

An Integrative Framework for Bridging the Research–Practice Gap in Sports Performance Analysis

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Abstract

Sports performance analysis research has experienced rapid growth due to advances in data collection technologies and analytical methods; however, the effective use of this knowledge in applied environments remains limited. This challenge is commonly de-scribed as the research–practice gap. The aim of this paper was to examine the underlying causes of this gap, to propose practical directions for addressing it, and finally to introduce an integrative model that aligns research production, knowledge translation, and applied implementation. The analysis indicates that the research–practice gap is a multi-dimensional and systemic phenomenon, arising from the interaction of methodological limitations, communication barriers, editorial practices, and practitioner-related constraints. Current approaches often fail to capture the complexity of performance, rely on reductionist designs, and provide limited practical relevance, while findings are frequently communicated in ways that are not accessible or actionable for practitioners. In response, this paper emphasizes the need for context-sensitive and ecologically valid re-search, clearer translation of findings into actionable insights, and stronger collaboration between researchers and practitioners. Building on these principles, an integrative model is proposed, conceptualizing performance analysis as a dynamic system in which re-search production, translation, and application are continuously interconnected.

Keywords: sports science; sports analytics; science-practice gap; knowledge translation; applied implementation.

Introduction

In recent years, sports performance analysis has experienced rapid growth, driven by advances in computerized video processing systems, tracking methods, wearable sensors, virtual reality, and data analytics (Cossich et al., 2023; Ferraz et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023; Seçkin et al., 2023). Systems such as GPS, optical tracking technologies, and video-based analysis platforms now provide detailed information on players' physical outputs, spatiotemporal behavior, and technical-tactical performance during training and competition (Otero-Saborido et al., 2021; Torres-Ronda et al., 2022). As a result, elite and sub-elite environments generate vast amounts of data related to tactical patterns, running performance, positional data, and contextual match variables (Goes et al., 2021; Memmert et al., 2017; Teixeira et al., 2022). This fact has also led to an increase in the writing and publication of relevant scientific articles (Abt et al., 2022; Memmert, 2025; Plakias, 2025). However, despite this progress, the effective use of such information in applied environments that will aid decision-making remains limited (Eisenmann, 2017; Halperin, 2018; Leggat et al., 2023; Plakias et al., 2025).

This challenge is commonly characterized as the research–practice gap, referring to the disconnect between the production of scientific knowledge and its application in real-world settings by practitioners (Sabo et al., 2024). In this paper, practitioners are broadly defined as professionals directly involved in performance-related decision-making within sport environments, including coaches, performance analysts, sport scientists, medical staff, and scouts. Within sports performance analysis, this gap becomes evident when data-rich outputs fail to translate into context-sensitive decisions, such as adjusting training load, adapting tactical strategies based on opponent characteristics, or modifying in-game decisions according to match status (Bradley & Noakes, 2013; Mallonee et al., 2006). For example, while tracking systems can quantify running performance, speed zones, and physical load, the results can be inconsistent or even contradictory depending on contextual factors such as competition type (e.g., domestic vs. international), playing level (elite vs. sub-elite), or match status (Carling, 2013; Klemp et al., 2022; Paul et al., 2015). As a result, such findings may create uncertainty and confusion rather

than effectively supporting decision-making.

The persistence of this gap has important implications. Ineffective translation of performance data can lead to underutilization of available technologies, suboptimal training decisions, and missed opportunities to enhance performance and prevent injuries. The value of performance analysis does not lie in data collection, statistical analysis, and publication of academic papers. In contrast, the essence is the ability to transform data into meaningful insights that inform practice (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013; Martin et al., 2021). Without this step, even highly sophisticated monitoring systems or the publication of thousands of relevant studies risk functioning as descriptive tools rather than decision-support mechanisms.

Although previous literature has acknowledged the existence of the research–practice gap and made some suggestions to address it, these approaches are scattered, fragmented, and tend to focus on isolated aspects of the problem, such as visualization, translation and performance delivery (Bartlett & Drust, 2021; Jayal et al., 2018; Plakias et al., 2023) or take for granted that a comprehensive use of data will aid in decision-making in sports performance optimization (Mănescu, 2025). While these contributions are valuable, they do not fully capture the multidimensional nature of the gap, which involves not only researchers and practitioners, but also editorial processes, organizational structures (e.g., within sport organizations and scientific environments), and broader cultural factors shaping the production and use of knowledge. Given this complexity, there is a need for a more integrative perspective that will allow a more comprehensive understanding of how performance analysis research should be produced, interpreted and applied within real-world sporting environments.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is threefold: (i) to examine the underlying causes of the research–practice gap in sports performance analysis, (ii) to propose practical directions for bridging this gap, and (iii) to introduce an integrative model that aligns research production, knowledge translation, and applied implementation within a unified framework. By doing so, this paper seeks to provide a coherent and practically relevant foundation for enhancing the impact of sports performance analysis research in applied environments, namely the field.

