

Inclusionary and Exclusionary Banter: English Club Cricket, Inclusive Attitudes and Male Camaraderie

Sport in Society

Abstract

Sport has traditionally been a hostile environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people. More recently, however, research on a range of British sports has documented a considerable shift toward inclusivity for sexual minorities. Curiously, despite its global popularity, no research has yet measured attitudes in cricket. By drawing on 12 semi-structured interviews with a club cricket team in the South East of England, we show inclusive attitudes toward homosexuality in sport and society. We also explore how forms of ‘banter’ among members of the club are complex and multifaceted. Accordingly, we propose that banter in grassroots cricket can be conceptualized into ‘inclusionary’ forms (incorporating how a close team relationship can facilitate inclusive forms of banter) and ‘exclusionary’ forms (incorporating jokes which transgress acceptable forms of banter). This research therefore acts as a point of departure for further investigations of the operation of banter across different levels of sport.

Keywords: cricket; masculinity; homophobia; homosexuality; banter; joking

Introduction

Sport across the world has changed significantly in recent years regarding issues of equality, diversity and inclusion. Previous research has traditionally shown sport to be a hostile environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual (hereafter LGBⁱ) people (Hekma 1998; Pronger 1990). It is, therefore, unsurprising that, historically, very few elite-level LGB athletes have come out of the closet (e.g Magrath, Cleland and Anderson 2017). However, more recent findings across a range of sporting contexts have uncovered more liberal and inclusive attitudes than ever before (Anderson, Magrath and Bullingham 2016). Krane (2016, 238), for example, writes that, ‘Sport is entering a new era of inclusion and acceptance... This is a whole different landscape from what has occurred in the past’. Interestingly, however, despite cricket’s position as England’s national sportⁱⁱ, only very limited recent research has focused on the sport’s changing (or not) patterns of diversity (Burdsey 2011; Malcolm, Bairner and Curry 2010; Velija 2015). Indeed, most research has instead focused on sports with higher *expected* levels of homophobia, such as rugby and football (Gaston and Dixon 2019; Magrath 2017a, 2017b, 2019; Magrath, Anderson and Roberts 2015).

Accordingly, this article represents the first-ever empirical analysis of the relationship between men’s cricket and attitudes toward homosexuality. By conducting semi-structured interviews with 12 heterosexual male cricketers, this research addresses the following objectives:

- to examine attitudes toward homosexuality in English club cricket;
- to understand definitions and interpretations of ‘banter’ in English club cricket.
- to explore the complexity and operation of ‘banter’ in English club cricket.

Findings indicate that, aside from the small number of religious participants, attitudes toward homosexuality in cricket mirror the sports industry more broadly (Anderson, Magrath and

Bullingham 2016). We also document that banter remains complex terrain—especially in sport. We therefore offer a fresh attempt to conceptualize the ‘double-edged’ effects of banter (e.g. Nichols, 2018; Roderick 2006), acknowledging that this can have both positive and negative implications: this is what we refer to as ‘inclusionary’ and ‘exclusionary’ forms of banter.

Cricket, Masculinity and Homophobia

The codification of cricket into an organized sport can be traced back to 1744ⁱⁱⁱ, when members of the aristocracy established the main features of the modern game (Malcolm 2013). By the following century, cricket had become widely recognized as England’s national sport – representing ‘what England is and [giving] meaning to the identity of being English’ (Maguire and Stead 1996: 17). As the effect of the industrial revolution took its hold in Anglo-American cultures in the mid-19th century, sport – largely men’s team sports – was thought to instil the qualities of discipline and obedience of labour necessary in dangerous occupations (Rigauer 1981). Factory workers in particular were required to sacrifice their time and health for the sake of earning the required wage to support their dependent families. In this context, participation in sport taught boys the values of self-sacrifice (Anderson 2009).

Additionally, sport at this time played an important role in ‘masculinizing’ boys. Given the emergence of an apparent ‘crisis’ of masculinity, men had to demonstrate their heterosexuality by aligning their ‘gendered behaviors with an idealized and narrow definition of masculinity’ (McCormack and Anderson 2014: 114). Perhaps unsurprisingly, early modern sport was epitomized by high levels of violence and disorderly behaviour from participants and spectators—even in cricket, which has long been thought as a softer and more gentlemanly sporting activity (Malcolm 1999). The reinforcement of masculinity also led to near-compulsory

heterosexuality through the creation of a homophobic sporting culture—thus largely excluding women, whose participation was denounced as ‘uncivilized’ (see Hargreaves 1986; McCrone 1988; Velija 2015), as well as LGB people (Pronger 1990).

Around a century later, in the 1980s, sport was – once again – to re-emerge with huge cultural significance for men and masculinity in the West. During this time, conservative socio-political responses to the advent of HIV – which was especially prevalent among gay men – fed the perception that homosexuality was dangerous and illicit (Weeks 1991). This elevated deleterious cultural attitudes toward homosexuality to an all-time high by the end of the decade. The British Social Attitudes Survey (BSAS), for example, showed that, in 1983, 62% of the population believed that same-sex sex between consenting adults was ‘always wrong’ or ‘mostly wrong’. Toward the end of the decade, this figure had increased to 75% of those sampled (Watt and Elliot 2019).

Given this hostile environment, LGB individuals tended to either avoid participation in sport, hide their sexual identities (e.g. Pronger 1990) or restrict themselves to gay-only leagues (Elling, De Knop and Knoppers 2003). Elite-level athletes who did come out during this time typically received abuse, faced rejection and found their careers in tatters—as best evidenced by footballer Justin Fashanu (Gaston, Magrath and Anderson 2018). In cricket, while the women’s game has typically had more out lesbian players (including Katherine Brunt, Jess Jonassen and Megan Schutt), the men’s game had no out gay male players at this time—and even very few since. This could be attributable to cricket’s popularity in various South Asian and Caribbean countries, where cultural attitudes toward homosexuality are less tolerant than the West (Frank, Camp and Boutcher 2010), and often influenced by religion (Magrath 2017b). Evidencing this in the Caribbean, for example, Chadee *et al.* (2013, 16) showed that ‘people with an intrinsic

religious orientation displayed more negative attitudes towards homosexuality than those with an extrinsic religious orientation’, while Pew (2013) data showed that most South Asian nations espoused generally conservative attitudes toward homosexuality.

