

**CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

**Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd**

**CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT**

**DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)**

**SPORTS DEVELOPMENT**

**TITLE: 'A QUALITITAVE STUDY OF STRESSORS  
IN WELSH WOMEN'S CRICKET'**

**(Dissertation submitted under the discipline of  
psychology)**

**NAME: FFION CARTWRIGHT**

**UNIVERSITY NUMBER: ST10001521**



NAME: FFION CARTWRIGHT

STUDENT NUMBER: ST10001521

CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF STRESSORS IN WELSH  
WOMEN'S CRICKET

**Cardiff School of Sport**  
**DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT PROFORMA:**  
 Empirical <sup>1</sup>

<b>Student name:</b>	<input type="text" value="Ffion Cartwright"/>	<b>Student ID:</b>	<input type="text" value="ST10001521"/>
<b>Programme:</b>	<input type="text" value="SD"/>		

<b>Dissertation title:</b>	<input type="text" value="A qualitative study of stressors in Welsh Women's Cricket"/>
<b>Supervisor:</b>	<input type="text" value="Lynne Evans"/>

Comments	Section
	<p><b>Title and Abstract</b></p> <p>Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem.</p> <p>Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken.</p>
	<p><b>Introduction and literature review</b></p> <p>To include: outline of context (theoretical/conceptual/applied) for the question; analysis of findings of previous related research including gaps in the literature and relevant contributions; logical flow to, and clear presentation of the research problem/ question; an indication of any research expectations, (i.e., hypotheses if applicable).</p>
	<p><b>Methods and Research Design</b></p> <p>To include: details of the research design and justification for the methods applied; participant details; comprehensive replicable protocol.</p>
	<p><b>Results and Analysis <sup>2</sup></b></p> <p>To include: description and justification of data treatment/ data analysis procedures; appropriate presentation of analysed data within text and in tables or figures; description of critical findings.</p>

	<p><b>Discussion and Conclusions</b> <sup>2</sup></p> <p>To include: collation of information and ideas and evaluation of those ideas relative to the extant literature/concept/theory and research question/problem; adoption of a personal position on the study by linking and combining different elements of the data reported; discussion of the real-life impact of your research findings for coaches and/or practitioners (i.e. practical implications); discussion of the limitations and a critical reflection of the approach/process adopted; and indication of potential improvements and future developments building on the study; and a conclusion which summarises the relationship between the research question and the major findings.</p>
	<p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p>To include: academic writing style; depth, scope and accuracy of referencing in the text and final reference list; clarity in organisation, formatting and visual presentation</p>

# Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

## **Certificate of student**

By submitting this document, I certify that the whole of this work is the result of my individual effort, that all quotations from books and journals have been acknowledged, and that the word count given below is a true and accurate record of the words contained (omitting contents pages, acknowledgements, indices, tables, figures, plates, reference list and appendices).

Word count: 7,570

Date: 19/03/13

## **Certificate of Dissertation Supervisor responsible**

I am satisfied that this work is the result of the student's own effort.

I have received a dissertation verification file from this student

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Notes:**

The University owns the right to reprint all or part of this document.

DECLARATION

CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....i

ABSTRACT.....ii

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION.....p.1

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....p. 4

Introduction..... p. 5

2.1: Competitive stress.....p. 6

2.2: Organisational stress.....p. 7

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY.....p .13

3.1: Introduction.....p.14

3.2: Participants.....p. 14

3.3: Interviews.....p. 14

3.4: Procedure.....p.15

3.5: Data Analysis.....p. 16

3.6: Trustworthiness.....p. 16

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS .....p. 17

4.1: Competitive stressors.....p. 18

4.2: Organisational stressors.....p. 20

## CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION.....p. 24

5.1: Goals and expectations.....p. 25

5.2: Roles.....p. 26

5.3: Team alterations.....p. 26

5.4: Travel.....p. 27

5.5: Finance.....p. 27

## CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION.....p. 28

6.1: Summary.....p. 29

6.2: Strengths and limitations.....p. 29

6.3: Practical implications.....p. 29

6.4: Future research.....p. 30

## CHAPTER 7

REFERENCE LIST.....p. 31

## Appendices

Appendix A: Interview guide.....	A1- A5
Appendix B: Table of results - competitive stressors.....	B1-B4
Appendix C: Table of results - organisational stressors.....	C1-C5

## Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank the participants that took part within the study, without them this would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Lynne Evans who has provided knowledge and guidance throughout. Also an additional thank you to my parents who have supported me continuously throughout my time at university.

## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively evaluate stressors experienced in Women's Cricket. Eight elite female Welsh cricketers were interviewed about the demands they face and their effects on performance. Two groups of stressors emerged from the data, competitive and organisational. Seven competitive stressors were identified: preparation, representing team and opposition, roles, mental and physical state, goals, atmosphere and personal performance. Eight organisational stressors were identified: team selection, team alterations, training facilities, location, travel, accommodation, finances and pitch condition. The most frequently cited themes within competition stressors were roles and goals, with all eight athletes stating a demand relating to them both. The highest cited themes for organisational stressors were team alterations, travel and finances. The results indicated a negative effect on performance for the most frequently cited themes: lack of concentration, decreased focus levels, pressure in order to live up to roles/expectations and frustration, with all participants expressing a decrease in performance levels due to these factors. The study highlighted more organisational demands in comparison to competitive demands. However, competitive stressors proved to have greater impact on performance levels. The observations identify all the demands faced by female cricketers and should be considered when preparing and taking part in a match environment. This knowledge will help for interventions to be developed in order to overcome these stressors.

**CHAPTER ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION**

## 1.0: Introduction

Over recent years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of understanding the demands associated with achieving optimal performance in sport. Stressors within a sporting environment can often be linked with negative performance (Gould *et al.*, 1993; Scalan *et al.*, 1991). Therefore it is not surprising that a number of studies have explored stressors within the sporting environment (Gould *et al.*, 1993; Hanton *et al.*, 2005; Mellalieu *et al.*, 2009). The findings that have emerged from this research suggest that stressors can originate from both competitive and organisational processes both having a potentially devastating effect on performance (Neil *et al.*, 2007).

Competitive stressors that have been highlighted consist of: Preparation in the build-up to a game with participants identifying the feeling of 'inadequate preparation' being the catalyst of the stressor. Injury in respect to hinder performance for athletes, also expectations in reference to goals set by the coach may be perceived as unreachable causing a demand for participants, rivalry between teams proves to place a demand as the competitive edge can have a negative effect on athletes performance and finally roles within the team in respect to athletes living up to their perceived roles within the team set up. In terms of organisational stressors: team selection, facilities and location of these, travel arrangements, finance and accommodation have been the most cited stressors within previous research (Fletcher and Hanton 2003; Hanton, Fletcher and Coughlan 2005). Hanton *et al.* (2005) explains how organisational stressors have been, to some extent, ignored. Previous research (Jones 1995; Woodman and Hardy 2001a) has failed to include within their studies a wider range of stressors which could relate to negative impact on performance during competition.

The purpose of the present study was to add to the existing research by exploring the demands women cricketers face and what impact this can have on performance. A qualitative approach was adopted by means of semi structured interviews with the aim to identify forms of stressors within women's cricket and what affect these had on athletes' performance. In order to comply with previous research, participants were asked equally about competitive and organisational

stressors. The data was analysed in relation to both stressor categories with numerous themes emerging for each. A discussion will be included reflecting on previous research combined with the results from this current study. A conclusion will bring to a close the findings this study has produced along with limitations and strengths of this present study.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

## 2.0: Literature Review

The present chapter will provide a review of previous literature on the stressors experienced within elite sport. It is presented into three sections. The first will provide key definitions which will be important throughout the study. The second will explore previous research relating to competitive stressors within sport and the third, the organisational stressors that elite athletes experience whilst performing. The review will conclude with the purpose of the study.

Within sport psychology, after some four decades, the study of stress continues to maintain a position of inner significance (Gould & Krane. 1992). The term 'stress' can be defined as "a demand which is placed upon the individual" (Hardy *et al.*, 1996, p. 141). The demands that are placed upon athletes during performance are frequently referred to as stressors. Fletcher *et al.* (2006) further explains how stress is a continuous procedure whereby individuals react with their environment, making judgements about certain situations and how they choose to cope with the conditions. Stressors are conditions that cause strains to the athlete which include anxiety, depression and exhaustion (Jex, 1998). This statement therefore suggests that stressors are the catalyst of the stress process for an individual. When dealing with means of stressors, it is essential that all causes are accounted for that come with the performer. Both Lazarus (1991) and Lazarus and Folkman, (1984) developed psychological stress theory which views stress as a relationship, or transaction, between individuals and their environment. This definition itself links with the conventional idea that stress originates from some external demand that exceeds one's coping resources. This might help to better explain how factors within this stress process, such as demands, cognitions, stimulus, a person's response, or the result of an interaction between the person and the environment might make an impact. They suggest that stress derives from the relationship between both environmental/organisational factors and the competitive surroundings of the athlete. (Lazarus. 1966). A framework was developed explaining the stress process in which an individual appraises the stressors they encounter, causing an emotional and behavioural response. This then brings out emotions within the athlete that are experienced due to this transaction and can be caused by different appraisals of a variety of stressors, and

depending on whether the individual perceives the stressor, and the consequences, as a threat, could have direct affect on their behaviour.

