NAME: PAUL HORROCKS

UNIVERSITY NUMBER: 05002656

SCHOOL OF SPORT, P.E. AND RECREATION

UNIVERSITY OF WALES INSTITUTE, CARDIFF
A CASE STUDY INVESTIGATING THE

TRANSACTIONAL STRESS PROCESS IN SPORT
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For my friend Alex Newton (R.I.P.), I hope you ‘like my work’.
ABSTRACT

This study investigated the stress process from a transactional perspective with a semi-professional rugby union performer. A qualitative research design was utilised, using semi-structured interviews across a four week period. The demands were examined with a primary emphasis on media as a specific example. The appraisals, emotions, emotional orientations and behaviours were expanded in relation to each stressor. A variety of performance, organisational and media demands were identified. The majority of these stressors parallel the findings from earlier research. A number of previously unreported demands emerged as a consequence of the longitudinal design. This study illuminated the whole stress process in a sports performer over a continued period of time. The emotional orientation, as developed by Fletcher et al. (2006) was strongly supported. A range of emotions were illustrated, with the majority interpreted as facilitative for performance. Practical implications were considered in relation to specific coping strategies for dealing with demands and emotions. Future studies should extend this research by placing a greater emphasis on the reciprocal nature of stress.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Stress as a construct has been related to a range of conditions (Fletcher, Hanton & Mellalieu, 2006). As a consequence, the research has been restricted and difficult to interpret. The different conceptualisations and the limitations will be discussed below.

1.1 THE STRESS PROCESS

The original concept of stress as a process was developed by McGrath (1970), who designed a stage model to illustrate this notion (Figure 1.1). Although stress has been studied since the early part of the twentieth century, McGrath’s theory can be considered a significant foundation point for current conceptualisations. The description of stress as cyclical and the belief that every individual can be equally as dynamic and adaptive as the environment are just two examples. McGrath’s (1970) stress process consisted of four stages: the realisation of a stressor, moving through the stages of perception and response, before an actual behaviour is activated. The consequences of the response are then fed back to the start, creating a continuous cycle.
1.2 STIMULUS & RESPONSE PERSPECTIVES

These perspectives are related to how people verbally express their sporting experiences (Neil, Fletcher, Hanton & Mellalieu, 2007). For example, stimulus-based conceptualisations refer to the awareness of external demands, whilst the response corresponds to how the athlete manages those stressors (Fletcher et al., 2006). This is best illustrated through the terms people use, such as feeling “under stress” (i.e., demand) or “being stressed” (i.e., response). They benefited the literature base by allowing straightforward and detailed investigation into the stressors experienced and the responses to them (see e.g., Gould, Jackson & Finch, 1993a; James & Collins, 1997; Scanlan, Stein & Ravizza, 1991). As a consequence, these
studies have neglected the underlying reasons for the corresponding behaviour to each demand; whilst unintentionally involving other variables such as emotional responses within their explanations (Fletcher et al., 2006). Fletcher et al. (2006) continued to explain that academics utilising these approaches have failed to examine the relationships between the person and the environment and how each individual understands these relationships. The confusion prompted deeper examination into the subject in an attempt to gain a clearer understanding of the stress process.

1.3 INTERACTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

This approach suggests an interaction between the person and the environment which influences that individual’s responses (Neil et al., 2007). The performer and the environment are considered independent variables where the athlete’s involvement with his or her surroundings results in a cognitive-emotional reaction to each demand; implying a cause and effect relationship (Fletcher et al., 2006). Although a beneficial advance on previous conceptualisations, this approach still fails to account for a number of important issues. Specifically, a person is always connected with their surroundings and therefore, they can not be considered independent variables. In addition, a person can adapt just as much as the environment and can influence it in similar ways, suggesting that the relationship is reciprocal (Fletcher et al., 2006). The theory neglects a person’s appraisals, which will influence their emotions and behaviour in response to each stressor (Fletcher & Fletcher, 2005). Indeed, the interactional approach does not explain how or why factors interact and thus, the research has begun to
focus on the dynamics of transaction and relational meaning (Cooper, Dewe & O’Driscoll, 2001; Fletcher et al., 2006).

1.4 TRANSACTIONAL PERSPECTIVE
The transactional approach has only recently been acknowledged within sport psychology, a belated adoption when considering McGrath identified the cyclical nature of the stress process as early as 1970. Nevertheless, Neil et al. (2007) have attempted to re-define and (re)conceptualise stress through advocating this approach. The reason for the (re)conceptualisation was the array of inconsistencies surrounding the research and the requirement to understand exactly why a stressor influences performance from a practitioner's perspective (Fletcher et al., 2006; Neil et al., 2007). Specifically, the transactional approach involves an ongoing transaction between perceived demands and the person’s responses (Neil et al., 2007). The theory proposes that demands develop in the performer’s sporting environment, are mediated through perceptions, appraisals and coping strategies, and produce positive or negative responses, feeling states and outcomes (Fletcher & Fletcher, 2005). Despite the work of Neil and associates, the studies implementing the transactional perspective have only considered parts of the stress process (see e.g., Dugdale, Eklund & Gordon, 2002; Holt & Hogg, 2002; Nicholls, Holt & Polman, 2005). The (re)conceptualisation adds extra functions to the stress process, for example, relational meaning and an emotional orientation that will be discussed in more detail below (Fletcher et al., 2006). The stress process, as a
consequence of the (re)conceptualisation, should now include stressors, appraisals, emotions, coping processes and behaviours (Neil et al., 2007).

As commented upon, the transactional perspective considers the relational meaning of each individual (Fletcher & Fletcher, 2005). This concept illustrates how the person appraises the significance of the situation in relation to themselves and their goals and this will strongly influence their behaviour (Lazarus, 1999). This appraisal of a demand results in an emotional response (Fletcher & Fletcher, 2005). Ultimately, as Lazarus (1999; 2000a) explained, relational meaning accounts for individual difference variables as it considers the psychological properties of every performer. Importantly, if the meaning is changed, then the emotion changes in accordance; illustrating the significance of this construct (Lazarus, 2000a).

For many years, emotion as a concept has had a separate literature base to stress (Lazarus, 1999). Lazarus (1999; 2000a) can be praised in his attempts to unite the two areas. As explained, the relationship between stress and emotions within the transactional process has only been advocated recently in sport (Fletcher & Fletcher, 2005; Fletcher et al., 2006; Neil et al., 2007). According to the meta-model (figure 1.2) by Fletcher and Fletcher (2005), stage two consists of the emotion to performance fit. Here, the emotional orientation relates to how performers interpret and assess the importance of their emotions (Fletcher et al., 2006). According to Lazarus (2000b), every appraisal initiates a feeling, which he suggested can influence subsequent thoughts and continue into the response phase. A motivational aspect is entwined within this issue, as an athlete must have a goal or
personal stake in which to consider the situation as significant enough to elicit stress (Lazarus, 2000b).