Aside from some historical examples from the late-19th century, the most notable gay male elite-level cricketers include Alan Hansford, who played for Sussex between 1989 and 1992. However, he came out after his retirement from playing. This feat was only repeated again in 2011, when Steven Davies – a batsman for Surrey and, later, Somerset – publicly came out in an interview with *The Telegraph*. The support received by Davies from the cricketing world mirrored the broader liberalization of cultural attitudes toward homosexuality which began to improve considerably around the turn of the millennium—as the next section of this article now addresses.

Homophobia in Sport: ‘It’s Just not Cricket’

Cultural attitudes toward homosexuality in the UK have improved significantly over the past two decades (Watt and Elliot 2019); indeed, the most recent BSAS showed that only 12% of those sampled believed same-sex sex to be ‘always wrong’—down over 50% from three decades earlier. And despite ongoing claims that sport is slower to embrace social change than wider society, there is a plethora of evidence which documents sport’s increased support for homosexuality (Anderson, Magrath and Bullingham 2016). Almost two decades ago, in 2002, Eric Anderson conducted the first research on out gay male collegiate athletes; finding that their sporting experiences were much more positive than they were expecting, and most regretted not coming out sooner (Anderson 2002). When this research was replicated almost 10 years later, Anderson (2011) found even greater levels of social inclusion for gay athletes. This included a

reduction of the ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ culture and greater inclusion of gay athletes in social activities. Similarly, Adams and Anderson’s (2012) research, which observed the first-ever, first-hand account of a gay athlete’s coming out process, documented both a decline in heteronormativity, and an increase in team cohesion. Indeed, this athlete’s friends and teammates felt closer to him after he publicly disclosed his sexuality to them.

Research has also documented how support from heterosexual peers toward homosexuality in sport has improved considerably. Bush, Anderson and Carr’s (2012) quantitative study with British heterosexual sports students found that, while athletic identity was initially connected with homophobia upon arrival, this had eroded upon graduation. Further, research on young, elite footballers also found that, despite not having any direct contact with gay teammates, friends or family members, these men were broadly supportive of sexual minorities (Magrath 2017a; Magrath, Anderson and Roberts 2015). The only exception to this was those who identified as religious; for some of these men, Christian beliefs prevented them from supporting LGB rights and would even threaten friendships with a gay friend (Magrath 2017b). In addition to players, even research on sports fandom – a demographic who have traditionally been stigmatized as homophobic – has shown increasingly positive attitudes toward homosexuality in sport (Cashmore and Cleland 2012; Magrath 2018).

This scholarly work has typically been situated within Anderson’s (2009) theoretical lens, inclusive masculinities. Departing from previous attempts to theorize masculinities—which were accurate during times of high homophobia (e.g. Connell 1995)—inclusive masculinities has been the most prolific attempt in framing attitudes toward the LGB community and their experiences in contemporary sport and society (Anderson 2011). The theory also argues that, when a culture becomes less homophobic, there will be a positive impact on young men’s gendered expression,

including greater emotional intimacy (Robinson, Anderson and White 2018) and physical tactility (McCormack 2012; McCormack and Anderson 2014)—without the threat of homophobic policing. Since its publication over a decade ago, the theory has been used in over 100 academic studies, most in sport.

Interestingly, however, while there have been attempts to explore historical notions of masculinity in cricket (e.g. Allen, 2011), no scholarly research has yet examined attitudes toward homosexuality among English cricketers—at any level of the game. A recent report by Cricket Australia and Cricket Victoria claimed that three-quarters of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) respondents had ‘witnessed homophobia in cricket at some time or another’ (Storr, O’Sullivan, Symons, Spaaij and Sbaraglia 2017). In the UK, Stonewall^{iv} (2017) claimed that one in six cricket fans have ‘heard homophobic abuse at matches’; this was an influential factor in the England and Wales Cricket Board’s participation in the Rainbow Laces campaign. Research examining England’s ‘Barmy Army’ – a passionate and boisterous group of England cricket supporters – documented ‘coarse verbal abuse of Australian players...including homophobic accusations about players’ sexualities’ (Parry and Malcolm 2004, 80). Finally, in 2019, the England cricket captain, Joe Root, was widely praised for his public denouncement of homophobic ‘sledging’ – a term used to describe unpleasant or personal remarks between opposition players – in a match between England and West Indies (Ingle 2019).

Language, Banter and Camaraderie

Numerous studies have explored the concept of ‘banter’ in sport. Attempts to define the term, however, are complex; it is generally accepted, though, that it loosely refers to the ‘playful exchange of teasing remarks’ (Hein and O’Donohoe 2014: 1299). Gill, Henwood and McLean’s

(2005, 42) research found that banter ‘can be variously understood as humorous, defensive or competitive’. And Lyman’s (1987) research on fraternity relationships documented the role of both irony and sarcasm in men’s deployment of banter. Easthope (1990) argues that banter can serve a double function: outwardly it is aggressive, yet inwardly it relies on an intimate and personal understanding of the recipient. It can also be ‘double-edged’ – have multiple meanings – and frequently contain ‘snide remarks [which] often deliver unpalatable messages with softened impact’ (Roderick 2006, 87). In research on men’s rugby, this was characterized by Nichols (2018) as evidence of ‘lad culture’, of which banter is a central feature.

Irrespective of its intentions, however, banter has been identified as central to male friendships in multiple (sporting and non-sporting) contexts. Interestingly, however – and also somewhat counterintuitively – research has also shown how the deployment of banter has fostered a sense of community. Kennedy’s (2000) research on British football found that exchanging opinions on a match permitted the opportunity for men to ‘score points’ against one another, but that this also led to developing friendships and building solidarity with each other. This is a crucial process in establishing an ‘in group’ by positioning others as external and, therefore, separate from private humour. The establishment of such boundaries facilitates broader and potentially more inclusive forms of banter.

This can include the playful and sometimes ironic maintenance of one’s heterosexuality through sexualized discourse; this oftentimes includes men feigning gay sex with one another (Diamond, Kimmel and Schroeder 2000); making jokes about being sexually attracted to one another (McCormack 2012); and complimenting each other’s bodies (Roberts, Anderson and Magrath 2017). These behaviours have been widely documented in both interview and ethnographic research – primarily with, but not restricted to, adolescent heterosexual teamsport

athletes (Anderson 2009; Magrath 2019). While it can be interpreted in many ways, including a mockery of homosexuality, others might refer to it as a method for ironically showing that one is not gay—an example of what McCormack (2012) might call ‘ironic heterosexual recuperation’.

