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Emotional Experiences in Youth Tennis

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29 *Objectives:* To explore adolescents' emotional experiences in competitive sport. Specifically,
30 this study sought to identify, 1) The emotions adolescents' experience at tennis tournaments, 2)
31 The precursors of the emotions they experience, and 3) How adolescents attempt to cope with
32 these emotions.

33 *Design:* Case-study

34 *Method:* Four adolescent tennis players competed in four or five tennis matches under the
35 observation of a researcher. Immediately following each match, participants completed a post-
36 match review sheet and a semi-structured interview. A further semi-structured interview was
37 completed at the end of the tournament. Review sheets, notes from match observations, and
38 video recordings of matches were used to stimulate discussions during final interviews. All data
39 were analyzed following the procedures outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994).

40 *Results:* Participants cited numerous positive and negatively valenced emotions during matches
41 and tournaments. Participants' emotions seemed to be broadly influenced by their perceptions of
42 performance and outcomes, as well as their opponent's behavior and player's perceptions of
43 their own behavior. Participants described various strategies to cope with these emotions, such
44 as controlling breathing rate, focusing on positive thoughts, and individualized routines. Further,
45 if participants perceived them to be facilitative, negative emotions could be beneficial for
46 performance.

47 *Conclusion:* This study has provided original insights into the complexity of adolescent athletes'
48 emotional experiences at competitions and highlighted the critical need for further in-depth
49 examinations of youth sport to fully comprehend the experiences of young people. Most notably,
50 the findings highlight the necessity of considering the impact of both intra- and interpersonal
51 influences on adolescents' emotional experiences, while also accounting for temporal changes.

52 *Key words:* youth sport, emotion, coping, adolescents, tennis

53 Emotions are a central component of youth sport participation (Crocker, Hoar,
54 McDonough, Kowalski, & Niefer, 2004). One of the most common emotions experienced
55 when participating in sport is enjoyment and feelings of enjoyment have been identified as
56 one of the main reasons children and adolescents play sport (Weiss, Kimmel, & Smith,
57 2001). When children and adolescents enjoy their sport experience they demonstrate higher
58 levels, and more positive types, of motivation, increased sport commitment, and sustain
59 participation for longer (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; McCarthy, Jones, & Clark-Carter,
60 2008). However, participation in sport is not always enjoyable (McCarthy & Jones, 2007).
61 Sport involvement can also result in anxiety, which can have negative consequences for
62 young athlete's participation, health, and performance (Crocker et al., 2004). For example,
63 high-levels of anxiety have been associated with avoidance of sport, reduced sport
64 enjoyment, burnout, sleep disruption, and dropout or discontinuation (see Mellalieu, Hanton,
65 & Fletcher, 2006).

66 In addition to experiencing anxiety and enjoyment, adolescents are likely to
67 experience a range of other emotions when participating in sport (Nicholls, Hemmings, &
68 Clough, 2010). For instance, Crocker and colleagues (2004) described different emotional
69 states that could be experienced in youth sport ranging from happiness due to sporting
70 success, to sadness from experiencing defeat, and anxiety as a result of fearing competition.
71 Given the range of emotions associated with youth sport, as well as a recognition that
72 emotions can influence performance levels, it is somewhat surprising that limited
73 consideration has been given to unpacking the various emotions adolescents might
74 experience when participating in sport (McCarthy & Jones, 2007; Nicholls et al., 2010). It
75 has been suggested that, as well as focusing on enhancing sporting performances, sport
76 psychologists should consider working with athletes to maximize positive emotion and
77 motivation in sport (McCarthy et al., 2008). To fully understand experiences in youth sport,

78 and in turn, be able to help youth athletes cope with positive and negative experiences, it is
79 pertinent to explore the range of emotions adolescents experience when they are competing.

80 Youth sport competitions were selected as the focus of this study because they are an
81 integral part of youth sport but maintain a difficult position in the overall experience.

82 Through competition young athletes not only test their physical skills but also have an
83 opportunity to develop psychological and social characteristics (Cumming, Smoll, Smith, &
84 Grossbard, 2007). Also, for those individuals who seek to excel in sport, competition during
85 youth provides them with an opportunity to learn and develop skills that will be beneficial in
86 the future (cf. MacNamara, Collins, & Button, 2010). However, participation in competition
87 is one of the main stressors for youth athletes and can result in feelings of pressure and
88 anxiety (Nicholls, Holt, Polman, & James, 2005; Nicholls et al., 2010). By developing an
89 understanding of adolescents' experiences in competition it is hoped that practitioners can
90 work to prepare adolescents to manage different emotions, allowing them to gain the benefits
91 of participating in competition, while limiting negative outcomes.