This further appraisal, or emotional orientation as it is defined in the literature (Fletcher et al., 2006), represents the directional interpretation of emotions and whether they are understood to be positive or negative (Lazarus, 2000a). These interpretations are regarded as facilitative and debilitating to performance, respectively (Jones, 1995). Since the early 1990s, direction has been discussed in the anxiety literature, with a directional scale added to the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (cf. Hanton & Jones, 1999a). The interpretation of anxiety as facilitative has been demonstrated in a number of studies (see e.g., Hanton & Jones, 1999a; Hanton & Jones, 1999b; Jones & Swain, 1995; Jones, Swain & Hardy, 1993).

Anxiety is a specific emotional response to a demand (cf. Neil et al., 2007). Anger is another emotion, in which the directional interpretation has also been supported in the literature (Isberg, 2000). These two negative emotions have been demonstrated as facilitative for performance. As emotions are considered vital, the notion of emotional orientation within it is just as important. In Fletcher and Fletcher’s (2005) work, the emotional orientation is divided into a tertiary and quaternary appraisal consisting of an evaluation of the emotion in relation to the performance and the availability of coping resources respectively. Future research, therefore, needs to examine the inter-relationships between emotions, individuals’ interpretations of these emotions and the performance outcome in relation to specific demands (Neil et al., 2007).
Figure 1.2. A meta-model of stress, emotions and performance (adapted from Fletcher & Fletcher, 2005).
To make all future investigations coherent, researchers must explicitly identify the conceptualisation and definitions that their studies are based on (Neil et al., 2007). In line with this, this investigation is founded upon the following definitions (cf. Fletcher et al., 2006; Neil et al., 2007; Woodman & Hardy, 2001):

- **Competition stress**: an ongoing transaction between an individual and the environmental demands associated primarily and directly with the competition within which he or she is operating.

- **Competition (or performance) stressor**: the environmental demands (i.e. stimuli) associated primarily and directly with the competition within which an individual is operating.

- **Organisational stressor**: the demands associated primarily and directly with an individual’s appraisal of the structure and functioning of the organisation within which he or she is operating.

- **Competition strain**: an individual's negative psychological, physical and behavioural responses to competition stressors.

As mentioned, this area has been severely limited by the use of different conceptualisations and definitions. For the stress process to progress as a subject, all research must use the same conceptualisation until new developments are made. This will be expanded upon in the following literature review.
1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to develop a detailed understanding of the constructs within the stress process from an elite athlete's perspective. This was expected to provide support for the conceptualisation of stress as a transaction. A qualitative research design was utilised with a particular emphasis placed on media as a specific demand. Media was chosen as the example because it has been consistently reported in the stressor literature.
CHAPTER III

METHOD
3.0 METHOD

3.1 PARTICIPANT
The participant was a twenty-two year old male rugby union player. The performer had previously reached junior international level and also competed at a regional rugby standard. He was playing fly-half for a semi-professional team at the time of the study with five years of experience at this level. The researcher contacted a senior member of the selected rugby club and was provided with access to the performer.

3.2 DESIGN
A qualitative research design was utilised consisting of semi-structured interviews alongside notational data collection on match days to examine differences in performance across games. A qualitative procedure was employed in the hope of gaining a comprehensive insight into the athlete’s sporting life (Noblet & Gifford, 2002). This type of research is concerned with the personal meanings for behaviour and how these are understood (Denscombe, 1998).

The availability of elite participants for undergraduate research investigations as well as the purpose of studying the longitudinal nature of the stress process resulted in the application of a case study methodology. Case studies are beneficial as they allow the acquisition of in-depth information on particular individuals or phenomena (Patton, 2002). It has been reported that some of the best academic reports have been based on
one respondent’s opinions across a series of interviews and therefore, supports the design of this study (Travers, 2002).

Semi-structured interviews can generate large quantities of qualitative data and were used in this investigation to provide guidance for the researcher (Nicholls et al., 2005). This was important as a fully-structured interview guide would dictate the flow and leave the interviewer unable to deviate when the subject commented on unexpected items. Further, this structure provided an opportunity to advance the rapport, probe interesting areas that arose and follow the subject’s interests and concerns (Nicholls et al., 2005).

3.3 INTERVIEW GUIDES

With the purpose of the study in mind, the researcher modified a semi-structured interview guide used by Gould et al. (1993b). The questions created by Gould et al. (1993b) were edited and expanded for this study to help aid the focus on the key issues of the stress process. The interviews were carried out over four weeks and were divided into pre- and post-game.

The two guides each contained four main sections which consisted of cognitions towards the media, emotions in response to demands, perceived directions and the upcoming match in the pre-game guide; and previous performance, media and the stress process, the player’s statistics and the media report in the post-game guide. The stress process was clearly embedded within these guides to suit the research requirements of Neil et al. (2007). The cognitive, emotional, interpretational and performance responses were all incorporated; with the recursive properties illustrated
through the longitudinal design (Neil et al., 2007). The post-game guide also demonstrated the cyclical nature of stress as it connected the demands of the previous training week with the player’s game performance as well as the upcoming training week. This expansive type of interview technique has been supported in the literature, for example, ‘If you ask open-ended questions, follow up particular topics, and give the interviewee the opportunity to comment on your interpretation of the answers, you are likely to obtain some rich, original data’ (Travers, 2002, p.3).

3.4 PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

To successfully design a set of objective performance criterion, the researcher consulted with an individual who has over ten years of experience as a rugby union player and was emerging as a coach. This approval was necessary to ensure the system would generate the required data but not be biased towards achieving a specific answer (Hughes & Franks, 2004). For example, ‘successful conversions’ would likely be observed favourably in comparison to a more valid measure of ‘ratio between successful to unsuccessful attempts’. The performance indicators were defined to ensure reliability in data collection (Hughes & Franks, 2004), and can be seen in appendix A.
3.5 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted with a non-elite performer using the most up-to-date version of the interview guide. This meeting was organised to aid the development of the researcher's technique and to gain an appreciation of the type of information that would be specified by a participant. The researcher also became aware of when probes were necessary and how best to deliver them. Guidance was offered to the researcher from a supervisor with recent interviewing experience.

As a consequence of the pilot study, four main issues were identified. All of these involved changes to the structure or language of the interview guides as follows: questions were separated into distinct categories, were rephrased into singular items, repetitions were eliminated and extra clarification probes were added (Patton, 2002). For example, a dual question targeting the demands encountered during the week and whether these influenced preparation for the match or the performance itself. The question remained in the guide but had a note alongside informing the interviewer to enquire about each separately. An example of a clarification probe added was ‘the emotion you have identified, how intense was it?’.