Cricket research examining the nature of banter is relatively limited. Burdsey’s (2011) analysis of elite British Asian experiences in first-class cricket documented the presence of racism and Islamophobia. Given the strength of colour-blind ideology in cricket, however, these men were encouraged to downplay these ‘incidents as merely “banter” or “jokes”’ (Burdsey 2011: 277; see also Fletcher 2011). Cricket’s drinking culture has also been documented as a fundamental part of team bonding and banter; counterintuitively, however, this has largely excluded British Muslims, as they are forbidden to drink alcohol for religious reasons (Fletcher and Spracklen 2014).

‘Sledging’ is also prevalent in cricket cultures. Duncan’s (2019) analysis concludes that sledging can have mixed effects on cricketers. In the elite game, however, Joseph and Cramer (2011, 238) show that sledging is ‘not the foul-mouthed tirade of abusive language that the media often depicts...[It is] subtle and humorous banter taking place between teammates or with opponents in an attempt at distracting the batter’. Nevertheless, this was shown to have a substantially negative effect on performance, including an altered perception of self, an altered state of mind and decreased sporting ability—thus requiring numerous coping strategies.

Methods

Southford CC

This research represents the first empirical analysis of male cricketers’ attitudes toward homosexuality. Data for this article was collected with 12 members of a cricket club located in

the South East of England—whom we call Southford Cricket Club (CC). Southford is a large village situated approximately 10 miles from its county’s largest major city. Politically, it is located in a Conservative stronghold, with the local area having elected the same Member of Parliament (MP) since the constituency’s inception in 1997. Interestingly, however, only two of Southford CC’s 50 members reside in the area the club is located; the remainder reside in various locations across the county.

At the time of writing, Southford CC compete in a regionalized combined county league of 18 teams, and are relatively successful, frequently winning local-level, grassroots trophies. The structure of club cricket is somewhat unique in comparison to other popular sports played in the UK. Where many sports follow a routine of a weekly fixture and training session, club cricket often includes competitions played across multiple formats on both evenings and weekends. It is, therefore, feasible for many of the players to be involved in evening training sessions, weekend matches (on both Saturday and Sunday), and involvement in midweek evening fixtures. Matches in club cricket can often last around seven hours. Much of this time can be spent by participation in the match, socializing with teammates (or opposition), and by regular tea breaks (and occasional rain delays). Even though the regional nature of the divisional setup aims to reduce the impact of travel, it is not uncommon for journeys of an hour or more to occur. It is, therefore, often not unrealistic for players who participate in club cricket to spend up to around 40 hours a week with each other. Southford CC were chosen due the first author’s close working relationship with the club at the time of data collection. Access was then granted after we explained to the club secretary that we were interested in replicating similar research conducted regarding the presence of homosexuality in British sport (e.g. Anderson, Magrath and Bullingham 2016).

Cricket, however, is unlike other team sports; its relatively low physiological demands^v (Noakes and Durandt 2000) contribute to the sport being played recreationally by a broader age range of participants than many other team sports. In our research, for example, the mean age of participants was 30, with the youngest participant aged 19 and the oldest aged 49 (see Table 1 for a complete outline of our sample's demographics). Cricket's ongoing popularity in a variety of South Asian countries also influences a disproportionately high number of these communities participating in the sport (Burdsey 2011). The ethnic breakdown of participants in our research was broadly consistent with Southford's nearest major city; nine of our participants were White British, as well as one Asian, one British Asian, and one mixed-race participant. **Most participants self-identified** as middle-class, as determined by participants' occupation and/or educational status. Additionally, every participant self-identified as 'exclusively heterosexual' on a sexuality continuum. **Indeed, at the time of data collection, there were no out gay players competing for Southford CC^{vi}.**

Insert Table 1 here.

Procedures

Approximately 18 of Southford CC's overall members regularly compete for the club's First Team; 13 of whom are White British, two are Indian, one is Pakistani, one is British Asian, and one is mixed race. The first author conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 of these men over the summer of 2017. To ensure consistency of approach, all interviews were conducted in person, and ranged from between 40 minutes and 90 minutes, averaging approximately an hour. Prior to interview, participants were provided with a research brief and both authors' contact

details should they have any queries about the research (none did). Each participant also signed a consent form. Ethical approval was granted by both authors' institution prior to data collection, and all guidelines of the British Sociological Association (BSA) were followed. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured throughout the research process, and pseudonyms have been used to protect participants' genuine identities.

Interviews began with initial discussions of demographic information and a range of contemporary issues affecting English cricket. Four broad themes were then discussed: (1) overall team relationship; (2) gay-friendliness and legal rights; (3) coming out; (4) language and banter among team members. Each participant was also provided with a range of hypothetical questions; for consistency, answers to these were then compared with their espoused attitudes.

Researcher Reflexivity

During the interviews, the first author was able to strike initial rapport through 'shop talk'; a mixture of formal and informal discussions about sport. This approach has previously been shown as important for striking rapport with participants, thus improving the quality of their responses (Magrath 2017a; Magrath, Anderson and Roberts 2015). Although the first author's (the author who conducted each interview) sexuality was not overtly stated to the participants – he and the second author both identify as 'exclusively heterosexual' – it is likely that the persistence of a heterosexist culture (e.g. Anderson 2011) dictated that we were likely assumed to be straight. Only two participants enquired (to the first author) of his sexual orientation both prior **to** and after their respective interviews had taken place. He confirmed to these participants that he was heterosexual.

Analysis

Interviews were transcribed and coded immediately upon completion. Because this was the first scholarly research dedicated to the nature of inclusivity, friendships and banter in English cricket, an inductive framework was adopted with a thematic analysis (Charmaz 2014) employed when analyzing results. Braun, Clarke and Weate (2016, 191) argue that this approach is widely recognized as the most effective method for ‘identifying patterns (themes) in a dataset, and for describing and interpreting the meaning and importance of those’. To avoid a diluted and confused application of thematic analysis, these authors’ guidance list was followed throughout the data analysis process. This included a thorough and comprehensive approach to coding, as well as a detailed interpretation of analytic claims. This approach ensured a ‘rigorous, deliberative process for doing thematic analysis, that keeps “quality” as a foregrounded concern’ (Braun, Clarke and Weate 2016, 202).