92 Although there are various theories and frameworks that can be utilized to study
93 emotions in sport, much of the research that has been conducted with adult populations (e.g.,
94 Martinent & Ferrand, 2009; Neil, Hanton, Mellalieu, & Fletcher, 2011; Uphill & Jones, 2007)
95 has used Lazarus' (1991) Cognitive-Motivational-Relational Theory (CMRT). Lazarus
96 (1991) stated that emotions are a by-product of personality and environment combined with
97 cognitive, motivational, and relational features (Lazarus, 1991). Emotions are relational
98 because they always encompass a person-environment relationship involving harm and/or
99 benefit (Lazarus, 2000). Lazarus (1991) proposed that there were 15 discrete emotions, each
100 of which involved a distinct core relational theme summarizing the transactions within the
101 person-environment relationship for that emotion. CMRT further suggests that emotions are
102 reactions to the status of goals in adaptational encounters. Therefore, motivation accounts for

103 an understanding of what makes adaptational encounters personally relevant and a source of
104 harm or benefit to be developed (Lazarus, 1991). Finally, the cognitive aspect of the theory
105 refers to knowledge and appraisal of occurrences during adaptational encounters. Knowledge
106 comprises situational and generalized beliefs about how things work, and appraisal is an
107 evaluation of the personal significance of an encounter with the environment (Lazarus, 1991).

108 Cognitive appraisal is a central process involved in emotion generation and
109 regulation. Cognitive appraisal consists of primary and secondary appraisals, which are key
110 interrelated processes in the theory. Primary appraisals are motivationally orientated and
111 evaluate the importance of a situation to the individual and whether personal goals are at
112 stake (Lazarus, 1991, 2000). Primary appraisals consist of three components; goal relevance,
113 goal congruence, and goal content (Lazarus, 1991). The appraisal is termed primary because
114 without a goal at stake there is no potential for emotion (Lazarus, 1991). Secondary appraisal
115 assesses what action can be taken in situations where there is the potential of harm or benefit
116 to the individual. Responsibility of blame or credit is evaluated along with coping potential
117 and future expectations (Lazarus, 2000). Blame or credit is dependent upon whether one feels
118 accountable or responsible for the harm, threat, or benefit combined with an attribution of
119 control of harmful or beneficial actions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

120 Lazarus' CMRT posits that an individual's appraisal of a situation, along with their
121 coping, influences the type of emotion experienced and how their emotions transform
122 throughout the person-environment transaction (Lazarus, 2000). Thus, coping is the second
123 key process involved in Lazarus' (1991) CMRT. Coping relates to the action that is taken to
124 manage demands, more specifically it has been described as the psychological reaction to
125 action tendencies which are subconscious, automatic responses to threat (Lazarus, 2000).
126 How one copes is influenced by appraising what action is possible or necessary, what action
127 is acceptable in the situation, and what action is likely to be most effective in dealing with the

128 situation (Lazarus 2000). Coping was initially classified into two categories: problem-focused
129 and emotion-focused (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). However, more recently it has been
130 suggested that individuals may also use avoidance coping strategies and cognitive reappraisal
131 (Tamminen & Holt, 2012) or task-oriented, distraction-orientated, and disengagement-
132 orientated coping strategies (Gaudreau, El Ali, & Marivain, 2005).

133 Research with adult athlete populations has demonstrated support for different
134 components of CMRT. For example, Uphill and Jones (2007) interviewed 12 international
135 athletes representing a range of sports and noted that primary and secondary appraisal
136 components were associated with a range of emotions (anger, anxiety, guilt, happiness, pride,
137 relief, sadness, and shame), providing some support for Lazarus' (1991) core relational
138 themes. Supporting the critical role of appraisals in the generation of emotion, Neil and
139 colleagues (2011) interviewed twelve performers from varying sports and identified that in
140 certain situations appraisals and negative emotions were interpreted as debilitating for
141 upcoming performance, consequently resulting in a debilitating effect on athlete behavior.
142 However, in other situations where appraisals and negative emotions were cited, further
143 appraisals of the situation allowed athletes to interpret the appraisals and emotions as
144 facilitative for upcoming performance through increased focus and/or effort. In contrast,
145 Nicholls, Perry, and Calmeiro (2014) tested a model of achievement goals, stress appraisal,
146 emotions, and coping based on a sample of 827 athletes and identified that emotions are just
147 as important as appraisals in shaping coping.