Why the Research–Practice Gap Persists

The persistence of the research–practice gap in sports performance analysis cannot be explained by a single factor. Instead, it emerges from the interaction of limitations in research relevance, methodological design, communication practices, and broader systemic structures that shape both knowledge production and its use (Banks et al., 2021; Bartlett & Drust, 2021; Bishop, 2008; Eisenmann, 2017; Keegan et al., 2017; Knight et al., 2025; McLean et al., 2021; Tkachenko et al., 2017). One of the primary issues concerns the problematic communication of scientific knowledge, as researchers often use complex academic terminology (jargon), making findings difficult to interpret for coaches and practitioners (Bartlett & Drust, 2021; Eisenmann, 2017; Fullagar et al., 2019; Knight et al., 2025; Kubayi et al., 2018; Lyle, 2018; Williams & Kendall, 2007). At the same time, a significant mismatch exists in dissemination channels: while academics tend to rely on scientific journals and conferences, practitioners primarily depend on informal networks, applied workshops, and simplified formats of information such as infographics (Fullagar et al., 2019; Malone et al., 2019; Reade et al., 2008).

From a methodological perspective, the dominance of reductionist approaches and the lack of longitudinal studies hinder the understanding of the multifactorial and dynamic nature of athletic performance, often limiting analysis to descriptive indicators without adequately capturing the interactions and contextual mechanisms that underpin performance (Bishop et al., 2006; Lyle, 2018; McGarry, 2009; Nicholls et al., 2026). This issue is further reinforced in contemporary sports analytics research, where an overreliance on isolated variables and data-driven metrics without sufficient theoretical grounding may lead to superficial or even misleading interpretations of performance (Morgulev & Lebed, 2024). Furthermore, research is often

characterized by limited practical relevance, as research questions are frequently shaped by academic interests rather than the immediate needs of coaches (Bishop, 2008; Eisenmann, 2017; Fullagar et al., 2019). Although a substantial body of literature exists across physical, technical, tactical, and psychological domains, the way in which findings are produced and communicated often limits their practical usefulness. In many cases, research relies on reductionist and decontextualized approaches, providing outputs that are not easily translated into context-sensitive and actionable decisions for practitioners. In addition, the low ecological validity of many studies conducted in controlled laboratory settings limits the transferability of findings to the complex and dynamic environment of sport (Atkinson & Nevill, 2001; Bishop, 2008; Keegan et al., 2017; Kubayi et al., 2018; McLean et al., 2021). This limitation is also reflected in how performance analysis is implemented in practice. For example, qualitative research on youth soccer coaches has shown that video-based performance analysis sessions are often unstructured, reactive, and centered on isolated critical incidents rather than following a systematic and theory-driven approach (Groom et al., 2011). This indicates that even when analytical tools are available, their application may lack coherence and consistency, thereby limiting their effectiveness in supporting decision-making. Collectively, these methodological limitations do not simply reduce the applicability of research, but fundamentally constrain the type of knowledge that is produced.

Beyond methodological and contextual limitations, recent perspectives on coaching practice challenge the assumption that knowledge can be directly transferred from research to applied environments. Coaching has been conceptualized as an interactional and situational process, where meaning and decision-making are co-constructed in real time through the dynamic interplay of actors within specific contexts. This view suggests that knowledge is not simply “applied” but actively shaped within practice, further complicating linear models of research-to-practice transfer (Corsby et al., 2024).