Limitations

We also recognize the limitations of this research. The research presents data from 12 male cricketers competing for an English club cricket team based in the South East of England. Although we see no fundamental reason why men from similar clubs might differ in their attitudes, external factors – such as gender, ethnicity, geography, socioeconomic status and religious beliefs – may affect the outcome of results elsewhere. We also note here that the present research focuses only on attitudes and banter in men’s cricket; while this is not designed to discount women’s voices from sporting locales – Nichols’ (2018) research in rugby, for example, documents the importance of these narratives – it is beyond the scope of our analysis. Importantly, Schnable’s (2016) research acknowledges significant gender variation with respect

to attitudes toward homosexuality. Accordingly, the results presented in this article should instead act as a point of departure for further research on cricket, gender, and sexuality.

Results

Acceptance of Homosexuality in English Club Cricket

While research has typically shown sport to be a hostile institution for sexual minorities (Pronger 1990), a plethora of recent research has documented how it has become an increasingly liberal and inclusive environment (Anderson, Magrath and Bullingham 2016; Cashmore and Cleland 2012; Magrath 2017a, 2018, 2019). Consistent with this research, members of Southford CC were also broadly positive in their attitudes toward homosexuality. Evidencing this, Richard, a 35-year-old fireman, said that, ‘Each to their own – we should be able to do what we want. If someone loves someone...they’re just two people in love’. Similarly, Lewis, a 25-year-old operations manager, said that, ‘Live life how you choose to live it...Nowadays things are much more socially acceptable’. George, a 39-year-old engineer, said that, ‘I haven’t got any problem with gay people...They shouldn’t have to hide – it’s who they are – they should be able to be open about it’. And Trevor, a 30-year-old electrician, said that, ‘[Homosexuality] isn’t an issue to me. I’ve come across all sorts of people...I don’t see them as being any lesser people than me, to be honest’.

Other members of Southford CC offered simplistic yet positive perspectives of homosexuality. John, for example, a 26-year-old retail assistant, said that, ‘I’m not really bothered. I don’t see them [gay people] as different in any way’. Similarly, Declan, a 37-year-old civil servant, simply said, ‘Fine, no problem’ when asked about his personal views on homosexuality. Some members of the team also recognized that homosexuality had little bearing

on their own lives; however, they too maintained positive attitudes. Robert, a 19-year-old undergraduate student, said that, 'I don't mind. Their sexual preferences don't affect my life, so I'm not offended. If that's who you are, that's who you are'. And Luke, a 43-year-old IT consultant, said that, 'It doesn't make any difference to me at all...If you're a man who wants to be with a man or a woman who wants to be a woman, it doesn't matter'.

The inclusive attitudes espoused by men on this team also extended to hypothetical support for a gay member of Southford CC. When thinking about the notion of an out gay teammate, Luke simply commented that it 'wouldn't make the slightest bit of difference...He would still be accepted'. Similarly, John said that, 'To be gay in a sporting environment is difficult. I think it's easier in cricket than in other sports, but I think he'd be respected by the team, anyway'. Other participants referred to the strength of the overall team friendship at Southford CC as being a key reason why a gay teammate would be accepted. Lewis said that, 'Nothing would change. He'd still be a key part of the team', while Robert said that, 'At the end of the day, he's a friend and a teammate. I don't think him being gay would bother anyone'. These inclusive views – even for a hypothetically gay teammate – therefore depart from previous findings that cricket culture is an unwelcoming environment for LGB people (Storr *et al.* 2017).

Nevertheless, there were two members of Southford CC who articulated objection to homosexuality. Edward, a 49-year-old devout Muslim, originally from Pakistan, said that, 'We don't have homosexuality in Islam, we don't even consider it'. Discussing homosexuality in the West, he further commented that, 'It's disgraceful. A man should be with a woman and that's just the way it is'. Pete, a 19-year-old IT technician, mirrored these perspectives: 'I was brought up in a strong Muslim home, so I'm not a big fan of them [gay people]...Thinking about gay sex puts me off. I don't think it's normal'. Both men also opposed same-sex marriage, which was

passed to take effect in most of the UK in 2014. Paradoxically, however, Edward and Pete said that having a gay teammate would not negatively impact their interactions with that person. Accordingly, these perspectives are congruent with previous sporting research which shows religious beliefs to be an impediment to more progressive attitudes toward homosexuality (Hamdi, Lachheb and Anderson 2017; Magrath 2017b).

Exploring Cricket Banter

In addition to addressing attitudes toward homosexuality, this research also addressed the operation of banter among members of Southford CC. Previous analyses of banter have typically understood the term as referring to playful and humorous yet often defensive or competitive exchanges (Gill, Henwood and McLean, 2005; Hein and O'Donohoe, 2014; Lyman, 1987). It has also been documented that deploying banter is a means of developing a sense of community – particularly in sport (Kennedy 2000). Research on elite sport, however, has shown the use of banter between athletes to often have a far more sinister meaning (Burdsey 2011; Roderick 2006), or that it fosters a toxic form of laddism (Nichols 2018). To offer a well-rounded discussion of the concept of banter in English club cricket, we asked members of Southford CC to provide their own definitions of the term. Consistent with previous research, these definitions were largely focused on jocular interactions among those with whom they are familiar.

Evidencing this, George said that, 'It can be any off-the-cuff joking and laughter. It can be just general chit-chat and trying to make each other laugh in a light-hearted way'. Similarly, Robert defined banter as 'laughing, joking around and making jokes with people...It's a good thing because it's the way it should be between a group of mates'. Lewis said that, 'It's about having a joke with someone you know and seeing how far you can push someone. You both find

it funny without being upset’. Each of the participants also spoke of the importance of familiarity when engaging in banter. Declan, for example, said that, ‘Banter is only between two people who know each other. I wouldn’t have banter with people I haven’t known very long’. And Spencer said that, ‘It has to be with people you know well. Especially when so much of the banter is things like in-jokes’.

During their attempts to define banter, two members of the team voiced their concerns with the term. Club captain Richard, for example, initially claimed banter to be ‘an excuse to bully people’. However, that stemmed from his dislike of how widespread the concept had apparently become in sport. He later commented that, ‘The banter or piss-taking – I think I’d prefer to call it “joviality” – doesn’t overstep the mark with jokes between members of the team’. And John recognized that the concept can also have multiple meanings. He said: ‘You can categorize it in two ways. On the one hand, it’s messing about to help create a relaxed atmosphere...But then it’s often used to incite people and create a negative vibe—and then used as an excuse’.