It was also established in the pilot study that the guides would require amendment for each individual interview. Although the guide was semi-structured and allowed for changes during the meeting, the longitudinal design made it essential for the demands revealed previously to be transferred for future discussion. The final version of the interview guides can be seen in appendix B.
The data collection sheets were piloted and were executed on the England versus Australia game in the Rugby World Cup 2007. The performance level was expected to be superior between international and semi-professional club matches. This was perceived as an opportunity to test the system at a greater tempo. It was hoped this difference would make any flaws transparent. This was not the case, so the data collection sheets and definitions remained the same. The researcher had experience in notational data collection in rugby union from previous studies, so this was not considered an issue.

3.6 PROCEDURE

3.6.1 PROVISION OF INFORMATION
The participant was informed of the study and the reasons behind it. He agreed to the study and willingly signed the informed consent form in the knowledge that his involvement was voluntary and his personal details would be kept confidential. An initial interview was conducted with the participant to obtain his personal details and to explain the study. A copy of the pre- and post-game interview guides were presented to the participant at the initial interview, allowing the subject to familiarise with the questions that would be asked. This was perceived by the researcher as a tool to help build trust and rapport. The building of trust between the researcher and the participant has been deemed as one of the most important features of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
3.6.2 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
The process consisted of a four week study with each interview lasting between twenty-five and forty-five minutes. The participant’s commitments required the researcher to be flexible and thus, pre- and post-interview guides were designed. This allowed for questions to be asked that most suitably met the timing of each interview.

Every game during the process was analysed by the same researcher. The subject’s performances on the pitch were also examined immediately preceding and following the four week process to acquire standard criterion. The main reason for recording this information was to allow comparisons between the player’s match statistics before, during and after the study. If there were vast differences between interviews or if certain performance variables were mentioned in relation to the demands experienced, then the notational data would be used in an attempt to identify the possible effects on performance.

3.6.3 SPECIFIC DATA COLLECTION
The process was activated with an introductory pre-game interview. As this was the beginning of the intervention period, there was a reduction in the number of questions asked. The presentation of the media reports was planned for the interviews following match days and therefore, the first pre-game meeting could not involve enquiry on this subject. The player’s performances were analysed according to the standard assessment sheet (see appendix C).
The next interview followed a similar reduction in the process, as previous media could not be connected to the player’s preparation or performance. This was the first time that media reports were presented to the subject and initiated the cyclical procedure. As explained previously, all new investigations must consider stress a continuous process as expressed in this methodology (Neil et al., 2007).

The following meeting was pre-game and examined the influence of the media reports presented in the previous interview in relation to the player’s week of training and preparation for the match. This second game was cancelled as a consequence of continued bad weather throughout the week. It was decided that an interview following the weekend would be wasting the performer’s time and was not conducted.

The media information was rolled over to the following week ahead of the next game in the sequence in which a pre-game interview was conducted. The performance was analysed and acted as the last part of the four week cycle. The following match was examined to gain another benchmark for performance and closed the data collection loop.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS
All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim immediately after the meeting to provide an opportunity for the researcher to re-live the experience (Gould et al., 1999; Wengraf, 2001). The participant was comfortable with the interviews being recorded and was presented with a copy of each transcript at the next interview. The subject was asked to read
the transcript in his own time and to report any problems to the researcher; of which there were none. There were forty-one pages of verbatim text overall.

Following the production of the four sets of verbatim text, a combination of thematic and content analysis techniques were employed to condense all the material into meaningful information. First, deductive examination of the transcripts was employed to identify quotes that accurately represented the stressors reported (Noblet & Gifford, 2002). A deductive approach was utilised as the interview guides were geared towards expanding on the demands expressed by the athlete and thus, the analysis was heavily based on the current conceptualisations of the stress process (Patton, 2002). The cognitive, emotional, directional and behavioural responses were matched to these demands and illustrated through the performer’s exact descriptions. The stressors that represented similar items were classified into performance, organisational and media themes and were examined in relation to previous research. As Travers (2002) explained, the objective of this technique is to apply the concepts in the literature to the information collected.

The information surrounding each stressor was placed into tables to confirm that all variables within the stress process were covered. This data was transferred into narrative text to allow the researcher to observe the information from a different viewpoint. From here, figures were designed, placing the verbatim quotes for each variable into the specific section. Narrative techniques were used again, this time in conjunction with the diagrams to expand on certain examples and experiences. The subject’s ‘voice’ appeared in the results where possible to illustrate his exact thoughts.
(Nicholls et al., 2005). The verbatim texts were re-read a number of times in parallel with each stage to ensure the data accurately illustrated the participant’s statements and had not been taken out of context during the analysis process.

Reliability was aided by the use of semi-structured interview guides. The guides consisted of pre-determined probes to aid further enquiry or to gain clarity from the participant. There was also a set introduction for each that explained the reasons for the interview, the areas that would be examined and the subject’s right to withdraw at any time. The participant was questioned each time by the same researcher in a one-on-one meeting leading to standardised exchanges (Frey & Oishi, 1995). A thorough and complete description of the procedure offers another avenue to ensure reliability as it allows others to use and examine the exact methods for future studies (Denscombe, 1998; Thomas & Nelson, 2001).

The concern of external validity was apparent due to the small sample size (Patton, 2002). The use of one subject across a set time period resulted in a case study method (Travers, 2002). This helped to combat this issue and the researcher was aware that inferences could not be made in relation to the general population (Thomas & Nelson, 2001). The performer’s playing status made it implausible for generalisations in relation to the standard population anyway (Holt & Hogg, 2002; Noblet & Gifford, 2002; Wengraf, 2001). As previously mentioned, internal validity was ensured through the execution of pilots for all data collection methods (Thomas & Nelson, 2001).
A technique used for validity in Nicholls et al. (2005) was member checking. The study consisted of one-off interviews with informal follow-ups performed after analysis to check the accuracy of the author’s interpretations. The presentation of verbatim transcripts and the longitudinal nature of the design signified that the procedure mentioned in Nicholls et al. (2005) to increase validity was evident in this study. Further, some early analysis was performed after each interview to create 'talking points' for the next meeting. The subject was aware of this and at no stage did he disagree or contest information depicted from previous discussions.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS
4.0 RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION
The participant reported a variety of demands which instigated different cognitions, emotions, subsequent interpretations (i.e., emotional orientation) and behaviours. The information is presented in diagrams using the performer’s exact responses in the hope of illuminating the stress process. A selection of the demands will be fully demonstrated in figures; whilst all of the stressors, emotions and orientations are included in a summary table (table 4.1). The performance data will be presented at the end of this section (tables 4.2 to 4.6).