Woodman and Hardy (2001) argued that studies investigating elite athlete stress, which provided insight into their stress experiences, have failed to examine the origins of the athletes' stressors. If later research could find ways in which to explore the catalyst of stressors, athletes would benefit from this as it would allow them to overcome certain barriers related to their psychological performance and allow them to fully concentrate and focus on the game in hand. Lepine *et al.* (2005) relates stressors with the levels of effort spent on coping with a demand and the probability of success with meeting the demand. They further explain the relationship between success in achieving the demand and obtaining the outcomes are also in association. Hanton *et al.* (2005) recommended that a more in-depth and broader perceptive of the stressors that inhabit elite sport would allow psychologists, coaches and organizations to devise more appropriate interventions in order to manage the demands placed upon the athletes. (p.1131)

Early studies have proved that there is a link between stressors and negative performance. Scanlan *et al.* (1991) explored stressors within figure skating and results indicated that the demands effected athlete's performance. The stressors produced were: negative aspects of competition, negative significant-other relationships, demands or costs of skating, personal struggles, and traumatic experiences.

### 2.1: Competitive stress

Competitive stress can be defined as "an ongoing transaction between an individual and the environmental demands associated primarily and directly with competitive performance" (Mellalieu *et al.*, 2009). Stressors that may be associated with competition could be the team's opposition or level of the match. Qualitative research conducted by Gould *et al.* (1993) and Hanton *et al.* (2005) suggested that stressors experienced by elite athletes included the physical preparation of the athlete; level of the opposition, pressures and expectations to perform; team atmosphere; relationship issues with significant others; nature of the event; and issues regarding self-presentation and social evaluation (Hanton and Mellalieu, 2006, p.4). Previous research carried out by Gould *et al.* (1993)

focused on stressors of performers and the coping strategies that they undergo. They identified stressors such as the level of the opposing team, nature of the event and team atmosphere which were seen to be highly influential towards the performance of the athlete.

Competition stress would be totally personal to the certain performer. Hanton *et al.* (2008) suggested performers experience a variety of stressors whilst taking part within a competition. However, it is down to the athletes themselves as to how they deal with the onset of stressors as many have diverse action tendencies.

Mellalieu *et al.* (2009) examined competition stressors experienced by elite and non-elite athletes among a range of sports and found that non-elite athletes suffered from a similar amount of competitive stressors when compared to elite athletes. 283 distinct stressors were identified during the data analysis. Higher order themes were categorised into five performance stressors dimensions: preparation, injury, expectation, self-presentation and rivalry. The data analysis discovered that elite performers encountered a similar number of competition performance stressors. The framework produced also revealed that when leading up to competition, performers encounter demands directly related to the game ahead. Hanton (2005) produced similar results with the higher order themes including preparation, injury, pressure, opponents, self, event, and superstitions with the most common being preparation. The studies mentioned previously all show common trends in regards to data collection.

## 2.2: Organisational stress

Organisational stress has been defined as “an ongoing transaction between an individual and the environmental demands associated primarily and directly with the organisation within which he or she is operating” (Fletcher and Hanton, 2003, p.176). A sporting organisation can be described as “a social entity involved in the sport industry; it is goal directed, with a consciously structured activity system and a relatively identifiable boundary.” (Slack, 1997, p.5). Fletcher *et al.* (2006) collectively found that the term stress had been broadly defined in psychology literature as a stimulus provoked by the environment which leads to an effect on the athlete. He proposed a framework in order to overcome organisational stress.

This procedure involves in depth testing and is formulated through interventions upon the performer on a theory to practice basis. By using this method he was able to study the athletes over a long period of time whilst continuously assessing the implementation of their intervention plans. Therefore any improvement would become apparent.

The organisational environment can place high demands upon athletes. Fletcher *et al.* (2006) explains how it has become apparent that some organizations and clubs are not aware that their own athletes have such psychological issues due to their own framework on how some aspects of the club are run. Woodman and Hardy (2001) suggest that in order to improve and develop the organisations understanding that stress has on their performers, the 'non-athletes' should also be methodically investigated. These would include coaches, managers and other staff related to the organisation. By undertaking this process, researchers would be able to analyse and evaluate any underlying problems within the organization that could lead to stress being passed on to the athletes. Through their research upon elite athletes it became evident that organisational issues included: team selection, training environment and finances. Participants stated that team selection was a cause of stress as the process was completed too close to their competition and was a long process. The training environment was deemed as a source of stress as the participants were unused to training with each other and found it hard to adjust to different training drills/coaches. Lack of finances was another common source of stress found within the study. Athletes stated that their income was often not adequate in order to cover sporting costs so would then have to rely on family or sponsors.

Hanton (2005) suggested that athletes found the organisational side of the sport to have more stressors than competitive performance. Performers identified similar competitive stressors and differed when relating to organisational stressors. A total of 93 stressors were recorded during this study which were abstracted into 23 higher order themes before finally being broken down into five categories: performance issues, environmental issues, personal issues, leadership issues and team issues. The study revealed that there were almost four times more organisational stressors than competitive stressors. Environmental issues for organisational stressors included: team selection, finances training environment,

accommodation, travel, competition environment and safety. Personal issues were also a trend for organisational stressors which included: nutrition, injury, goals and expectations. A further organisational issue that arose was leadership including the coaches and their coaching styles which the participants deemed as a stressor. The final organisational factors were team issues including the team atmosphere, support networks, roles within the team and communication.

Fletcher and Hanton (2003) extended their research and investigated organisational stress within elite sports. They identified a gap in previous research (Jones, 1995) stating that research was mainly focused upon competitive stressors as opposed to environmental or organizational. Neil *et al.* (2007) explains how it is pertinent to consider both competition and organisational factors when exploring stressors relating to performance. However they agree with Woodman and Hardy (2001) and their definition of organisational stress as being how an individual copes with demands from the structure and frameworks contained within the organisation (Woodman and Hardy, 2001). The findings suggested that sporting organisations which support elite athletes need to take full consideration of the environment in which they perform. They are not fully aware of the underlying issues involved within the organisation that could have a negative effect on their athletes. They found a range of stressors that were linked to elite athletes such as goals, expectations, team atmosphere and communication and concluded that enough evidence had been researched in order for a framework to be developed highlighting the organisational barriers that elite athletes face.

Mellalieu *et al.* (2009) tested elite and non-elite athletes and reported the highest themed organisational stressors to be: roles within the organisation, factors intrinsic to the sport, sport relationships and inter-personal demands, athletic career and performance development issues and organisational structure and climate of the sport. These results were common for both elite and non-elite performers. Another related study, Fletcher *et al.* (2011), showed similar findings. 261 stressor related themes emerged from the data collections which were then subsequently abstracted into 54 lower order themes, then 22 higher order themes before finally categorising them into five sections: factors intrinsic to sport psychology, roles within the organisation, sport relationships and interpersonal

demands, career and performance development issues, and organisational structure and climate of the profession. Of the 12 participants that were interviewed 51% of these demands fell under intrinsic factors related to sport psychology. A further 19% to career and performance development issues, 16% related to organisational structure with the remaining 14% split evenly between roles in the sport organisation, sport relationships and interpersonal demands. A more recent study by Fletcher *et al.* (2011) showed the most common organisational stressors to be produced were; unfair selection criteria, monotonous training sessions, differences of opinion with the coach, lack of financial support within the structure, prolonged travelling time and coaches putting pressure on athletes. This study included 10 athletes, five male, five female and concluded that more research should be undertaken examining cognitive appraisals of the organisational stressors that athletes encounter.

Much research has been undertaken into competitive stressors. Frameworks and structures have been developed in order that an athlete suffering with high stress levels may follow and hopefully overcome their issues. Hanton *et al.* (2005) discovered that athletes identified more organisational stressors compared to competitive stressors when taking part at elite level in sport. After thorough analysis of participants, it also became apparent that athletes identified similar competitive stressors but different organisational stressors. He continued by stating that these differences within organisational stressors were due to them being extraneous and broadly spread across the sporting association, compared to competitive stressors which were all relevant to elite competition sports.

Fletcher and Hanton (2003) suggested that there is need to research where the demand originates from within a performer. Also, as certain roles within a team sport may have different stressors, Thelwell *et al.* (2006) explains how this should be taken into consideration when conducting studies. Certain roles within a team require different psychological roles. He completed a study using nine elite batsmen exploring their sources of stress and coping strategies. The stressors that emerged were: personal issues, match specific issues and external factors (e.g. opponents, views of others).