Our analysis of banter among these men concurs with part of John’s assessment. As with other sporting settings, cricket-related banter is complex, complicated and often multi-layered (e.g. Magrath 2017a; Nichols 2018; Roderick 2006). We now focus on the different elements of banter – what we call *inclusionary* and *exclusionary* – among members of Southford CC.

Inclusionary Banter

A consistent theme among these men was how they enjoyed a close team relationship – despite only competing in grassroots cricket (c.f. Roberts, Anderson and Magrath 2017). Evidencing this, Luke said that, ‘There’s a really strong overall friendship between us. It’ll never be

perfection, but...we socialize together after the match and enjoy each other's company'.

Similarly, Spencer said that, 'I love the socializing that we do...I never had that at my old club. You turned up, played cricket, paid your fees and then left again straight after'. Robert said that, 'I love how everyone always stays and has a drink afterwards. It's one of the reasons I play. It's a really positive thing and helps all the team bond together'. Consistent with research which shows how men develop friendship and solidarity through deployment of banter (e.g. Kennedy 2000), Spencer argued that the deployment of banter among men on the team was evidence of the 'caring side of the guys on the team...[But] we just do it in a different way'.

All but one participant interviewed for this research agreed that the close team relationship among members of Southford CC was central to the operation of banter between teammates. Importantly, this was also underpinned by the amount of time that these men had spent together as teammates, thus permitting strong familiarity between members of the group. Supporting these perspectives, Declan said that, 'The banter between us only works well because we all know each other so well. It wouldn't be the same if it was people we didn't know well'. Similarly, John said that, 'The Saturday team have played together for ages and, even though it's competitive – more competitive than the Thursday and Sunday teams – everyone knows each other well enough to all take part in the banter'. And Mason said that peripheral members of the Saturday team – those who only play occasionally, normally due to a shortage of players – are quicker to be included if they engage in banter: 'The quicker someone joins in with the rest of us, the more quickly they're included. That's how much of a big thing it [banter] is for us all—it makes all the difference'.

Evidencing the familiarity, participants also provided numerous examples of 'in-jokes' – instances of banter which regularly occur among members of Southford CC. These could be both

on and off the cricket field, and also be verbal or physical forms of banter (Diamond, Kimmel and Schroeder 2000; Magrath, Anderson and Roberts 2015). These ranged from ‘calling another guy on the team by a woman’s name because his surname rhymes with it’ (Mason); ‘putting pots of mustard in [teammate’s name] bag, because he hates mustard in his sandwiches’ (John); ‘[Teammate’s name] pretending to “bum” us with his cricket bat during a break in play’ (George); and [Teammate’s name] doesn’t take many wickets, so I pull his leg about it sometimes’ (Robert). According to Trevor, such exchanges also occur every time these men are together, whether during a match, team practice or in social situations: ‘Every time, it happens without fail. It doesn’t matter if we’re winning or losing, as long as we’re together it’s rare for us to go home without having any banter together’.

Consistent with previous research which argues that recognizing intent, context and effect are pivotal when understanding language (McCormack, Wignall and Morris 2016), we also seek to further understand participants’ interactions. Interestingly, they were described by the vast majority of participants as having a largely positive effect on the team as a whole—and further indicative of the team relationship. Declan, for instance, said that, ‘It’s light-hearted entertainment and a bit of fun...Everyone finds it funny and no one’s offended by it’. Similarly, Lewis said that, ‘It’s almost like anything goes, but only to the point where we push each other’s buttons and know what we can get away with’. And Trevor said that, ‘It’s not a personal attack. It’s more a case of taking the mick and having a laugh together...It’s a case of not going too far and offending someone, but just having a laugh with everyone’. Humour, then, often employed at the expense of others, is central to these constructions of sporting banter (Gill, Henwood and McLean 2005; Lyman 1987)—yet also does so in an apparently positive manner.

Finally, it is worth noting that, for a small number of participants (3), the banter they enjoyed with other members of Southford CC was also an example of sport's apparent cathartic nature. This was best articulated by Trevor, who said that, 'I play cricket and relax...It's not me going to work or looking after the kids, I'm there on my own and can play cricket and have a laugh with mates'. Similarly, Pete said that, 'Cricket is a chance to have a bit of fun with mates and a place to go where I can escape everything for a while'. And Spencer discussed how engaging in banter with friends on the team was an example of 'escapism' and how it 'provides an opportunity to get away from it [the stress of work] all'. Thus, in comparison to the elite-level (e.g. Roberts, Anderson and Magrath 2017), banter in grassroots sport has an extra, cathartic dimension in its make-up.

Exclusionary Banter

While banter has so far shown to have a positive and inclusionary effect among members of Southford CC, we also recognize that the concept can be 'double-edged' (see Roderick 2006), with a more negative – or 'exclusionary' – effect. Every member of the team interviewed for this research believed that negative aspects of banter occurred when jokes 'crossed the line'; this is what Rivers and Ross (2019) describe as 'banter violations'. George, for example, said that this would happen 'when somebody takes offence to something. We have to be careful not to do that'. Similarly, Trevor said that, 'It steps out of the realms of acceptable banter when you start attacking someone personally, and they take offence. That's going too far'. And Declan said that, 'If people got pissed off with a joke or something that someone said about them, you've gone too far...It wouldn't be banter, it would just be rudeness'. Spencer said that these scenarios were examples of 'bad banter'.

Participants unanimously agreed that this primarily occurred through comments about a teammate's personal identity. Edward, for example, said that, 'The limit is crossed with things like race, religion, sex [gender]... Things like that should never be involved. I've been called things like "paki" [on the field by opposing players] – that's not banter, it's just harassment' (Burdsey 2011; Fletcher 2011). Similarly, George said that, 'Jokes about or at the expense of gay people, or black people, are things that go too far'. And Robert said that, 'Sometimes people say, "it's just banter" and think that that makes it fine, but not in my opinion. You have to draw a line somewhere, like racism and sexism – that's just unacceptable'.