At a systemic level, academic evaluation systems do not prioritize publication based on practical utility, thereby distancing research from application (Hassmén et al., 2016; Keegan et al., 2017; Malone et al., 2019; McLean et al., 2021). This misalignment is not merely theoretical but can also be observed in the peer-review process itself. For example, entrenched epistemological hierarchies and evaluation practices within academia may inadvertently sustain the research–practice gap by privileging certain forms of knowledge over others, even when alternative approaches (e.g. qualitative research) demonstrate clear relevance in applied settings (Leggat et al., 2023; Plakias, 2026; Plakias et al., 2025). However, the responsibility of editors, journals, and the peer-review system is not limited to this, because it is they who ultimately shape not only the types but also the quality of knowledge that are produced and disseminated (Khokhlov, 2020; Pires, 2024; Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2023). Although peer review is considered the primary mechanism for ensuring scientific quality, it is vulnerable to biases and lacks full transparency, allowing manuscripts to be evaluated based on factors unrelated to their practical relevance or scientific merit (Pires, 2024; Tvina et al., 2019). At the same time, the dominance of scientometric indicators (e.g., impact factor, citation metrics) shifts editorial priorities toward journal prestige and visibility rather than real-world applicability, reinforcing a system in which publication success is not necessarily aligned with practical usefulness (Khokhlov, 2020; Pires, 2024). This dynamic is further intensified by the “publish or perish” culture, which incentivizes the production of publishable findings over meaningful and applicable knowledge, often resulting in research with limited impact on practice (Pires, 2024; Rawat & Meena, 2014). Moreover, the reliability of published findings themselves has been questioned, as biases in study design, analysis, and reporting, along with an overemphasis on statistical significance, can reduce the likelihood that reported results are true or applicable in real-world contexts (Ioannidis, 2005; Khokhlov, 2020). Finally, increasing commercialization and workload pressures within the publishing system have been associated with declining review quality and reduced rigor in

manuscript evaluation, further affecting the type and quality of evidence that reaches practitioners (Domingo, 2024; Khokhlov, 2020). Collectively, these factors indicate that editorial and publication practices do not merely evaluate research, but systematically influence the production of knowledge in ways that may perpetuate the research–practice gap (Khokhlov, 2020; Pires, 2024; Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2023).

Finally, from a practitioner-oriented perspective, additional barriers further complicate the problem. Constraints related to time represent a major barrier for practitioners, who operate in fast-paced decision-making environments and are often unable to follow or much less apply all this volume of scientific literature produced in recent years (Ardern et al., 2019; Barry et al., 2022; Malone et al., 2019; Nicholls et al., 2026). Psychological and organizational factors, such as status quo bias, resistance to change, and lack of stakeholder acceptance, limit the adoption of evidence-informed practices (Banks et al., 2021; Barry et al., 2022; Fullagar et al., 2019; Ross et al., 2018). Finally, the prevailing culture in many sporting environments continues to frame coaching as an intuitive “art,” thereby undervaluing the role of scientific evidence (Hassmén et al., 2016; Keegan et al., 2017; Lyle, 2018; Ross et al., 2018).

Therefore, this conceptual analysis suggests that the research–practice gap cannot be attributed to a single underlying cause. Rather, it emerges from the interaction of communicative, methodological, editorial, and behavioral factors operating within complex sporting systems. As a result, understanding and addressing this gap requires a systemic perspective that acknowledges the interconnected roles of practitioners, researchers, and the broader scientific ecosystem.

How to Bridge the Research–Practice Gap: Practical Directions

From a research perspective, bridging the gap requires a stronger focus on practical relevance and clarity of communication (Bartlett & Drust, 2021; Bishop, 2008; Reade et al., 2008). Research questions should be grounded in real-world problems rather than driven solely by academic interests (Bishop, 2008; Fullagar et al., 2019; Malone et al., 2019; McLean et al., 2021). This implies a shift toward more applied study designs, greater consideration of ecological validity, and clearer reporting of practical implications (Bishop, 2008; Fullagar et al., 2019; Leggat et al., 2023; McLean et al., 2021). Importantly, researchers should move beyond purely statistical reporting and explicitly translate their findings into actionable insights, using simple language, concrete examples, and clear take-home messages (Ardern et al., 2019; Driban & Laursen, 2019; Halperin et al., 2018; Kubayi et al., 2018). For example, instead of reporting abstract metrics such as “high-speed running distance” or “player load” in isolation, these can be reframed into practical insights, such as whether a player is physically prepared to meet the demands of their role or whether training intensity should be increased or reduced in the upcoming sessions. Finally, writing style also plays a critical role; overly complex terminology and excessive methodological detail can limit accessibility, whereas concise and practice-oriented communication enhances the likelihood that findings will be understood and used (Bartlett & Drust, 2021; Esculier et al., 2018; Malone et al., 2019).

