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The Experience of Competition Stress and Emotions in Cricket

Rich Neil, Harry C.R. Bowles, Scott Fleming, and Sheldon Hanton

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to conduct an in-depth examination of the stress and emotion process experienced by three sub-elite-level male cricketers over a series of five competitive performances. Using reflective diaries and follow-up semistructured interviews, the findings highlighted the impact of appraisal, coping, and emotion on performance, with perceptions of control and self-confidence emerging as variables that can influence the emotive and behavioral outcomes of a stressful transaction. Postperformance, guided athlete reflection was advanced as a valuable tool in the production and application of idiographic coping behaviors that could enhance perceptions of control and self-confidence and influence stress and emotion processes.

Keywords: stressor, appraisal, coping, emotion, performance

The Experience of Competition Stress and Emotions in Cricket

Given the potentially deleterious effects of experiencing stress within competition, a large body of research has attempted to further understanding by investigating the causes and consequences of stress, and how performers attempt to cope during stressful situations (Fletcher, Hanton, & Mellalieu, 2006). A recent focus has been informed by Lazarus' transactional perspective of stress and cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotions (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Within these theories, Lazarus proposed stress to be an ongoing, dynamic process that reflects a relationship between an individual and the environment that gives rise to set of cognitive-emotional responses. Central to this proposition is the notion of relational meaning (Lazarus, 1991), where stressors are appraised with regard to the implications they have for personal goals, values, and beliefs. When stressors are considered to negatively influence these personal goals, then the individual makes one of four primary appraisals: harm, benefit, threat, or challenge. The individual may also experience secondary appraisals that focus on the options for coping, the level of control over own actions, and the potential outcomes of engaging in the situation. The way in which an individual appraises the environment can influence the emotional and behavioural response to it—thus having implications for sporting performance (Jones, Meijen, McCarthy, & Sheffield, 2009; Neil, Fletcher, Hanton, & Mellalieu, 2007).

Guided by Lazarus's perspective, an insight has been provided into the different stressors encountered by sport performers (e.g., Arnold, Fletcher, & Daniels, 2013; Fletcher, Hanton, Mellalieu, & Neil, 2012), the range of appraisals made when faced with such demands (e.g., Didymus & Fletcher, 2012; Hanton, Wagstaff, & Fletcher, 2012; Thatcher & Day, 2008), the emotional responses to appraisals (e.g., Uphill & Jones, 2007), and how athletes cope within stressful situations (e.g., Holt, 2003; Holt & Dunn, 2004; Nicholls, Holt, Polman, & Bloomfield, 2006; Nicholls & Polman, 2008). Consequently, the nature of a performer's experience of stress and emotions has been partially demonstrated. The main limitation of this research is the focus on segments of Lazarus' conceptualization, thus failing to illustrate a performer's *continuous* journey through the process of encountering and appraising stressors, responding emotionally, coping with these demands and/or emotions, and the impact on performance. Indeed, Lazarus (1999) proposed that the individual parts of an

adaptational encounter belong together as a single, conjoined conceptual unit and are separated only for the purpose of discussion. This process has been illuminated more comprehensively through interviewing performers about experiences of stress and emotions during competition. For example, Neil, Mellalieu, Hanton, and Fletcher (2011) showed that performers encounter many stressors, have different appraisals in relation to these stressors, and experience subsequent emotions that can influence sporting performance positively or negatively, depending on whether these emotions were viewed as beneficial or detrimental to performance. Likewise, Neil, Bayston, Wilson, and Hanton (2013) illustrated the impact of negative appraisals of stressors on emotions and football referee decision stressors caused negative emotions such as anxiety and anger. The inability to cope with these emotions caused amateur referees to give discriminating or incorrect decisions, whereas the use of problem-focused and positive emotion-focused coping strategies helped professional referees manage their emotions and led to perceptions of improved decision accuracy.

Despite adding some richness to the understanding of the stress and emotion process, Neil and associates have provided only snapshots of performers' experiences and have not considered how these experiences change during performance. Indeed, Lazarus (1991) noted that the study of emotion is primarily a study of change and flow over time and across occasions. Consequently, longitudinal designs and narratives are now desirable to represent accurately Lazarus' theory and offer advice for practitioners. The aim of the current study, therefore, was to provide an in-depth examination of the stress and emotion process, focusing specifically on the *process* of a transaction during performance and over a series of performances. To achieve this, we constructed the objectives of the study as follows: (a) to illustrate sequentially the stages of the stress and emotion process from onset (recognition of performance stressors) to outcome (performance); and (b) to illuminate an athlete's experiences of stress and emotion across a sequence of performances.

Method

Research Design

Because the experience of stress and emotion is ongoing and ever-changing and the experience is unique to the individual (Lazarus, 1999), a prolonged qualitative design

was deemed the most appropriate approach (Neil, Hanton, & Mellalieu, 2009). Specifically, participants used reflective journals after five competitive matches to catalog their experiences and to inform interviews aimed at gaining more in-depth information about competition stress and emotion.

Participants

Three male competitive county level (semiprofessional) cricketers between 17 and 22 years of age ($M = 20.5$ years, $SD = 2.38$) were recruited to take part in the study. All three participants were known by the researchers and were asked to partake in the study. This purposive sampling technique was used to provide “information-rich” cases (Patton, 2002); cricket was chosen because it is an interactive, open-skilled sport in which stressful situations occur frequently (Holt, 2003; Thelwell, Weston, & Greenlees, 2007).

Measures

Reflective journal. A reflective journal was created according to the stages of a stressful transaction posited by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Specifically, the participants were instructed to respond to the following four open ended questions after each match: “Tell me about your performance” “What demands (stressors) did you face during your performance?” “What did you think (appraisal) and feel (cognitive-emotional responses) when you experienced these demands?” and “What impact (behavioral) did these thoughts and feelings have on your performance?” Following the method of Nicholls et al. (2006), we included an appendix in the diaries that provided thought-provoking examples in response to the four questions. This appendix formed part of a structured education approach and made clear its purpose as a prompt for the process of reflection rather than a model answer.

Interview guide. The information disclosed in the reflective journals informed a tailored interview guide that sought elaboration and explanation for the description in the diary (Holt & Dunn, 2004). For example, one diary extract read: “One of the biggest demands was probably the quality of the bowling.” The participant was subsequently probed: “Why did you view the quality of the opposition’s bowling as a demand?” The interview guide followed the participants’ season chronologically, and the stages of the stress-emotion process sequentially, but remained sufficiently open to allow the participants to express themselves in relation to their own experiences (Patton, 2002).

