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SOURCES OF ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL STRESS IN
SUB-ELITE MALE AND FEMALE TENNIS PLAYERS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to gain an insight into the organisational and personal issues that may arise prior to competition and uncover whether they could be viewed as stressors. The study aims to build on existing research done in relation to elite performers and extend this research to include the organisational and personal factors recognised by sub elite tennis players. Eight sub elite tennis players were interviewed with regard to potential sources of organisational and personal stress. Content analysis of the data involved categorising the demands into general dimensions. Five main organisational stress issues were examined: Factors intrinsic to the sport, Roles in the sport organisation, Sport relationships and interpersonal demands, Athletic career and performance development issues and organisational structure and climate of the sport. The main personal stress issues were: Work related issues and social issues. Analysis revealed that the main sources of organisational stress were: training, travel, nutrition, injuries, roles, coaching style, team atmosphere, funding, goals and expectations, selection process and communication. The main sources of personal stress were: university workload, time constraints, fear of letting significant others down, social ties, and the ratings system. The findings indicate that sub elite tennis players experience both organisational and personal stressors prior to competition. However, responses varied between participants which indicated that individual differences were apparent in this study.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Sport in the new millennium is firmly established as a global industry (Fletcher, Hanton & Mellalieu, 2006). Spurred on by national pride, sport has successfully traversed almost every border to influence the lives of nearly everyone on the planet (Fletcher et al., 2006). The ability to cope with intense stress and anxiety is an integral part of all competitive sport, particularly at the highest levels (Hardy et al., 1997). The following statement from an elite performer clearly indicates that she was experiencing considerable stress and anxiety:

“I know I’ll probably regret the decision to quit competitive swimming for the rest of my life, but I just couldn’t afford to carry on..... We were told about the changes in lottery funding just before the nationals. You don’t need that sort of pressure..... When they first started paying me lottery money, I thought I would be looked after through to the Olympics, so I put my education on hold. Now I have no swimming career, no qualifications and..... I’ll never know what its like to go to the Olympics (Linda Hindmarsh, ex international British swimmer, quoted in Downes, 1999, p.13)”.

Stress is an ongoing transaction between the environmental demands and an individuals resources, with strain resulting from an imbalance between these demands and resources (Fletcher & Hanton, 2005). Stress cannot be eliminated but we can learn to recognise and cope with it (Jenson, 2001). The study of stress has been and continues to be of heuristic value to the sports sciences (Hanton et al., 2005). The vague rhetoric often surrounding the study of stress is perhaps best illustrated by the broad use of the terms ‘competition stress’ and ‘noncompetition stress’ (Fletcher et al., 2006). Fletcher and Hanton (2003) argued that the latter term is too imprecise to adequately contribute to theory and practice and does little to capture the essence of the stress experience. To this end they proffered the terms competitive stress, organisational stress and personal stress to conceptually differentiate between major categories of stress in sport performers.

This study concentrates on organisational and personal stress with the main focus being on organisational stress in tennis players. My interest in the area comes from the fact that I am a sub elite tennis player and have played tennis since I was a junior and have experienced various stressors over the years I have been playing. 'Stressors' refer to events, situations, or conditions and an individual's negative response to these stressors result in 'strain' (Mellalieu et al., 2006). Therefore, I wanted to delve further into this area and see if other performers experienced similar demands or uncover any new issues that the performer considers stressful.

Travel, media, family, fame, managing injury and playing matches are some of the stressful situations professional tennis players encounter every day (Jenson, 2001). An example of a player who experienced such stressors was the rising young tennis star James Blake who showed courage and determination when faced with difficult personal challenges. In 2004 Blake fractured his neck in a freak accident on the tennis court. Blake explained, 'Listening to their possibly empty reassurances, I felt like a guy from a war movie who is about to expire, but all his buddies comfort him by whitewashing the grim reality.' A few months later, as he was recovering from his injury, he suffered another heart stopping setback when his father lost his battle with stomach cancer. Blake recalled 'the idea of working out or playing tennis seemed like a joke.' Shortly after his fathers death he suffered a third blow when he contracted zoster, a rare virus which threatened to end his already jeopardized tennis career. The following quote illustrates the frustration Blake felt and the realisation of his illness:

"That was the first time when I really came to recognise the limits of willpower and resolve. I would have been happy to have come off court with a good workout under my belt, but my shirt wasn't even damp. Frustrated and discouraged, I got in my car, drove home, turned on Saturday night live, and plopped on the sofa, and didn't laugh at all." (Blake, 2007, p.130)

A recent interview on Daniela Hantuchova conducted by the Independent newspaper revealed external stressors such as media pressure to look good and a lifetime commitment to the sport. The following quotes illustrate this:

"I think that there is way too much emphasis on the way we look in sport in general. With the guys nobody bothers, except to say that Ronaldo has got a little bit heavy or something. But with the women, there is too much. Everyone has a different shape. People should focus only on the game."

"Yes, but I don't think about money. And anyway I don't think the rewards in tennis are too big. Basically, you have to give up everything else in your life. You talk about winning Grand Slams. That's not a job from 8am to 4pm that means you have to be committed 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

The above examples are just a few organisational stressors experienced by sports performers. There is increasing evidence to suggest that organisational stress is an important issue in elite sport (Hanton et al., 2005). In his personal reflections on performance and business, Jones (2002) concluded that organisational issues probably have the greatest impact of any single factor on performance. In a similar vein Fletcher and Hanton (2003) speculated that elite athletes experience more stressors associated primarily and directly with the sport organisation than with competitive performance. However, there has been very little research conducted in the area of organisational stress in sport, despite repeated calls for research, psychologists understanding of this area remains limited. The distinction between competitive and organisational stress has emerged in the research but there is little research to distinguish between organisational and personal stress. This study attempts to build a foundation on which further research can develop.

In view of our rather scant knowledge of organisational stress in sport, this study is best suited to a qualitative methodology. One of the main advantages of qualitative research is that it allows researchers to gain an in depth understanding of the participants (Woodman & Hardy, 2001). The purpose of this study is to gain an insight into the organisational and personal issues that may arise prior to competition and undercover whether they could be viewed as stressors.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

Methodological Approach

A qualitative approach was chosen for this particular study because of the nature of the research question. In a qualitative study, the research question often starts with a 'how' or 'what' so that initial forays into the topic describe what is going on (Creswell, 1998). There has been limited research in the area of organisational stress in a sport setting and there is no current research on personal stressors. Therefore, this particular study has the objective of exploring the topic in greater detail and finding out information that could aid others in the future. By using a qualitative design it enables the researcher to present a detailed view of the topic (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative researchers remain open to the unexpected and are willing to change the direction or focus of a research project therefore providing flexibility within the study (Neuman, 2006).

Participants

Eight sub-elite tennis performers (four men and four women) were selected to participate in the study. When selecting participants, the major consideration was that they were current members of a university team and played competitive fixtures regularly for that team. A second consideration involved selecting participants who had different experiences of the sport organisation (e.g. length of time involved with the organisation). Participants ranged in age between 18 and 22 (Mean = 20, SD = 1.46) and had an average of 13 years (SD = 3.98) of tennis experience between them. All participants provided written informed consent prior to the start of the interviews. Upon meeting the interviewer, participants were reminded that any information discussed would remain anonymous. However participants were encouraged to delve further back into their involvements with tennis and so a wide range of issues could be investigated.

Procedure

A standardised interview format was used which involved participants being taken through an identical set of questions by the interviewer. The individual interview is recognised for its ability to elicit more personal experiences that would not be easily shared within a group situation (Bernard, 1988). Despite being structured, the questions were designed in order to allow the participant to expand on them and explore relevant issues. This flexibility enhanced the fluency of the interview and allowed the participants time to think about their answers and expand on them (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003). Probes were established to ensure that responses were as consistent as possible in terms of depth and complexity (Patton, 1990). These included statements like, “What effect did that have?” or a clarification probe such as “Would you consider this a demand?” At the end of each section, participants were asked whether there was anything else they would like to add concerning what had just been discussed. All of the interviews were conducted face to face by the researcher and were tape recorded in their entirety. The recordings were then transcribed to allow for closer analysis. Interviews ranged from 35 minutes to 75 minutes in duration. This range reflects the performer’s different ways of expressing themselves (Woodman & Hardy, 2001).

Interview Guide

In order to fully investigate the research question and facilitate the interview process, an interview guide was developed. The interview guide was prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed (Patton, 2002). The interview guide was based on both Woodman and Hardy’s (2001) and Fletcher and Hanton’s (2003) interview guide on sources of organisational stress in elite performers. The questions were then adapted to suit the research question of this study. The participants were asked to discuss their experiences in competing for their university or club and how they perceived

certain stressors prior to competition. The first five sections of the interview guide were based on organisational stress and followed Fletcher and Hanton's (2003) framework which consisted of: Factors intrinsic to the sport, roles in the sport organisation, sport relationships and interpersonal demands, athletic career and performance development issues and organisational structure and climate of the sport.

A section was added at the end of the interview guide on personal stressors which dealt with issues such as family, friends and relationships and how these may affect performance. Udry et al., (1997), found that negative parental influence was cited by 90% of tennis performers and negative coach influences was identified by 70% of participants. Therefore this study intends to build on this knowledge. Currently there is no theoretical framework for personal stressors therefore this was developed to explore these issues and the problems that arise. The final section of the interview guide was used as a bias and concluded the interview by making some sort of comparison between and across the issues of organisational and personal stressors.

Pilot Study

A pilot study of the interview guide was conducted on one sub elite tennis performer within the university network. The purpose of this interview was to make sure the questions covered all the issues that might contribute to the topic and to help the interviewer practice their interview technique (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003). As a result of the interview certain problems were brought to the attention of the researcher and the appropriate steps were taken to solve them.

Data Analysis

All eight transcribed interviews were analysed using content analysis. Content analysis is most often used for descriptive purposes (Neuman, 2006) which is why it was chosen for this study. This involved sorting the information into meaningful segments of text that were related to organisational stress. These were labeled under five main categories: Factors intrinsic to the sport, Roles in the sport organisation, Sport relationships and Interpersonal demands, Athletic career and performance development issues and Organisational structure and climate of the sport. The information was then presented in the form of hierarchical trees. Woodman and Hardy (2001) explained that if interview transcriptions are simply reduced into textual summaries and subsequently inserted into a hierarchical tree, the very essence of qualitative research would largely be lost. Therefore, the present investigation reported the traditional hierarchical trees in order to illustrate the array of issues involved. However, a considerable amount of data was reported in the form of direct quotes in order to gain an in depth understanding of the participants. As there is no current theoretical framework for personal stressors it was necessary to create themes that were most consistent with the answers given.

Reliability means dependability or consistency (Neuman, 2006). It is important to be consistent in how observations are made. This study attempted to increase reliability by taking measures such as conducting a pilot study in order to test the methods used and ensure it was clear and understandable. Validity was maintained by making sure the study gave a fair, honest and balanced account of participant's viewpoints (Neuman, 2006).