It is important, when conducting a study such as this, to establish what the participant's roles are as different positions will require different demands. For example, an opening batter in cricket. It is their responsibility to score a positive number of runs, their psychological stressors may differ from a lower order batsman/woman entering the crease. This should be considered when interviewing and ensuring that the relevant questions are asked.

Within text from Mellalieu *et al.* (2009) a critique was stated regarding research produced by Jones, (1995) and Woodman and Hardy (2001) suggesting that when examining stressors on athletes relating to competitive sport, the authors did not take into consideration other factors that could be affecting the athlete. A greater depth of knowledge would have been needed regarding the athlete in order to gain a full understanding of all potential factors which could be causing stressors. Mellalieu *et al.* (2009) continues critiquing work by Neil *et al.* (2007) and Fletcher *et al.* (2006) illustrating that their research was undertaken on athletes across their entire sporting lives. This shows a weak protocol as stressors that may have been identified could have occurred in the performer at a very young age and they may have changed their perceptions more recently. By having the participants recall more recent stressors and within a specific time frame would allow the study to be more relevant and reliable. Also by building rationale would increase the studies data by having that greater depth of knowledge of the participants.

A limitation highlighted within Hanton (2005) research was how vague the data was regarding the participants sporting career as it was based around their entire sporting experiences. In order for the study to become further reliable and legitimate, research could have taken place on the day of a match to give clearer emotion specific factors with the main focus being on pre-performance therefore producing more reliable, recent statistics. In relation to this current study, a cricket game can last up to seven hours. By not recording results for the entire game could reflect a weak protocol as player's emotions and feelings could continuously change and affect the various results recorded. Hardy *et al.* (1996) supports this and states that a longer measurement of time for testing would be more appropriate.

Consequently it is pertinent to consider competition stressors that originate from both performance and organisational-related sources (Neil *et al.*, 2007) as there may be differences in the cognitive processes underpinning the responses to these demands, which may, therefore, require contrasting interventions. Also, by having background knowledge of the athlete, such as family issues, it would allow the researcher to understand any underlying issues linked with the performer which could also psychologically hinder performance.

Overall the main findings produced from the previous studies have concluded various forms of competition stressors within elite athletes. The most common of these stressors being; opposing team, nature of the event, team atmosphere, injury, roles within the team and the team's expectations. All of the previous studies mentioned are comparable in respect to producing similar sets of results. With regards to organisational stressors the main themes seen in previous studies produced were team selection, training environment, travel and finances.

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**METHODOLOGY**

## 3.0: Methodology

### 3.1: Introduction

The overall purpose of this current study was to explore stressors experienced within women's cricket. A qualitative approach was employed in order to achieve these aims by the use of semi-structured interviews. Qualitative approaches are particularly effective in order to retrieve greater insight into the participants' thoughts about the chosen topic. Patton (1990) explains how it allows in depth knowledge to be gained about the performer and their feelings as they are allowed to openly express their thoughts to the researcher. The researcher can then expand on questions if they wish to draw more out of the participant therefore producing reliable data.

### 3.2: Participants

A purposeful sample of eight female Welsh cricketers participated within the study. Purposeful sampling enables the selection of information rich cases that are suited to addressing the research question (Patton, 2002). In the present study two criteria were employed to select participants a) they had to be members of the Welsh Senior Cricket Squad b) they represented a range of roles within the team. The cricketers were current members of the Welsh Senior Women's cricket team who play within the England Cricket Board Division 2. They range between age 18-27 (M= 21.375 SD = 3.12). Roles played by the cricketers were opening bowlers (3) opening batters (2) and all-rounders' (3). All participants agreed to take part within the study and signed a consent form before the interview took place.

### 3.3: Interviews

In order to meet the needs of the study a qualitative approach was used in the form of semi structured interviews. The interview guide was conducted using an interview guide that was developed based on an extensive review of the relevant research literature (Fletcher and Hanton, 2003; Hanton *et al.*, 2005; Woodman and Hardy, 2001; Mellalieu *et al.*, 2009) The interviews consisted of open-ended

questions and probes which attempt to entice in-depth responses about experiences and feelings to the related subject (Patton, 2002). Open ended questions help with the flow of the interview and allow for opportunities to elicit a more detailed and in-depth response from the participant (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Participants were asked the same questions, in the same way, an approach that enhances the trustworthiness of the data. Heiman (1999) suggested when conducting interviews that the researcher has background knowledge about the chosen subject. Probes were used to enhance the depth and meaningfulness of responses (Patton, 2002). For example: *“What way does it not work out? Can you give me an example?”* The guide was split into two parts, competition stressors and organisation stressors. The first section was based in line with results from Mellalieu *et al.* (2009) who explored competition stressors within a competitive environment. For example: *“Explain if your role in the team places any demand on you.”* A number of authors were used in relation to organisational stressors section of the interview guide (e.g. Hanton *et al.*, 2005; Fletcher *et al.*, 2011) who studied organisational stressors within elite sports. For example: *“Explain if the process of team selection places any demand on you.”*

#### 3.4: Procedure

The researcher approached the Senior Women’s coach and was granted permission to carry out the interviews with the eight players who all agreed to take part in the study. Prior to the interviews all participants were advised of the purpose of the study and given an information sheet. All participants provided written informed consent prior to interviews being conducted. All eight participants were purposely selected as to ensure that there was a range of roles within the study. They understood that withdrawal from the study could be made at any time and that all information collected was anonymous. The participants were all asked the same questions in a quiet and relaxed environment and lasted between 20 to 30 minutes. A Dictaphone was used to record the interviews which were then accurately transcribed.

### 3.5: Data analysis

Data analysis refers to searching for common themes of what participants have identified (Patton, 1990). The transcribed interviews were analysed, coded and categorised in relation to competitive and organisation stressors. Common cited stressors were highlighted and further categorized into smaller themes. These emergent themes were recorded and addressed in the results and discussion section.

### 3.6: Trustworthiness

The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative research is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.290). Lincoln and Guba (1985) go on to suggest that there are four main fields which require attention within qualitative data: Credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. The present study evaluates the data collected and interprets this to meet the criteria of the research question, also allowing the findings to apply with other studies relating to stressors. All of the data collected has been transcribed and analysed accurately supporting the quality of the information presented.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **RESULTS**

## 4.0: Results

The overall objective for this study was to identify stressors within women's cricket. A number of themes emerged from the data in relation to stressors experienced before and during performance and the effects these have on the participants' performance. The different themes were categorized into competitive stressors and organizational stressors.

### 4.1: Competitive stressors

Overall a total of seven themes emerged from the data: Preparation, level of play and opposition, roles within the team, mental and physical state, goals and expectations, team atmosphere and personal performance.

Preparation when leading up to a game was identified by five participants who all highlighted the importance of it as a stressor. For example, participant 3 suggested: *"I worry if I've done enough training and preparation... The night before I'm especially nervous and apprehensive."* Participants explained that if they don't feel the correct preparation has been undertaken prior to a game, this is demanding for them. They personally feel unprepared for the game and stated that this can have a major effect on their performance as they feel unfocused and low on confidence. For example participant 4 suggested: *"If I didn't do anything at all then my confidence going into a game wouldn't be as high."*

The stressor 'team' was dichotomized into opposition and representation. All but one participant described stressors relating to both categories. The most frequent related to representation which was highlighted in the following quotes from participant 2 and 8 respectively: *"International match it's a lot more pressure for you to do well... Everyone expects different things from you rather than playing for your club."* and *"A lot more pressure when playing for your country... Internationals we take serious and it's always 110% we give"*.

In respect of the effect on performance, the majority of the participants indicated a decrease in confidence when playing at international level due to the high expectations associated with this level of cricket. However the majority of

participants explained how focus and concentration levels increased, represented by participant 6: *"I have to be sensible and concentrate a lot more as the stakes are higher. I could over compensate for things sometimes and let the pressure get to me and it just doesn't work out."* Also participant 8 stated: *"I'm a lot more focused, serious and up for the game, higher commitment"*

All participants stated stressors relating to this, the most frequently cited related to the demand of living up to these roles within the teams set-up and being able to cover personal responsibilities. This stressor appeared to be position specific for athletes. For opening batters their demands were very similar and were exemplified by participant 1: *"I have to live up to that role, that's why I'm there, that's my job to score runs."*

For the bowlers the specific stressors that came with this role can be understood by participant 8's sentiments: *"You have to live up to your expectations, if the pitch is a spinner's wicket then it's my job to make the ball turn and get those wickets for the team."* and *"Pressure is for me to take quick wickets.. So that can be quite stressful if you don't feel like you've done your job."*

All rounders within the team highlighted more stressors as they were referring to both aspects of the game. This was evidenced by participant 5: *"I think it places more of a demand being an all rounder as you're expected to do everything! I'm expected to hold up the batting, same for bowling the expectation is for me to take wickets."* Participant 6 similarly stated: *"As an all rounder there is obviously a lot of pressure for this role because the team sort of relies on me for both batting and fielding abilities."*

The effect of this stressor was captured by participant 8: *"Definitely pressure on me to take those wickets. Sometimes the pressure can get to me especially if I'm not bowling well. My head can drop then I tend to get frustrated with myself."*

Psychological and physical importance when entering a match situation proved demanding for the majority of participants. The most frequently cited themes within this category were inadequate preparation both physically and mentally.