Procedure

After ethical approval was granted by the University's Ethics Committee through devolved responsibility to departmental level, the participants were contacted via e-mail after permission had been received from their respective cricket clubs to contact them. After a verbal discussion about the purpose and specific details of the study—in which the participants had the opportunity to ask questions relating to the research topic and data-collection procedures—each participant provided informed consent and was allocated the reflective journal and appendices in time for the start of the cricket season in 2011. The participants were asked to submit one diary entry per calendar month but were given the freedom to reflect on any match they wished. However, they were instructed to engage with their journals within 24 hr after a specific performance to minimize the effects of memory decay and to enhance the accuracy of their reflections. All participants reported that they adhered to this timeline.

The participants reflected on five separate performances across the course of one cricket season. This corresponded to one diary entry per calendar month of a cricket season that ran from April to August. The spacing (i.e., one diary entry per calendar month) was aimed at encouraging participants to reflect on changing contextual influences (e.g., form) on their experiences of competition stress across time; the participants agreed that this was less intrusive than the biweekly schedule originally proposed. On average, diary entries were submitted within 26 days of each other. These diary entries were then used to inform bespoke one-to-one interviews at the end of the season. A week prior, the participants were presented with their tailored interview preparation guide and a summary of their individual diary entries. The purpose of this was to give the participants adequate time to familiarize themselves with the questions and to provide them with ample opportunity to recall the experiences they reported over the course of the season (Thatcher & Day, 2008). The interviews were divided into two sessions (lasting in excess of 2 hr per session) and were audio recorded and undertaken in agreed venues away from the competitive environment, to minimize interference with the interview process and participant responses (Mellalieu, Neil, Hanton, & Fletcher, 2009). The interviews resulted in a total of 584 pages of text (103,042 words).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed via analytic induction, whereby the researcher applies theory-derived concepts and theoretical frameworks alongside inductive procedures that strive for “undiscovered patterns and emergent understandings” (Patton, 2002, p. 454). Throughout the season, the participants’ diaries were collated into individual player profiles via the extraction of relevant quotations under six sequentially ordered themes—demands, appraisals, emotions, coping, behaviors, and performance—that were the core components of the stress and emotion process. This was followed by a written interpretation that summarized each performance, helping the research team to get close to the data and begin to understand each participant’s competitive experiences (Patton, 2002). General themes, gaps in the data, and areas requiring further clarification were noted and used in the development of tailored interview guides. The interview data were subjected to a continual analytical process in that (a) all data were transcribed verbatim, (b) repeated line-by-line analysis took place to identify key aspects of the stress and emotion process, and, (c) responses were placed on a theoretical “timeline” to establish the sequence of events for the purpose of retelling each stressful transaction. Collectively, this analytical process reflects what Smith and Sparkes (2009) refer to as a “story analysis” (p. 282) whereby data are extrapolated and formally analyzed alongside theoretical propositions, before the “story” is (re)represented in the form of a realist tale.

Verification and trustworthiness. Kvale (2007) argued that to achieve trustworthy findings, researchers should initiate a continual process of checking, questioning, and theoretical interpretation that permeates the investigation. This relates to the notion of reflexivity that denotes an ongoing examination of “what I know” and “how I know it” (Patton, 2002). To aid “trustworthiness,” the authors reflected repeatedly in an unstructured, reflective log on salient aspects of the research process that contributed to conceptual understanding and data interpretation. This included personal experiences of stress and emotions, reflections on the interview process, and conceptual and theoretical uncertainties during the analysis of data.

The authors’ interpretations of diary extracts and the interview transcript were verified through member checking, an essential procedure that allows “the objects to object” (Kvale, 2007, p. 121). The participants were content that each narrative represented their experiences accurately and sought only reassurance that their anonymity would be protected—hence the use of pseudonyms and the removal of all identifying

descriptors throughout. Furthermore, the data were subject to independent analysis by two active researchers, experienced in qualitative research and knowledgeable in the subject matter, to clarify interpretation and reduce misrepresentation (Patton, 2002). Finally, in reference to the data-collection procedures, the dual-staged approach minimized issues relating to retrospective research designs; the diaries captured specific moments in time with the purpose of providing a stimulant for accurate recall during interview.

Results

We present the data as a series of narratives. To guide the reader through experiences of stress and emotion, each stage of the process is italicized (e.g., *appraisal*, *emotion*).

Aaron the “All-rounder”

Aaron opened the bowling and batted in the middle order; the following narratives relate to his experiences playing for his club side over the course of the competitive season.

Performance 1 (batting): “In two minds.” During this performance, Aaron was confronted with two *stressors*—his opponents’ ability and the playing conditions:

The biggest demand was the quality of the bowlers. Warming up they looked useful, the quickest bowlers I have faced. The strip was also fairly green, which meant the ball was nipping around off the seam, which made batting very difficult.

He *appraised* both demands as threatening to the outcomes of his performance:

I was thinking, “He’s got quite a good chance of getting me out . . . the batting above me is of a higher standard than I am, and they got out to it, so if they got out to it, then I can get out to it easily as well.” There was also that thought that the pitch is going to do something you don’t expect. So the bowler had both the positives in his favor.

Consequently, he responded anxiously [*emotion*] to this situation describing how he became “cautious” as a result of the demands that had planted doubt in his mind:

[My] focus went away from what I was doing to what he [the bowler] was doing . . . rather than acting on instinct and dealing with the ball when it comes down, I was thinking, “Oh, what is he going to bowl me? Is he going to bowl a short one? Is he going to bowl a Yorker? Is the ball going to nip in? Should I come forward? Should I go back?” I was putting loads and loads of doubt in my mind.

Aaron's anxiety left him feeling "vulnerable" and unsure about what to expect, a state that he suggested was debilitating to his performance:

. . . it [anxiety] was negative because I was threatened, I felt vulnerable. I think the vulnerability came because I was threatened . . . you're [then] playing the shot but you're not committed to the shot, because there's that element of doubt in your head. You need to be either committed to a shot or leaving it. That half way house is not a good place to be . . . it has a negative impact [on performance]!