Interestingly, however, participants said that transgressing the boundaries of banter was rare; none could provide examples of when this had happened directly between members of the team. This was largely attributable to the fact that they regularly socialize with each other and are thus familiar with 'acceptable' notions of banter among and between teammates. Declan, for example, said that, 'The "line" varies for different people. There are some things that you can say to some people, but not to others... But we know each other well enough to know what we can get away with'. Pete supported this notion: 'It's [banter] quite well defined by how well you know someone... And I think the line moves depending on the length of time you have known someone'.

Despite these findings, however, there was also evidence among a small number of participants (2) that banter sometimes had a more sinister meaning. In this context, it was used to mask genuine dislike of a teammate: this is what Luke referred to as 'loaded' banter. He said that this would be 'when they take the piss out of you, but there would sometimes be a hidden meaning behind it'. This was best evidenced by John, who said that, 'I banter with [Jimmy] all the time because he annoys me. I'll joke about his ability and I might talk about him bowling all

over the place. It might upset him, but I don't care – there's a genuine dislike there'. Thus, while disguised as humour, this form of exclusionary banter provided some evidence that banter in grassroots sport can also be 'double-edged' (Roderick 2006).

Discussion

This research has drawn on interviews with 12 heterosexual male cricketers from a club cricket team located in the South East of England – Southford CC – to examine their attitudes toward homosexuality and deployment of banter. Adopting an inductive analytic approach, our findings largely support a broad range of other recent research documenting positive and inclusive attitudes toward homosexuality (Anderson 2011; Anderson, Magrath and Bullingham 2016; Gaston and Dixon 2019). These positive attitudes also extended to the hypothetical notion of having an out gay teammate at Southford CC (Magrath 2019). The only objections to homosexuality among members of Southford CC came from the two religious participants. For these men – both of whom identified as devout Muslims – homosexuality was 'unnatural', 'immoral' and stood in opposition to religious teachings. Each of these participants also opposed the introduction of same-sex marriage. Thus, these findings are consistent with Hamdi, Lachheb and Anderson's (2017) research on sport and Islam, which argues that homosexuality has a 'profoundly negative representation...[and is] interpreted as a revolt on Muslim customs' (698). Despite these participants' conservative attitudes, however, they also – paradoxically – said that they would not interact differently with a gay member of Southford CC. This is likely best explained by the fact that these men's religious beliefs were 'usurped by the strength of their friendships with hypothetically gay friends [on the team]' (Magrath 2017b, 425).

The findings in this research are overwhelmingly consistent with Anderson's (2009) inclusive masculinity. In this context, these ostensibly heterosexual cricketers' attitudes support the theory's central premise of the growing inclusion of homosexuality in sport (Anderson, Magrath and Bullingham 2016). While there may be some evidence of heteronormativity – perhaps best evidenced through *some* of their banter (as discussed shortly) or the simplistic articulation of their support for homosexuality – it is important to recognize that this does equate to homophobia. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to tackle, and could result in LGB people's exclusion from participation in cricket. However, these men still espoused positive attitudes toward homosexuality, despite there being no gay members of Southford CC. Moreover, this research further extends this theorizing to include a new sport – cricket – and also presents some further evidence that inclusive masculinities are not simply restricted to male youth cultures (Anderson 2009).

Alongside attitudes toward homosexuality, this research also further develops current understandings of the concept of 'banter'—extending them to the grassroots sports setting. Members of Southford CC provided definitions of banter which were largely consistent with previous research (Gill, Henwood and McLean 2005; Hein and O'Donohoe 2014; Lyman 1987). But there was also evidence to suggest that banter – even in grassroots cricket – can have mixed effects. To conceptualize this environment, we present inclusionary and exclusionary forms of banter as a starting point for cricket-related banter.

Inclusionary forms of banter center on the close friendships which members of the team discussed during interview. These friendships were essential in constructing an 'in group', which previous research has shown is a crucial process in the camaraderie that groups of men share with one another (Easthope 1990; Kennedy 2000). This facilitates the development of something

of a cyclical paradox whereby jocular interactions – often those deployed at the expense of others – act as an inclusionary form of banter; or ‘mischievous masculinities’ (Nichols 2018). Important to the exchange of banter among men on this team, however, was a recognition that their interactions were intended to be ‘light-hearted’ and, therefore, by definition, inoffensive (see McCormack, Wignall and Morris 2016). However, there is also some evidence that inclusionary forms of banter are predicated on heteronormativity; such as these athletes engaging in mock homosexual acts for the purpose of homosocial bonding. While acts may well contribute to a culture of heteronormativity – in that they are ironic proclamations of heteromascularity (e.g. McCormack 2012) – there is no evidence to suggest that these acts are designed as a form of homophobia.

We also propose that *exclusionary* forms of banter refer to exchanges which ‘cross the line’, and therefore become an unacceptable, failed form of banter. This has previously been described as ‘banter violations’ (Rivers and Ross 2019), and by our participants as ‘bad banter’. Jokes about an individual’s personal identity, such as their sexuality or ethnic background, were deemed to transgress the ‘acceptable’ notions of banter among these men; these were a rare occurrence among members of Southford CC, however. Indeed, while this was outside of the scope of our analysis, such examples are likely better understood as an example of racially motivated sledging (e.g. Burdsey 2011; Fletcher 2011). Nevertheless, ‘exclusionary’ banter still remains a useful framework for conceptualizing failed banter. This concept is useful in framing more sinister forms of banter—which our participants referred to as ‘loaded’ banter. Indeed, similar to research on elite-level sport – which documents how banter may appear harmless but, in reality, contains ‘implicit but generally understood meaning’ (Roderick 2006, 86-7) – seemingly inoffensive comments are instead designed to mask hidden messages, such as simple

dislike for whomever may be on the receiving end. This loaded banter was purely designed as an implicit mechanism for articulating one's dislike for a teammate, rather than an attempt to 'score points' against a competitor (see Magrath 2017a). Accordingly, while there may only be subtle variance, the findings presented here are evidence that banter serves different functions at different levels of sport.

While we believe *inclusionary* and *exclusionary* forms of banter to be useful in explaining cricket camaraderie, we also recognize that banter is complex and often contradictory. Accordingly, these concepts should be treated as fluid, rather than binary—particularly when one considers the complicated nature of language and its interpretation (e.g. McCormack, Wignall and Morris 2016). This is especially the case when one considers the (often) negative effects of both sledging (e.g. Duncan 2019) and racially motivated interactions in cricket (e.g. Burdsey 2011; Fletcher and Spracklen 2014).