Participant 8 suggested: *"If we're not physically fit I won't be able to bowl my ten overs through. I would definitely be struggling. If I go into a game thinking I'm not ready for this or we're going to lose then you already feel like you've lost the game before it's even started."*

Each participant highlighted a stressor relating to goals and expectations during the interviews. Participants emphasised how the goals - set by the coach- should be achievable, if not they lose focus. The most common stressor cited was the pressure in order to hit the targets set. Participant 8 highlighted the importance of effective goals: *“If a goal is set too high and it’s unrealistic... It would always be in the back of my mind thinking ‘they want us to do really well’.”* This was perceived to directly affect participants’ performance: *“There is more pressure for us to do well and work 100 times harder to reach the target then we could crumble and not perform well under that amount of pressure.”* (participant 6)

‘Team atmosphere’ was identified as a demand as it related to lack of teamwork while on the pitch and was a stressor for most of the participants. For example, participant 1 suggested: *“Cricket is such a team sport... If there was a bad atmosphere it would place a demand on everyone’s game. There wouldn’t be any teamwork and everyone would be working individually. I don’t think it would work at all.”* In terms of effect on team performance participant 7 suggested:

*If certain individuals heads have already gone and already feeling like we have lost the game then we’ve got no chance of getting that break through wicket and yeah, if the atmosphere is down then it will have an effect on everyone.*

The final competitive related stressor participants identified was linked to personal performance, specifically a drop in concentration when factors went wrong for the participant while in the competitive environment. Participant 3 emphasised what effect this had on personal performance: *“Sometimes I might try to over compensate for something then something else might go wrong.”*

#### 4.2: Organizational stressors

A total of 8 stressors emerged: Team selection, team alterations, training facilities, location of facilities, travel, accommodation, finances and pitch conditions. The highest cited themes to be expressed by participants were team alterations, travel and finances.

All participants identified a stressor relating to team alterations. The most frequent stressor was if a player was to withdraw from the match at short notice. The stressor can be identified through participant 1:

*“Well if they were a top end batter, I think it would place more of a demand on me to score more runs. Again even though I feel pressure when I go into bat, I think there would be a bigger demand for me to perform well as that player would have dropped out, sort of leaving me to do most of the work as that’s my role”*

Participants all stated a change in performance if this stressor was to occur. For example, participant 6 suggested: *“I would feel a lot more pressure going into the game knowing we had lost an important player... Nerves would definitely be running higher.”*

Another organisational stressor identified by participants was travel arrangements. Higher order themes consisted of players as drivers and distance travelled. Issues linked with the two proved to have a direct effect on participant’s performance which can be represented through participant 3: *“If I have to drive on away trips that’s annoying... I’m a bit more tired when we get there. The next day I’m more lethargic so take a while to get going when it comes to playing and being on the ball.”* Another theme participants identified under the category ‘travel’ was poor time management, which was perceived to have a direct impact on performance. Participant 7 explained:

*“If someone is late then it delays the whole team. It’s a lot of demand because you’re in the car a lot of the time 4-5 hours... There are times when we haven’t prepared ourselves properly like the night before the previous day which means we arrive at 11/12 at night then have to be up 6/7 in the morning to get to a ground in order to warm up so I think we’re not able to cope with the demand and are then unprepared for the game.”*

The majority of participants identified finance to be a form of stress. The most frequent stressor relating to finance was costs of training. This was evident through a quote from participant 7:

*“There isn’t much funding for women’s cricket... We have to pay to train, pay to use the facilities, yeah okay it’s only £2.50 an hour but if you’re training 10-6 then that’s £20 a day and if it’s over a weekend then that’s a lot. That includes petrol as well, travelling to the likes of Swansea, Ebbw Vale etc. It all tallies up if we’re doing it once a week.”*

Participants suggested that parental help played a vital role in order to cover the demands of the cost to play and train. However this stressor proved not to have any direct impact on players' performance.

Training facilities was the next most commonly cited theme amongst participants. The majority of participants stated that the size of the training facility was of utmost significance. The most reoccurring stressor was the limitation of space.

*"We used to train in Neath where there were only three nets available to us because the hall was so small, so we couldn't really do much in there. It was far too small so limited us to what we could actually do. Everyone used to get bored... You feel like it's a wasted session when you're just going nets constantly". (Participant 6).*

Participant 8 also suggested:

*"We weren't able to practice our over arm throwing in a training environment so was bound to have an effect when it came to playing outdoors. I think our fielding performance decreased simply because of the crap facility we had as we weren't able to practice everything we wanted."*

The pitch condition proved to be another commonly cited stressor expressed by the participants. Participants suggested this had a major impact on their performance compared to any other stressor as it would be the most influential factor as to how the team played due to pitch conditions. Participant 2 emphasized the demands this can cause:

*"If we were playing on quite an old pitch or a pitch that had been played on days previously, then obviously it would affect the game and us as a team would have to make changes within the playing patterns. Yeah if the pitch wasn't very good it would generally be a lot harder to score on make the runs and especially if the weather has been bad as well it will tear the wicket up making it a lot harder for the batters making it easier for them to injure themselves as well."*

Participant 3 added: *"The team morale can go down... Affect the team's confidence and team spirit."*

The majority of participants commented on the competition for spaces within squad which can be expressed through participant 3: *"It is competitive to get a place*

*in the side... I try to practice as much as I can outside in order to be selected.”* However, participants stated no performance related impact to this stressor.

Another theme was location. Participants explained how their main training facility is located in Neath. A commonly mentioned stressor throughout the interviews was the cost in order to reach this facility which was made apparent by participant 1: *“Llandarcy (Neath) is about an hour away. This can be demanding because of the amount of petrol I use because we don’t get subsidised for training.”*

The final organisational stressor identified by participants was accommodation. The most commonly cited stressor associated with this was time management: *“The time it takes to organise the rooms can be a pain. Especially after a hard game, or even a loss you just want to get to your rooms straight away and not have to be waiting around in the lobby for them to sort it out.”* (participant 3)

Participant 2 added: *“I suffer with a bad back so if the beds weren’t nice this would probably affect how I play the next day because I might be stiff from the night before.”*

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**DISCUSSION**

## 5.0: Discussion

This study extends on previous research that explores stressors within elite athletes and involves both competitive and organisational demands within women's' cricket and what affect this has on athletes' sporting performance.

The most prominent themes to emerge from the data across both competitive and organisational related demands were; goals and expectations, roles within the team, team alterations, travel and finances.

### 5.1: Goals and Expectations

All eight participants identified goals and expectations as a demand. Hanton *et al.* (2005) found that participants own high expectations of themselves placed demands on them, which originated from a past performance and led them to develop the mindset that they have to live up to that previous expectation. Mellalieu *et al.* (2009) took a deeper insight into goals and expectations and identified external and internal themes. External covered demands such as previous team performance, sponsorship and importance of the competition in hand. Internal covered demands such as personal technique, importance to start well and staying within the top range of the rankings. Unlike Hanton *et al.* (2005) the participants described the demand as being external. In other words the pressure was produced when the coach set unrealistic goals which the participants portrayed as unrealistic. This in turn resulted in negative performance as the athletes were already in the frame of mind that the target was unreachable so there developed the tendency to give up. Participants also emphasised the added pressure it brought to their game. This can run in correlation with the demand of the 'roles within the team'. For example, as a batter the pressure may possibly start to develop when they stop scoring runs. They may feel the target set was too high yet, as a batter, it is ideally their role to achieve this.

## 5.2: Roles

Roles within the team was one of the two most commonly cited competitive stressors within the study. Previous research on roles within sporting teams has generally focused on negative perceptions of role ambiguity, efficacy or conflict (Eys *et al.*, 2006; Eys *et al.*, 2007). The results produced diverse stressors amongst participants as their roles varied within the team. Across the three roles, all-rounder's encountered the most forms of stressors, which is perhaps not surprising given that they have to fulfil the multiple roles of batting and bowling. Thelwell *et al.* (2007) suggested that roles within the team are vital and different psychological mind sets are needed for each, a finding echoed by Mellalieu *et al.* (2009). In relation to this study, for example it is the batters responsibility to score runs. If they fail to do so the responsibility is transferred onto another player which can prove to be demanding for the athlete. Hanton *et al.* (2005) identified a different demand when dealing with roles within the team 'lack of role structure'. Within cricket it is vital that players are aware of their roles as cricket is an extremely position orientated sport. Thelwell *et al.* (2007) reinforced the importance of having an understanding of the psychological requirements of specific roles within sports.