Aaron's performance decrement led to a new appraisal that the bowler was doing better than he was; he described *appraising* the situation as threatening as he had little control over it:

I had nothing to show the bowler that I could cope with what he was bowling, he had all guns blazing and I was the rabbit in the headlights . . . When you're in a vulnerable state you doubt yourself . . . you've no confidence in what you're doing.

He continued by describing how his perceptions of his poor batting performance during this time made him worry about how he was presenting himself in front of his teammates, "when something is out of my control I get worked up and then I feel like everyone is looking on and expecting me to do well, so the stress I was experiencing definitely increased because of the situation." Aaron attempted to *cope* by "doing something about the situation" through trying to score runs, "the only way I could cope was try to attack." His coping efforts briefly made him feel at ease, but attempts to cope and score runs failed:

I actually tried to score a run, which put my mind a little bit at ease because I was trying to [score] . . . but I wasn't scoring . . . the bowling was good, the pitch wasn't great, I hadn't scored a run, I tried to score a run, I can't cope!

The consequence of this stressful cycle was a reduction in Aaron's capacity to attend to relevant stimuli to the extent that he lost focus and got bowled out:

It took my focus away from my batting performance. There were so many external factors that actually I didn't concentrate on what the best asset was and that was me! This made me very indecisive in my shot selection, which consequently contributed to me getting out. The ball was just back of a length and I was in two minds whether to go forward or back, I did neither resulting in me being bowled out through the gate.

Performance 2 (batting): "I was in control." In this game, Aaron's team was in a bad position and he viewed it as his responsibility [*stressor*] to get them out of that

situation:

Our batting line up was thin and the team needed me to put a good performance in and score some runs . . . at 50 for 4, my team being bowled out cheaply looked quite likely and it was my responsibility to ensure that didn't happen.

He *appraised* his responsibility as a challenge, a "chance to shine," placing a positive slant on the situation, and evaluating his chances of success as high:

I saw that I could win us the game. I wanted to show [the opposition] and team mates that I was as good as when I played them and got 87 at the start of the season. That contributed to seeing responsibility positively, as a challenge. I was eager to bat.

Despite this appraisal, the initial stages of his innings proved difficult, and he described how he found it hard to score runs. He explained that the bowler became an additional *stressor* causing him to doubt his own ability, *appraising* the situation as threatening:

They brought a left-arm-over [bowler] on just as I went out to bat—I hate left-arm-overs. So that affected my confidence and I found it difficult to score. The first 20 balls, I'd scored 5 runs. I felt lots of pressure, I was reluctant to get on strike, I was worried I'd get out. I need to be scoring as many runs as I have faced balls and I wasn't anywhere near that.

The strain of the situation then brought frustration [*emotion*] that resulted in a loss of focus. He stated, "[I had] a lapse in concentration, I went to drive the ball over extra cover's head and I was nearly caught." This was as a critical moment in his performance. Rather than dwelling on his actions, he *coped* with the situation by viewing it as an opportunity to refocus:

I realized that I'd ***** up, and that brought me back down to ground and made me refocus. A little light bulb went off in my head, "Right you can't do that again, that's your chance, go and take advantage of the fact that you've made a mistake and you're still batting." So it spurred me on that "I've done something stupid but I'm still here."

During this stage of his innings, Aaron also described *coping* with the situation by initially evading the strike, "when you get to the nonstriker's end it gives you time to think, look at fielding positions and reflect on what you're doing." This respite afforded him the opportunity to reevaluate the situation. Specifically, he described using positive self-talk to maintain control over his emotions and actions. He also thought about his game plan, focusing on a strategy to deal with his circumstances.

Combined, these strategies helped him deal with and eventually overcome the stressors he faced during this phase of his innings:

We were in a bad situation and it's a positive to get off strike because I know I can't get out and I'm still here for the next over. This kept me in control. I was telling myself that runs didn't matter, that we needed to bat the overs. [I was] thinking about the game plan of how I'm going to get through the situation.

His coping efforts resulted in a perception of control. He described how his *performance* improved to a point where he felt "indestructible—I was in complete control—the bowlers had nothing on me [*benefit appraisal*]. [I felt] very happy [*emotion*]." He elaborated further:

The responsibility was always there, but when I was batting better that demand became easier because I was doing well. I'd conquered the first challenge of getting the team out of a sticky situation. From that point I thought whatever we got is a bonus. I wasn't thinking about the situation. I saw the ball, I hit it and it went for runs. I was doing really well. I was in total control. As I became more confident and scoring runs, I wasn't thinking about batting . . . [I was] going on instinct . . . showing my potential. I was timing the ball really well and playing more aggressively. Anything the bowler bowled at me I was dealing with.

Performance 5 (bowling): "Why do I bother?" Aaron perceived the importance of this game as a *stressor*. He viewed his team as better than the opposition and felt "quite positive about the situation," and this helped his *appraisal* of the match as a "challenge":

Because we'd beaten them previously, I saw it as a challenge. We were the better team. We had better players and I was confident that we would do well . . . they were bottom of the league, so the expectation was there that we would go out and win.

The match was *appraised* as "a must win," because of the threat of "looking bad" if they lost. Consequently, Aaron confessed that the situation made him feel "a little bit nervous," [*emotion*] and he sought ways of *coping*, "I made a conscious effort to warm up and concentrate on what lines I needed to bowl, so that it didn't take me 5 or 10 balls to get into my stride." This coping method had a positive impact on the way he was feeling, it "eased the nerves," "eased the pressure" and had a positive effect on his "thought processes":

[After my warm up] I was feeling pretty high . . . and I was pleased that I'd had a good warm up session, so that put me in a good state of mind. I was happy with my preparation so I was feeling quite confident and ready to go out and play.

The use of this coping strategy meant that Aaron felt that his “nerves” were under “control.” However, a teammate then dropped a catch off his bowling, which became a *stressor* for him:

I’d put so much into bowling well . . . that’s what I was hoping for and I’d done everything within my control it was just the fact that the catch went down. Trying to keep that frustration under control was quite difficult.

The *stressor* of the dropped catch coupled with the importance of the fixture resulted in an instant reaction, “as soon as the catch went down I hit the roof, I became so frustrated! It sent everything plummeting in my mindset . . . my head dropped and I became really angry.” He described how he perceived that he had done everything he could to create a wicket taking opportunity, *appraising* the situation as harmful as “somebody had let me down”:

It’s annoying [*emotion*], you’re bowling really, really well, and something that is out of your control has affected you . . . the fact that there was no outcome from it, there was no success, it’s sort of like, “Why do I bother?”