The interview results have been separated into three themes: performance, organisational and media demands. On one occasion, the experience of multiple stressors has been described. There were a total of twenty-two distinct performance (10), organisational (3) and media (9) demands. The following narrative summarises the results (figures 4.1 to 4.12 and appendix E1 to E11) and will be mentioned according to their category distinctions. The themes will be considered separately to illustrate the full scale of stressors encountered in an elite performer’s sporting life.
Table 4.1. Summary of the demands, emotions and emotional orientations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Number</th>
<th>Demand Number</th>
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<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<td>Positive</td>
<td>Performance</td>
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<td>Positive</td>
<td>Performance</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Slight concern</td>
<td>Neutral or Negative</td>
<td>Organisational</td>
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<td>Self-doubt</td>
<td>Neutral or Negative</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<td>Media</td>
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<td>Pleased</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<td>‘(Team) domination’</td>
<td>Pleased / Happy</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<td>Team-mate’s views</td>
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<td>Media</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>‘Genuine title contenders’</td>
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<td>Positive</td>
<td>Performance &amp; Media</td>
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<td>Dropped from starting line-up</td>
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<td>Weather conditions</td>
<td>Relaxed / Unaffected</td>
<td>Positive or Neutral</td>
<td>Performance</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>‘Home as a fortress’</td>
<td>Slight concern</td>
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<td>Demand to win</td>
<td>Relaxed / Confident</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Positional change</td>
<td>Calm / Happy</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Return of goal kicking duties</td>
<td>Happy / Confident</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cup competition</td>
<td>Arrogant</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Positive reports</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Positive or Neutral</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Contemplating a loss</td>
<td>Anxious / Worry</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 PERFORMANCE STRESSORS

There were ten distinct performance stressors identified by the participant. These were further divided into competition, expectation and skill demands. The competition stressors were team selection, weather conditions (see appendix E6) and the type of fixture being played. The demands concerning expectations related to both the team and the player’s attitude towards the upcoming games or the season as a whole. The skill items revolved around the kicking duties of the participant.

4.2.1 COMPETITION DEMANDS

Team selection covered two issues: being dropped from the starting line-up and a change in position. The player was unhappy about the team selection when he found out he was not starting but was happy to go along with what the coach had said and interpreted the emotion positively (figure 4.1). His actions consisted of helping the team-mate (who had replaced him) in training and “taking a back seat”.

The subject found out about the change of position within forty-eight hours of the game (see appendix E11). His responses suggested that he was happy and remained calm. The interpretation was positive as the performer believed he was able to cope with the change of position from one that involves high volumes of pressure to one that contains intense pressure during the low number of involvements. As a consequence he was focused on his role.
PERFORMANCE STRESSOR
Being dropped from the starting line-up

COGNITION
“I had a text Wednesday (to say) I’m dropped.”

EMOTION
Disappointed

EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION
“Well I’m not happy with team selection this week.”
“When I had a text Wednesday I wasn’t the happiest of chaps.”

EMOTIONAL ORIENTATION
Positive

EXPLANATION FOR ORIENTATION
“I’ve spoken to the coaches and what he’s said…well I’m quite happy to go along with (it).”

BEHAVIOUR
“Last nights training because the other fly-half has only played quarter of an hour in the last two weeks, I just take it upon myself to just take a backwards seat.”
“We’d normally mix in just to go through stuff like I just said ‘well you (his team-mate) just do the whole session so you can get used to it (again)’.”

Figure 4.1. Response to the competition demand ‘being dropped’
The fixture type was substantial as the match following interview four was a cup competition against lower league opponents (figure 4.2). The performer reported that he felt arrogant, but interpreted this emotion as facilitative for performance. This was different to previous comments on other upcoming games in which he remarked at being confident. His behavioural intentions were to make sure that he performed well and to make a statement to the opposition. The team won by fifty points with the performer scoring high for both handling and kicking components (table 4.5).

4.2.2 EXPECTATION DEMANDS

The four demands relating to expectations consisted of pre-game anticipation, expectations for the season, a general demand to win and establishing ‘home as a fortress’. For the first two stressors, the performer was confident and excited with both items being interpreted positively (see appendix E1 & E5). The confidence was spreading amongst the squad and this was furthering expectations. As a consequence, the performer and his team were relaxed during the week, aware of when they needed “to get serious” for a game. The demand to win followed a similar path to the aforementioned expectations, as the subject was excited, confident and relaxed (figure 4.3). He interpreted these emotions as positive and expected the team to maintain their winning streak in the games ahead.

The target of winning all home games was a demand for the whole squad (see appendix E7). The ‘home as a fortress’ impression was a motivational tool used to enhance performance. The subject appeared slightly concerned by this goal due to the added pressure. The interpretation
was unclear, although, it could be inferred as negative because of this extra pressure. This possibility was amplified by the identification in a previous meeting that the team does not always perform well at home. The behaviour saw him focus on his personal performance and individual duties for every home game.

4.2.3 SKILL DEMANDS
The two skill-related stressors concerned the goal kicking duties. The first interview occurred at a time when the goal kicking responsibility was passed onto a team-mate (figure 4.4). The subject was happy for his team-mate to take on the role and interpreted the emotion as positive for his performance as it relieved some of the pressure following a rough couple of weeks kicking. In interview four, the goal kicking was returned to the participant as his team-mate was unavailable for the forthcoming game (figure 4.5). Once again, he reported emotions of happiness due to the demands being appraised as a challenge. So he was happy with both the loss and return of kicking duties. He interpreted the emotions positively because he practised his kicking more which resulted in greater confidence when the duties were returned.
**PERFORMANCE STRESSOR**  
Knock-out cup competition against lower league opposition with the opportunity to prove a point.

**COGNITION**  
“I think we all would like to really give them a stuffing because they’re top of (their league).”

**EMOTION**  
Arrogant

**EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION**  
“It’s more like an arrogance than a confidence kind of thing.”

**EMOTIONAL ORIENTATION**  
Positive

**EXPLANATION FOR ORIENTATION**  
“Yeah, they do (motivate us further).”  
“It’s like we know we’re the better team, we know we’ve got a better ability and I suppose being arrogant and going out there and just performing and showing that we’re better than them.”

**BEHAVIOUR**  
“(We’re) going there to make a point and a statement that you (the opposition) think you’re good enough but let’s see how good you are.”  
“You just want to perform (as a player from a higher league & therefore, put more effort in).”

---

**Figure 4.2.**  
Response to the competition demand ‘a cup game’
Figure 4.3. Response to the expectation demand 'to win'
Figure 4.4. Response to the skill demand 'losing kicking duties'
**PERFORMANCE STRESSOR**
Regaining goal kicking duties

**COGNITION**
“(I have) done a bit more kicking this week because (team-mate) can’t play…that’s influenced my performance.”