Finally, we also note the importance of future research in this area. While this article has documented heterosexual men's inclusive attitudes towards homosexuality, more research is required on the experiences of LGB cricketers. Indeed, LGB people's experiences in cricket – and sport more broadly – remain under-researched and largely excluded. Additionally, Velija's (2015) research acknowledges how cricket remains a male preserve; further investigation into the interpretation and effects of male banter is thus required. Finally, while some research has explored the influence of religion on attitudes toward homosexuality (e.g. Hamdi, Lachheb and Anderson 2017; Magrath 2017b), cricket's popularity in countries where attitudes remain more conservative means that further research would be an important contribution to the field.

References

- Adams, Adi and Eric Anderson (2012) Exploring the relationship between homosexuality and sport among the teammates of a small, Midwestern Catholic college soccer team. *Sport, Education and Society* 17(3): 347-364.
- Allen, Dean (2011) 'A man's game': Cricket, war and masculinity, South Africa, 1899–1902. *International Journal of the History of Sport* 28(1): 63-80.
- Anderson, Eric (2002) Openly gay athletes: Contesting Hegemonic Masculinity in a Homophobic Environment. *Gender and Society* 16(6): 860-877.
- Anderson, Eric (2009) *Inclusive masculinity: The Changing Nature of Masculinities*. New York: Routledge.
- Anderson, Eric (2011) Updating the outcome: Gay Athletes, Straight Teams, and Coming Out in Educationally Based Sport Teams. *Gender and Society* 25(2): 250-268.
- Anderson, Eric, Rory Magrath and Rachael Bullingham (2016) *Out in sport: The experiences of openly gay and lesbian athletes in competitive sport*. London: Routledge.
- Braun, Virginia, Victoria Clarke and Paul Weate (2016) Using thematic analysis in sport and exercise research. In *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise* (191-205), edited by Brett Smith and Andrew C. Sparkes. London: Routledge.
- Burdsey, Daniel (2010) British Muslim experiences in English first-class cricket. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 45(3): 315-334.
- Bush Anthony, Eric Anderson and Sam Carr (2012) The declining significance of men's homophobia in British sport. *Journal for the Study of Sport and Athletes in Education* 6(1): 107-120.

- Cashmore, Ellis and Jamie Cleland (2012) Fans, homophobia and masculinities in association football: Evidence of a more inclusive environment. *British Journal of Sociology* 63(2): 370-387.
- Chadee, Derek, Chezelle Joseph, Claire Peters, Vandana Siew Sankar, Nisha Nair and Jannel Philip (2013) Religiosity and attitudes towards homosexuals in a Caribbean environment. *Social and Economic Studies* 62(1): 1-28.
- Charmaz, Kathy (2014) *Constructing grounded theory*. London: Sage.
- Diamond Diane, Michael S. Kimmel and Kirby Schroeder (2000) “What’s this about a few good men?” *Research on Men and Masculinities Series* 11(2): 231–252.
- Duncan, Samuel (2019) Sledging in sport—Playful banter, or mean-spirited insults? A study of sledging’s place in play. *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* 13(2): 183-197.
- Easthope, Antony (1990) *What’s a man gotta do*. London: Unwin.
- Elling, Agnes, Paul De Knop and Annelies Knoppers (2003) Gay/lesbian sports clubs and events: Places of Homo-Social Bonding and Cultural Resistance? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 38(4): 441-456.
- Fletcher, Tom (2011) “Aye, but it were wasted on thee”: Cricket, British Asians, Ethnic Identities, and the ‘Magical Recovery of Community’. *Sociological Research Online* 16(4): 5.
- Fletcher, Thomas and Karl Spracklen (2014) “Cricket, drinking and exclusion of British Pakistani Muslims.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37(8): 1310-1327.
- Frank, David, Bayliss Camp and Steven Boutcher (2010) Worldwide trends in the criminal regulation of sex, 1945-2005. *American Sociological Review* 75(6): 867-893.

- Gaston, Lindsey, Rory Magrath and Eric Anderson (2018) From hegemonic to inclusive masculinities in English professional football: Marking a cultural shift. *Journal of Gender Studies* 27(3): 301-312.
- Gaston, Lindsey and Laura Dixon (2019) A want or a need? Exploring the role of grassroots gay rugby teams in the context of inclusive masculinity. *Journal of Gender Studies* (Online First).
- Gill, Rosalind, Karen Henwood and Carl McLean (2005) Body projects and the regulation of normative. *Body and Society* 11(1): 37-62.
- Hamdi Nassim, Monica Lachheb and Eric Anderson (2017) Masculinity, homosexuality and sport in an Islamic state of increasing homophobia. *Journal of Gender Studies* 26(6): 688-701.
- Hargreaves, John (1986) *Sport, power and culture: A social and historical analysis of popular sports in Britain*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Hein, Wendy and Stephanie O'Donohue (2014) Practising gender: The role of banter in young men's improvisations of masculine consumer identities. *Journal of Marketing Management* 30(13-14): 1293-1319.
- Hekma, Gert (1998) 'As long as they don't make an issue of it...': Gay Men and Lesbians in Organized Sports in the Netherlands. *Journal of Homosexuality* 35(1): 1-23.
- Ingle, Sean (2019) England's Joe Root praised for response to alleged homophobia. *The Guardian*, 12 February. Available at:
<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/feb/12/joe-root-praised-response-alleged-homophobic-abuse-england-west-indies-shannon-gabriel>

- Joseph, Samuele and Duncan Cramer (2011) Sledging in cricket: Elite English Batsmen's Experiences of Verbal Gameship. *Journal of Clinical Sports Psychology* 5(3): 237-251.
- Kennedy, Eileen (2000) You talk a good game: Football and Masculine Style on British Television. *Men and Masculinities* 3(1): 57-84.
- Krane, Vikki (2016) Inclusion to exclusion: Sport for LGBT athletes. In *Routledge international handbook of sport psychology* (238-247), edited by Robert J. Schinke, Kerry McGannon and Brett Smith. London: Routledge.
- Lyman, Peter (1987) The fraternal bond as a joking relationship. In *Changing men* (149-163), edited by Michael S. Kimmel. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Magrath, Rory (2017a) *Inclusive masculinities in contemporary football: Men in the beautiful game*. London: Routledge.
- Magrath, Rory (2017b) The intersection of race, religion and homophobia in British football. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 52(4): 411-429.
- Magrath, Rory (2018) 'To try and gain an advantage for my team': Homophobic and homosexually themed chanting among English football fans. *Sociology* 52(4): 709-726.
- Magrath, Rory (2019) Inclusive masculinities of working-class university footballers in the South of England. *Sport in Society* (Online First).
- Magrath, Rory, Eric Anderson and Steven Roberts (2015) On the door-step of equality: Attitudes toward gay athletes among academy-level footballers. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 50(7): 804-821.