Aaron considered that his only *coping options* to reduce his frustration were to “bowl better, get the wicket, try harder.” However, this strategy only managed to make him evaluate that he couldn’t cope, “I wasn’t succeeding . . . I had gone so far down the downward spiral of frustration that I couldn’t cope . . . so the frustration and feeling of being irate just continued.” He then described getting increasingly “stressed” as he battled to control his growing frustration and anger between each delivery:

My mind was going off at different tangents, the dropped catch [*stressor*], I’m bowling well, I’m not bowling well [*appraisal*], I’m frustrated [*emotion*], I’m bowling wide after wide [*behavior*], the batsman is getting on top [*appraisal*], the situation of the game [*stressor*], the intensity of my thoughts and feelings . . . I wasn’t actually thinking about bowling, where I was going to land the ball. The batsman was really good off his front foot, but I was still bowling really full [*behavior*]. I was running up and getting to my mark feeling negative. Then I got hit for 4 [*stressor*], and then I bowled a wide [*behavior*]. I never took a step out to calm myself down or think about the situation and talk to myself about what I needed to do or talk to somebody else, get their thoughts on the situation . . . I just failed to cope.

Aaron’s season overview. Throughout the season Aaron attributed “form” as the key contributing factor to how he appraised his ability to cope with stressors:

The responsibility and demand of winning and overcoming my emotions was always there. When I was performing well I thought about it less, but when I wasn't performing [as well] that's what I was concentrating on. At the start of the season I was dealing with the demands because I was performing well, but during the middle and end of the season I wasn't performing well as I wasn't coping with the demands.

Aaron suggested that the "anxiety" experienced increased because he was not in "control" of his emotions because he was no longer "performing well" and was unable to cope with the demands he faced. He also described how the "frustration" he experienced while performing increased in line with a progressive decrease in his "enjoyment" and "motivation":

The enjoyment was there at the start, but as soon as I didn't perform well I enjoyed it less. I became disappointed and when I'm not enjoying it, it's a chore to go out and bat. I'd gone through a stage where I got three or four ducks in a row and I thought "Why am I bothering? I'm not coping, I can't bat, I may as well give up!"

Importantly, through a process of experiential learning Aaron was able to recognize his needs during this period and implemented an appropriate and effective method of coping:

The frustration got to a point where I needed to do something about it. That's when I thought, "I can bat but I might need to work on it" . . . I made a conscious effort to try and warm up, try to practice in the nets more often and even played games on a Sunday that were of an easier standard to get back into the rhythm. So the way of coping was trying to improve my game and try to deal with the main demand of lack of form and technique . . . the practice did have a positive impact as my form increased and I started to enjoy my cricket. I was becoming confident again.

Brendan the Bowler

Brendan is the youngest and least experienced of the three cricketers. He is a "leg break" (spin) bowler and the following narratives portray his experiences bowling for his club side's 1st XI in league fixtures over the course of the competitive season.

Performance 1: "It got a bit overwhelming." During this game Brendan perceived his opponent as being the main *stressor*, "My biggest challenge was their number 4 batsman that kept coming down the track and hitting me over the top . . . he was a good batsman and I wasn't bowling well." Consequently, he had low expectations of success, "I knew I couldn't get him out." In addition, he felt he "had to back up the person who was bowling at the other end" and "had not been bowling well all

season” [*stressors*]. These demands contributed to a threat *appraisal* that he was incapable of dealing with the qualities of the batsman, which caused him to feel “anxious” [*emotion*] and overwhelmed by the situation:

It got a bit overwhelming . . . as soon as it’s not going [well] for me I have a tendency just to—not to give up but just to pass the buck . . . If I’m not going to do it then someone else can because I just wasn’t good enough at the time.

Brendan described how he then began to question his bowling action and strategy, which proved detrimental to his performance:

Usually when I bowl I don’t think about what I’m doing, I just do it. When I think about what I’m doing, it impacts how I’m doing it. Bowling bad balls make me doubt myself and look at what I’m doing wrong and as I do that my concentration goes.

He conceded that he “couldn’t get the wickets” that he was “there for.” He therefore asked his captain to end his bowling spell. This *avoidance coping behaviour* provided immediate “relief” from the stressful situation. However, avoiding the situation failed to help restore confidence, so he resigned himself to likely failure in his second bowling spell, “having no confidence after my first spell impacted my second spell. I knew that if I couldn’t do it in my first spell then why would I do it in my second?” In addition to the prospect of bowling again and the *stressors* related to the opposition’s batsman, he perceived people were now “expecting” him to perform, increasing his anxiety [*emotion*]:

I was more anxious because I knew people were expecting me to perform. I was tense in my shoulders and my wrist. I was nervous. My feet weren’t going where they were supposed to, which meant doubts about what I was going to do with that delivery. When I get tense in my arms and wrists I can’t put the ball where I want. That makes me doubt myself more. It made the batsman more of a threat because he knew he was on top of me. I thought, “I can’t put the ball where I want, how am I going to get him out?” This anxiety made the demand even more of a threat to my performance.

During his second spell, Brendan alluded to how he could remember only the bad balls and how this was having a negative impact on his performance: “If I’m thinking about what I’m doing then it impacts on my performance. So thoughts of the bad deliveries were still there even when I was bowling so that made me bowl an even worse ball.” He attempted to *cope* by “kidding” himself that he could perform better, “I kept telling myself that I had the ability to put it [the ball] where I wanted and

to back myself.” This strategy proved ineffective, as he was still “thinking about the bad balls” and did not believe he could perform well:

I knew deep down that I was bowling so badly that whatever I told myself wasn't going to impact on what I was doing. I doubted myself too much. I knew that it was all going to go wrong, because it's happened before in other games. I've egged myself up, but it hasn't worked, so what was going to make this game any different?

As a result of the anxiety experienced and the lack of confidence, his bowling *performances* continued to be perceived as poor:

Every time I came up to bowl I had no confidence in my action so the end result was either a full toss or a long hop. Then I lost confidence altogether, and I started to question my action and where I'm meant to be bowling. It's a vicious circle, if I bowl a bad ball I lose confidence and think about what I'm doing, and when I think about what I'm doing I bowl another bad ball. If I know that someone is on top of me and I'm anxious, then I'm thinking about what I'm doing and it all just goes to pot.