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The results derived from the data analysis procedures represent the collated interview responses from all eight participants. The organisational stressors being: Factors intrinsic to the sport, Roles in the sport organisation, Sport relationships and interpersonal demands, Athletic career and performance development issues and organisational structure and climate of the sport are displayed in figure one. The two general dimensions for personal stressors are Work related issues and Social issues and are displayed in figure two. Although these trees display the full range of issues, the true intricate and complex nature of organisational stress would mostly be lost if the presentation of the data were restricted to such trees (Woodman & Hardy, 2001). Therefore, a selection of direct quotations were depicted from the transcripts which has the considerable advantage of allowing the quotes to “speak for themselves”, thus enabling the reader to understand fully the issues involved (Woodman & Hardy, 2001).

Factors Intrinsic to the sport

The full range of these factors can be seen in figure one. The issues mentioned by the participants included: Training, standard of the opposition, lack of instruction regarding diet, lack of knowledge regarding injuries, traveling long distances, management and professionalism of the organisation, insufficient recovery from training and worries about what others think. The main issue that arose from this section was related to travel. Travel was mentioned by all participants as a source of organisational stress. Travel appeared to frustrate most participants due to the amount of time it took to get to places. The following quote from a male athlete illustrated the frustration that’s caused through lengthy journeys:

“It takes the whole day out and when you have work to do you just want to play tennis and that will be it instead of having to travel two hours here and there and its always rush hour when you leave places as well so it takes a bit longer to get

home..... I haven't got that sort of time to give all the time and I have university commitments with work and so it can be a bit stressful".

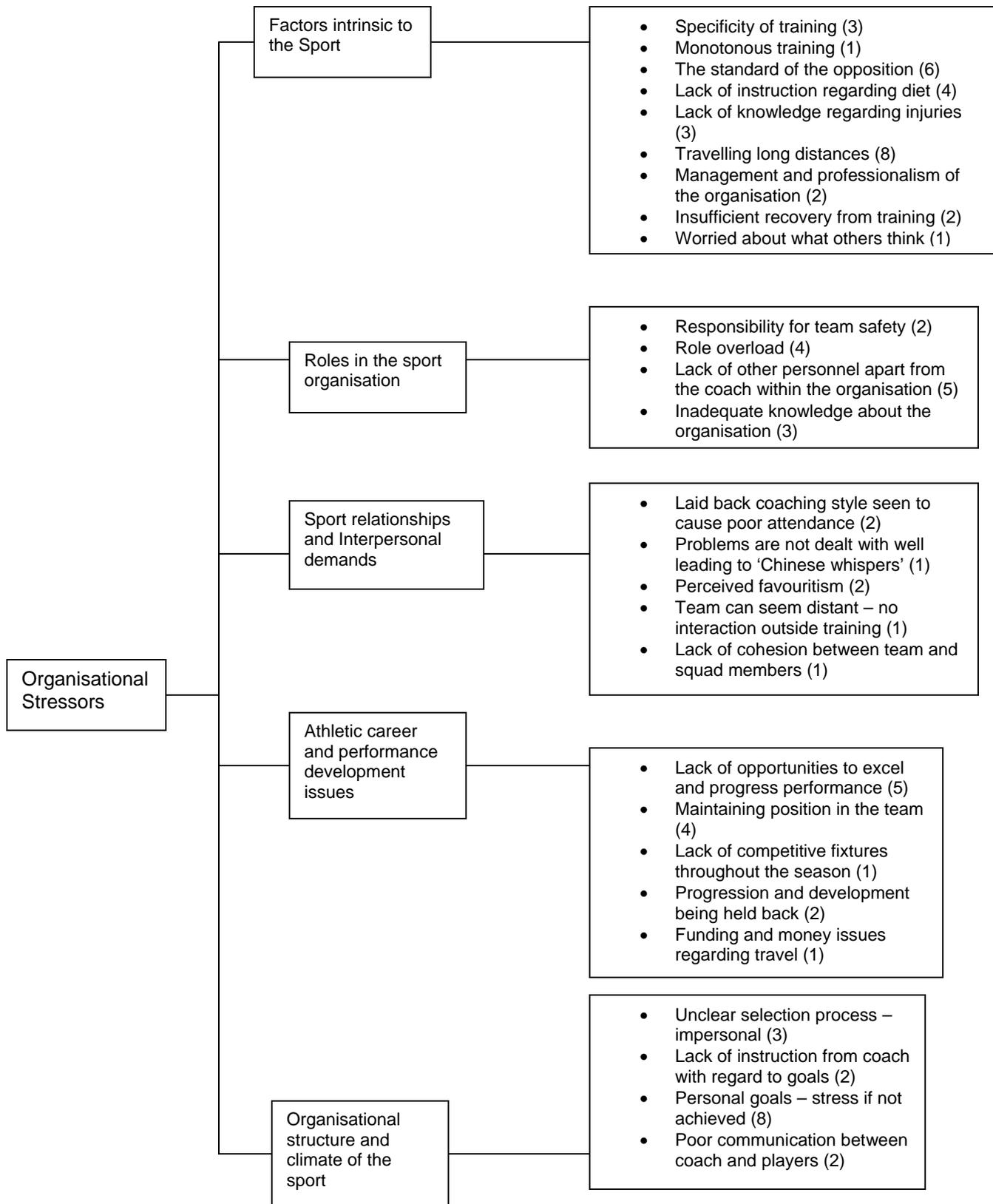


Figure one: Organisational Stressors

Another participant who also found travel stressful took a different view to the one above:

“Yeah the traveling long distance makes me quite fatigued and is quite tiring and you come out of the car already sore and stiff and not really up for it..... it can be quite stressful if you have to navigate and get lost. You need to be on time for the match obviously when the times approaching it can be quite stressful if your still looking around the city or town”.

It seems travel for these participants is particularly important as it can have a detrimental affect on performance if perceived as stressful. The following quote illustrates this:

“Sometimes you get out of the car and your quite tight and already quite tired and you obviously want to win your matches so sometimes you might feel a little bit negative because you just want to go on court and play well but your feeling a little bit stiff and you have just driven and your heads a little bit tired. So sometimes it would be nice to have a little bit of extra time to get prepared”.

While travel is clearly frustrating to the athlete, poor structure and a lack of specificity in training also caused stress to the participants. Both the structure and specificity of training were important issues to the participants due to the fact that when training became monotonous frustration and boredom kicked in. Also insufficient recovery time from training proved an issue for one participant. This is apparent in the quote below:

“I don't like to train the day before competition..... I just don't like..... I always get a bit sore especially last season when we did match specific training before. Serving and stuff made my arm sore so I had to rest up”.

A few participants mentioned a lack of specificity in training as a potential stressor. The following quote illustrates this:

“I have had very little match practice and so when I go into BUSA on a Wednesday matches are so totally different to training and when I’m on court this can often lead to me getting very stressed and not knowing what to do in a certain situation like break points or serving for the match”.

The tennis structure and organisation was mentioned by one participant who felt that the way the organisation is run reflects the results the team achieves:

“If you were to see other universities and how they do their tennis structure, like the top universities in Britain, theirs would be completely different in that they are more organised and a bit more professional. Although they might have players that have played at a higher level I think our university should be considered one of the top universities for tennis because we have such great facilities and stuff but I think the management and the professionalism of how everything’s dealt with is a little bit..... It’s not as good as other universities!”

Other minor issues that were brought up included lack of instruction regarding diet and a lack of knowledge of injuries sustained. The following quote suggests that the way injuries are dealt with can cause pressure on the individual and a lack of sensitivity on behalf of coaches and players can exacerbate the problem:

“I just think sometimes you are pressured possibly into playing when you are injured. I don’t know whether that’s a coach thing or pressure on the team because they want us to win but you know its only university tennis so if we are injured we should take a step back because you don’t want to be long term injured.”

In terms of diet most participants found it a demand that there was not a plan in place and would like this implemented:

“I would personally like or certainly wouldn’t object to any sort of dietary or nutritional information because it’s probably something that I could really improve in my lifestyle and probably a lot of other students as well.....I certainly think that eating the right foods at the right time and making sure your hydrated as well throughout the match. I think that could have a significant effect on performance.”

The difficulties of creating the right environment for participants to compete under proved an issue for on particular participant who had issues about what others thought. This caused stress to the participant who explained:

“I can get quite nervous and quite worried about what people think and how I should do and if I feel I should win and I start playing badly then I worry. So if I go into a match thinking I should be doing well then it does worry me.”

Roles in the sport organisation

The main issues that were apparent in this section included: Responsibility for team safety, role overload, lack of any other personnel apart from the coach within the organisation, and an inadequate knowledge about the organisation. The responsibility for team safety proved an issue for one participant who perceived this as demanding:

“It is quite demanding because you have to get your team back safely and you could be tired you know and weather conditions as well aren’t nice to drive in..... It can be stressful.”

Some of the participants who had taken on extra responsibilities had often found it too much and felt it became a demand, for example:

“There are demands with it, like having an extra job to playing tennis. It’s not always what you want when you have other things to do. As they are quite stressful years.”

Due to the small size of the organisation communication between the coach and players should not be a problem. By ensuring players have an understanding of the organisation they are able to contribute fully to their role in that organisation. A lack of knowledge of the organisation from the participants was an issue in that many participants found it stressful that they did not understand what was going on with regard to other bodies that aided the organisation and how it was run. The following quote illustrates this:

“Yeah kind of because I don’t really know what the AU does really..... It’s just I don’t really understand if something’s not done and you don’t know why.”

All participants felt that a lack of any other personnel aiding the team was a stressor for example one participant explained:

“It can be a demand because the players have to go and do it themselves and figure it out themselves and what kind of fitness they need. It can be stressful to motivate myself to get to the gym and then having to think about a structure of what I’m going to do.”

Sports relationships and Interpersonal demands

The main issues that can be seen within this section are: coaching style, problems dealt with badly, perceived favouritism and a lack of cohesion. These issues were apparent in most participants’ answers. Most participants felt that the laid back coaching style hindered their development and they did not feel ‘pushed’ in training. The results emphasised the need for a strategy to increase

motivation to attend training and ensure players strive towards a common goal. The following quote illustrates the degree to which participants feel a sense of hopelessness and frustration when it comes to training:

“Hardly anyone goes which means there are not enough people to play against or the training session has to be adapted on that specific day which might not have been accounted for by the coach. If there is someone who’s there that might not be the same standard as you or the same ability you don’t get the hitting that you want from training. You’re not pushed.”

Support issues were related to a lack of team cohesion outside of training. From the results it can be seen that having a strong social support network provides the athlete with a sense of belonging within the team. The following quote illustrates the lack of team cohesion:

“Sometimes it seems a bit distant you only really see people at training or at matches. There are occasional socials but then again not everyone makes those so you don’t really build up friendships with people outside of the training sessions.”

In addition greater support amongst older members of the squad was raised as an issue in that it might be difficult for new team members to integrate into a team that has been together for a long period of time:

“There is probably a greater support among team members and so there are the odd squad members who may feel left out”

Team members are likely to have fall outs when they spend long periods of time together and friction between players can cause a bad atmosphere within the team. One participant felt the way problems were dealt in the team needed

attention as they can cause stress for team members. The following quote illustrates this:

“I don’t think its dealt with very good a lot of the times there’s a lot of Chinese whispers and people saying stuff but they don’t want to say it to the person they should be saying it to.....I just think there should be a bit more confidence and a bit better relationship between the coach and the team players.”