## 5.3: Team alterations

Previous studies have not identified 'team alterations' as a demand reported by participants. This current study suggested the impact changes to the team can have through late selection processes. This also related to the two previously mentioned demands, roles and expectations. Participants explained how late withdrawal can impact on the team and force players to change their individual roles. For example if an opening bowler was to withdraw from the game, another player has to come forward and perform that role. Participants emphasised the added pressure this creates and commented on how they have to 'step up' their game in order to fulfil the role. This can also relate to the degree of expectation which is also required from the replacement in order to make up for the loss of an important player.

#### 5.4: Travel

Another common organisational stressor amongst participants was the concept of travel. The present findings link with those of Hanton *et al.* (2005) with the most salient being the distance travelled and late arrival time. Participants went on to suggest how poor travel arrangements can impact on their performance which is similar to this study where participants feel lethargic on the day of the game due to bad time management within the travelling process. In contrast both, Levi *et al.* (2009) and Fletcher and Scott (2012) suggested that the travel arrangements are more stressful for the coaches and managers as they are the overall organisers. In relation to travel he found that the distance travelled was the highest cited theme. However, surely this is applicable to the whole team as they are travelling along with the coach. In a more recent study, Fletcher *et al.* (2012) identified both prolonged travelling time and poorly organised travel arrangements to be highly cited stressors amongst sports performers.

#### 5.5: Finance

This emerged as another important organisational stressor. Even though this stressor was cited by all participants, it was not felt that it had a direct impact upon performance. Finance has been identified by a number of previous studies (Hanton, 2005; Hanton and Fletcher, 2003; Fletcher and Wagstaff, 2009). The highest cited stressors within this category were the training costs and travel expenses. In contrast Fletcher and Hanton (2003) suggested that lack of financial support was the main demand. However, the findings here are consistent with those of Hanton *et al.* (2005) who found that inadequate financial support was the main financial demand. This present study differs in these results as participants explained how they depend on parental support. They went on to further indicate that due to parental support, there has never been an issue with finance affecting their performance.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

## **CONCLUSION**

## 6.0: Conclusion

### 6.1: Summary

This current study has explored stressors within women's cricket and stated the impact these can have on an athlete's performance. The findings demonstrated that stressors are frequently experienced by elite female cricketers and emphasis that there are more organisational demands compared with competitive demands, with the highest cited stressors being team alterations, travel and finances. Most demands that were identified lead on to have a direct effect on participants' performance with team alterations, roles within the team and mental/physical state proving to have the greatest effect. However, competitive stressors also proved demanding for the athletes with the highest cited themes being roles within the team, goals set by the coach and expectations.

### 6.2: Strengths and Limitations

This present study had a number of strengths and limitations. In terms of strengths, the use of semi structured interviews provided an in-depth understanding of the stressors experienced in the sporting environment. The sample quality proved to be another strength as all athletes have been involved with the Welsh Squad for many years and are all familiar with the set-up. In terms of limitations a larger sample would have generated more data and allowed a greater representation of positions within the team. A further limitation was the studies focus was at macro level and was based around the athletes' entire years of playing within the squad. This could have resulted in participants not remembering certain demands they faced in the early years of their participation, therefore being unable to recall stressors.

### 6.3: Practical Implications

From this study, practitioners and coaches can gain the knowledge of the diverse stressors experienced within women's cricket. It highlights the main stressors which are likely to have a direct effect on performance, allowing coaches to be aware of the demands leading up to a game and during performance.

#### 6.4: Future Research

As this study has already identified stressors within women's cricket, future researchers may wish to gain further insight into the direct effects the stressors can have on performance. Analysis could take place on the athletes' performance during a match situation after having experienced the stressor which would have affected them. Researchers could more closely examine the impact on performance rather than the individual identifying it. Furthermore, future practitioners may wish to study the coping mechanisms used in order to overcome these stressors which may lead on to prevention of the cause therefore improving performance in some cases.

**CHAPTER SEVEN**  
**REFERENCE LIST**

## 7.0: Reference List

Eys, M. A., Beauchamp, M. R., & Bray, S. R. (2006). A review of team roles in sport. In S. Hanton, & S. D. Mellalieu (Eds.), *Literature reviews in sport psychology* (pp. 227–255). Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science.

Eys, M. A., Schinke, R. J., & Jeffery, S. (2007). Role perceptions in sport groups. In M. Beauchamp, & M. Eys (Eds.), *Group dynamics advances in sport and exercise psychology: Contemporary themes*. Oxford: Routledge.

Fletcher, D. and Hanton, S. (2003) Sources of organizational stress in Elite sports performers. *The Sports Psychologist*. (1) 175-195

Fletcher, D. and Scott, M. (2010). Psychological stress in sports coaches: A review of concepts, research, and practice. *Journal of Sports Sciences*. **28** (2), 127–137.

Fletcher, D., Hanton, S., and Mellalieu, S.D. (2006). An organizational stress review: Conceptual and theoretical issues in competitive sport. In S.Hanton and S.D. Mellalieu (Eds.), *Literature reviews in sport psychology*. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science

Fletcher, D., Hanton, S. and Wagstaff, C.R.D. (2012). Performers' responses to stressors encountered in sport organisations. *Journal of Sports Sciences*. **30** (4), 349-358.

Fletcher, D., Rumbold, J.L., Tester, R and Coombes, M.S. (2011). Sport Psychologists' Experiences of Organizational Stress. *The Sport Psychologist*. **25** (1), 363-381.

Fletcher, D and Wagstaff, C.R.D. (2009). Organizational psychology in elite sport: Its emergence, application and future.. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*. **10** (4), 427–434.

Gledhill, A., Mulligan, C., Saffery, G., Sutton, L. and Taylor, R. (2007). *BTEC National Sport and Exercise Science*. Oxford: Heinemann. 86.

Gould, D., Jackson, S. A., and Finch, L. M (1993). Sources of stress in national champion figure skaters. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*. **15**, 134-159.)

Gould, D., & Krane, V. (1992). The arousal-athletic performance relationship: Current status and future directions. In T.S Horn (Ed), *Advances in sports psychology* (pp. 119-142). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics

Hanton, S., Fletcher, D and Coughlan, G. (2005). Stress in elite sport performers: A comparative study of competitive and organizational stressors. *Journal of Sports Sciences*. **23** (10), 1129-1141.

Hardy, L., Jones, G., & Gould, D. (1996) *Understanding psychological preparation for sport: theory and practice of elite performance in sport*. Chichester, UK. Wiley

Heiman, G. W. (1999). *Research methods in psychology*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). NYC, USA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Holt, N. L., & Hogg, J. M. (2002). Perceptions of stress and coping during preparations for the 1999 women's soccer World Cup finals. *Sport Psychologist*, **16**, 251–271.

Jex, S. M. (1998). *Stress and job performance: Theory, research, and implications for managerial practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Jones, G. (1995). More than just a game: Research developments and issues in competitive state anxiety in sport. *British Journal of Psychology*, **86**, 449–478.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews*. London, UK: Sage.

Lazarus, R.S and Folkman, S. (1966). *Stress appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer

Lazarus, R., Coyne, J.C and Folkman, S. (1984). Cognition, emotion and motivation: the doctoring of Humpty-Dumpty. In K.R Scherer and P.Ekman (eds), *Approaches to emotion* (pp. 221-237). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Lepine, J.A., Podsakoff, N.P. and Lepine, M.A. (2005). A Meta-Analytic Test of the Challenge Stressor-Hindrance Stressor Framework: An Explanation for Inconsistent Relationships among Stressors and Performance. *The Academy of Management Journal*. **48** (5), 764-775.

Levy, A., Nicholls, A., Marchant, D. and Polman, R. (2004). Organisational Stressors, Coping, and Coping Effectiveness: A Longitudinal Study with an Elite Coach. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*. **4** (1), 31-45.

Lincoln, S. D., and Guba, G. E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. London: Sage. 290.

Mellalieu, S. D., and Hanton, S. (2009). *Advances in Applied Sport Psychology*. Oxon: Routledge.

Mellalieu, S. D., Hanton, S. and Fletcher, D. (2006). “A competitive anxiety review: Recent directions in sport psychology research”. In *Literature reviews in sport psychology*, Edited by: Hanton, S. and Mellalieu, S. D. 1–45. Hauppauge, NY: Nova

Mellalieu, S., D, Neil, R., Hanton, S and Fletcher, D. (2009). Competition stress in sport performers: Stressors experiences in the competition environment. *Journal of Sports Sciences*. **27** (7) 729-744

Miles, M.B., and Huberman, A.M. (1994) *An Expanded Sourcebook Qualitative Data Analysis*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) Sage Publications. London.

Neil, R., Fletcher, D., Hanton, S., and Mellalieu, S. D. (2007). (Re) conceptualizing competition stress in sports performers. *Sport and Exercise Psychology Review*, **3**, 23-29

Neil, R., Mellalieu, S.D., Hanton, S. (2009). The contribution of qualitative inquiry towards understanding competitive anxiety and competition stress. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*. **1** (2), 191-205

Patton, M.Q. (1990) *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Sage Publications London.