At the same time, methodological choices should better reflect the complexity of sport performance (Lyle, 2018; McLean et al., 2021; McLean et al., 2017). Performance should be approached as a complex and dynamic system, where physical, tactical, psychological, and contextual factors interact, rather than as a set of isolated variables (McLean et al., 2021; McLean et al., 2017; Plakias, 2026). This perspective calls for a more balanced integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches, reflecting a pragmatic view of performance analysis in which multiple methods are combined to address real-world coaching problems (Halperin, 2018; Nelson & Groom, 2012; Plakias, 2026; Plakias et al., 2026; Plakias et al., 2025). In particular, qualitative methods and case studies can provide essential context, helping to explain the “how” and “why” behind performance outcomes and making findings more meaningful for practitioners

(Halperin, 2018; McGarry, 2009; Mujika et al., 2025; Plakias, 2026). When combined with quantitative data, such approaches can enhance both ecological validity and interpretability, supporting a more integrated and pragmatic approach to performance analysis (Nelson & Groom, 2012; Plakias et al., 2026; Plakias et al., 2025). For example, combining positional data with qualitative video analysis can help explain not only how much a player runs, but why certain movement patterns emerge in relation to tactical instructions or match context.

In addition, researchers should improve the way results are reported and interpreted (Arderin et al., 2019; Halperin et al., 2018). Greater emphasis should be placed on the practical relevance of findings, including the use of effect sizes and the discussion of their real-world implications, rather than relying solely on statistical significance (Halperin et al., 2018; Tomczak & Tomczak, 2014). In particular, researchers could clarify whether the observed effect is large enough to meaningfully influence training decisions, because small but statistically significant effects may have limited practical value (Ferguson, 2009; Lantz, 2013; Tomczak & Tomczak, 2014). Finally, researchers should diversify the formats through which knowledge is disseminated (Bartlett & Drust, 2021; Driban & Laursen, 2019; Reade et al., 2008). Traditional journal articles, while essential, are often insufficient on their own (Fullagar et al., 2019; Malone et al., 2019). Complementary formats such as graphical abstracts and applied guidelines can make research more accessible to practitioners operating under time constraints (Heiestad et al., 2022; Malone et al., 2019; Schail  e et al., 2019).

Importantly, these changes cannot rely solely on individual researchers but also require support from journals and editorial processes. Editors and reviewers should place greater emphasis on the practical relevance, clarity of implications, and applicability of research, rather than prioritizing methodological complexity or novelty alone. Encouraging diverse methodological approaches and valuing applied contributions can facilitate the publication of research that is both scientifically robust and practically meaningful.

From a practitioner perspective, bridging the gap requires a more active engagement with scientific knowledge (Esculier et al., 2018; Grant & O'Connor, 2019; Kubayi et al., 2018). Practitioners should adopt an evidence-informed approach, where research findings are critically evaluated and integrated with professional experience and contextual understanding (Arderin et al., 2019; Fullagar et al., 2019; Grant & O'Connor, 2019; Root et al., 2022; Ross et al., 2018; Stober et al., 2006). Rather than relying exclusively on intuition or tradition, coaches and applied staff can benefit from selectively incorporating scientific insights that are relevant and feasible within their specific environments (Fullagar et al., 2019; Kubayi et al., 2018; Reade et al., 2008; Ross et al., 2018). At the same time, developing basic data literacy and critical thinking skills can improve the ability to interpret research findings and avoid misapplication or oversimplification of performance data (Arderin et al., 2019; Eisenmann, 2017; Grant & O'Connor, 2019; Kubayi et al., 2018). In this context, basic data literacy does not require advanced statistical expertise, but rather an understanding of key concepts such as effect sizes, variability, and the practical interpretation of results, enabling practitioners to distinguish between statistically significant findings and those that are meaningfully relevant for decision-making. However, expecting all practitioners to develop such competencies may not always be realistic. In many applied environments, this challenge can be addressed through the presence of specialized roles (e.g., performance analysts or sport scientists) who act as intermediaries, translating complex data into simple, actionable insights that align with the needs of coaches and other stakeholders. At the same time, the implementation of such roles may be constrained by financial and organizational limitations, particularly in sub-elite or resource-limited environments. In such cases, alternative approaches, such as part-time collaborations, external consultancy, or simplified knowledge translation tools, may offer more feasible pathways for integrating scientific support into practice.