Athletic career and performance development issues

The issues that were identified in this section were: Lack of opportunity to excel, maintaining your position in the team, lack of competitive fixtures, funding and money issues and being held back. Most participants found maintaining their position in the team a demand, the following quote illustrates this:

“Yeah I think it’s quite stressful to sort of maintain your position in the team or really try and prove yourself but wherever you’re placed that sort of puts you in a niche where you have to perform to certain criteria whether you’re at number one or four.”

Another quote from a female participant illustrates the lack of opportunity to excel within the organisation:

“There is an opportunity to improve but I wouldn’t say excel. Within training the coach definitely comes over and helps you with a forehand, serve or backhand but there’s not enough time in training or players to be able to hit with people and excel to your full potential.”

Funding and money was not a common stressor for most participants and was only mentioned by one participant in this study. Athletes commit many years of their life to their sport and often don’t have time to earn money outside training

therefore funding can be stressful to the individual if it is not forthcoming. The following quote illustrates this:

“Sometimes I think there’s a pressure with funding with the LTA if you don’t win matches or if you don’t keep up your performance aspect your funding can be dropped so that sometimes was quite a big pressure because obviously if you don’t win matches and you don’t get the funding to keep playing and you don’t have enough money to travel then that’s quite stressful because you wonder what your going to do next.”

The final issue mentioned was a lack of competitive fixtures throughout the season. In order for the player to improve it is essential to play competitive matches against other players as suggested in the following quote:

‘I don’t think there is enough regular opportunity for us to excel with matches only sort of occurring once a week for quite a short period of the year..... It would be nice to maybe have a few more matches towards the latter stages of the year.’

Organisational structure and climate of the sport

The main issues apparent within this section were: Lack of instruction from coach with regard to goals, unclear selection process, poor communication and stress if goals are not achieved. The selection process can be seen to cause stress to some players in that lack of clarity can increase the likelihood of bad feelings within the squad and cause stress if the team is unclear. The following quote illustrates this:

“Sometimes you just won’t know whether you’re playing. I think there was an issue a couple of weeks ago with the girls number four..... She was going to play but then turned out her wrist hurt so we came to the match not knowing we had a fourth player but then one of the other girls rocked up but the coach hadn’t

let me know who was playing. So that was quite stressful because I was like ‘oh my god are we going to have a team!!!!’ So knowing the next day isn’t the best organisation.”

Other issues such as goals were mentioned by most participants as a demand in that when goals are not achieved it causes stress to the individual. For example:

“Yea I’m the type of person who doesn’t tend to be happy unless I really achieve what I want to so therefore if I come off the court losing to someone I knew I really should have beaten and you know its because I can attribute it to something I did wrong then I would certainly get annoyed with myself.”

In relation to goals another issue brought up by some participants was a lack of instruction by the coach, ‘personally I don’t think there are any goals which I think there should be goals’. Most participants wanted instructions regarding goal setting and felt it a stressor when there was nothing to aim for, ‘it would make you more focused sometimes we put a lot of demands on ourselves.’

The final issue to be looked at is the communication within the organisation, one participant explained, ‘I think if the communication was improved between the AU, coach, the SU and the players it would just be a bit easier knowing.’

Personal Stress

The full range of personal issues can be seen in figure 2. The major personal issues came under two categories: work related issues and social issues.

Work related issues

The major issues mentioned by participants were: university workload, time constraints and job commitments. The main issue that all participants found stressful was trying to juggle university work and tennis especially when deadlines were looming. The following quote illustrates this:

“As work is getting increasingly important and there is more deadlines to meet I know I will particularly find this stressful as already the last few weeks I haven’t been to training because I have had work to be handed in.”

Managing time effectively in order to fit in both university work and tennis commitments proved difficult and the following quote suggested it had an effect on performance:

“Yeah definitely I do think when I’m playing say I have a deadline in a couple of days I will be thinking about it during my match so although it might not effect my actual performance result my timing might be a little off and I wont be concentrating on tennis I’ll be thinking ‘oh my god when am I going to write this section.’ It doesn’t normally affect my result but will have affected the way I have played and I will be a bit annoyed at that. I also rush more so we can finish earlier and try and get home maybe do a bit of work but that’s not the ideal situation you want to be in.”

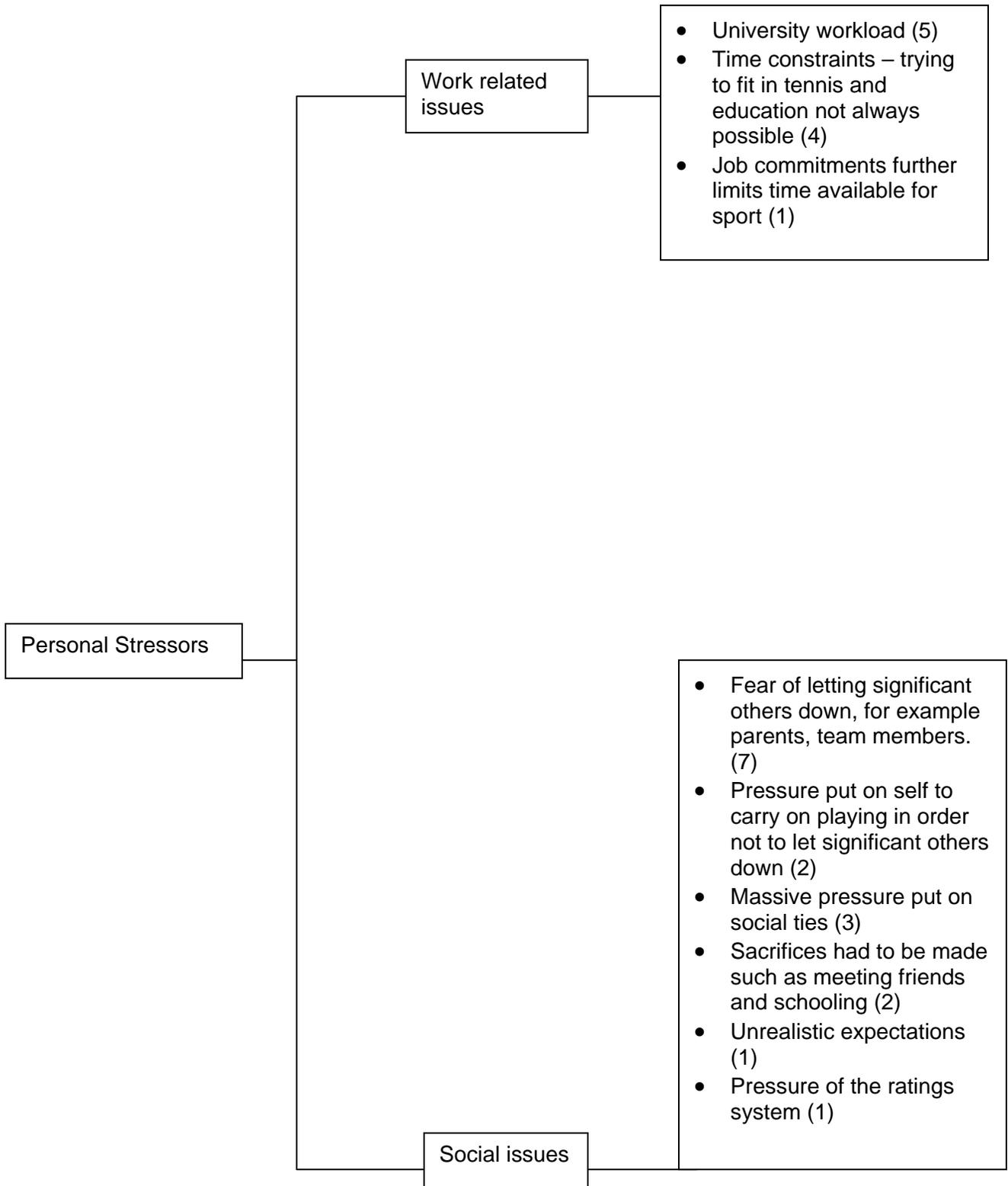


Figure two: Personal Stressors

Other issues such as time constraints and job commitments were also mentioned as demands. One participant felt that trying to fit in university work, tennis and a job proved very demanding and struggled to fit in tennis due to time constraints which inevitably effected performance:

“Like I’ve been saying with university work having to be prioritised and this inevitably means training sessions would be missed and you were just relying on sometimes just turning up once a week in a match situation without any training that week. It certainly does affect your performance.”

Social issues

The major social issues apparent in this section were: Fear of letting significant others down, massive pressure put on social ties, unrealistic expectations, and pressure of the ratings system. The issue that was most prevalent was a fear of letting significant others down especially parents. The following quote demonstrates this:

“If we had traveled two to three hours to try and get to the tournament or competition and I know my mum and dad had maybe taken the day off work to come with me then yeah I’d be worried about letting them down”

Most participants felt that tennis had a big impact on their social lives growing up and maybe missed out on things, for example, the following participant explained:

“When I was younger obviously I was really good and I was on the way to being one of the top tennis players in Britain and I decided to leave school at 15 and I didn’t do my GCSE’s so that had a massive impact on my social life because obviously at first all my girlfriends were like ‘oh we will catch up every weekend

don't worry'. Then I moved to Cardiff and it completely changed..... I found it difficult to maintain my friendships with my girlfriends which was quite hard because it's so difficult to have a life and not be really close to your friends and stuff."

Other issues include one participant taking a few years out of tennis due to frustration in his own ability and an unrealistic assumption of his ability level:

"I took a few years out of tennis..... Just because I wasn't getting any better and was getting too annoyed. I wasn't enjoying it. I probably thought I was better than I really was."

Also, another participant felt that the ratings system put a massive pressure on them to win and to perform. This system meant the performer was under constant pressure to keep playing matches in order to maintain the rating they were at. The following quote illustrates this:

"Yeah because the system such as the ratings there's pressure there to either stay in the same rating or go up a rating and to do that you have to play certain matches and a certain amount of matches to go up which means playing every weekend or playing tournaments as much as possible."

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

The study shows that both organisational and personal stress is experienced by non elite male and female tennis players and highlighted the major sources of stress that confront this sample population. Analysis revealed that the most common sources of organisational stress experienced by participants were: training, travel, nutrition, injuries, roles, coaching style, team atmosphere, funding, goals and expectations, selection process and communication. The most common sources of personal stress were: university workload, time constraints, fear of letting significant others down and social ties. Other sources of organisational stress experienced by a smaller minority included: management and professionalism of the organisation, inadequate knowledge about the organisation, problems dealt with poorly, and lack of competitive fixtures. Other personal stressors included: ratings system, unrealistic expectations, and job commitments.