Patton, M. Q (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)*. London, UK: Sage.

Scanlan, T. K., Stein, G. L., & Ravizza, K. (1991). An in-depth study of former elite figure skaters: III. Sources of stress. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, **13**, 103–120.

Slack, T. (1997). *Understanding sport organizations: The application of organization theory*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics

Thelwell, R. C., Greenless, I. A., and Weston, N. J. V. (2006). Using psychological skills training to develop soccer performance. *Journal of Applied Sports Psychology*.

Woodman, T., and Hardy, L. (2001b). A case study of Organizational Stress in Elite Sport. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*. **3** (1), 207-238

## Appendices

Appendix A  
Interview guide

## Interview Guide

### **Participant details:**

Name:

Age:

Batter/bowler/all rounder:

Years participating in sport:

Current performance level:

Highest performance level:

Interview date:

Duration of interview:

Signature for consent to study

.....

Firstly, thank you for agreeing to be a part of this study. I am Ffion Cartwright, an undergraduate student from Cardiff Metropolitan University. The purpose of this interview is to explore your experiences of 'stressors within women's cricket' – so I am interested in gaining an insight into the demands you face pre/during/post match and if these have a direct effect on your performance. The information that will be gained from this interview will be included within my dissertation.

All the information collected will be anonymous and at no point will your identity be revealed. I will be using a Dictaphone to record the interview to ensure the accuracy of the information.

Your participation within this study is completely voluntary and if at any point you wish to refrain from answering certain questions then please do so. You may also withdraw from the interview at anytime. Please answer the questions honestly and if you do not understand a question then please let me know. No question has a right or wrong answer so please take your time when answering. I am interested in gaining as much information as possible.

## **Competition**

I would first like to ask you about your feelings during competition.

1. Explain to me any demands you feel when leading up to a game?

### **Probes**

- a) Start from a week before and progress to the night before the game.
  - b) Explain to me if you feel these demands could cause interference with your performance.
  - c) Explain to me if these demands differ from playing a club match to an international match.
  - d) Describe if this has an effect on your performance.
2. Describe any demands you face when you play a team that has come from a higher league than you?

### **Probes**

- a) Do these demands differ if they are from a lower league? If so why?
- b) When playing a rival team, explain if this has any effect on you.
- c) Explain if these factors affect your performance.

3. Explain if your role in the team places any demands on you?

### **Probe**

- a) Tell me if you think this adds any pressure to your game or performance?
  - b) Can you tell me if everyone is aware of their roles within the team?
  - c) Explain if these have any effect on your performance.
4. Tell me if you think it is important to feel prepared physically and mentally when going into a match situation.

**Probes**

- a) Does this place any demands on you during a build up to a game?
- b) Does this affect your performance in any way? If so why?

5. Explain if your coach sets goals or expectations for you before the start of a game/season?

**Probes**

- a) Explain if you feel added pressure in order to meet these targets
- b) Describe if this places any demands on you which could affect performance.
- c) Can you tell as a whole does this place demands on the team?
- d) Does this in any way, affect your performance? Why?

6. Can you tell me, if as a team, if you do not have a good atmosphere, if this places any sort of demand on your game.

**Probes**

- a) Explain why?
- b) Explain if you think this has a direct effect on the performance on the team.
- c) Describe if the atmosphere has a direct affect on the team's performance.

7. If, during a game, something happens to hinder your performance, tell me if it affects your performance in any way throughout the game.

**Probes**

- a) What do you do in order to improve this?
- b) If no, do any other negative points have an effect during your personal performance?

I would now like to ask you about your feeling towards the organisational side of matches.

1. Explain if the process of the team selection places any demands on you.

**Probes**

- a) Explain if you feel it gives you enough time to prepare.
- b) Can you explain what happens if alterations have to take place close to match day?
- c) Explain if this has an effect on your feelings towards the game.
- d) Can you tell me if you think the selection process is fair?

2. Can you explain to me what your training environment is like?

**Probes**

- a) Does this place any demands on you in any way?
- b) Explain if the facilities are appropriate, if not why?
- c) What about the location of the facilities?
- d) Explain if the training is suitable and relevant.
- e) Does this have any effect on your performance in any way? Why?

3. Can you describe the travel arrangements prior to a game?

**Probes**

- a) Do you face any demands in the process?
- b) Explain if you feel the length of the journey has an impact on your performance?
- c) Describe if you face any demands when travelling as a team.
- d) Can you tell me if this affects your performance?

4. Can you explain to me the organisation of the accommodation?

**Probes**

- a) Are there any demands involved?
- b) Explain if it is always straight forward on arrival.
- c) Do you feel they have sufficient facilities for the team? Why?
- d) Tell me if this affects performance in any way.

5. What are your thoughts about the financial side of playing cricket?

**Probes**

- a) Explain if this places any demands on you which could hinder your performance.
- b) If there are any limitations, can you explain them?
- c) What financial support do you receive?
- d) Do these factors have any impact on your performance? If so, why?

6. And finally can you tell me if the ground or facilities in which you play affect your overall thoughts about the game?

**Probes**

- a) If facilities are poor, how does this affect the team and their performance?
- b) Describe any other demands the facilities could place upon you and if this effects performance.

This concludes the interview, thank you for taking the time to answer all the questions.

Appendix B  
Competitive stressors.  
Results table

THEMES							
	Preparation	Representing Team/Opposition	Roles	Mental/physical	Goals	Atmosphere	Personal performance
Participant 1 (opening batter)	<p><b>“only if something unexpected happed close to the game”</b>  <i>“Could make more pressure... on me to do my job properly”</i></p>	<p><b>“If the team are from a higher league than us.”</b>  <i>“I sometimes get scared, making me not as confident when I’m batting.”</i></p>	<p><b>“I have to live up to that role, that’s why I’m there, that’s my job to score runs.”</b>  <i>“If people were unaware of their roles it would affect the team performance because people would be unaware of what their capable of.”</i></p>	-	<p><b>“If I’m batting number three and I know he wants us to be on a certain score and we are far off that then as my role as a top end batter I feel the pressure in order to hit those targets. That’s why it’s easy to get frustrated when I fall behind the run rate because I know I’m getting further away from the target.”</b>  <i>“It makes me more nervous... I get frustrated when I know I haven’t hit a certain target. I might start rushing to score runs and possibly make more mistakes because I’m more focused on actually hitting the goal rather than my own performance.”</i></p>	<p><b>“Cricket is such a team sport... If there was a bad atmosphere it would place a demand on everyone’s game. There wouldn’t be any teamwork and everyone would be working individually. I don’t think it would work at all.”</b></p>	<p><b>“If I’ve missed out on a really important opportunity to get someone out, and say I’ve dropped a catch, it will be on my mind then throughout the whole game.”</b>  <i>“I let my head drop and become negative... drop in my confidence levels too.”</i></p>
Participant 2 (opening bowler)	<p><i>“If you’re tired or stressed from travelling this could affect performance.”</i></p>	<p><b>“International match it’s a lot more pressure for you to do well... Everyone expects different things from you rather than playing for your club.”</b>  <i>“Too much worry and stress has a negative impact on my performance such as silly little mistakes when fielding”</i></p>	<p><b>“Pressure is for me (as an opening bowler) to take quick wickets... So that can be quite stressful if you don’t feel like you’ve done your job.”</b>  <i>“If I let the pressure get to me then I crack and everything I do just seems to be wrong... I haven’t done my job I feel a bit down.”</i></p>	<p><b>“I’ve played in games where if you aren’t mentally switched on then you’re not going to physically perform.”</b>  <i>“If I don’t feel prepared like for example I haven’t stretched or warmed up properly then I worry that I could pull a muscle which could then stop my from performing to my maximum.”</i></p>	<p><b>“If we’re playing a stronger team and our coach expects us to get them all out in 100 runs, obviously that’s a really hard target to achieve so it will cause a lot of pressure.”</b>  <i>“The whole team won’t be in the right place because they know they have got no chance of reaching it.” (if target is set too high)</i></p>	-	-
Participant 3	<p><b>“I worry if I’ve done enough</b></p>	<p><b>“I do worry if we are as good as</b></p>	<p><b>“There is definite pressure, I’m</b></p>	<p><b>“Confidence is a major part of my game if I</b></p>	<p><b>“I kind of always worry that I should be scoring</b></p>	<p><b>“If the team morale is low it can take a lot of</b></p>	<p><b>“If I drop a catch then yeah I would say it</b></p>