Critical to Brendan's performance outcomes were the levels of his self-confidence. When he is confident this appraisals and emotions differ and help benefit his performance. In addition, he referred to the importance of previous bowling performances that help him “relate” to the situation and provide him with confidence that he lacked during this game:

[A past good performance] would have given me more confidence because I could relate to it and say, “It's the same sort of batsman I got out before, so this is what I'm going to do again.” But because I couldn't relate it to anything I couldn't find a way of getting him out. If I'm confident it shows in my performance, I'd bowl more variations like a wrong'un, or a top spinner, or a slider. I don't get stressed, I get reared up. If the batsman takes me on, I get reared up and say to myself, “Ok I'm going to get him out.” It's more of a challenge, not a threat like in this particular game!

Performance 2: “It was all in my head.” During this performance Brendan was confronted with numerous *stressors* that stemmed from the competitive environment and his experiences in his last performance (i.e., Performance 1). Consequently, he perceived the task of bowling as a demand describing it as something he just “didn't want to do.” Added to this was a perception that he was physically tired from his performance earlier in the day with the bat and the conditions the match was being played in. In his diary, he *appraised* the prospect of bowling as a “chore” and a

“threat,” which resulted in a lack of “enthusiasm,” the feeling of anxiety [*emotion*], and an unwillingness to confront the task at hand [*behavior*]:

It was really hot that day, I was batting and I got really hot, so that was another factor why I didn't want to bowl because I was physically fatigued, but also mentally fatigued from knowledge of my previous performance. So I didn't want to go over everything—I didn't want to go through the emotions of being let down by myself that I went through in previous games and the stress of letting the team down again.

At the same time, Brendan had the *stressor* of preserving his identity as a good player. He described not wanting to “embarrass” himself “again” in front of his teammates and “look like a fool” by not “living up to the standards that people came to expect” from him. He became preoccupied with people's “perceptions” of him, which channeled his focus away from trying to do well. He concluded that, “if I didn't bowl at all then maybe people would still have good perceptions of me as a bowler.” Consequently, he confessed in his diary that that he *appraised* “no threat from the batsman,” suggesting that “it was all in my head,” explaining “a knowledge of how poorly I'd performed in the games before affected how I felt at that moment in time”—a continuation of the stressful transaction that preceded this performance. Waiting to bowl he described himself as someone who was “defeated”:

My mind was telling me if you do this [bowl] you're going to do as worse as you did in other games. So I was telling myself, “Ok, you've been told you're bowling and you can't!” I stood there waiting to bowl, thinking, “What am I doing? This is going to go bad! Why put myself through it again? Why is my captain making me do it?”

This whole experience resulted in the demand of bowling being *appraised* as an excessive demand that overpowered his resources to cope:

The demand was too overwhelming for me when I was bowling so I felt that I didn't want to bowl. This was more than a demand, it was something that I couldn't do, an impossible demand... knowing that I can't compete, I can't do what I'm supposed to, I felt that there's no point in me doing anything. I'm not going to have any impact on the game. I'd be letting the team down and that is the worst feeling.

Consequently, he responded angrily, describing feeling “pissed off” and “annoyed” as a result of his *harm appraisal* that everything was “going against him,” he “couldn't do any better” and perform as well as he “should.” His *emotions* built up as his performance continued, “I had another over, which made me even more

angry.” He described that he felt “at no time comfortable” with his bowling, “I wasn’t trusting my action or where my feet were landing.” This was detrimental to his performance. He felt impelled to remove himself [*avoidance coping*] from the situation:

The emotion, everything got to me and I just got to a point where I said “I can’t do it anymore. It’s not working for me. It’s not going to impact the game for us so why should I be bowling?” So the pressure of bowling, the anger, and all the questions of why I should be bowling just built up to a point where I just said, “I can’t do it.”

Performance 3: “I just bowled.” Similar to previous performances, Brendan described that “the biggest demand was the quality of the batsman,” who was *appraised* as threatening because of his ability to “hit me around the park.” This appraisal was influenced by low confidence—a result of previous poor bowling performances that season:

He was a good batsman . . . I felt I’d have to work really hard to get him out and I felt that maybe I wasn’t even good enough to get him out given my past performances. So he was a threat to my way of bowling in that I couldn’t beat him, I couldn’t be better than him . . . I knew that he would probably affect me before I affected him.

Concurrent with this appraisal was his evaluation of the playing conditions and the match situation. He described that the conditions for bowling were “nigh on perfect . . . the wicket was turning and the weather was good,” which he remarked as suiting his type of bowling. Further, and perhaps most importantly, he *appraised* very little pressure from the competitive situation, which acted to reduce his perception of what was at stake:

I knew we weren’t going to win if we were honest with ourselves, so there was no pressure on me really to take wickets . . . I’m bowling because I’m there in the team . . . it’s what I do . . . I knew it wouldn’t change the impact on the game.

Despite the fact Brendan perceived his opponent as a “threat” throughout his performance, the value placed on the situation, and therefore the requirement for Brendan to perform well, appears to have overpowered and compensated for the relational meaning construed to the environmental stressor. The demand of the opponent became irrelevant in as much as it was never perceived by Brendan to stretch his resources to cope, and therefore have the potential to evoke negative cognitive-emotional reactions. When asked to explain why he didn’t feel the need to cope, Brendan replied, “there was no pressure on me . . . I didn’t feel the need to

have a coping strategy.” Consequently, a positive relaxed feeling state was described:

[The conditions and match situation] made me relax in what I was doing. I didn't have to think about what I was going to do, how I was going to get him out . . . I just bowled . . . I was relaxed in my mind in that I wasn't thinking about anything, but I didn't have any pressure in my body either—no tension . . . I was in a frame of mind that I knew that whatever I did I couldn't affect the outcome of the game so that made me relaxed in that I didn't have to perform, and because I didn't have to perform I didn't have to think about what I was doing. And because I didn't have to think about what I was doing, I just bowled better.

He explained how he “felt really good coming in [to bowl]” because he was not “bothered about the outcome.” He described how he was free of all “worry” in relation to how his actions were going to impact on peoples “opinion” and “perceptions” of him. As a result, he described, “[I had] no problems with how I was feeling . . . so it had no [effect] on what I was doing.” This process led Brendan to have some control over his performance during this time, “when I bowl well I don't think about it and I can just feel it coming out nicely,” thus facilitating his performance. He stated in his diary, “I had a pretty good rhythm. I did well just landing the ball on a good length making sure the batsman played, and I eventually got this batsman out.”