The results from this study revealed that participants experienced stress from a wide range of sources. From this study it is apparent that how participants perceived these sources of stress differed with each individual. What one participant perceived as a demand was not necessarily the same as another individual. Rather, the stress of competition may cause anxiety to one performer but excitement in another (Jones & Hardy, 1990). Therefore, the implication is that stress management techniques should be individually tailored to cater for these individual differences (Jones & Hardy, 1990). An important consideration is that knowledge and understanding of organisational and personal stress within the sport environment allows for intervention strategies to be implemented in order to help performers understand and cope with these stressors. Finally, sport organisations and personnel working with performers need to be aware of and sensitive to the complex social and organisational environment they are constantly shaping (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003).

Strengths and Limitations

Qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed information about a small number of people and cases (Patton, 2002). The present study reinforces the value of qualitative methods in helping researchers gain a fuller understanding of performers stress experiences. The individual interviews proved appropriate due to the uniqueness of the study and the exploratory nature of the study. In addition the study identified the emergence of new stressors and proved the need for further research into personal stressors as most participants found these issues important and regarded them as stressful. Qualitative enquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples (Patton, 2002). The sample size used for this study was ample and provided a wide array of data with which to analyse. The study provided a base for future research to build and develop especially with regards to personal stress.

One limitation of this study would be that the interviews were conducted in an environment the participants might associate with the sport organisation, therefore it was not a neutral setting. By conducting the interviews in a neutral setting the performers would be more inclined to speak freely about their experiences (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003). The second limitation of this study was that sample only looked at performers who played for the university team. Therefore social players and squad members were overlooked and so this should be taken into consideration for future research.

Future Research

There is an extreme shortage of research in the area of organisational stress and no current research in the area of personal stress. Sport psychology researchers should embrace the challenge of examining the social and organisational influences on performers' appraisal of stress (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003). Future research should include a comparative study of the sources of

stress experienced by both elite and non elite performers. Also the present study looked specifically at tennis which is an individual sport. Further research should look at a variety of sports including team sports and see if there is any variation in responses. In addition variables such as age or gender could be a worthy direction for future research. A study that looked at the difference between how children perceive certain stressors and how adults perceive similar stressors would be an interesting line of enquiry.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

Figure one: Organisational Stressors

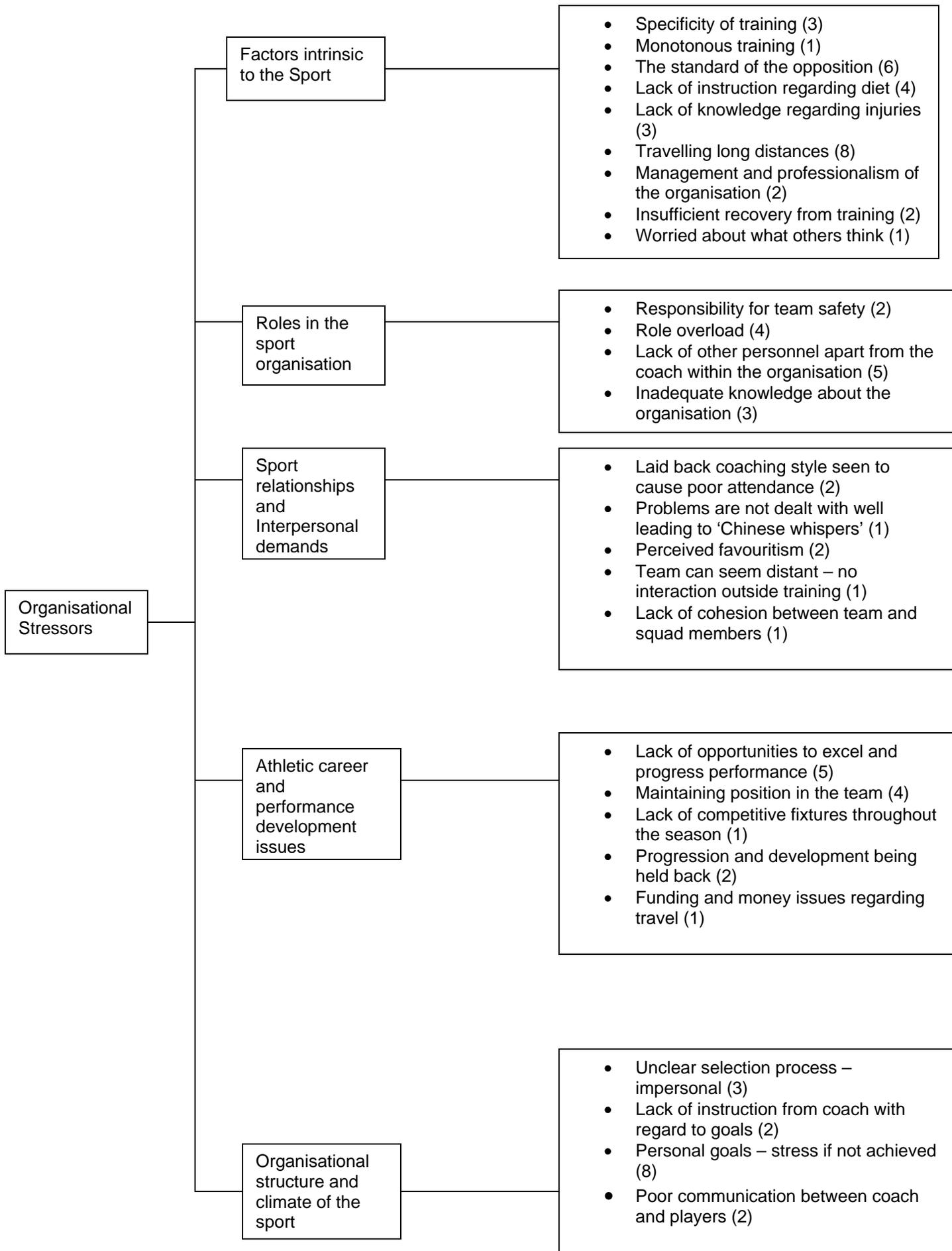
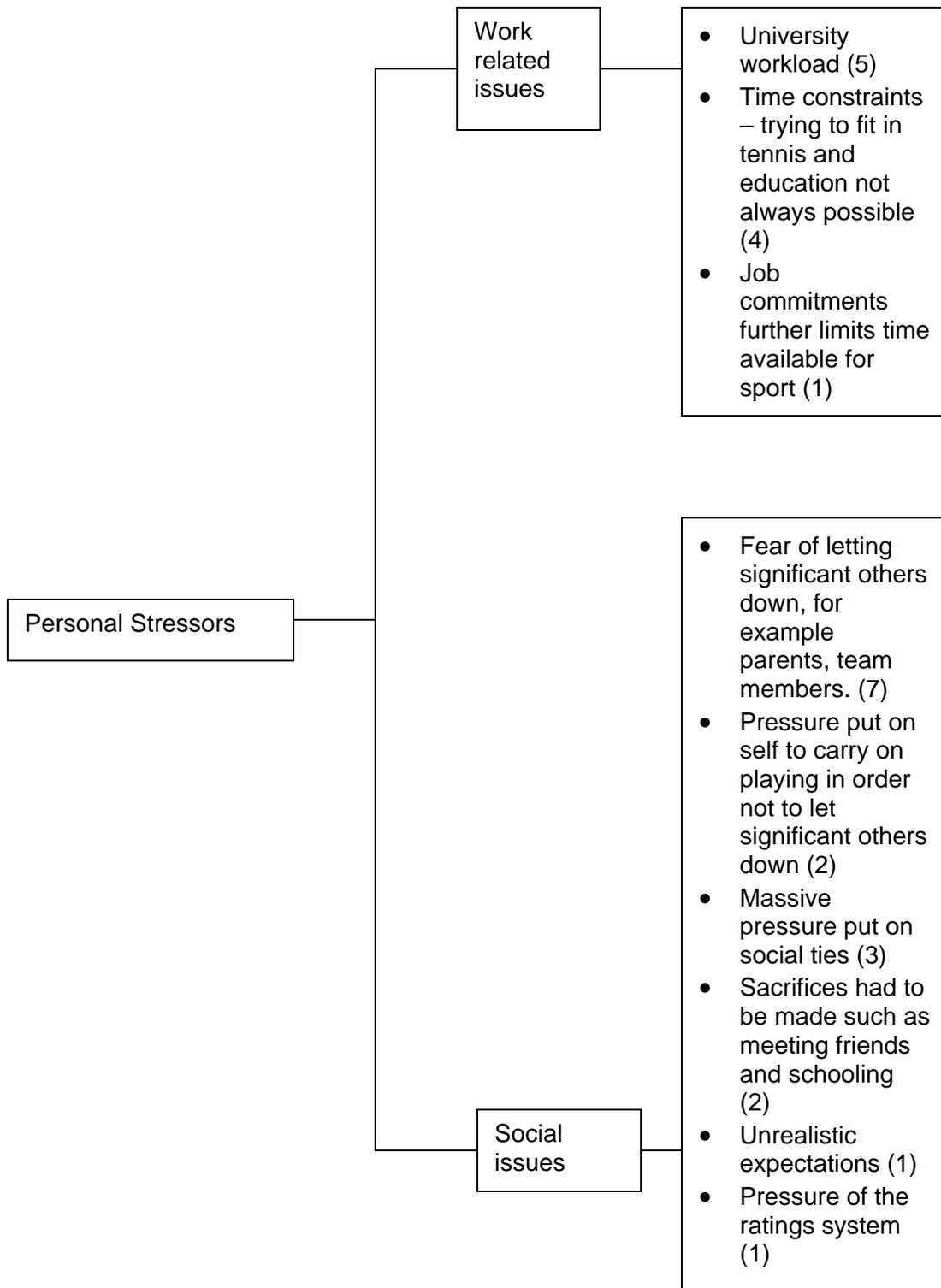


Figure two: Personal Stressors



APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

Jane Greenwood

Third year undergraduate student, Sport and Physical Education, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff.

Participant Details

Participant number:

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Telephone Number:

Years participating in tennis:

Current performance level:

Interview Date:

Time Begun:

Time ended:

Duration of interview:

Introduction (this will not be on tape)

Hello, I'm Jane Greenwood, a third year undergraduate student at the University of Wales Institute Cardiff and I am currently studying Sport and Physical Education. I would firstly like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview study and hope you benefit from what is discovered. In this study I am talking to sub-elite male and female tennis players in order to try and discover any issues which they perceive as stressful and that they feel are important prior to competing.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to gain an insight into any issues that arise prior to competition and uncover whether they could be viewed as stressors. Stressors can be defined as 'environmental demands (i.e. stimuli) encountered by an individual' (Fletcher et al., 2006, p.9). This study aims to build on the existing research done in relation to elite performers and extend this research to include the organisational and personal factors recognised by sub-elite tennis performers. During this interview I am interested in your experience of competing for your university or club and how you perceive certain stressors prior to competition. I want to learn about these issues in order to help other performers, coaches and organisations in the future.