Equally important is the development of structured collaboration between researchers and

practitioners (Bartlett & Drust, 2021; Eisenmann, 2017; Fullagar et al., 2019; Knight et al., 2025; Lyle, 2018). Effective knowledge exchange does not occur through one-way dissemination, but through continuous interaction and mutual understanding (Eisenmann, 2017; Hanson et al., 2014; Knight et al., 2025; Mohajerzad et al., 2021; Verhagen et al., 2014). Involving practitioners in the early stages of research design can ensure that studies address meaningful questions, while regular communication throughout the process can facilitate the interpretation and application of findings (Driban & Laursen, 2019; Esculier et al., 2018; Knight et al., 2025; Schailée et al., 2019; Verhagen et al., 2014). Collaborative environments, whether formal (e.g., joint projects, embedded scientists) or informal (e.g., regular discussions, feedback loops), can enhance trust, increase stakeholder commitment, and improve the overall impact of research (Banks et al., 2021; Bartlett & Drust, 2021; Driban & Laursen, 2019; Eisenmann, 2017; Fullagar et al., 2019).

Taken together, these practical directions highlight that bridging the research–practice gap is not the responsibility of a single group, but a shared process that depends on the alignment of research practices, practitioner engagement, and collaboration between them. This perspective provides the basis for the integrative model proposed in the following section.

An Integrative Model for Performance Analysis

Building on the multidimensional causes of the research–practice gap and the practical directions outlined in the previous sections, this paper proposes an integrative model for performance analysis that emphasizes alignment across research, communication, and application processes (Figure 1). Rather than viewing knowledge generation and implementation as sequential steps, the model conceptualizes them as interconnected and continuously interacting domains within a broader sporting and scientific ecosystem. This perspective aligns with previous work suggesting that performance analysis requires a more unified and multidisciplinary theoretical framework to adequately capture the complexity and emergent nature of sport performance (Glazier, 2010). Importantly, this ecosystem includes multiple practitioner roles (e.g., coaches, performance analysts, medical staff, and scouts), each with distinct responsibilities, constraints, and decision-making needs.