- Magrath, Rory, Jamie Cleland and Eric Anderson (2017) Bisexual erasure in the British print media: Representation of Tom Daley's coming out. *Journal of Bisexuality* 17(3): 300-317.
- Maguire, Joseph and David Stead (1996) For pavilions? Cricket Migrants, Foreign Sojourns and Contested Identities. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 31(1): 1-23.
- Malcolm, Dominic (1999) Cricket spectator disorder: Myths, and historical evidence. *Sports Historian* 19(1): 16-37.
- Malcolm, Dominic (2013) *Globalizing cricket: Englishness, empire and identity*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Malcolm, Dominic, Alan Bairner and Graham Curry (2010) 'Woolmergate': Cricket and the Representation of Islam and Muslims in the British Press. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 34(2): 215-235.
- McCormack, Mark (2012) *The declining significance of homophobia: How teenage boys are redefining masculinity and heterosexuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McCormack, Mark and Eric Anderson (2014) The influence of declining homophobia on men's gender in the United States. *Sex Roles* 71(3-4): 109-120.
- McCormack, Mark, Liam Wignall and Max Morris (2016) Gay guys using gay language: Friendship, shared values and the intent-context-effect matrix. *British Journal of Sociology* 67(4): 747-767.
- McCrone, Kathleen (1988) *Sport and the physical emancipation of English women*. London: Routledge.

- Nichols, Kitty (2018) Moving beyond ideas of laddism: Conceptualising ‘mischievous masculinities’ as a new way of understanding everyday sexism and gender relations. *Journal of Gender Studies* 27(1): 73-85.
- Noakes, TD and JJ Durandt (2000) Physiological requirements of cricket. *Journal of Sports Sciences* 18(12), 919-929.
- Parry, Matthew and Dominic Malcolm (2004) England’s Barmy Army: Commercialization, Masculinity and Nationalism. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 39(1): 75-94.
- Pew (2013) ‘The global divide on homosexuality. *Pew Research Center*, June 4.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2013/06/04/the-global-divide-on-homosexuality/>
- Pronger, Brian (1990) *The arena of masculinity: Sports, homosexuality, and the meaning of sex*. New York: St Martin’s.
- Rigauer, Bero (1981) *Sport and work*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rivers, Damian J. and Andrew Ross (2019) ‘This channel has more subs from rival fans than Arsenal fans’: Arsenal Fan TV, football fandom and banter in the new media era. *Sport in Society* (Online First).
- Roberts, Steven, Eric Anderson and Rory Magrath (2017) Continuity, change and complexity in the performance of masculinity among elite young footballers in England. *British Journal of Sociology* 68(2): 336-357.
- Robinson, Stefan, Eric Anderson and Adam White (2018) The bromance: Undergraduate male friendships and the expansion of contemporary homosocial boundaries. *Sex Roles* 78(1-2): 94-106.

- Roderick Martin (2006) Adding insult to injury: Workplace injury in English professional football. *Sociology of Health and Illness* 28(1): 76-97.
- Schnabel, Landon (2016) Gender and homosexuality attitudes across religious groups from the 1970s to 2014. *Social Science Research* 55(1): 31-47.
- Stonewall (2017) Cricket goes rainbow for LGBT equality. Available at: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/news/cricket-goes-rainbow-lgbt-equality> (accessed 21 April 2020).
- Storr, Ryan, Grant O'Sullivan, Caroline Symons, Ramon Spaaij and Melissa Sbraglia (2017). *Exploring LGBT inclusion in Australian cricket*. Victoria: Victoria University.
- Velija, Philippa (2015) *Women's cricket and global processes: The emergence and development of women's cricket as a global game*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Wagg, Stephen (2003) Muck or nettles: Men, masculinity and myth in Yorkshire cricket. *Sport in History* 23(2): 68-93.
- Watt, Laura and Mark Elliot (2019) Homonegativity in Britain: Changing attitudes towards same-sex relationships. *Journal of Sex Research* 56(9): 1101-1114.
- Weeks, Jeffrey (1991) *Against nature: Essays on sexuality, history and identity*. London: Rivers Oram.

Table 1: Sample Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	Sexual orientation	Religiosity	Occupation	Years at club
Richard	35	Mixed race	Exc. straight	Atheist	Fireman	20
Edward	49	Asian	Exc. straight	Muslim	-	20
Pete	19	British Asian	Exc. straight	Muslim	IT tech	6
Lewis	25	White British	Exc. straight	Atheist	Operations	4
Luke	43	White British	Exc. straight	Atheist	IT consultant	4
John	26	White British	Exc. straight	Atheist	Retail	15
Declan	37	White British	Exc. straight	Atheist	Civil servant	4
George	39	White British	Exc. straight	Atheist	Engineer	5
Robert	19	White British	Exc. straight	Agnostic	Student	4
Trevor	30	White British	Exc. straight	Atheist	Electrician	6
Spencer	28	White British	Exc. straight	Atheist	Management	8
Mason	21	White British	Exc. straight	Agnostic	Student	3

ⁱ Because matters are far more complex for transgender individuals, we eschew from using ‘LGBT’ in this article.

ⁱⁱ While not statistically the most popular, it is generally accepted by scholars that, due to its ‘supposed national character of the English people and the behaviour of those who play the sport’ (Malcolm, 2013: 32), cricket is England’s national sport.

ⁱⁱⁱ Although these were amended in 1774 – when reference to leg-before-wicket (LBW), middle stump and maximum bat width were first included – cricket’s original codification is generally regarded as being 1744.

^{iv} Stonewall are widely regarded as the UK’s largest and most influential LGBT organization.

^v Noakes and Durandt (2000) explain that, in comparison to contact team sports (such as football and rugby) – whose structure involves ongoing, often end-to-end movement – cricket is relatively mild as it involves long periods of being static.

^{vi} This was accurate at the point of data collection (which was complete by the summer of 2017).