Brendan's season overview. Before each game, appraisals related to opposition and previous performances influenced Brendan's emotions throughout the season: It [appraisal] was varied . . . if playing [opposition] I'd automatically think, “****”, they're a good team so I have to raise my performance even more.” So the stress I'd get depended on what team we were playing and what happened the week before. He also experienced the reoccurring emotion of anger that was coherent with a steady decrease in his “enthusiasm to bowl,” “confidence with the ball,” and “faith in ability.” Underscoring this anger was his struggle to identify the root of his fluctuating performances: In one game I took seven wickets. The following week I did poorly and I don't know why. I have control on where I put that ball, so how is it one week I can do it well and the next I can't? I got angry about not having control over that throughout the season. Linked to Brendan's inability to identify the cause of his fluctuating performances was his lack of variety in coping during competition. He described how his method of coping remained the same throughout the season:

I've always had that coping strategy of telling myself that I was better than everyone. That's always been there throughout the season. I either told myself I as better than them or I found a way of getting out of the situation, which was

telling myself to give up. I wouldn't say I didn't know any other way . . . it just comes down to the fact that I don't know why I bowl well in some games and don't bowl well in the next game. If I knew why then I would be able to devise a coping strategy to help.

Being unable to pinpoint the reason why he “performed well one game and poorly the next” led to a suggested “rolling process” of demanding circumstances, failures to cope, negative emotions, variable performances, and a perception that he “no longer wanted to bowl.”

Carl the Captain

Carl competes in minor county (U25's) representative cricket. He is a top-order batsman who was also captain of the 1st XI. The following portrays his experiences as batsman and captain in league and cup competitions over the course of a competitive season.

Performance 1: “I wasn't ready.” During this game, Carl experienced a number of *stressors* leading up to his batting performance. First, he described the fixture as a “bottom of the table clash against a team we backed ourselves against” that placed an expectation that he and his team had to perform well. This match was also his first game back as captain and he had “lost the toss and faced the demand of changing my idealized game plan”:

They won the toss and put us in to bat. I didn't feel confident as we hadn't been batting well all season. We weren't prepared for it. I felt I needed to force a good score to get us a decent total. This affected my mind-set when I went out to bat.

An additional *stressor* was his change in batting position, which he described as “much harder” and completely different” to his usual position at the top of the batting order, and a role he hadn't yet “adapted” to. Consequently, he *appraised* these stressors as threatening toward the outcomes of his performance. Accompanying this appraisal was a negative *emotional response* that he experienced immediately before the start of his innings:

We'd lost a wicket straight away. We wanted a solid grounding, so I was disappointed in the way the opening batsman got out. I thought, “Why did you do that?” It's annoying! I was really nervous and apprehensive. I couldn't act how I wanted to act and I wasn't thinking clearly. I felt uncomfortable and timid when I went out to bat.

Consequently, Carl described how he became “anxious,” which affected his performance:

Anxiety when I’m performing is normally detrimental, affecting my thought processes and ability to perform at my normal level. It’s debilitating as I lose control of my ability to do things I know I can do. I don’t think straight, in a logical way.

He then recounted how this experience of anxiety caused him to “scuff” his first delivery, an easy half volley that could have got him nicely off the mark:

I didn’t feel myself out there. I didn’t feel relaxed enough to just stroke the ball. When I’m anxious I try and hit the ball too hard and too early, I don’t let my natural timing come through. You’ve really got to wait for the ball. But I was anxious and wanted to hit the ball early, and then I missed it and thought, “God I can’t believe I missed out on that” and it just got worse and worse.

He reported in his diary how a few balls later he got struck on the leg pad, a “painful blow on the knee” from another delivery he perceived he “should” have hit [*stressor*]. However, instead of backing away and composing himself for the next ball, he depicted how a clouded mind led to an error of “judgment” resulting in his innings coming to a premature end:

I got out the next ball after I got hit on the knee. When facing up to the next ball I had it in my head that I wasn’t ready. I was anxious, not thinking properly to say, “Right just back away here.” Everything we discussed reduced my confidence in my actions, I wasn’t confident in my footwork, I wasn’t confident enough to say, “I’m not ready to face this ball.” I wasn’t in the right frame of mind to just step back and take my time and recover. I was letting the opposition control me. It comes back to feeling nervous before the game, as physically I didn’t feel on top of my game. I felt restricted and didn’t move my feet, didn’t watch the ball properly, didn’t time anything . . . I ended up not making a decision, letting the ball go and then I was bowled . . . and that was it!

He then portrayed how his cognitive-emotional reactions affected his capacity to “think straight,” identify with his needs, and subsequently cope with the stressful situation:

I didn’t know what I was trying to cope with. I knew I wasn’t quite myself but I didn’t try and rectify that. I didn’t try and take a bit of time out to just sort myself out. It never occurred to me to try and change or cope with what I was feeling. I was stressed and not in the frame of mind to say “All right, let’s get out of it.”

Performance 2: “Getting bogged down.” Carl went out to bat faced with the *stressor* of having to “continue the good work” of the opening batsmen by maintaining the high scoring rate they had set at the start of the innings.

He *appraised* the situation as a threat as he did not want to not “waste” the good start his team had made in the game. He described how, to cope, he spoke to himself about his game plan, repeating to himself that he must be “patient,” allow his “timing to come,” and not be “reckless” with his actions. He expanded:

I didn't want to go out there and try and smash it. I didn't want to give my wicket away to a big shot or put it up in the air or anything like that. So even though I was anxious [*emotion*], that was what was in my mind—patience . . . because it was a good enough pitch where I thought if I stayed in I could have got runs.

As a result, Carl described entering the playing area in a “relaxed” state, not worrying about maintaining the good start. However, as wickets fell and “more overs went by,” the pressure and responsibility developed as he became more “desperate” to start scoring “freely”:

Frustration [*emotion*] was building up, especially when I actually got one out of the middle of the bat and it just hits the fielder . . . I was getting frustrated because the team's run rate was going down and we'd lost another wicket at the other end [*harm appraisal*]. The new batsman that then came in doesn't like running, doesn't score quickly, so that put extra pressure on me to make the scoreboard tick over . . . It just felt like I was always on strike but not really rotating the strike or scoring freely.