The information gathered from this study will be used primarily for my undergraduate dissertation. I would like to accentuate that any information you provide will remain strictly confidential and your name will not be present in the results. In the presentation of my results I may use selected quotes from the interview in order to demonstrate important points more clearly. However these quotes will remain anonymous and your identity will be protected. In order to ensure my information is accurate and complete I will be using a Dictaphone to record the interview. This enables me to replay the information afterwards to make sure I have not missed anything out and in order to transcribe the interview at a later date.

As a participant in this study you have several rights. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can pull out of the interview at any point. You are not required to give any notice if you do decide to pull out of the interview and you do not have to answer a question if you do not wish to do so. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions I am asking. They are simply your thoughts and feelings and so answer them truthfully. If you do not want to divulge information to a certain question then just state 'no comment' rather than making something up. I want to learn and benefit from your experience and so I can gain a better insight into organisational and personal issues.

Throughout the interview I will be concentrating on both your experiences within the competitive arena and outside the competitive arena. Therefore I will be asking about your experiences as a competitive tennis player and other issues such as parental pressure, university work and significant others. So in your answers you can draw on any and all aspects of your sports performance not just playing for your university team. If you play at a club or used to play at county standard then refer to that as well. Since you might have to think back to earlier experiences there will be plenty of time to answer the questions. Take your time as you try to answer the questions and if you cannot remember then just let me know but please do not guess.

At the end of each section there will be an opportunity for you to add anything else that has not been covered in the questions. Here you can mention anything you feel is relevant to the study. At the end of the interview there will be a chance for you to express how you felt the interview went and add any thoughts about the interview.

Section one

1.0 Factors Intrinsic to the Sport

To gain a better understanding of your sport I would like to ask you a few questions on the training and competition environment. Issues such as travel to and from matches and nutrition will also be covered in this section.

Interview Questions

- 1.1 Could you tell me about the structure of training? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Would you consider it a demand? If so what is the perceived effect? Who takes the sessions? Is everyone included? Do players have input? How many hours a week do you train?)
- 1.2 Could you tell me what training is like in the lead up to competition? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Would you consider it a demand? If so what is the perceived effect? Does it differ from week to week? Is there a system in place?)
- 1.3 What is the team atmosphere like as competition approaches? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Would you consider it a demand? If so what is the perceived effect? Positive or negative? How do people feel? Does it depend on forthcoming opposition? Who affects the atmosphere, players/coaches?)
- 1.4 How happy would you say you are at the point of competition? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Are you affected by nerves? Is there support?)
- 1.5 Do you have a certain regime regarding your diet? (Adapted from Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Would you consider this a demand? If so what is the perceived effect? Is there any advice from coaches? Are players given a plan?)
- 1.6 Could you tell me how injuries are dealt with in the team? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Would you consider it a demand? If so what is the perceived effect? Is there a team physiotherapist available to the team? Is there support? If so are you happy with the support given?)

- 1.7 Could you tell me about the travel arrangements to and from the competition? (Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Would you consider this a demand? If so what is the perceived effect? Who makes the arrangements?)
- 1.8 Is there anything else you would like to add concerning what has just been discussed? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)

Section two

2.0 Roles in the Sport Organisation

In this section I would like to look further into your experience within the organisation and clarify the different roles that exist.

Interview Questions

- 2.1 Could you tell me about different people's roles and responsibilities within the team? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Would you consider it a demand? If so what is the perceived effect? What does the coach take care of? What do the players take care of?)
- 2.2 Could you tell me about any other personnel (e.g. physiotherapists, nutritionists, sports scientists) that are involved in your team? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Would you consider this a demand? If so what is the perceived effect? Is there any? Do/Would they help?)
- 2.3 Could you tell me about the team captain(s)? (Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Are they respected? Do they affect team spirit? Do they motivate people? Do you feel this is an issue?)
- 2.4 Could you tell me about different people's contributions to the team? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001)
(Who aids the organisation? Coaches/Players/Family? Would you consider this a demand? If so what is the perceived effect?)
- 2.5 Before we proceed to the next section, is there anything else you can add concerning what has just been discussed in this section regarding the roles within your sports organisation? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)

Section three

3.0 Sport relationships and interpersonal demands

In the previous section you identified the different roles that exist within your team. Now I am interested in looking at how these people can influence the organisation as a whole and whether it has a positive or negative effect on your performance.

Interview Questions

- 3.1 Could you tell me about the different styles of coaching you have encountered? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Do players have an input? Does the style suit players or cause unrest/stress? If so to what extent? Is there room for suggestions?)
- 3.2 Could you tell me about the support team members receive from the rest of the team? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Would you consider this a demand? If so what is the perceived effect? Is there support from everyone? Can you approach the coach/captain comfortably? Do you feel there is a good social support system?)
- 3.3 Could you tell me how problems are dealt with within the team?
(Who sorts problems? Are they dealt with quickly? Do disagreements cause stress to individuals/the whole team? If so what is the perceived effect?)
- 3.4 Before we proceed to the next section, is there anything else you can add concerning what has just been discussed in this section regarding sport relationships and interpersonal demands? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)

Section four

4.0 Athletic career and performance development issues

I would now like to ask you a few questions on how you see yourself within your sports organisation.

Interview Questions

- 4.1 Are there any money issues that may have an affect on your participation? (Would you consider this a stressor? If so what is the perceived effect? Does paying for kit/training/travel/etc. pose a problem? Are you expected to pay for these things?)
- 4.2 Are there any concerns you may have about your own sporting development as you continue to be a part of your particular sport organisation? (Is your performance affected by competition for your position in the team? Would you consider this a demand? If so what is the perceived effect?)
- 4.3 Do you feel you receive enough support from your organisation with regard to performance advancement? (Would you consider this a demand? If so what is the perceived effect? Are there opportunities for you to excel? Do you feel as though you are held back in any way?)
- 4.4 Before we proceed to the next section, is there anything else you can add concerning what has just been discussed in this section regarding athletic career and performance development issues? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)

Section five

5.0 Organisational structure and climate of the sport

In this section I will be looking at the internal structure and climate of the sport

organisation and how this affects the team as a whole. For example, factors such as coaching or management style, lack of participation in decision making, lack of communication channels and no sense of belonging.

Interview Questions

- 5.1 Could you tell me about the selection process? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Who has input? When are you told? How are you told if you're dropped? Does this procedure cause stress amongst the team-members? If so to what effect?)
- 5.2 Could you tell me about the team's goals and how they are decided? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Who has input? Do players have input? Are they long/short term, achievable/unrealistic? Do you feel stress if goals are not being achieved?)
- 5.3 Could you tell me about performer's goals and expectations? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)
(Are you set individual goals? Do you set your own goals? Do you feel stress if goals are not being achieved? If so how does this affect you?)
- 5.4 Before we proceed to the next section, is there anything else you can add concerning what has just been discussed in this section regarding the organisational structure and climate of the sport you participate in? (Woodman and Hardy, 2001 & Fletcher and Hanton, 2003 interview guide)

Section six

6.0 PERSONAL ISSUES (NEW)

In this section I am trying to gain a better understanding into issues which are considered as non sporting 'life' events, for example, family issues and relationships. These issues are defined as personal stressors and I am

interested in finding out the effect they have on your experience as a sports performer.

Interview Questions

- 6.1 Do you feel as though you have enough time to fit in both your university work and your sport?
(Does everyone make training? Does this effect selection? What sacrifices are made? Does this have an effect on your match preparation/performance? If so in what way?)
- 6.2 Do you feel as though you have a solid social support network?
(If you don't why is that? How does this affect your preparation/performance? Are your friends supportive of you playing? Do your parents agree with you playing? Do they put any pressure on you to do well?)
- 6.3 Have you ever felt pressurised into playing tennis?
(If so what effect has this had on you? How have you dealt with it? Parents/coach? Fear of letting significant others down?)
- 6.4 Could you tell me if tennis has an effect on any other aspects of your social life, for example, relationships, meeting with friends?
(Do you feel this is an issue? If so how does it affect you? Do you have enough time to fit in your tennis commitments and your friends?)

Final section

This final section concludes the interview by making some sort of comparison between and across the issues of organisational and personal stressors. Therefore I will be looking back through the interview and revisiting previous issues in order to find out what you feel is most important and why.

SECTION SEVEN (not on tape)

7.0 Conclusion (Section taken from Fletcher and Hanton, 2003, Interview Guide)

This just about completes the interview. However, before we finish, let me ask you some final questions.

Interview Questions:

- 7.1 How do you think the interview went? (Hanton 1996; Hanton and Jones, 1999; Fletcher and Hanton, 2003, Interview Guide)
- 7.2 Did you feel that you could tell your story fully? (Hanton 1996; Hanton and Jones, 1999; Fletcher and Hanton, 2003, Interview Guide)
- 7.3 Did I lead you or influence your responses in any way? (Hanton 1996; Hanton and Jones, 1999; Fletcher and Hanton, 2003, Interview Guide)
- 7.4 Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you are able to tell me about your experience of the sport organisation? (Hanton 1996; Hanton and Jones, 1999; Fletcher and Hanton, 2003, Interview Guide)
- 7.5 Have you any comments or suggestions about the interview itself? (Hanton 1996; Hanton and Jones, 1999; Fletcher and Hanton, 2003, Interview Guide)

Thank you for helping out with this interview study.

APPENDIX C

Interview Transcript

Section one

This first section is basically on training and the competition environment.

Ok first question is how is training structured?

Id say the coach had most input into training because they should be planning the session and so that the players then understand and know what there sort of doing. But I think sometimes at this level and our age the players do have a little bit of input and can suggest some things to do and sort of thing but id say its more the coaches choosing what we are really doing unless the coach isn't there and then it's a player sort of session but apart from that id say training is the coaches job.

Do you think this is a good thing?

Yes and no sometimes I think you want to go up to training and you might not want to be there and so you don't really want to be thinking about planning stuff so I think it's good that the coach is there. There role is then to plan the session and do certain drills. Then sometimes I think you will be at a session and you want to do something you want to do but the coach has said to do something and you don't really want to do it or you would rather do something else then you might find it difficult to say to the coach especially if you don't have a really strong relationship with them that you don't want to do that and you would rather be practicing your backhands rather than your forehands for example.

Would you consider this a demand?

Erm no not for me not really I think... although sometimes maybe I'll want to do different stuff I wouldn't find it stressful or doing stuff that I'm not supposed to be doing. Although however if it was the day before the match say then it might be a bit stressful because then I might be thinking about not practicing a certain part of my game if I didn't get to do it but at this level I'm quite happy with just doing anything I think.

Is training any different in the lead up to competition?

Yea id say most probably do a lot more match environment training so your playing matches which is good because then your match fit and more prepared for playing points and stuff. But I would say we could do with more training or more match practice just in general so leading up to a match there would be more points.

So is there any system in place?

I think there's a system in place that possibly the day before matches there are match play sessions but I don't think they have been very successful. I don't think enough people turn up.

Why do you think that is?

I don't know! Maybe in university it depends on peoples timetables so they can't come because they have lectures and stuff. Maybe people would rather not play matches against there friends and lose and so then the next day there feeling maybe a little bit worried about playing there matches because they lost the day before so they have more of a negative feeling but then on the other hand if you win then you would have a positive feeling.

Would you consider it a demand?