(opening batter)	<b>training and preparation</b> <i>"The night before I'm especially nervous and apprehensive."</i>	<b>the team we're playing against.</b> <i>"I have less confidence if I know they're stronger than us."</i>	<b>normally really nervous.</b> <i>"I won't really play many attacking shots early on."</i>	<b>have my head in the right place it's a lot easier.</b> <i>"If I'm on some sort of downer and we've lost matches or I haven't scored runs I might not feel ready for the game and might not perform well."</i>	<b>more runs."</b>	<b>work to get it to a positive again."</b>	<b>would affect how I feel for the rest of the game.</b> <i>"Sometimes I might try to over compensate for something then something else might go wrong."</i>
Participants 4 (all rounder)	<b>"not doing enough training before the game"</b> <i>"If I didn't do anything at all then my confidence going into a game wouldn't be as high."</i>	-	<b>"If an end needs to be help up in batting or bowling... I'm probably going to have to be that person."</b> <i>"Probably being an all rounder has more demands and pressures."</i>	<b>"For me I would say physically prepared is more important as I don't often struggle mentally, maybe only with a bit of nerves."</b> <i>"Knowing I'm not feeling simply not fit enough to bat for two hours then that's always going to be a struggle. If it's a warm day this will have a bigger effect on me, I will become very tired quickly."</i>	<b>"The goals set will require everyone to pull together for those demands to be met."</b>	<b>"If there is a bad atmosphere out on the pitch, it's very difficult to pick us all up. As a senior player I would take it upon myself to try and lift it but sometimes this can be very difficult."</b> <i>"I feel more responsible to take control and change the atmosphere."</i>	-
Participant 5 (wicket keeper/all rounder)	-	<b>"There is a great deal more pressure when playing for your country, more expectation there. "</b> <i>"I up my game as the pressure increases."</i>	<b>"I think it places more of a demand being an all rounder as you're expected to do everything! I'm expected to hold up the batting, same for bowling the expectation is for me to take wickets."</b> <i>"There is a lot of pressure on me which makes me nervous when I play."</i>	<b>"I need the physical stamina to last the whole game and mentally be able to stay focused."</b> <i>"I wouldn't want to go into a game feeling unprepared I would be in a negative frame of mind I wouldn't be able to concentrate, could lead to me getting out early on or maybe my bowling wouldn't be hitting the target because I wouldn't be focused."</i>	<b>"If we don't hit the targets set on the day, I feel like we're letting the coach down."</b> <i>"When I'm playing I feel the pressure... I keep looking at the score all of the time, that's when I start to panic especially if we're behind the run rate... I tend not to focus on the game in hand."</i>	<i>"It would place a demand on my own performance because I would be constantly worrying about them and not about the actual game."</i>	<b>"I tend to dwell on it for a while."</b> <i>"My head drops"</i>
Participant 6 (all rounder)	-	<b>"International match is a massive amount of pressure compared to club games... I change</b>	<b>"As an all rounder there is obviously a lot of pressure for this role because the team sort of relies on me</b>	<b>"If you're injured then you obviously can't play to your full potential, if you're mentally down then this can affect the</b>	<b>"If a goal is set too high and it's unrealistic... It would always be in the back of my mind thinking 'they want us to do really well'."</b>	<b>"If you have a bad atmosphere then it's bad because people can be walking on eggshells around each other rather than</b>	<b>"I would be down for the whole game and gain a negative outlook on the game."</b> <i>".. which would normally result in something else</i>

		<p><b>my game.”</b>  <i>“I have to be sensible and concentrate a lot more as the stakes are higher. I could over compensate for things sometimes and let the pressure get to me and it just doesn’t work out.”</i></p>	<p><b>for both batting and fielding abilities.”</b>  <i>“It adds pressure because I’m expected to fulfil two roles rather than others just have the one to live up to.”</i></p>	<p><b>whole team.”</b>  <i>“If I go in thinking ‘oh we are going to lose today’ then I’m not going to bat or bowl well, normally I will do badly when I play.”</i></p>	<p><i>“There is more pressure for us to do well and work one hundred times harder to reach the target then we could crumble and not perform well under that amount of pressure.”</i></p>	<p><b>acting like a team.”</b>  <i>“If everyone is down it’s going to be harder for us as a team to stay in the field for 50 overs encouraging everyone. The team would lose concentration and start to focus more on the players that need to be picked up.”</i></p>	<p><i>going wrong which is never good.”</i></p>
Participant 7 (bowler)	-	<p><b>“Obviously there is not as much pressure playing for club level in comparison to international level... It’s a big demand both on and off the field.”</b>  <i>“If I make mistakes or I’m not mentally prepared internationally then I pay the price because it’s at a higher level.”</i></p>	<p><b>“The demand is on me to bowl to the best that I can which is a lot of pressure.”</b>  <i>“If I start concentrating on other people’s roles, I might not concentrate on my own and get distracted which would cause me to lose focus on my own performance.”</i></p>	<p><b>“If we’re not physically fit I won’t be able to bowl my ten overs through. I would definitely be struggling. If I go into a game thinking I’m not ready for this or we’re going to lose then you already feel like you’ve lost the game before it’s even started.”</b>  <i>“If my heart and soul is not there then I won’t perform well for my team.”</i></p>	<p><b>“If we are having to get a certain amount of runs in a game and we don’t quite meet it, that’s us not hitting our goals that we set out to do.”</b>  <i>“Rather than concentrating about the game and about what I need to do in order to win the game I’m thinking ‘no I may need to get an extra 50 runs, or need another wicket so bowl a variation ball.”</i></p>	<p><b>“If a certain batter or bowler for example is not bowling very well then when it comes to supporting teammates they tend not to, they tend to close away umm are very very quiet and not encouraging the team. This can then get the whole moral of the team very very down.”</b>  <i>“If certain individuals heads have already gone and already feeling like we have lost the game then we’ve got no chance of getting that break through wicket and yeah, if the atmosphere is down then it will have an effect on everyone.”</i></p>	<p><b>“If something was to go wrong negatively then for the next 5-10 overs I would be kicking myself a lot.”</b></p>

<p>Participant 8 (off-spin bowler)</p>	<p><b>“I worry about the team, if it’s the right team, the competition, certain players, overall just the whole game”</b> <i>“It’s just nerves... I focus on the game in hand and run off adrenaline”</i></p>	<p><b>“A lot more pressure when playing for your country... Internationals we take serious and it’s always 110% we give”</b> <i>“I’m a lot more focused, serious and up for the game, higher commitment”</i></p>	<p><b>“You have to live up to your expectations, if the pitch is a spinner’s wicket then it’s my job to make the ball turn and get those wickets for the team.”</b> <i>“Definitely pressure on me to take those wickets. Sometimes the pressure can get to me especially if I’m not bowling well. My head can drop then I tend to get frustrated with myself.”</i></p>	<p><b>“If I am not in the right frame of mind before going into a game this will have an impact on the team. If their captain is negative and not focused when playing, why should they be? I wouldn’t feel prepared or ready for the game if I wasn’t in the right frame of mind to play”</b> <i>“My stamina wouldn’t last. If I’m not at my peak fitness then I know that I can’t perform at my best.”</i></p>	<p><b>“I think the right goal needs to be made because if the goal is set too high and we know there is no way we can reach the goal, some players won’t even bother to work towards it because they know it’s not achievable.”</b></p>	<p><b>“If we aren’t a team off the pitch then we aren’t going to work as a team on the pitch, simple as that.”</b> <i>“It can be demanding when you know a player isn’t concentrating or their heads are somewhere else because you know they aren’t performing as well as you know they can.”</i></p>	<p><b>“Say if I was to drop a catch, my head would be down for ages.”</b> <i>“I would be frustrated with myself that it would affect my game to the point where I was making silly mistakes that I never do.”</i></p>
--	---	--	--	--	---	--	---

Appendix C  
Organisational stressors.  
Results table

THEMES								
	Selection	Team alterations	Training facilities	Location	Travel	Accommodation	Finances	Pitch
Participant 1 (opening batter)	“We all have to fight for our places.”	“Well if they were a top end batter, I think it would place more of a demand on me to score more runs. Again even though I feel pressure when I go into bat, I think there would be a bigger demand for me to perform well as that player would have dropped out, sort of leaving me to do most of the work as that’s my role”	“We used to train in a tiny facility down Neath.. This obviously limited us to what we could do... The training became tedious and repetitive.”	“Llandarcy (where we train now) is about an hour away. This can be demanding because of the amount of petrol I use because we don’t get subsidised for training.”	“Only demand is the distance. Like away games, sometimes they can be a four to five hour drive.” <i>“The next day if I’ve driven and I don’t get a good nights sleeps then I can be lazy the next day, especially knowing I have to drive all the way back later.”</i>	-	“It’s very expensive. To travel, we get to claim money back for petrol when we have a match, but to train we have to pay hourly. I think it’s stupid because we are representing Wales and we have to pay to train! Also we have to pay for our own kit, and a bat alone is a few hundred pounds.” <i>“If I wasn’t still living at home and being supported by my parents, I think I would struggle to play big time. I wouldn’t be able to afford the petrol or be able to pay for training.”</i>	“Well obviously the main issue would be if it’s raining. Or if it has rained and the pitch is covered in puddles or it’s a really wet outfield.” <i>“I think this brings an instant downer on people’s thoughts of the game. Yeah this can then affect performance as the ball can do anything in those conditions.”</i>
Participant 2 (opening bowler)	-	“Everyone would have to step up and fill their shoes, especially if they were a key player.” <i>“It would place a lot more pressure on the whole team, it could affect atmosphere as the team wouldn’t be happy about it.”</i>	“Some are worse than others, as in there isn’t as much space so you’re very limited in what you can train for. Say we needed to focus on our over arm throwing and we were training in Neath then we wouldn’t be able to do specific drills.” <i>“This would obviously hinder our performance</i>	“I don’t mind travelling to Neath but only when it’s for a decent amount of time otherwise it would just be a waste.”	“The people driving us there are the players so I think it’s unfair on those because they’re bound to be tired the next day.”	“Check in can take longer than expected because there are 15+ of us. If the hotel wasn’t very nice and they didn’t have nice beds etc.” <i>“I suffer with a bad back so if the beds weren’t nice this would probably affect how I play the next day because I might be stiff from the night before.”</i>	“It does cost a lot to attend training sessions and for kit throughout the season. For training we have to pay an hourly rate to cover the cost of the facility and coaching which is sometimes expensive!” <i>“If we had to pay for hotels etc. I think it would limit the times I could play.”</i>	“If we were playing on quite an old pitch or a pitch that had been played on days previously, then obviously it would affect the game and as a team would have to make changes within the playing patterns. Yeah if the pitch wasn’t very good it would generally be a lot harder to score on make