The more he got “bogged down” the more preoccupied he became with his “frustration”—“frustration was the main overriding sensation” that he was “consciously feeling” during that period of time. Consequently, Carl depicted how his *emotional response* started to translate into his “batting technique” [*behavior*] as he began to think that he “needed to change something” [*coping*]. He suggested his emotions led him to miss out on balls he'd “always” hit for four, he tried to hit the ball “too hard” and played in a manner that was not “natural” to him.

The frustration led him to lose sight of his game plan and the calming “be patient self-talk” coping strategy he used earlier in the innings:

I was weak and decided to change my game plan, trying to hit balls I wouldn't normally try and hit for four. My patience ran out after a certain amount of time. When you're scoring slowly, if you're not scoring when you want to be scoring or at least perceive you should be scoring then it [my plan] goes out of the window.

Entwined in his growing frustration were feelings of “anxiety” that were attached to his threatening *appraisal* that he would not be living up to the “level” of performance that he and others “expect.” He began to question his ability, technique,

and why he could no longer score as “freely as I used to,” suggesting his anxiety had a detrimental effect on performance:

It [anxiety] is like any kind of mental negative issue you have in your head when you’re playing cricket. It comes out and it affects the way you play. It’s not letting you be as free, it’s not letting you play your natural game, it affects your physical actions.

Once again, Carl’s cognitive-emotional responses inhibited his capacity to identify his needs and cope with the situation effectively. He allowed the situation to “build up,” rather than being proactive in his attempts to manage the situation. Carl’s growing frustration and anxiety led him to believe that he must “score quickly” and “find” form, and by doing so, “hopefully” cope. He attributed this *maladaptive coping style* as the reason for his dismissal:

I didn’t actually think how I was going to find my form; I was just hoping it was going to come back. I just thought my luck would turn. You know the old saying, where you get a bad ball and you’ll hit it for four and everything will change. That’s what I was hoping would happen. That’s why I got out! I wasn’t concentrating on the ball!

Performance 5: “Everything was coming naturally.”

During this game, Carl faced an opposition’s bowler who he described was bowling with “good pace and swing” and whose “tail was really up” [*stressor*]. He *appraised* this bowler as a “challenge” and one he “liked to face” early on in his innings because of the confidence he drew from successes against bowlers of a similar “caliber.” Carl wrote, “I felt confident when reaching the crease as this was the type of bowler I was scoring lots of runs against during the season. I get excited [*emotion*] facing good bowlers and I normally have reasonable success.” He then described how the “challenge” of facing a talented bowler helped him focus to better his performance:

I was used to facing bowlers like this so I knew I could keep him out and I knew it was a pretty good way to start my innings . . . I was more at home; I immediately recognized what he was going to bowl [away swing], and the pace he was bowling. In those challenges I want to come out on top. So that helped focus the mind.

Carl described how he felt in his “comfort zone,” which was reinforced by the “good start” he made to his innings. He wrote how the first ball he faced was “the best ball of the day, a huge away swinging Yorker that I managed to dig out.” Commenting on the significance of this moment in context to the rest of his performance, Carl described how surviving this delivery instantly elevated his levels

of confidence, reinforcing that he was capable of performing successfully. Further, his actions led to the *appraisal* that he was in control of his performance, which contributed to a “relaxed” feeling state beneficial for his batting:

Just keeping that ball out, I knew something was going to go right today. On most days you'd get bowled by that ball . . . If I keep out the good ball early on I know my eye is in, I know that even if they bowl the best ball at me it's not going to get me out, I know I'm going to score runs . . . It relaxed me quite a lot; I was confident and didn't need to force anything. That opening encounter got me in a frame of mind that helped me focus in on what I needed to do. I also thought, “If that can't get me out then there's something right today, it's going to be a good day.” It definitely helped my batting. That whole feeling of being relaxed is when I play my best cricket.

Despite overcoming this initial demand, Carl still faced the *stressor* of achieving his main goal of constructing an innings that would contribute significantly to his team's position in the game. He described in his diary how he perceived himself to be in the “correct mind-set” for a “big innings” generated by the process of appraisal described above and through the application of a “game plan” [*coping*] that assisted him in retaining his focus on “achievable goals.” Abiding by his “game plan” that helped him keep “everything in control,” he felt no “stress or strain,” which he suggested gave him the “opportunity to score freely” and “find” his “natural form” [*performance*]. In addition, he alluded to being free of all debilitating thoughts about “the weight of captaincy” and “the weight of underperformance by myself, or by my team or by the situation.” He also stated, “I didn't feel like anyone was going to get me out.” Consequently, he remained in a “relaxed” state throughout his performance:

My game plan helped me keep in control, helped me realize what the end goal was. My performance is driven from my thoughts and emotions. If I'm too emotional then you see it in my shots. You see it if I'm stressed, because I'm not playing my natural game. So keeping that kind of emotion at bay is why I performed well in this game.

Carl implied that, combined, his appraisals, coping, and emotions (regulated by perceptions of confidence and control), produced a perceived good performance. He wrote, “I did not give the opposition a chance throughout my innings. I scored at a brisk rate. I hit the ball as well as I have all season—finally, it felt like everything was coming naturally again.”

Carl's season overview. At the start of the year, the novelty of captaincy and the stressors that accompanied such responsibilities proved to be the strongest antecedents to Carl's stressful experiences before and during competition. These

contributed to the “pressure” and “threat” he appraised he was under while performing. Furthermore, his team’s position in the league after a “bad start” to the season was a “stressful situation to come into” and take over the captaincy of the side. Consequently, thoughts about his team’s “league position” and the importance of winning games disrupted his concentration and performance:

We were at the bottom of the league and I had only captained for one game . . . that was a really stressful position to come into. Before I went in to bat, the stress I was feeling wasn’t just because of batting it was also the stress of the situation. Any demand on me early in the season, because of all the other stresses, had a great effect on me mentally. My performance was affected much more at the start of the season.