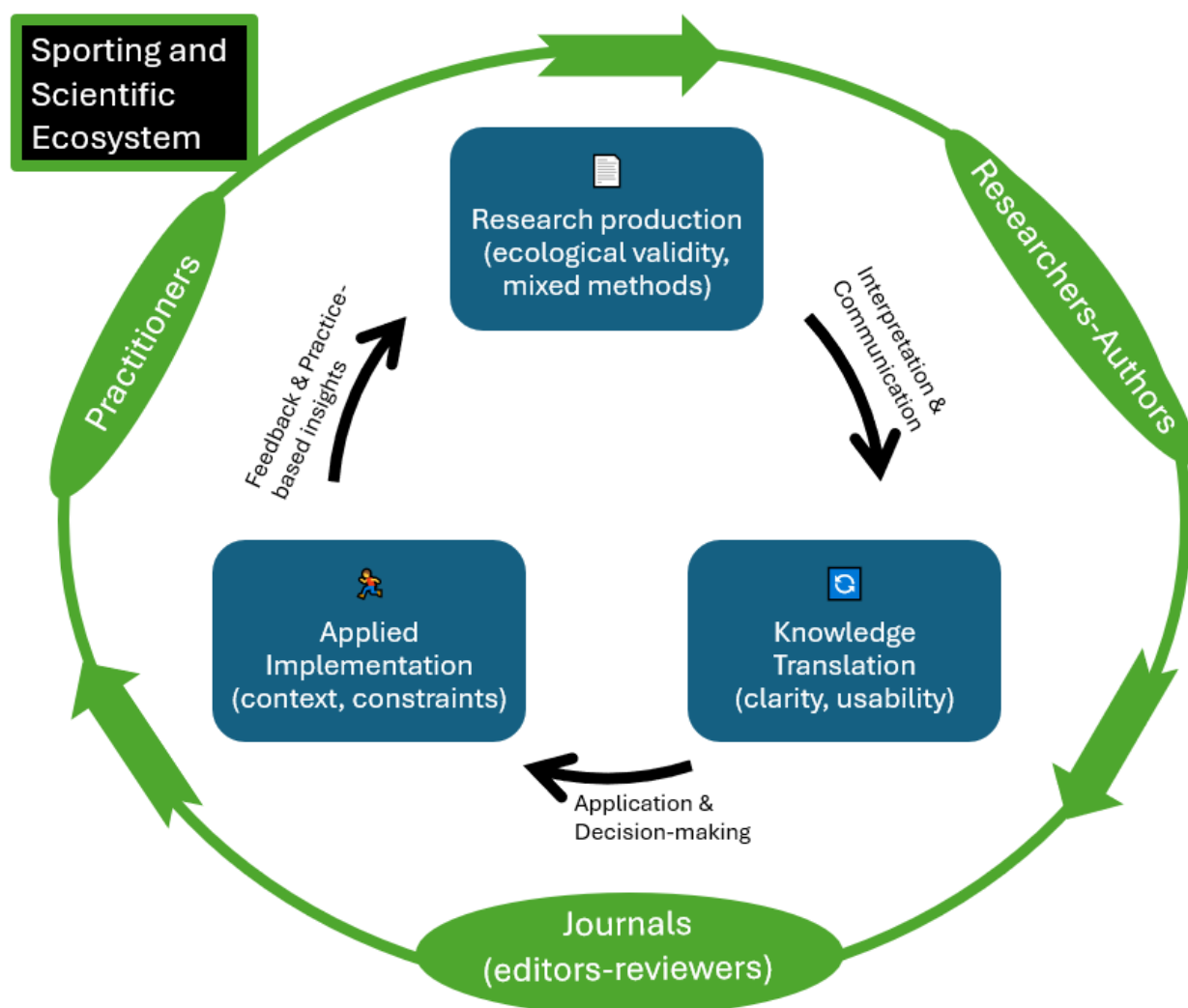


Figure 1. An integrative model for bridging the research–practice gap in sports performance analysis.

As shown in Figure 1, the model consists of three interdependent components: research production, knowledge translation, and applied implementation. Together, these components form a cyclical system in which knowledge is continuously generated, interpreted, and refined through practice. The first component, research production, refers to the design and conduct of studies that are grounded in real-world problems, incorporates ecologically valid methodologies, and acknowledge the complex and dynamic nature of sport performance. This includes the integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches, the use of context-sensitive designs, and the explicit consideration of practical relevance from the outset of the research process. To achieve this, close collaboration between researchers and practitioners is essential, alongside rigorous editorial oversight to ensure that submitted studies are not only methodologically sound but also contextually grounded and practically relevant to real-world sport settings.

The second component, knowledge translation, focuses on how research findings are communicated and transformed into usable forms. In this context, the value of data lies not only in its accuracy but in its interpretability and accessibility. Effective knowledge translation requires simplifying complex information, contextualizing findings, and presenting them in formats that align with the needs and constraints of practitioners, such as graphical abstracts, concise summaries, and actionable guidelines. Notably, this process should be iterative rather than unidirectional, incorporating continuous feedback from practitioners to refine both interpretation and communication, while also being shaped by editors and reviewers who ensure

that research outputs are clearly communicated, practically meaningful, and aligned with the needs of end users. Crucially, these processes should not assume a single, homogeneous audience, but instead account for the diversity of practitioner roles, as different stakeholders require tailored formats, levels of detail, and types of information to effectively support their specific decision-making contexts.

The third component, applied implementation, refers to the actual use of knowledge within performance environments. This involves the integration of scientific evidence with practitioner expertise and contextual factors, leading to informed decision-making in areas such as training design, performance monitoring, and tactical analysis. Successful implementation depends on factors such as feasibility, time constraints, organizational culture, and stakeholder acceptance and commitment, highlighting that even high-quality evidence may fail to have impact if these conditions are not addressed. In this context, implementation is inherently role-dependent, as the applicability, feasibility, and impact of scientific knowledge vary according to the specific responsibilities and constraints associated with different practitioner roles.