No I would find it quite beneficial because I think I can learn from my mistakes if I was to lose and if I was to win then id obviously keep those things in my mind.

What's the team atmosphere like as competition approaches?

As in leading up to it?

Yea as in a few days before

I wouldn't say there's a massive team atmosphere leading up to matches because we have matches say every Wednesday id say that most of the atmosphere happens on the actual day leading up to it its just more training or sometimes we don't even see each other so the preparation is sort of planned on the day.

Do you think this had an effect on the performance of the team?

Erm I don't know let me think..... I really can't answer that.

Does it affect you?

No it doesn't I'm quite happy just to go to the matches and be ready to play.

Do you think the opposition would affect you in any way?

Yea because I think if we play a team we are not supposed to beat or something sometimes I think the atmosphere is even better because if we are winning matches or doing well in a match I think a couple of the non playing team members come along to support and there's a bit more banter from the balcony and that's good fun because then obviously we are the underdogs and its nice to know we are being supported. Whereas if we are playing a team we beat quite easily there's not as much support and atmosphere because it's just routine. It is fun when there's more atmosphere.

Does anyone particularly affect the atmosphere?

Yea I think if there are more people up on the balcony we know supporting like non playing players, possibly the coach and friends I think that has a big impact. Its just nice to hear your name being shouted and know that people are actually watching you and not just sitting there and speaking to each other and stuff and even when say there's some matches still on but some of the team have finished obviously its really good for them to get involved and make sure there supporting you, encouraging you to keep going and keep winning.

How happy would you say you are at the point of competition?

At the moment during university tennis no not really at all because I don't find it a pressure at all because I just go to play and enjoy myself whereas when I was playing a little bit more competitively for myself I felt id be more be more nervous in that situation against people I knew I should beat or knew they were going to be close matches but in university I have sort of taken a step backwards and just go out there and play to enjoy more than the fact of winning.

Did you have support?

Yea I used to get support people watching me sort of thing.... That sort of support?

Well people around you?

Ok yea I used to have my parents who were a massive support, it was a positive support because they didn't use to pressurise me or anything like that. If I wanted to play today id play they never used to pressurise me so that was good support. I had a coach so he used to come to quite a lot of matches and obviously id train with him four, five, six days a week so that was quite a good support because he would teach me and encourage me. I had a bit of sports science support and things like that and funding through the LTA that was a support because if I didn't have any funding then I wouldn't be able to play quite a lot of tournaments around the country because its so expensive so that's all sort of support.

Did you ever consider this a demand?

Sometimes I think there's a pressure with funding with the LTA if you don't win matches or if you don't keep up your performance aspect your funding can be dropped so that sometimes that's quite a big pressure because obviously if you don't win matches and you don't get the funding to keep playing and you don't have enough money to travel then that's quite stressful because you wonder what your going to do next. I think everybody goes through a bad patch but I think sometimes they consider reducing your funding but you know it just could be a bad patch.

Do you have a certain regime regarding diet?

At the moment no so during uni I always have my sandwich during singles and doubles though! No during university tennis I haven't really got a diet whereas when I used to play more competitively I always used to make sure I had a pasta meal the night before and id take loads of energy stuff on to court with me and an energy drink as well.

So were you given a plan then?

I used to see a dietician every couple of months so they used to give me ideas and encourage me to take isotonic drinks on court, lots of cereal bars and bananas on court and they would tell me the ratios I should be eating carbs to proteins to fats and stuff so that was quite beneficial.

Would you consider it a demand?

Sometimes because when you go away and play tournaments you end up eating in restaurants and sometimes it's quite difficult to try and stay away from the nicer foods and stuff. Sometimes when you go to even Italian restaurants and stuff there portions are really small in pasta and you don't get filled up and then end up eating something else and so sometimes it can be quite stressful because you want to make sure that you have energy for the next day but you want to make sure you eat the right stuff but then you have to try and find the right restaurants to eat at so sometimes it can be quite difficult. When I was playing I was quite strict so I would try and do the best but sometimes you have to be naughty!

Could you tell me how injuries are dealt with within the team?

Injuries.... I know that the university has a physiotherapy department or person not that I've seen them. But I know that I think if you get injured I think it depends on the person because I think if you think you have an injury and you don't want to play like me! I kind of say I'm injured and not playing and try to sort it out. I think sometimes you can play with an injury and it's obviously not doing you any favours because obviously in the long run it will most probably be more harmful but I know that we do get discounts on physio rates which is obviously really good. But I think because, especially in the girl's team, there's not a massive amount of girl players and if one of the top girls get injured there's a lot of pressure to still play because we want to win the matches.

Do you think that has an effect on you?

I think its quite a negative thing from my own experience like last year I remember I hurt my shoulder and I remember playing through a couple of matches and in a way I think it was quite negative because I was constantly thinking about it and your shoulders hurting for the rest of the week and you don't

know whether to say something or see a physio and then be told you aren't going to be able to play for a couple of weeks and then feel guilty about the team..... erm yea I've completely forgotten the question!!! There was something else I wanted to say!

Are you happy with the support that is given?

Yes and no I think it's good that the university has a good base and they have physio's so that's really good. I just think sometimes you're pressurised possibly into playing when you're injured. I don't know whether that's a coach thing or pressure on the team because they want us to win but you know it is only university tennis so if we are injured we should take a step back because you don't want to be long term injured.

Could you tell me about travel arrangements?

There good in some ways and bad in other ways obviously if the matches are at home then we don't need to deal with any travel but when we go away normally we get a car from the SU, student union office, so that's good sometimes we can get really good cars other times there will be five people and put into a little mini hatchback with five tennis bags and that can be quite annoying because obviously you want a safe journey and stuff like that. On the whole travel arrangements are alright.

Would you consider it a demand?

Id say it's a demand for certain people id say the captain of the team especially because they have to deal with sorting out the car and making sure that they have insurance and on the list. Also claiming money and putting petrol in the car and stuff because you don't get it back straight away. From personal experience when you don't have much money in your back account that can be quite stressful because you don't get the money back for about six weeks and although you do get the money back at the time it would be better to get given it in advance.

So a better system needs to be in place?

Yes definitely

So would you consider it a demand?

Yes id say just personally for the person who's driving because they are in charge of looking after the car and putting the petrol in the car and obviously paying for it and driving because I think sometimes we can go 2/3 hours down the road and if your tired I think there should be two of you in the car who can drive. It is quite demanding because you have to get your team back safely and

you could be tired you know and weather conditions as well aren't nice to drive in. Sometimes a lot of students don't drive that often they might have their driving license but they don't have their own car. It can be quite stressful.

Do you think that has any effect on your tennis performance?

Yea I think say sometimes because if your driving somewhere quite far I think for all the team you aim to get there 20 min or half an hour before your meant to be playing. For university matches it's not as massively important as if you were playing world cup tennis or something! But sometimes you can get out the car and your quite tight and already quite tired and you obviously want to win your matches so sometimes you might feel a little but negative because you just want to go on court and play well but your feeling a little but stiff and you have just driven and your heads a little but tired. So sometimes it would be nice to have a little bit of extra time to get prepared but for university tennis I don't think we really consider that do we!

Is there anything else you would like to add?

No.... oh this is just random if you were to see other universities and how they do their tennis structure, like the top universities in Britain, there's would be completely different and that they are more organised and a bit more professional. Although they might have more players that have played at a higher level I think our university should be considered one of the top universities for tennis because we have such great facilities and stuff but I think the management and the professionalism of how everything's dealt with is a little bit.... It's not as good as other universities. There you go!!!

Section two

Ok this is on the roles in the sport organisation so basically looking into your experience within the organisation and just clarifying different roles that exist within it.

Firstly could you tell me about the different peoples roles and responsibilities within the team?

Ok so we have a team coach who gives us about two training sessions a week sometimes he's only there for one and stuff he is a lecturer and stuff which is fair enough. But he's there and he sometimes delegates roles to the players in training sessions and then obviously in matches. So you have team captains so a girls and a guys. They are responsible for helping to choose the teams sometimes and obviously when you go away to matches they drive the car and they sort out the preparation and making sure the other team members know when the match is and what time and things like that. They should also be supporting and encouraging and being a good team captain and obviously being

really positive for the other players. I think we have a social secretary, two haven't we, and they are in charge of making sure as well as it just being a tennis team that we have some good nights out and stuff and so its not all just about tennis, tennis, tennis although it should be really because we are athletes! We get some good nights out and stuff. We have a chairperson I don't know what he does!!! He is in charge of stuff he gives us tennis balls and stuff.... What does he do!? Just sorts stuff out I think. I think roles within the team change when picking team kit and stuff like that but not everyone has a definite role but then you have all the team players and the social players that come to different sessions.

Do you think this structure works then?

Yea it's quite traditional because every decent tennis university has a tennis coach which is good and then obviously traditionally you have team captains which is normal and I think all the other positions are quite traditional with regards to other teams within the university so I think it does work. Yea I can't think of anything else that could be done because I think its quite good to have a team captain or possibly change the team captain now and again so that the role isn't pressurised for one person for too long. Possibly having a vice captain so that that person knows when the captain's not about their in charge I don't think that's in place.

Ok is there any other personnel involved in the team? (Fitness, nutritionists, sports scientists)

We used to have a fitness guy but he left university last year he was really good asset to the team he took us through quite a lot of training regimes and improved our physical fitness which was really good. It was also good because he gave our coach lots of ideas so that when he wasn't about the coach would use them but he left university last year and no one else has been brought in. That is quite a shame I don't know why that has not happened maybe the coach hasn't found anyone as good as him to take over. At one point last year I think we had a psychologist but this year I think the structure of the tennis team has obviously, we still have the players and stuff, but we have lost some sort of support with extra training and fitness and psychologists and there is no dietary people not that I'm aware of.

Do you think it would help to have these people?

Yea it does help but with university it's up to the individual people on the team whether they choose to use these people I think the guys had more benefits form using the fitness instructor that the girls. In university we don't take it as seriously and we can be a bit lazy and so we don't want to be sweating in the gym next to some guys! But I do think it is beneficial and at one point I think the coach tried to make it compulsory we turn up or that we pay a pound if we didn't. It was a good idea in theory but it never happened and so I know there is about twenty people

on the team and only a handful took up going to the gym and used his knowledge which is a shame because I think it would help the team.

What do you think the effect of these people were on the team?

Yea I think physically maybe the boys improve their strength and stuff. Even with the girls I think when we were training and the fitness instructor was at the sessions so then you couldn't get out of not doing his work. I think it had a little bit of benefit on us because we do a lot of tennis dynamic movements which would obviously then benefit us on the tennis court. I did think it benefited especially the fitness aspect because if you do it quite regularly then its going to have a positive effect on your game especially if your not playing tennis four, five, six days a week just having a little bit of extra fitness does help because do you remember when we played Millfied! That was funny! We had all not done any training through the whole summer but if we had a little bit of match fitness and a bit of muscle to keep us going it would help.

Could you tell me about the team captains?

Ok should I talk about myself!?

Yea if you're the team captain!