As the season progressed Carl described how his “experience of captaining more games and getting used to everything” reduced his focus on organizational stressors. He became more aware of the competition demands he encountered, developing and implementing strategies that helped him *cope*. Through experiential learning he created and applied effective “game plans” that helped improve his emotional response and performances:

It [coping] came in half way through the year. My confidence was at the lowest point ever so I thought, “How am I going to go forwards?” So, I set up a simple game plan and it worked! I was only thinking about my batting, I wasn’t thinking about the captaincy or anything. I created something that helped clear my mind and start performing again. Once I’d implemented this, the stress before and during the game was much less . . . I then started to enjoy performing again. I became a lot more relaxed . . . I was feeling like I was contributing significantly to the team doing well.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth examination of the stress and emotion process of competitive cricketers at specific moments in time and across performances. Informed by Lazarus’ (1991, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) transactional perspective of stress and cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotions, diaries and in-depth interviews facilitated findings that support the notion that athletes progress through an adaptational process where appraisals of encountered stressors elicit emotional responses that, if not managed effectively, can be detrimental to performance. Consistent with Lazarus’ perspective, appraisals were shown to be at the “heart” of the stress and emotion process (Lazarus, 1999, p. 61) and fundamental to understanding the manner in which athletes respond to competitive demands (Holt & Dunn, 2004; Thatcher & Day, 2008). In addition, the

findings illustrated that individuals' progress through a continuous cycle of appraisal that is closely attached to their personal values, beliefs, and commitment to achieving personal goals (Lazarus, 1999; Uphill & Jones, 2007). Indeed, the data revealed that these cricketers' appraisals were linked to their perception of goal attainment that, if seen as endangered, led to a situation being appraised as threatening (Holt, 2003; Holt & Dunn 2004), and resulting in emotional and behavioral responses capable of disrupting performance.

Key to the goal-attainment appraisals reported by these cricketers was their knowledge of past performances. The confidence gained, or lost, from previous performances was shown to influence their goal attainment appraisals and the subsequent emotional and behavioral responses. Self-confidence has been demonstrated to protect athletes from the detrimental effects of anxiety symptoms (see Hanton, Mellalieu, & Hall, 2004). Focusing on Lazarus's notion of relational meaning, it is therefore possible that self-confidence also aids performers earlier in the stress-emotion process, by inducing greater perceptions of goal attainment and positively influencing primary appraisals. Consequently, improving the performers' belief that they can achieve their goals and helping them focus on the positive challenges or/and benefits from reaching their personal targets.

The findings also indicated that the amount of control an athlete is capable of exerting over their emotions might influence the relationship between the experienced emotions and performance (Jones, 2003). By definition, emotions are associated with cognitive, biological reactions and impulses to act (Lazarus, 1991, 2000). Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that it was the amount of control the cricketers possessed over their action tendencies associated with experienced emotions that proved most pivotal in respect to their performance. For example, Carl gave a clear indication of how frustration during performance changed the way he "naturally" played by urging him to "snatch" at scoring opportunities, which affected his timing and debilitated his performance. This supports the sentiments made by Lazarus (1991, 2000), who highlighted that the motivational properties of emotion compel individuals to act in certain ways during an adaptation encounter, which in this case was acting erratically when feeling frustrated. In contrast, Aaron highlighted the use of self-talk and a game plan to keep self-control when feeling frustrated, strategies that were perceived to benefit performance and that have previously been demonstrated as effective in facilitating cricketbatting performance (i.e., Miles & Neil,

2013). Coping strategies such as positive self-talk (emotion-focused) and the development and application of a predetermined game plan (problem-focused) also helped the cricketers when experiencing other emotions, such as anxiety. The use of such coping strategies supports findings from previous research (e.g., Thelwell et al., 2007) and further demonstrates their potential performance benefits when individuals are experiencing stress. Again, the terms “confident” and “controlled” were associated with the effective use of such strategies when negative emotions were felt.

The identified coping strategies were not always evident from the start of the season, however, but developed through reflection during the season. Specifically, the cricketers managed to identify with their down turn in “form,” and formulated and implemented methods of coping that helped them reestablish their confidence, maintain their focus, and facilitate performance. It is, therefore, plausible to infer from these cricketers’ narratives the potential benefits of self-reflection on regulating emotions and enhancing performance—a strategy well documented to have such effects within the sporting literature (see e.g., Hanton, Cropley, & Lee, 2009; Jones, 2003; Neil, Cropley, Wilson, & Faull, 2013).

From an applied perspective, the findings point to a number of strategies to help cricketers cope during performance. For example, during stressful situations, such strategies as self-talk, game-plan development, and distraction techniques seemed to help the performers maintain self-control and improve perceptions of control over the situation. Consequently, the development of such cognitive-behavioral strategies are advocated for performers who may be struggling to manage their cognitive-emotional responses to stressors within the competitive environment (Neil, Hanton, & Mellalieu, 2013; Wagstaff, Hanton, & Fletcher, 2013). In addition, these strategies were suggested to be formed through a process of reflective learning. Reflective practice has been forwarded as a way of establishing constructive self-awareness and the development of a varied coping repertoire (Fletcher et al., 2006). Therefore, postmatch reflection and experiential learning could help cricketers become more proficient at acknowledging what they’re thinking and feeling during performance and, accordingly, why they are thinking and feeling in that way. In turn, this may help them to identify what actions to take to improve or maintain performance during a stressful event (Neil, Cropley, et al., 2013; Wagstaff et al., 2013). For example, through guided reflection, sport psychologists could help

athletes become more understanding of their stress experiences, the stressors they encounter, their negative appraisals, the accompanying emotions and the consequences this process had on their performance (Jones, 2003). Once achieved, practitioners can then work with the performer to construct more process-oriented, context-specific methods of coping that set about a facilitative course of change.

Despite providing a novel contribution to the extant stress and emotion literature, it is important to identify this study's limitations for future research to address. Although this study did demonstrate changes in demands, appraisals, emotions, and behaviors within and across performances, the current method may have lacked the sensitivity to pick up on many important factors contributing to the Cricketers' stressful experiences in competition. Consequently, more innovative methods of recording and discussing performances could provide more detail into the experiences of sport performers. One possible approach is through recording performance and, aided by this medium, conducting self-confrontational interviews outside of the competition environment. Selfconfrontational interviewing has been used successfully in previous research (see Miles & Neil, 2013; Sève, Ria, Poizat, Saury, & Durand, 2007) and could be used to provide a more detailed insight into the experience of competition stress and emotion within performance.

In conclusion, this study has provided detail of the experiences of competition stress and emotion of cricket performers. Expanding on previous research, the study adopted a holistic approach that focused on the unfolding of these experiences through time. In doing so, the research has illustrated the dynamic relationship between performers and the competitive environment that influences performance through the cognitive-emotional responses such relationships generate.

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