**EMOTION**
Happy / Confident

**EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION**
“I’m quite happy and quite confident with my kicking skills.”

**EMOTIONAL ORIENTATION**
Positive

**EXPLANATION FOR ORIENTATION**
“I would prefer to be kicking because it’s part of my game.”

**BEHAVIOUR**
“(I have) done a bit more kicking this week (during training).”

“I’m quite happy with how it will go on the weekend.”

“(I am) taking on one thing (goal-kicking duties) and losing the normal tactical kicking (related to the fly-half position).”

---

**Figure 4.5.** Response to the skill demand ‘regaining kicking duties’
4.3 ORGANISATIONAL STRESSORS
The three organisational demands were training issues that included attendance, facilities and times changing as a consequence of the weather (see appendix E2, E8 & E9). The emotional response suggested negative feeling states (concerned, frustrated and unsettled, respectively) with the direction interpreted as either neutral, negative or a combination. This was the only theme where the interpretations were all reported as neutral or below. There were connections with match-day performance for all of these stressors.

4.4 MEDIA STRESSORS
Media stressors are a type of organisational demand, but are reported separately due to the nature of the research design. There were nine media stressors in total, separated into four categories: post-game reflection (immediate), use of the reports ahead of the next game, consideration of negative information and other people’s statements.

4.4.1 POST-GAME REFLECTION
The post-game reflection came after the first game, a comprehensive win (figure 4.6). The respondent was pleased and content with the reports. These were interpreted as neutral because the performer highlighted that reflection had provided him with accurate feedback. This illustrates that the media did not influence behaviour on this occasion.
Figure 4.6. Response to the media demand ‘a fair report’
4.4.2 REFLECTION IN RELATION TO TRAINING & UPCOMING GAME

There were three responses related to this issue (figures 4.7 & 4.8 & appendix E3). The subject was happy and pleased with the reports ahead of the next game as an individual but showed concern with regards to the team’s overall reaction. He reported that he interpreted the emotions positively as he continued to focus on his own training. It was suggested that the behaviour was dependent on how everyone coped, highlighting that it could influence both training and performance.

4.4.3 NEGATIVE MEDIA

One of the negative media issues related to previous experience, whilst the other was looking into the future and contemplating the report if the team were to lose in the cup (figures 4.9 & 4.10, respectively). Both of these resulted in negative emotions of self-doubt and anxiety. The reflection on negative reports suggested that the performer had a fair amount of experience with these. For example, he contemplated the increase in media coverage if there was a cup upset.
Figure 4.7. Response to the media demand ‘a positive report’
Figure 4.8.  Response to the media demand ‘a positive report’
Figure 4.9. Response to the media demand ‘a negative report’
Figure 4.10. Response to the media demand ‘a negative report’
4.4.4 OTHER PEOPLE’S COMMENTS

These two demands varied considerably, one concerned his team-mate’s views in the post-game report whilst the other was an interview with the opponent’s Chairman (see appendix E4 & figure 4.11, respectively). He was happy with his team-mate’s write-up but was angry with the information from an opponent’s representative. However, both were interpreted positively as his team-mate recognised the contribution of the rest of the team and the Chairman’s comments gave him an extra edge for the fixture against that side. He accepted what was reported in the reviews and his behaviour corresponded with this.

4.5 MULTIPLE STRESSORS

There was one multiple demand reported. The team had a good home record and were in good form when the study started and were labelled by the media as ‘genuine title contenders’ (figure 4.12). The performer was excited as the whole squad believed in this and could not wait for the remaining games. His excitement was interpreted positively and his behaviour related to maintaining the good performances in the final fourteen matches.
MEDIA STRESSOR
Other people’s comments to the media

COGNITION
“There was one incident in the last game that we played, the (opponent’s) chairman did an interview at the start of the season, where he said ‘He wanted (them) to be top of the league, so far ahead by Christmas so that they could just put the league to one side’.”

EMOTION
Anger

EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION
“That’s just fuel to the fire.”

EMOTIONAL ORIENTATION
Positive

EXPLANATION FOR ORIENTATION
“Lets put this up on the wall and show people what he’s been saying and give the guys a bit of edge for the game (against them).”

BEHAVIOUR
“I just printed it out on a piece of paper and put it on the wall.”

“This is what their chairman has said… we’ve (got to) show them that they’re not (going to) do it!”

Figure 4.11. Response to the media demand ‘other people’s comments’
Figure 4.12. Response to the multiple stressor ‘genuine title contenders’
4.6 PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

The performance statistics for every game are included as they may act as an explanation for any of the differences reported above and will be identified in the discussion.

**Table 4.2.** Game number 1 – Standard performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain-line breaks:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicks to touch:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion/ Penalty/ Drop goal:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>1 (L53mP)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackle:</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Table 4.3.** Game number 2 – Introductory performance

<table>
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<th>Variables</th>
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<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain-line breaks:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicks to touch:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion/ Penalty/ Drop goal:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackle:</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date: 17-11-2007 - Substituted off: twenty-eight minutes into the second half.

Date: 01-12-2007 - Substituted off: twenty-eight minutes into the second half.
Table 4.4.  Game number 3

Date: 08-12-2007

Game postponed by the WRU due to weather and pitch conditions.

Table 4.5.  Game number 4 – Cup game

Date: 15-12-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain-line breaks:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicks to touch:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Conversion/ Penalty/ Drop goal:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>8 (C37mP) (C10mCo) (L18mCo) (C10mCo) (C10mCo) (R20mCo) (R23mCo)</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>2 (R25mCo) (R24mCo)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackle:</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
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</table>
### Table 4.6. Game number 5 – Standard performance