Yea I'm the team captain and there is two men's captains as well. I don't think are roles are that pressurised I make sure that the girls know what time we are due on court the next day. I normally text them on the Tuesday and try and give them some encouraging texts and stuff and try and make it a bit of fun as well. We don't want it to be too pressurised its not the be all and end all if we lose our match and stuff its better that we just play and enjoy it and have fun. I'm in charge of making sure we fill in the sheets at the end of the day and making sure that we give one to the coach and one to the AU office, give in all our results. I just try and encourage the girls as well and just try and make it a bit of fun and to encourage them that they can win the matches which I think the team captain should do. I could do a little bit more like turn up to training a little bit more!

Do you feel it's an issue?

Yea completely happy doing it when im feeling fine I think being in the third year it's much more difficult. It's difficult just handling essays and dissertation but along with giving away every Wednesday to matches and possibly when you're going away doing driving and stuff for one person I think it's quite difficult and stuff. So alternating captain every now and again would be quite good and giving the role to a younger person in the first or second year so that then they can use their experience the year after sort of thing but I don't have a problem with the role I quite enjoy it if the girls want to chat to me then that's cool and I will just give any feedback if I want to.

Could you tell me about different peoples contributions to the team?

The AU officer who is employed by UWIC and he is in charge of all the sports so if it wasn't for him we would not know what time we were playing on the Wednesday either home or away so he is in charge of planning the events on the Wednesday. He has an alright job although I think he has a lot of sports to control so sometimes the communication can be lost between AU student union with the car, coach and players and sometimes we can get it a little bit confused. As we have three teams its quite bad with four courts, two teams is ok but if there were three teams it would be really difficult because obviously we wouldn't have enough courts and we only have the courts until a certain time on the Wednesday because there is coaching and they will pretty much chuck us off because they have paid for those courts from four or five o'clock. So apart from that id say him and the student union with transport are the only other people outside the tennis.

Do you think how it's structured effects you in any way?

I think communication could be a little bit better. I know the AU officer has a lot of email addresses and so he does send out quite a lot of emails but I'm pretty sure he doesn't send out all the relevant information to everybody every week which would be quite good if he just sends it to the captains and the coach then some of the players aren't getting the information for three to five days because he then expects the team captains to pass on all the information and sometimes that cant happen straight away because they have things to do and you know they might not pick up their emails. I think if the communication was improved between the AU, the coach, the SU and the players it would just be a bit easier knowing. They don't seem to understand that if both teams play home at the same time it's you know.... For some reason everything starts at midday but I don't understand why because if we were playing bath who are only an hour away they could get here by half ten or eleven we could do the same. For some reason everything starts at a certain time and I think that's quite stressful because there is so much to get through in four hours and I don't know its just more stressful.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

No, not that I can think of.

Section three

This section is on sports relationships and interpersonal demands. So you have just identified the different roles that exist and now you're looking at how these people can influence the organisation and the effect they have.

Could you tell me about the different styles of coaching that you have encountered?

Ok id say being in uni third year so first and second year I've had quite a lot of coaching. The coach is quite open so he's autocratic. Yea id say he's quite open and not very pushy or demanding and although sometimes if you don't turn up to coaching sessions he will text you or email you but he wont specifically identify who didn't turn up so sometimes if you really want people to appreciate that he's doing his job and coming to coaching he should be saying personally to people that why aren't you coming to training if you want to be in the team you have to turn up but the emails get sent around but I don't think many students take much notice of them and they will just reply and give an excuse. If he was a little bit more hard not that we want him to be hard but if he had a little bit more anger in him and was really dedicated to the team then he might get a little but more response.... I don't know but on the other hand some people might not like that and then might not come so it's a catch 22 sort of thing. The training does get quite a lot quite a few people do come to training.

Do you think the style suits the players?

I don't think there is any stress during the training sessions. The coach is quite laid back we used to have another person who used to be delegated coaching when the coach wasn't about and he was really laid back as well. I think at university tennis at our institution is much more laid back than other institutions over Britain. It depends what the objectives of UWIC are for their tennis teams if they want to be in the top leagues then I think they would have to change their styles and their systems and try and aim to recruit more students who have a big tennis background so that they can get into the big leagues because at the moment I think with the styles its quite laid back. Training... People don't turn up to training whereas other uni's have training three or four times a week and you have to turn up that's one of the things that you have to do if you want to be on the team.

Could you tell me about the support team members receive from the rest of the team?

I think everyone in the teams is really supportive and everyone gets on with each other which is really good and when there are social events most people turn up and go out together and have fun. I don't think there is any divide between girls and boys. In training I think there's quite a mixture sometimes the coach will put the girls on one court and the guys on another but on other occasion the guys and the girls will work together and I don't think the guys have any problem with that because knowing them they most probably won't want to play girls! I think everyone supports each other and even if there's a girls match or a guys match at the tennis centre people from other teams will come and support which is really good.

So would you consider this a demand?

A stress on me..... I don't think I'd want to play as much. Playing university tennis one of the main reasons for me is more enjoyment and the people I'm around because it's not as competitive as we used to be because we don't get driven to win matches although it's sort of said in a 'come on girls you can win' sort of thing there's no consequences if we don't win. It's not like we have to do three hours of training the day after because we didn't win! So I definitely wouldn't want to participate if I didn't get on with the other players. You don't want to be traveling to matches with girls or guys that you don't get on with. It's really important that everyone works together as a team and has good fun.

So do you think it has a positive effect?

I think it's a positive effect yea.

How are problems dealt with in the team?

I don't think it's dealt with very good I think a lot of the times there's a lot of Chinese whispers and people saying stuff but they don't want to say it to the person they should be saying it to possibly they don't want to offend them or don't want to bring something up as an issue because they might think that other people think it's silly. I know on one occasion we had a meeting sort of thing but that was just a regular meeting that we just do to delegate position for the next year and issues were brought up in that suggesting how we possibly recruit members in to the team and about trials. Issues were brought up with that which was quite good because people suggested ideas about how to recruit players because sometimes it can be quite daunting just going to trials and the coach saying you can come to team coaching and you can come to social coaching. I remember issues being brought up and suggested however I think they were taken into account but they remained the same for the next year. I don't know whether that had a positive or negative effect on how many extra people we got this year but it would be nice if the students have a bigger impact on things than just the coach deciding everything. I think when issues in the girls team do arise I do think.... Obviously they tell the team captain.... I've had a couple of issues mentioned to me about some things but they don't want to tell the coach so I will have a quiet word with the coach about something and it's been dealt with absolutely fine but I just think that there should be a bit more confidence and a bit better relationship between the coach and the team players because I think sometimes there's not much relationship and we can play matches two or three weeks in a row and not see the coach at all during the matches which would obviously be nice because obviously we want him to see us play.

Do you think disagreements within the team would cause unrest and stress?

Yea it depends what it is I think if its something quite major for instance someone's talking to someone about they think they should be higher up in the team than someone else than I think that would cause friction because its been talked about and most probably everyone knows and its quite stressful because the possibly one persons trying to win to try and be better and that can cause friction. But if its something maybe a bit more personal like injury related or something that not going to effect anyone else in the team and so if its just effecting themselves then I don't think it will have a massive effect on the team but I think it will have an effect on that person and the relationship with the coach as well.

Do you think there could be a better structure put in place?

Yea I think there should be regular meetings or issue meetings that are in place and whether it's just the captains that go and they talk about how the teams feeling and so then there's no names mentioned but then that's adding extra pressure on the team captain. I think for someone like me as well I don't really fancy talking about issues because I don't want to be in the middle but if that has to happen and its one of the roles of the team captain then you have to take that in your stride. But yea I think there should be regular sort of meetings or the coach should sort of suggest to people has anyone got a problem with this or do you want to talk about anything and I don't think that's in place.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

No I think we will leave that one there

Section four

Ok this section is on athletic career and performance development.

Are there any money issues that may have an effect on your participation?

The only issue with money is when we travel away and the team captain has to pay for things and won't get things back. There was an issue a couple of weeks ago with the girls team having to go to Gloucester and we were told we were having a car and so that was bad communication because then literally the next day 12 hours before we were leaving we were told we were going in a mini bus and had to hang around for like 3/4 hours for another team. So that wasn't very good communication we were prepared to take our own car but they weren't prepared to pay for us and that was quite bad seeing as they told us we were having a car so I thought that was quite bad and that can be quite stressful. So the only issue really with money..... oh actually kit yea I forgot about that. Yea I would like to be really rebellious and say I will only play if I don't have to pay but obviously that just can't happen. But considering knowing about other teams they

do pay a lot more for their AU fees than we do although I don't think we get enough for what we are paying for. If you choose to go coaching then that's fair enough but we don't really get any kit we get a t-shirt but we have to pay extra on top of kit and it can be quite expensive.

Would you consider it a stressor?

No not really I think if you want to be part of the team I think you should have some smart kit. As long as you can afford it its fine but it would be a stress to some people most probably if they really cant afford it and you start to talk about a lot of money but as long as its only once a year maybe every 18 months sort of thing then I don't think its stressful.

Are there any concerns that you have about your own sporting developments as you continue to be a part of this organisation? So is your performance affected by competition for your position in the team?

I don't think so I think pretty much when I've been playing or when I came to the team I think my role was pretty much set out straight away and obviously my role would have changed if anybody knew came that was... it was obvious who was going to take the position of being number one in the team and either being captain or what ever for second or third year. So I don't think there is any rivalry between the team and although I don't go training that often which might cause some people to say stuff obviously if I wasn't performing then obviously then I would have more of an issue and say ok I'm not performing I will come training but as long as I keep performing then obviously my positions not..... There's no need for there to be any change in my position.

Do you feel enough support from the organisation with regard to performance advancement?

No because I think for me I reached my peak in tennis as a former playing full time junior and senior playing proper tournaments professionally so that was the time when I excelled and was at my peak so when I came to university for the first couple of weeks when I came in first year I actually thought that I didn't really fancy playing tennis but then I got hounded by the tennis coach and got forced into playing! So really the university tennis for me is purely just contributing to the team and having fun and I wouldn't really say.... Apart from the individual university tournament every Christmas which I have played for the last two years that's the only time I've been able to try and possibly excel and really been pushed to try and improve my game so I can do well for that tournament but for the university tennis id say its just more fun and the enjoyment and there is not much pressure on me really.

Do you think as a whole for other people involved in the team do they have opportunities to excel?

I think there's not favouritism..... but I think the teams set in stone and if those people were available for every single match I think unless some one like the captain said something I'm pretty sure that those four people would play and for the guys team there is quite a lot of guys out there that need to play in the matches and be felt to be part of the team and there's a couple of the girls now because a lot of the team for the girls now are used by the second and third years and so the first years that have come in haven't really had much experience being part of the team matches and I think that's bad thing because once the third years go next year those girls might choose to play another sport next year because they haven't been apart of the team so I think its really important that all of the players get to.... Except if it's a really important match then you put your strongest team out but I think if we are playing matches where we are either going to definitely lose it what ever with our strongest team or we are definitely going to win it with any of our team then I think all the players should get the opportunity to play otherwise I definitely know that if I wasn't being chosen for one or two matches I'd feel left out.

