## Munroe-Chandler et al (2008)

Previous qualitative research conducted by Munroe-Chandler et al (2007) demonstrated that young athletes of 7– 14 years reported using imagery and that developmental differences existed. More specifically, athletes of from all age cohorts reported using imagery for both cognitive and motivational purposes.

More specially Callow, Hardy, and Hall (2001) examined the effects of Motivational General-Mastery (MG-M) imagery on the confidence of elite adult badminton players. The results showed that a 20- week imagery intervention improved the sport confidence for two of the players and stabilised the sport confidence of the third player.

MG-M imagery involves visualising yourself successfully overcoming challenges and achieving mastery in a specific sport or activity. It is about imagining yourself coping under pressure and maintaining a positive focus during difficult situations. This type of imagery is used to build confidence, enhance control, and maintain focus.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between imagery use and confidence (self-confidence and self-efficacy) in soccer (football) players aged 11-14 years competing at both the recreational and competitive levels.

The researchers had two hypotheses:

(i)     MG-M imagery will be a significant predictor of both self-confidence and self-efficacy in young athletes (a non-directional hypothesis).

(ii)    (ii) The relationship between MG-M imagery use and self-confidence and self-efficacy will be stronger in competitive athletes than recreational athletes (because self-confidence and self-efficacy are important to success in competitive sport). (A directional hypothesis).

This study used the self-report research method to gather data in relation to young soccer players' use of imagery (using the SIQ-2C), their general self-confidence (using the CTAI-2C) and their self-efficacy in soccer (using the SEQ-S). Data was collected mid-soccer season over the course of a two week period.

A sample of young athletes was recruited from house and travel soccer leagues from south-western Ontario. It consisted of 125 participants (56 male, 69 female) all of whom were soccer athletes with ages 11–14 years. The athletes reported a mean of 6.11 years of soccer playing experience. The participants competed in both house/recreation (n = 72) and travel/competitive (n = 50) levels.

Three participants did not report their level and as such were removed from any further analysis resulting in a total sample of 122 athletes.

Imagery use was measured using the Sport Imagery Questionnaire for Children (SIQ-C). The SIQ –C is a 21-item questionnaire with statements measuring the frequency of children's imagery use. Statements were scored from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very often) and participants were asked to circle the number that most applied to that particular statement.

Confidence was measured using the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory – 2 for Children (CSAI-2C) – moderated for this study to the Competitive Trait Anxiety Inventory – 2 for Children (CTAI-2C) as the study was concerned with the athletes' trait measures of confidence. It is a 15-item questionnaire that measures somatic and cognitive anxiety as well as confidence.

Self-efficacy was measured sing the Self-efficacy Questionnaire for Soccer (SEQ-S). It is a 5-item questionnaire which asks participants to record the strength of their belief in their mental abilities (e.g. focused, in control, mentally tough) based on a 100-point scale, ranging in 10-unit intervals from 0 (No Confidence) to 100 (Complete Confidence).

Parental consent and player assent was obtained, following letters to soccer teams and coaches. The players first were asked to complete a general demographics questionnaire including their age, gender, level and number of years playing soccer. Next, the participants completed the three questionnaires in the following order; the SIQ-C to assess their frequency of imagery use, the CTAI-2C to measure their generalised confidence, and finally the SEQ-S to assess their self-efficacy in soccer. This took approximately 15 minutes.

No significant differences were found between level of play (competitive and recreational) or gender (male and females) with respect to any of the dependent variables (five imagery functions, self- confidence, or self-efficacy) or the number of years playing.

As was hypothesised, MG-M imagery proved to be a significant predictor of self-confidence and self-efficacy in young soccer players. More specifically, MG-M imagery accounted for between 40 and 57% of the variance for both self-confidence and self-efficacy with MG-A and MS only adding marginally to the prediction of self-confidence in recreational athletes.

The relationship between MG-M imagery use and self-confidence and self-efficacy was not significantly different between the two groups.

It was concluded that MG-M (Motivational General Mastery) imagery is a significant predictor of self-confidence and self-efficacy in young soccer players. If a youth athlete, regardless of competitive level, wants to increase his/her self-confidence or self-efficacy through the use of imagery, the MG-M function should be emphasised.

Encouraging young athletes to use more MG-M imagery is one very important avenue for enhancing their self-confidence and self-efficacy.