			<i>as we haven't had the chance to practice this."</i>					the runs and especially if the weather has been bad as well it will tear the wicket up making it a lot harder for the batters making it easier for them to injure themselves as well."
Participant 3 (opening batter)	<b>"It is competitive to get a place in the side."</b> <i>"I try to practice as much as I can outside in order to be selected."</i>	<b>"It may put extra pressure on me to step and play a bigger role within the team."</b> <i>"More pressure to my game."</i>	-	<b>"When we train in Neath, it's about an hour away from me so that could be a demand – the distance I have to travel."</b>	<b>"If I have to drive on away trips that's annoying."</b> <i>"I'm a bit more tired when we get there. The next day I'm more lethargic so take a while to get going when it comes to playing and being on the ball."</i>	<b>"The time it takes to organise the rooms can be a pain. Especially after a hard game, or even a loss you just want to get to your rooms straight away and not have to be waiting around in the lobby for them to sort it out."</b>	<b>"There is quite a lot of petrol money, travelling. Equipment is expensive... So yeah it's quite a financially demanding sport cricket."</b>	<b>"If it's a wet pitch and you turn up and it's raining and cold then you're not likely to be mentally prepared for the game I suppose."</b> <i>"The team morale can go down... Affect the team's confidence and team spirit."</i>
Participant 4 (all rounder)	-	<b>"If a senior player was to drop out I would say there as an extra bit of pressure then on the team as a whole."</b> <i>"We would have to step up our game. There is extra pressure on me." (being a senior member)</i>	-	-	<b>"Travelling from quite a long way away, even my home games are away games as I don't live in Wales anymore."</b>	-	<b>"Because I come from so far it's a lot of extra miles on the car, or the train... It can be annoying."</b>	<b>"So the square might be all well and good but if we've got pot holes and mud and an old football pitch or an old rugby pitch that's been used over the winter, then I don't want to go field that side of the pitch. Especially if it's dried out because you can't trust the ball at all. So that</b>

								itself would be a demand, the state of the pitch."
Participant 5 (wicket keeper/all rounder)	"I suppose if a player was picked because of favouritism and they hadn't been training then this would annoy me and the team."	"It is slightly annoying. Especially if it's a main senior player because they would be one of the key players on the day." <i>"The team would have to up their game and try to make up for the loss of an important player."</i>	"Neath was so small and really restricted us to what we could do training wise. Especially trying to do fielding drills we couldn't really over arm throw because the hall was so small."	"It would just be the cost of petrol as the only demand."	"There is always someone running late which then back tracks everyone." <i>"We could possibly be eating into our warm up time. We would feel really rushed and wouldn't go into the game feeling relaxed."</i>	-	"Playing cricket is quite expensive. All of the equipment is a couple of hundred pounds. Then on top of that we have to pay for training, so yeah actually paying to play for your country sounds stupid but that's what we do!" <i>"Only if it got to the stage where I was using an old bat because I wouldn't be able to afford a new one."</i>	-
Participant 6 (all rounder)	-	"Everyone has to change their roles within the team... Everyone has to step up their game and try to make up for that player who has dropped out. It can be really annoying, especially if they're a key player in the team." <i>"I would feel a lot more pressure going into the game knowing we had lost an important player... Nerves would definitely be running higher."</i>	"We used to train in Neath where there were only three nets available to us because the hall was so small, so we couldn't really do much in there. It was far too small so limited us to what we could actually do. Everyone used to get bored... You feel like it's a wasted session when you're just going nets constantly."	-	"The only thing I don't like is when I have to drive places because I get tired and grumpy!" <i>"The further away we travel, obviously the more tired I am the next day of the game. It can put a dower on me at the start."</i>	"Sometime we have to wait to sort out our rooms... It can be annoying when you have all your kit."	"It's very expensive. We have to pay for all our equipment. If we have to drive to training we pay for fuel. We also have to pay hourly for our coaching." <i>"If I didn't have family's support I wouldn't be able to do half the amount of cricket I would like to."</i>	"If it's raining then everyone just has to sit around and wait. If the rain does stop and we do play, everyone's motivation level is zero and nobody can really be bothered." <i>"I won't be as committed as I normally am."</i>

			<p><i>“Fielding training was very limited because it was so small so we couldn’t even train this aspect of our cricket which is ridiculous because that’s half of the game so is really important. We missed out on a lot of valuable training sessions.”</i></p>					
<p>Participant 7 (bowler)</p>	<p><b>“Sometimes the team list is sent out less than a week before. For me mentally that is not enough time to prepare myself to like, go away or to train for the match.”</b> <i>“My training regime may not be as strict, I might cut down on training if I know I’ve got a big game on the weekend in order to me to be at my prime level of fitness in order to perform.”</i></p>	<p><b>“You’ve got to deal with the different demands required, travel arrangements, certain grounds that you’re going to play on.”</b> <i>“There is a huge demand on you to perform and for you to get into that right frame of mind in order to win the game.”</i></p>	<p><b>“Sometimes we’ve had to train in smaller sport centres which meant that it’s not real game like or match like situations... Which is really bad because we’re not training to the level we want.”</b> <i>“The equipment is not there so we’ve had to make do which means that we may not be getting enough training or equipment that other teams are.”</i></p>	-	<p><b>“This is normally quite tricky like who is going in who’s car, who travels where, the pickup time. If someone is late then it delays the whole team. It’s a lot of demand because you’re in the car a lot of the time 4-5 hours.”</b> <i>“There are times when we haven’t prepared ourselves properly like the night before the previous day which means we arrive at 11/12 at night then have to be up 6/7 in the morning to get to a ground in order to warm up so I think we’re not able to cope with the demand and are then unprepared for the game.”</i></p>	<p><i>“I would say the only downfall is sometimes we haven’t had breakfast included which does affect my performance because as they say breakfast is the most important meal of the day so I think that effects my performance.”</i></p>	<p><b>“There isn’t much funding for women’s cricket... We have to pay to train, pay to use the facilities, yeah okay it’s only £2.50 an hour but if you’re training 10-6 then that’s £20 a day and if it’s over a weekend then that’s a lot. That includes petrol as well, travelling to the likes of Swansea, Ebbw Vale etc. It all tallies up if we’re doing it once a week.”</b> <i>“I think I potentially missed out on a few things such as to better myself and pay for private one to one coaching or what have you.”</i></p>	-

<p>Participant 8 (off-spin bowler)</p>	<p>-</p>	<p><b>"It can be a real struggle finding someone at short notice."</b>  <i>"It can influence the roles within the team. Say our opening batter dropped out, another player will have to step up in the team and take that role."</i></p>	<p><b>"We used to train in a tiny... Well I would call it a shed basically it was so small... We were really restricted with what we could do when we were training... We couldn't do many fielding drills."</b>  <i>"We weren't able to practice our over arm throwing in a training environment so was bound to have an effect when it came to playing outdoors. I think our fielding performance decreased simply because of the crap facility we had as we weren't able to practice everything we wanted."</i></p>	<p>-</p>	<p><b>"The only demand is if people are late then it disrupts the whole team and time arrangements."</b>  <i>"Especially if I'm driving because I can be very tired the next day."</i></p>	<p>-</p>	<p><b>"I mean we have to pay for our training, our own petrol for training which can be really expensive when you add it all up."</b>  <i>"I certainly appreciated that my parents helped me out when I was younger as I wouldn't have been able to afford it myself."</i></p>	<p><b>"If the outfield is boggy then it does put a downer on the game, we won't want to be fielding in rubbish conditions."</b>  <i>"It will affect the way the ball will move on the pitch... Have to up your concentration levels and really focus on the game."</i></p>
--	----------	--	--	----------	--	----------	--	--