Ok so do you feel it's important to introduce something to get everyone involved?

Yea one idea would be if obviously there are a lot of people with potential to play in the team maybe once a week or every other week for their to be match plays in one of their training sessions so that everyone can play matches against each other whether or not that would be good. Some people say that they want to play in the team so they have to play matches but then some people won't want to play because they won't want to lose to friends and things like that but you know you can't win every way. If something like that was on at least the organisation could say that they have put things on and given the people the opportunity to improve in their match practice and give the opportunity to play in as many matches as possible.

Ok so personally this isn't really an issue for you?

No not really

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Nope, I'm good

Section five

This is looking at the internal structure and climate of the sport organisation and how it affects the team (coaching and management style, lack of participation in decision making, lack of communication channels and no sense of belonging).

So firstly could you tell me about the selection process?

Erm yea I can there's not much to it really at the beginning of the term obviously trials take place so that the coach can pick players that are going to be in team coaching that happens twice a week and then anybody else that has turned up for trials that isn't really at the standard they go to social tennis so that's the first thing that happens. Then for every match the coach sends an email round....., as team captain he phones me every now and again or emails me saying am I happy with the selection or asks me what I think so that's quite good because he does listen every now and again. The email goes out to the team maybe on Monday or Tuesday before the match showing the team selection and if anyone can't play obviously there told to either contact the coach or myself. The teams then picked for Wednesday so that everyone roughly knows by the Tuesday whether they are in the team or not.

Ok so the email is sent on the Tuesday for Wednesday match?

Pretty much Monday sometimes.

Do you think this procedure could cause stress amongst team members knowing just the day before?

Yea pretty much although because the team is quite set in stone a lot of the girls and guys know they are playing on the Wednesday but I think sometimes obviously there has been injuries in the girls and the boys can change quite a lot because there is quite a lot of boys sometimes you just wont know whether your playing. I think there was an issue a couple of weeks ago with the girls number four because are number four can change quite a lot because there are some girls at the same standard and one of the girls said she was going to play but then turned out her wrist hurt so we came to the match not knowing we had a fourth player but then one of the other girls rocked up but the coach hadn't let me know who was playing. So that was quite stressful because I was like oh my god are we going to have a team!!! So knowing only the next day isn't the best organisation.

What do you think the effect of that is? I mean does it cause stress to the whole team?

It completely does and it also a lot of the time if the fourth person you don't know who its going to be or something like that happens then you don't know what the doubles is going to be because you don't know who's going to be in the team and the doubles can change a lot. Although we want players to play its really difficult for say someone who's playing changing partner a lot because you need to get into a rhythm and you need to understand and know that person and how they play and its really difficult when you don't know who you are playing with until

maybe the next day or even on the day and so that can be quite stressful. So it's quite stressful for the whole team because you are trying to strategically put the team out so that you try and do as well as you can and win as many rubbers and hopefully win.

Could you tell me about the team's goals and how they are decided?

Personally I don't think there are any goals. I don't feel as though it's my job to sort of say to the girls there's goals you know you should win this match or you should be doing this. I don't think the coach ever sort of says right we are going to win this match. Personally I don't think there are any goals which I think there should be goals.

Could you tell me about performers goals and expectations?

Not really I used to when I was playing competitively but because I don't have that much stress when I'm playing university matches. I might set myself a few goals within a match, during the match so if I know I'm doing quite well or something I'll try and challenge myself to possibly like serve and volley or just do something a little bit different to practice all aspects of my game but I don't have any goals before I play my match unless to try and finish for my lunch!

So when you played properly did you feel stressed if you didn't achieve your goals?

Oh I can't remember... I used to set quite a few goals I used to take little cards on court with me to remind me possibly if I wasn't getting any depth it would tell me come on get depth height over the net sort of thing. Normally because the goals were so simple I was achieving them if I was ever setting myself goals that were not unrealistic but quite hard to achieve then that would have a negative effect on me if I didn't achieve them. I used to see a psychologist a little bit but we always made sure my goals were completely realistic so I wouldn't come off court saying oh my god I didn't do that, I'm crap and stuff like that so that never really happened that much.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

No

Section six

Ok this is going away from organisational stress now and looking at non sporting life events so family, relationships and university work.

So firstly do you think you have enough time to fit in university work and your sport?

Realistically I'd like to say yes but I just think sometimes I think no because tennis takes up one whole day of your whole week. Sometimes I think god think how many words I could actually write on a Wednesday if I wasn't playing tennis and realistically we are all in university here we are not on tennis scholarships wanting to play tennis. We are here to try and do as well in our like dissertations and get really good results so sometimes I'm like what am I playing tennis for today when I should be doing my work. So realistically I think its crazy that so many people.... The sport takes up quite a big chunk out of your university life and although tennis doesn't a lot of other sports train a lot more than us. So I think how on earth do they do their university work. Sometimes I wish that we didn't have to play so much.... Saying that though its only in the first term that we are required to take one Wednesday after January we are quite flexible and we don't have that much tennis so its only for one term so if you have really good organisational skills and you plan your Wednesday out of your.... Pretend you only have a six day week then you will be doing well. But for me I sometimes find it quite stressful if there are assignments due.

Do you think it has an effect on your performance?

Yea definitely I do I think when I'm playing say I have a deadline in a couple of days I will be thinking about it during my match so although it might not effect my actual performance result my timing might be a little bit off and I wont be concentrating on tennis I'll be thinking of quotes or something and I'll be thinking 'oh my god when am I going to write this section'. It doesn't normally affect my result but will have affected the way I've played and I will be a bit annoyed with that. I also rush more so that we can finish earlier and try and get home and maybe do a bit of work but that's not the ideal situation you want to be in.

Ok do you feel as though you have a solid social support network?

Yea within the team there is a solid network which we have already mentioned. Yea I have a good network of friends and obviously I live with my fiancée and so that's quite good and he's good support and he is always encouraging. He enjoys that I at least have something extra in uni to do because I think if you come and do a sports degree and don't take part in any of the sports you know it's a shame really because you have come to possibly play your sport in the uni and you're not using it. Obviously family and friends it's a good support network.

Do you think they put any pressure on you to do well?

No not at all I've got no pressure to win or because I'm the captain to make sure we go up a league because there's no goals set so I think as long as we maintain

our position in the league and don't go down its fine. But nobody pressurises me to make sure I win or stuff like that so no it's good.

Have you ever felt pressurised into playing tennis maybe when you were younger?

I never got pressurised into playing tennis because I always wanted to play tennis and it was like I loved tennis so it was my life and so I had really good parents that weren't pushy parents because obviously in tennis we can all relate to their being pushy parents and stuff but my parents were really good. Sometimes if I were to lose matches that I should have won and like I think because I played so badly my mum would be disappointed and it might end up in us having a little bit of an argument. I've never been pushed into playing tournaments that I've not wanted to play. I think if I've ever not wanted to play although there might have been an issue of why I didn't want to play I think I normally get my own way or if there was stuff I wanted to play and maybe I shouldn't be playing it because I should be having a break or it should be a training session or things like that. I pretty much chose what I wanted to do and maybe that was a negative because maybe I burnt myself out a little but because I played too much but I was never pushed into doing stuff I didn't want to do.

Did you have a fear of letting significant others down?

Yea when I was young between the ages of 10-13 I didn't really understand how much effort had gone in by my parents. When I was younger obviously they had to pay for quite a lot of stuff so when I was getting to 15 or 16 and I was losing matches I think the people I wanted to do it for was my mum and dad because they put so much effort in to me. My mum worked extra hours to make sure that I had those tennis lessons and things like that. The biggest thing that hunted me was saying I was giving up because you know my mum and dad supported me throughout everything and believed that I'd get... because I had goals when I was younger achieve my goals and so the biggest thing it took me maybe a year to say to my parents I've decided to stop completely. Just my parents really because at the time when I did decide to stop I didn't have a coach because I had stopped with him a couple of months previously so I didn't have much care for him so I wasn't letting him down. Letting my fiancée down a bit because I wanted to prove to him that I was really good but it was mainly my parents.

So was that a demand?

Oh yea definitely. For the last year of playing it definitely had a big impact on my tennis performances because my heart wasn't in it and I was losing matches I shouldn't be losing and I knew that I should be saying right I'm going to stop now and going to go to university. But it took me about ten months to actually make that decision and it was the best thing I ever did.

Ok final question of this section could you tell me if tennis has had an effect on any other aspect of your social life?

Yea completely when I was younger obviously I was really good and I was on the way to being one of the top tennis players in Britain and I decided to leave school at 15 and I didn't do my GCSE's so that had a massive impact on my social life because obviously at first all my girlfriends were like 'oh we will catch up every weekend don't worry'. Then I moved to Cardiff and it completely changed.... Not that I didn't have a social life because I had a social life with tennis friends and stuff so when we were away and stuff. But I found it difficult to maintain my friendships with my girlfriends which was quite hard because its so difficult to have a life and not be really close with your friends and stuff and obviously only when I got injured that my social life started getting back to normal and that's when I meant my fiancée and stuff like that. Especially as a junior it was quite difficult losing contact with so many people you have been friends with for so long because I was always away. If you want to be a tennis player it's just got to be tennis and nothing else and I think that's what the top ten in the worked are they are just tennis. Especially in our country where we have so many opportunities to do something else if your finding it hard then you just quite because you can go to university and get decent jobs whereas if your in Russia that's the only thing they do! I found it very hard as a junior losing contact with the girls but then as soon as I got injured and stuff they all got rekindled because I was home. It is quite difficult trying to make tennis a profession as you don't really have a normal life.

Final section

Ok this final section is basically looking through the interview and what you have said about the organisational and personal issues and which you feel is more important and why.

Ok firstly when we were talking about organisational issues at the beginning you mentioned about implementing a structure so that It would be more organised and the players could relate to it more and better communication (travel arrangements). Comparing with your personal issues I thought you felt that these were more of an issue for you for example with work and friends and things.

So you mean more external issues.

Yea things that aren't really to do with the organisation. I think you play tennis for enjoyment now and so the personal side is more important.

Is that what you think?

Yea personally I think I'll come along and play the matches every week and I normally perform and pick up my rubbers and what ever and although there might be issues with the car and money and training and whatever I don't really find that really stressful I suppose. I don't think so any way not really. What else did I say about my personal stuff?

Relationships, university work, social support?

I think if there wasn't a good social support and I didn't get on with the girls and guys in the team and the coach in some respect and stuff. I think id find that more stressful for wanting to come and play every Wednesday and find that more of a chore and stuff and especially it is quite difficult when you're a third I don't think they understand that the third years have a lot more work to do than first or second years so it would be much less stressful if they considered that when choosing the teams and ruled out third years for a couple of matches when it didn't really matter.

So why do you think these issues are more important to you?

Most probably because I don't take the tennis structure too seriously any more because I'm just playing to enjoy it and obviously I want to win which is without saying. Personally I want to do better in my university work and id rather enjoy myself and so if those weren't in place then I'd find it more stressful and demanding to come and play.

I just want to say thank you for participating in my interview.