A key feature of the model is the presence of continuous feedback loops between all three components. In practice, these feedback loops can be operationalized through mechanisms such as regular performance meetings, structured post-match evaluations, iterative reporting processes, and ongoing dialogue between practitioners and researchers, enabling applied insights to systematically inform future research and analysis. Limitations in both research design and knowledge translation may limit implementation, while insights generated in practice can inform future research questions. This dynamic interaction reflects the reality of sport environments, where knowledge is constantly evolving rather than being statically transferred from research to practice. Crucially, the model is embedded within a broader sporting, editorial and organizational context that influences all stages of the process. Journals, editors, reviewers, and academic institutions play a central role in determining what types of knowledge are produced, valued, and disseminated. Taken together, this integrative framework shifts the focus from a linear “research-to-practice” pathway toward a systemic and interactive process in which knowledge is co-developed, translated, and applied within real-world contexts. In doing so, it provides a practical foundation for enhancing the impact of performance analysis in sport.

To illustrate the practical application of the proposed framework, consider a professional soccer team preparing for a congested match schedule. In this context, research production may focus on context-sensitive analysis of player load and recovery patterns. These findings are then translated into simplified reports and visual dashboards tailored to the needs of coaches and performance staff. Through regular performance meetings and feedback sessions, practitioners interpret and adapt this information to inform training adjustments and squad rotation decisions. Importantly, insights generated from these applied decisions can subsequently inform future research questions, thereby reinforcing the iterative and interconnected nature of the model. While such processes may not always occur in a structured manner, this example illustrates how the components of the model can be operationalized in applied settings.

Although several frameworks have previously attempted to address the research–practice gap in sport, they tend to focus on specific stages or dimensions of the process. For example, the applied research model by Bishop (2008) emphasizes a structured progression from problem identification to implementation, primarily guiding the research process itself. Similarly, the knowledge translation framework proposed by Bartlett and Drust (2021) focuses on enhancing the communication and delivery of scientific information. The Knowledge Transfer Scheme by Verhagen et al. (2014) provides a practical, step-based approach to translating evidence into applied tools, often combining top-down and bottom-up processes, while the Oslo model (Heiestad et al., 2022) emphasizes large-scale implementation through education, dissemination, and stakeholder engagement initiatives. More recently, data-driven frameworks, such as that

proposed by Mănescu (2025), highlight the role of integrated analytics pipelines in supporting decision-making through data acquisition, modeling, and visualization.

In contrast, the present model extends beyond these approaches by conceptualizing performance analysis as a fully interconnected system in which research production, knowledge translation, and applied implementation operate simultaneously and interactively through continuous feedback loops. Rather than focusing on a single stage (e.g., research design, communication, or implementation), the proposed framework explicitly integrates all components within a unified structure, while also incorporating the influence of editorial processes and organizational context. This systemic perspective provides a more holistic understanding of how knowledge is co-developed, interpreted, and applied in real-world sporting environments, thereby offering a more comprehensive and operational framework for bridging the research–practice gap. Nevertheless, an important limitation of the present paper should be acknowledged. The proposed framework does not emerge from a systematic review of the literature nor from a formal qualitative investigation using established methodologies such as grounded theory. Instead, it is based on a conceptual integration of existing literature and theoretical perspectives, which, while allowing for a broad and integrative synthesis, may be subject to selective interpretation.

Conclusions

This paper examined the underlying causes of the research–practice gap in sports performance analysis and proposed an integrative framework to address it. The conceptual analysis suggests that this gap is not due to a lack of data or analytical tools, but rather to limitations in how knowledge is produced, communicated, and applied in practice. As such, the research–practice gap should be understood as a systemic issue emerging from the interaction of methodological choices, communication practices, editorial processes, and practitioner-related constraints.

Bridging this gap requires coordinated action across multiple levels. From a research perspective, greater emphasis should be placed on context-sensitive and ecologically valid study designs, alongside clearer translation of findings into actionable insights. From an applied perspective, stronger collaboration between researchers and practitioners, as well as the development of role-specific knowledge translation strategies, is essential. At a systemic level, addressing the limitations imposed by the “publish or perish” culture requires a shift in academic evaluation criteria, where greater value is placed on the practical impact, applicability, and translational relevance of research, rather than predominantly on publication quantity or citation-based metrics. In this context, the proposed integrative model provides a conceptual foundation for aligning research production, knowledge translation, and applied implementation within a unified and interactive system.

Future research should prioritize (i) the development of context-sensitive performance models that integrate physical, tactical, and psychological variables, (ii) the evaluation of effective knowledge translation strategies in applied sport settings, and (iii) the investigation of collaborative and organizational frameworks that enhance interaction between researchers and practitioners. Such directions are essential for advancing the practical impact of sports performance analysis and ensuring that scientific knowledge effectively supports decision-making in applied environments.

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