**Date:** 22-12-2007 - Substituted off: ten minutes into the second half.

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<th>Variables</th>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain-line breaks:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicks to touch:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion/ Crossbar/ Drop goal:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>1 (C35mDG)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackle:</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
**Appendix A. Definitions of the performance indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain-line breaks:</td>
<td>Gaining a position beyond the ‘gain line’ when running with the ball at the opposition. The imaginary ‘gain line’ is a horizontal line from left to right and runs through the middle point at the scrum and lineout; and in line with the ‘tackled’ player in a ruck or maul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling:</td>
<td><strong>Successful</strong> – A combination of passing and handling. The pass is successful when the pass gets to the intended target without going forward and in a good positioning for the team-mate to catch the ball. Handling is successful when the ball is caught without spilling it forward or losing it. As the player was a fly-half, one tally was given only when both the catch and pass were successful when the ball was offloaded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Unsuccessful</strong> – When the player throws a forward or poor pass which does not reach its target, when the ball is intercepted or when the ball is dropped by the performer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicks to touch:</td>
<td><strong>Successful</strong> – When a punt kick is perceived by the researcher to be aimed towards touch and does in fact reach touch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Unsuccessful</strong> – When the punt kick is perceived by the researcher to be aimed towards touch does not make it and remains in the field of play, or is sliced and does not reach its target.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Conversion/ Penalty/ Drop goal: | **Conversion** – A kick at goal after a try is scored, usually from a kicking tee or a small pile of sand.  
Penalty Kick – Following an infringement, a penalty kick is awarded and can be place kicked from any point directly behind where the penalty was awarded.  
Drop Kick – The player must intentionally drop the ball, let it fall to the ground and strike it at the point of rebound.  
Successful – When the ball is on target and passes above the crossbar and between the posts.  
**Unsuccessful** – When the kick is short, wide or blocked by the opposition (e.g., drop-kicks). |  |
| Try:                      | Tries are scored by grounding the ball in the opposition’s in-goal area.                                                                                                                                     |  |
| Tackle:                   | **Completed** - When a player carrying the ball in open play is held by one or more opponents so that while held, the player is brought to the ground, the ball comes into contact with the ground or the player is held up, thus, creating a maul. However, there is an exception. An attacker may release the ball during the contact before any of the above incidences occur. The initiation of physical contact cannot solely be used as criteria for a tackle.  
**Failed** – When the aforementioned types of tackling are attempted but the opposition player remains on his feet without a maul being formed, his stride is not broken or he passes the ball to a team-mate while the tackle is being attempted. |  |

Definitions adapted from:–

Appendix B. Final versions of the pre- and post-game interview guides

PRE-GAME INTERVIEW GUIDE

SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

Hello (name), Thank you for coming. This is interview (number). The purpose of this pre-game interview is to discuss your thoughts and feelings on the upcoming game, your thoughts and feelings on the media presented to you by the interviewer, and whether this has had any influence on your training or pre-game preparation.

Your personal information will be kept completely confidential. Your identity will be protected by ascribing to you a random number. This interview is being tape-recorded to ensure data collection is completely accurate and for verbatim transcription during data analysis.

You are a volunteer in this study, and therefore have the right to decline to answer any questions asked or to stop the interview at any time. If you do not feel comfortable answering a question, please state “no comment” and no further questions or probes will be asked regarding that area. If you wish to stop the whole interview, please state “stop interview”. I would appreciate it if you answer honestly and not give answers that you think I would like to hear or what other people might expect you to say. Take your time to answer questions as you may have to think back over the week gone in some detail.

You will be asked the same sequence of questions for every pre-game interview. You may be asked specific probes to expand on or to clear up certain statements. If at any time you are unsure during the interview, please ask for clarity from the interviewer. Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, then we shall start.
SECTION TWO – GENERAL QUESTIONS

2.1 How are you feeling today?

2.2 What are your feelings towards tomorrow’s game?

Probe: Are you excited about the game tomorrow? Can you elaborate why?

Probe: Is playing at home a factor? Why?

Probe: What are your thoughts on team selection?

Probe: How do you expect the team to perform? Why?

2.3 What has influenced your training during the week?

Probe: Why do you think this had an effect?

Probe: Why was this area of training / certain skill practice influenced?

SECTION THREE - THOUGHTS

3.1 You were presented with the match report on Sunday, how did you feel about that report?

Please observe and read carefully the (other) media presented to you about yourself and your team. Consider the strength of each piece of media with regards to the viewing public that have access to it.

3.2 What are your thoughts towards any of the media (specify if a number of pieces)?

3.3 Has there been anything that happened during the week that you feel has influenced your build up to the match?

Probe: So you are saying that sponsorship has taken your focus all week?
Probe: So you are saying that marital pressures have taken your focus all week?
Probe: So you are saying that a team mate dispute has taken your focus all week?
Probe: So you are saying that the negativity in the media has taken your focus all week?
Can you elaborate? Explain why?

Probe: Describe how this affected your preparation?
Probe: How do you think this will influence your performance?

SECTION FOUR – FEELINGS & EMOTIONS

4.1 Okay, you have identified .......... as possible demands, how do these make you feel emotionally?

Probe: Why does it create anger/anxiety/frustration/excitement?
Probe: Do the feelings experienced motivate you (further)?
Probe: It sounds like you were .......... (Clarification probe).
Probe: Why do you think this will anger your team-mates?
Probe: Why do you feel this is unfair?
Probe: What should the reports have focused on?

Probe: The emotion you have identified, how intense was it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extremely</th>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Quite</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-doubt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION FIVE – PERCEPTION

5.1 Do you think these thoughts and feelings are good or bad when considering your next performance?

Probe: Why do you feel positive/negative?
Probe: How does this make you feel regarding the media and its impacts on performers?
Probe: Would you prefer to have responded in a different manner?
Probe: So you were happy with your response to the reports?
Probe: Are you angered that it could have such a reaction?

SECTION SIX – TOMORROW’S GAME

6.1 Focusing more on tomorrow’s game now, have your feelings changed towards tomorrow’s game as a result of the time spent in this interview?

Probe: Why do you feel this is?
Probe: How do you want to respond as a result?

SECTION SEVEN – CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

7.1 Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Thank you for your time for today’s interview.
POST-GAME INTERVIEW GUIDE

SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

Hello (name), Thank you for coming. This is interview (number). The purpose of this post-game interview is to discuss your thoughts and feelings on your most recent game, your thoughts and feelings on the media presented to you by the interviewer, and whether this has had any influence on your own performance. You will also be presented with yesterday’s media reports from the newspapers published today.

Your personal information will be kept completely confidential. Your identity will be protected by ascribing to you a random number. This interview is being tape-recorded to ensure data collection is completely accurate and for verbatim transcription during data analysis.

You are a volunteer in this study, and therefore have the right to decline to answer any questions asked or to stop the interview at any time. If you do not feel comfortable answering a question, please state “no comment” and no further questions or probes will be asked regarding that area. If you wish to stop the whole interview, please state “stop interview”. I would appreciate it if you answer honestly and not give answers that you think I would like to hear or what other people might expect you to say. Take your time to answer questions as you may have to think back over the week gone in some detail.

You will be asked the same sequence of questions for every post-game interview. You may be asked specific probes to expand on or to clear up certain statements. If at any time you are unsure during the interview, please ask for clarity from the interviewer. Do you have any questions before we begin? Just before we begin, please think hard about your last match and the build up to it. Okay, then we shall start.
SECTION TWO – GENERAL QUESTIONS

2.1 How are you feeling today?

SECTION THREE – PERFORMANCE

Key: Include prompts from previous interview.

