The elite soccer arena is like no other. No matter what the age of the player it's an environment which provides unique experiences for those competing at the top level of sport. Consequently, the mental ramifications of engagement in sport are commonly referred to as sources of strain. Despite an increased knowledge base surrounding sources of strain and their associated coping mechanisms, much of the present research focuses on senior athletes. The purpose of the current study was therefore to establish the sources of strain as experienced by performance school soccer players and to understand the players coping strategies for dealing with stress. A questionnaire consisting of five sections (background information, competitive stressors, organisational stressors, personal stressors and general questions) was administered to 102 participants from seven Scottish regions. All players had been in the performance school system for 6-7 months. Participants were asked on a scale of 1 (low stress) to 10 (high stress) to rate their level of stress and were asked what type of coping strategy they use deal with the stressors. Each region reported different stressors but self pressure, school and injuries were reoccurring issues. All three categories (competitive, organisational & personal) were represented as stressors. In relation to coping strategies participants evidenced a clear lack of understanding regarding what actually constituted a coping mechanism. Whilst pockets of high levels of stress existed, overall levels were low to moderate. Consequently players had a limited number of coping strategies which could buffer any increased level of stress.

S47.5
Multiple target tracking in football: visual attention at different levels of football experience
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Specialists in sport psychology often highlights the role of visual attention and visual processing in football. Effectiveness of multiple target tracking in football become a crucial component for many technical and tactical task: during the game the ability to focus attention in different objects (personal movements with the ball, actions of counterparts or goalkeeper) is strongly connected with the effectiveness of sport performance.

The aim of the present study was to identify differences in visual attention during multiple tracking objects between less and more experienced football players.

Participants: a total of male 79 football players from Russia participated in research: 21 young athletes (9-10 y.o.), 39 professional football players (19-23 y.o.), 19 non-professional football players («amateurs», 17-23 y.o.).

Method: via NeuroTracker (developed by Dr. Faubert at the “Visual Psychophysics and Perception Laboratory”) we measure athletes’ multiple object tracking ability, which requires integrating several complex mental functions directly related to visually processing and reaction. The task is to follow 4 targets in dynamic 3D scene.

Results: there was found the difference in the average speed of successful multiple target tracking: a) novice athletes were slower than professional athletes in focusing attention during multiple target-tracking task (p<0,001);
b) amateurs also have lower results than professional footballers do (p<0.01); 
c) novice athletes have lower results in focusing on dynamic targets (p<0.001).
Thus, effectiveness of visual processing and multiple target tracking in dynamic scene is strongly connected with the level of football experience.

S47.6
Grit in junior and senior professional football players
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Grit has been proposed to represent a tendency to pursue long-term, challenging goals with perseverance and passion. A related concept, self-control, has been defined as the capacity to alter one’s responses to achieve a desired outcome that otherwise would not arise naturally. Both concepts have been related to performance in several domains. Recent research has shown that self-control was associated with senior professional football players’ performance level. The current study investigated the concept of grit in professional footballers, and examined whether senior players of three professional clubs in the Norwegian Premier League (n = 55; mean age = 24.9 yrs.; SD=5.6) were grittier than their junior counterparts (n = 54; mean age = 16.9 yrs.; SD=1.1). Players completed the Grit-S, Brief Self-Control Scale, and questions related to the amount of effort they were willing to expend to reach certain short- and long-term goals. Grit in professional football players was found to be strongly related to self-control (r=.49 restraint, r=.56 impulse control). Additionally, grit scores were associated with the amount of effort players were willing to expend to win a duel within a game (r=.23), solve their task in a game (r=.22), become better at a skill they want to improve (r=.20), reach their individual goal for the season (r=.39), and reach their long-term career goal (r=.34). No significant differences were found between junior and senior footballers. Grit seems to be associated with professional players’ self-control and willingness to expend effort to reach short- and long-term performance goals in football.

10:30 - 12:00
S48 REFEREES AND SCOUTS

S48.1
Reputation of referee and opponents: is social information relevant when soccer players decide to use antisocial behaviours?
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The studies presented are part of a social cognition approach. The aim is to examine to what extent the soccer players use social information related to the reputation of the referee and the opponents to regulate their interactions, especially when they are in a defensive position, one against one. In such situations, use unsportsmanlike conduct may result in a favourable outcome. 3 studies based on hypothetical scenarios were conducted using a between subjects factorial design. Study 1