3.1 How do you feel your last game went?

Probe: So why do you think you performed poorly/well?
Probe: What, besides from the direct cues, were you thinking of whilst playing?
Probe: Why do you think you concentrated on that area?

3.2 Give a rating out of ten for your performance this week

3.3 Has there been anything that happened during the week that may have influenced your build up to the match? Was there anything that influenced your preparation or performance? (One or other)

Probe: So you are saying that family matters have taken your focus all week?
Probe: So you are saying that the comments of the media have taken your focus all week?

SECTION FOUR – MEDIA AND STRESS PROCESS

4.1 You were presented with media regarding you and your team on two occasions during the week and stated that it made you feel …(emotion)…… Did this impact on your performance or thoughts in any way?
4.2 How did it make you feel when you realised it was having an influence?

4.3 As a result how did you deal with it? Or indeed, did you deal with it?

4.4 How did you interpret your feelings/emotions? Facilitative? Debilitative?

4.5 Since your game, have any of your perceptions changed regarding your emotions that you reported in the pre-game interview? (refer to ratings in pre-game interview)

4.6 Did anything written in the media remain in your thoughts after leaving the pre-match interview?

Probe: For how long?
Probe: How did this make you feel?

SECTION FIVE – PERFORMANCE RATINGS

5.1 Here are your performance ratings for the game yesterday; can you explain these for me?
Probe: Why is this score so low?
Probe: You exceeded here, why do you feel this was?

5.2 Please can you rate the following items on a scale of 1-10, for how important they were to your performance.

- Significant others
- Score during game
- Media attention
- Team mates' contributions
SECTION SIX – MEDIA REPORT OF GAME

Here is the media’s view of the game yesterday – please read it carefully.

6.1 Does this affect anything we have just spoken about?

6.2 What are your thoughts concerning this piece?

6.3 What are your feelings concerning the reports?

6.4 How do you feel about training during the week and the game next weekend? Does this media report have any influence on those feelings?

Probe: How does it influence your thoughts/feelings?
Probe: Why do you feel it does not have an influence?

SECTION SEVEN – CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

7.1 Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Thank you for your time for today’s interview
APPENDIX C
### Appendix C. Performance analysis - data collection sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain-line breaks:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicks to touch:</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion/ Penalty/ Drop</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goal:</td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackle:</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D
Appendix D. Extract from interview 4

Researcher – Okay, okay that’s fine. Right okay, obviously we said…we said about has there been anything that influenced erm like training, erm personally for you, has there been anything that’s influenced like your build up to the match?

Subject 1 – Erm, done a bit more kicking this week, because erm (team-mate) can’t play erm that’s the only thing really that’s…that’s influenced my training.

Researcher – Okay, so obviously you’re going to be kicking erm tomorrow, okay, what are your thoughts on that?

Subject 1 – I’m quite…I’m quite happy you know. I was happy to pass it over to (team-mate) to kick for the last two games, but at the same time I would prefer to be kicking because its part of my game as well, and you know, maybe it does take a bit of pressure off myself but erm it possibly puts more pressure on me because if (team-mate) kicks that well it puts…when I come to kick it puts more pressure on me to come to the same standard so to speak.

Researcher – Okay so obviously, erm you’re kinda looking at there that you’ve kinda got to emulate erm his kicking success.

Subject 1 – Erm, yeah, you know. Erm, the coaches are obviously going to be keeping a close eye and that’s one of the things you know. Okay, maybe at (last opponents) it wasn’t that big a factor because we scored four tries and perhaps (team-mate) missed a few kicks where he wasn’t happy about. Erm, you know, the (late November) game he didn’t miss a kick, so erm yeah I suppose there is pressure there with that but I’m quite happy and quite confident now with my kicking skills and how it will go on the weekend.

Researcher – Okay, that’s good. So erm, obviously you’ve taken on an extra role or demand if you like and obviously you’re happy to do such so erm would you say you’re…you’re taking that in a positive light?

Subject 1 – Yeah, I suppose taking on an extra role but playing at fifteen as well it takes…some kicking roles are taken away from you so in…in a sense I’m taking on one thing and losing the normal tactical kicking side of things which I would normally do so erm its pretty much the same for…for me really.

Researcher – Okay, that’s fine. Okay so erm obviously you’ve taken on this extra demand, okay with regards to performance…

Subject 1 – Yeah.

Researcher – Do you see…see your performance this…tomorrow any differently?
Subject 1 – Erm, no. To be honest I think there...there’s less pressure on me tomorrow because erm I’m not playing in that ten role where you’re having to make decisions all the time constantly through the game whereas playing at full back you might get, I don’t know, half the amount of decisions to make but those are the more...in...in a sense more crucial because you’re the one that can see space and counter-attacking and where to kick the ball to and stuff like that.

Researcher – Okay, that’s fine. Okay. Okay and obviously how will you erm cope with that in the fact that obviously erm you know you have less decisions but they are perhaps more important? Is there anyway...

Subject 1 – Erm, I think it makes it easier for me because erm, one I’ll have more time back there to see things and to decide and to execute and erm...yeah so I’m quite happy with that...with that pressure or whatever.
Appendix E1. Response to the demand ‘pre-game expectations’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE STRESSOR</th>
<th>Pre-game expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COGNITION</strong></td>
<td>“It’s a game we can definitely win and a game we’re expected to win.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMOTION</strong></td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION</strong></td>
<td>“Amongst the players you can see in our team run that we’re quite confident.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIRECTION</strong></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPLANATION FOR DIRECTION</strong></td>
<td>“It’s really relaxed and we’re all just looking forward to the game.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BEHAVIOUR</strong></td>
<td>“Well most weeks in training the guys we’re all laughing, having a joke, chilling out you know, just everyone knows when we need to get serious, we get serious.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E2. Response to the demand ‘team-mates missing training’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANISATIONAL STRESSOR</th>
<th>Team-mates missing training as a consequence of other games being played.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COGNITION</td>
<td>“I suppose the Tuesday night session wasn't the best because the academy were playing as well and a few of the boys were playing for a county team.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMOTION</td>
<td>Slight concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION</td>
<td>“It could hinder our performance possibly but I wouldn’t expect it to.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIRECTION</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPLANATION FOR DIRECTION</td>
<td>“The backline hasn’t had that much time to prepare as we normally do.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEHAVIOUR</td>
<td>In response to the chances of team work possibly lacking on the weekend: “Yeah possibly. But most of the team was there.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-game - “Well, the things we went through on Tuesday, we actually got it wrong on the Saturday.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E3. Response to the demand ‘media report on domination’

MEDIA STRESSOR
Western Mail report on (his team’s) domination

COGNITION
“Well the last sixty minutes (we) probably dominated. The first twenty we weren’t too special to be honest.”

EMOTION
Pleased / Happy

EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION
“Our pack destroyed their pack so that was quite pleasing from our point of view.”

“Against a side that is renowned as a forward playing side and well (we) nullified their forwards so yeah, it’s quite pleasing.”

“We’re quite happy with how things turned out.”

DIRECTION
Positive

EXPLANATION FOR DIRECTION
“It’s just an eye-opener for us where we can really improve (in training & on match-days).”

BEHAVIOUR
“I don’t think they were anywhere near us to be honest.”

“If we stick to our second half performance (by continuing the hard work in training) we’ll be beating better sides by the same amount.”
Appendix E4. Response to the demand ‘team-mate’s views in media’

**MEDIA STRESSOR**  
South Wales Echo report – Team-mate’s views

**COGNITION**  
“This one’s probably more got the feelings of one of our players.”

**EMOTION**  
Happy

**EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION**  
“Yeah it was nice that he’s recognising the people around him.”

**DIRECTION**  
Positive

**EXPLANATION FOR DIRECTION**  
“He’s hit the nail on the head with everything he’s said so yeah it’s quite a positive piece.”  
“You (have) got to recognise that you’ve got fourteen other guys around you that are helping you as well so it’s nice to be recognised.”

**BEHAVIOUR**  
“We were pretty good, but you know that first twenty minutes was where we’ve got to nail it down (and put the work & effort into training and matches to correct this).”
Appendix E5. Response to the demand ‘team expectations’

PERFORMANCE STRESSOR
Team Expectations

COGNITION
“I think all the guys, all the players, and all the coaches are now expecting us to win games.”
“(We) should be title challengers with the money and recruitment.”

EMOTION
Excited

EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION
“(I’m) quite looking forward to it.”

DIRECTION
Positive or Neutral

EXPLANATION FOR DIRECTION
“(I’m) quite looking forward to it.”
“I don’t think it adds any pressure to the players.”

BEHAVIOUR
“Things are starting to change (in relation to a more professional attitude).”
“(Focusing upon the) chance to do a double over the side (the upcoming opposition) because we beat them first game of the season.”
“If we don’t win the title or end up in that top two-three places it’ll be classed as a failure by us (so we must continue to push ourselves).”
Appendix E6. Response to the demand ‘weather conditions’

PERFORMANCE STRESSOR
Weather conditions

COGNITION
“The weather isn’t helping.”

EMOTION
Relaxed / Unaffected

EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION
“It’s just the same as last week you know, it was chucking it down most of the game last week (laugh) so, the guys are quite used to it now.”

DIRECTION
Positive or Neutral

EXPLANATION FOR DIRECTION
As the conditions were “just the same as last week” and the team won then the performer was not overly concerned and knew the team could compete and perform in those conditions.

BEHAVIOURAL OUTCOME
“(We’ve) just (got to) crack on and get on with it (and perform like last week).”
Appendix E7. Response to the demand ‘home as a fortress’

**PERFORMANCE STRESSOR**
Home as a fortress

**COGNITION**
“We set ourselves a target at the start of the year (to) make home a fortress and we don’t lose any games home.”

**EMOTION**
Slight concern

**EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION**
“(It) puts pressure on ourselves maybe, but the home games are what people would call bankers.”

**DIRECTION**
Positive or Negative

**EXPLANATION FOR DIRECTION**
“(It) puts pressure on ourselves.”

“We set ourselves (the) target.”

**BEHAVIOURAL OUTCOME**
“Home games are the ones you have to win (and the team would do everything they could to make sure of it on match day).”
Appendix E8. Response to the demand ‘training facilities’

**ORGANISATIONAL STRESSOR**
Training facilities

**COGNITION**
“When we play home it’s like playing away for us because we never train there.”

**EMOTION**
Nonchalant / Relaxed / Frustrated

**EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION**
“It’s quite frustrating for everyone really.”

“It doesn’t bother me to be honest.”

**DIRECTION**
Came across as neutral for the subject, but potentially negative for his teammates.

**EXPLANATION FOR DIRECTION**
“It doesn’t bother me to be honest because I can go down there whenever and just practice kicking.”

“The expectation might hinder their performance.”

**BEHAVIOURAL OUTCOME**
“(There’s) nothing that can (be done) about it (so we just have to get on with it and concentrate on what is within our control).”
Appendix E9. Response to the demand ‘training time changes’

**ORGANISATIONAL STRESSOR**
Changes to training times

**COGNITION**
“The pitches are waterlogged (so) we had to train at half four instead of half five.”

**EMOTION**
Distracted

**EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION**
“I’ve got to finish earlier from work and things like that which is quite distracting more than anything else because you know you’ve (got to) change things on the spot.”

**DIRECTION**
Negative or Neutral

**EXPLANATION FOR DIRECTION**
“To keep everyone happy which relatively you don’t keep everyone happy because someone’s (going to) get annoyed.”

“Well my boss can get annoyed because I’ve got to leave work early (and this will influence our working relationship).”

**BEHAVIOURAL OUTCOME**
“You know you’ve got to crack on and get on with it.”

“It’s just one of those things (laugh) that you can’t help.”
Appendix E10. Response to the demand ‘previous match reports’

**MEDIA STRESSOR**
Previous match reports

**COGNITION**
“We’re getting recognition that we are a good side.”

**EMOTION**
Happy / Pleased

**EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION**
“They’re all quite positive in what they’re saying so I’m quite happy.”
“It’s quite pleasing to see people recognising us as a title challenger.”
“It’s quite pleasing as well that the guys are praising their team-mates as well.”

**DIRECTION**
Positive

**EXPLANATION FOR DIRECTION**
“I think they’re all quite positive.”

**BEHAVIOURAL OUTCOME**
“We’re getting recognition that we are a good side but I suppose it depends on how everyone reacts to it.”
“How the players react to that, people saying that.”
Appendix E11. Response to the demand 'change of position'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE STRESSOR</th>
<th>Change of position to full-back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COGNITION</td>
<td>“Instead of playing fly-half I’m going to be playing full-back.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s changed in the last twelve hours to where I’m playing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMOTION</td>
<td>Calm / Happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPLANATION FOR EMOTION</td>
<td>“It doesn’t really bother me because I’ve played there plenty of times so yeah (I’m) quite happy.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIRECTION</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPLANATION FOR DIRECTION</td>
<td>“There’s less pressure because I’m not playing in that ten role where you’re having to make decisions all the time through(out) the game.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEHAVIOURAL OUTCOME</td>
<td>In relation to more decision making: “(I will) have more time back there to see things, to decide and to execute.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“(Although you have) half the amount of decisions to make, those are the more crucial because you’re the one that can see space and counter-attacking and where to kick.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>