148 CMRT has also been used within the youth sport literature, particularly with regards
149 to studies of stressors, stress appraisals, and coping (see Tamminen & Holt, 2010 for a
150 review). However, the majority of these studies have not focused upon or included details
151 regarding the emotions that are experienced or generated (Nicholls et al., 2010). One
152 exception is the study by Nicholls and colleagues (2010) that explored adolescent golfers'

153 emotions generated during and as a consequence of stress appraisals, after coping, and after
154 event outcomes. Following interviews with ten male golfers, Nicholls and colleagues
155 identified three “causal maps” that described stressful situations with a favorable outcome
156 (causal map one), stressful situations that had unfavorable outcomes (causal map two), and
157 stressful events that were perceived as having neither favorable nor unfavorable outcomes
158 (causal map three). In situations allocated within causal map one, participants identified 10
159 different stressors, which could lead to participants experiencing anxiety or anger.
160 Participants implemented different coping strategies to manage their anxiety and then
161 reported feelings of happiness, anxiety, hope, relief, and anger. In causal map two, a similar
162 range of emotions were experienced as in map one but also included pride and sadness.
163 Finally, in map three, fewer emotions were reported, with only anxiety, sadness, and
164 happiness being experienced. These findings highlighted both the importance of coping in
165 generating positively toned emotions, as well as the possibility for multiple emotions to be
166 generated from stress appraisals of one event outcome.

167 Such studies demonstrate the utility of adopting CMRT as a framework for examining
168 emotion in youth sport, as well as emphasizing the importance of focusing on emotions.
169 However, they are still limited in the extent to which they identify and examine the range of
170 emotional experiences adolescents have at youth sport competitions. To this end, the purpose
171 of this study was to examine adolescent tennis players’ emotional experiences at
172 tournaments. Specifically, this study sought to address three research questions: 1) What
173 emotions do adolescents experience at tennis tournaments? 2) What are the precursors of the
174 emotions they experience? and, 3) How do adolescents attempt to cope with these emotions?

175 **Method**

176 **Methodology and philosophical underpinnings**

177 A case study methodology was chosen for this study. A case study approach allows
178 data collection to be extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information such as
179 observations, written reports, and interviews (Yin, 2009). As such, a case study methodology
180 was deemed an appropriate choice for the present study to enable an in-depth understanding
181 of adolescent's emotional experiences to be obtained and understood within specific
182 contextual conditions (in tennis competitions) that were pertinent to the study. Moreover, this
183 methodology ensured that a detailed description and understanding of each case, through the
184 use of multiple information sources, could be created, which aligns with the interpretive
185 approach adopted by the research team.

186 **Case Selection and Participants**

187 Four individual cases were selected for the study (details of each case are provided at
188 the start of the results section). Each case was selected based on age (e.g., Under 14 or 16),
189 standard (e.g., currently or previously competing at national and international level), and their
190 involvement in high performance training squads. Overall, the sample comprised four tennis
191 players (two male and two female) aged 12-15 years (Mean \pm SD; age 13.5 ± 1.73 years)
192 with 8.8 years of tennis experience on average.

193 **Procedure**

194 Institutional ethics approval and permission from the National sporting organization
195 were obtained. Following approval, eight potential participants were contacted to inquire into
196 their interest and availability to participate. Four participants (and their parents) indicated an
197 interest in participating and provided informed consent. Once consent was obtained, times
198 and dates for data collection were scheduled based on participants' tournament schedules.

199 **Data Collection**

200 Data collection occurred through three methods: 1) observations; 2) written accounts
201 (post-match review sheets); and 3) semi-structured interviews immediately following

202 matches (informal interviews) and at the end of the tournaments (formal interviews; see
203 Appendix A). The data collection methods allowed for comprehensive information to be
204 gathered from each athlete's perspective, enabling an in-depth exploration of participants'
205 experiences to be obtained. Specifically, interviews were selected because they provide an
206 opportunity for conversation to take place between the researcher and participant, during
207 which time the participant has an opportunity to tell their accounts of experiences and
208 emotions (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Observations, meanwhile, were selected to allow us to
209 gain insight into aspects of emotional experiences at the competitions that may be taken-for-
210 granted or typical and thus would not necessarily be raised by the participants in interviews,
211 while also providing great contextual understanding of the adolescents' actions and emotions
212 (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). To ensure these methods would be appropriate an extensive pilot
213 study with five county tennis players over 20 matches was first conducted.

214 Data was collected at tennis tournaments across England and Wales. The lead
215 researcher travelled with each participant to film and observe matches and conduct
216 interviews. The lead researcher, a qualified tennis coach and former semi-professional tennis
217 player, had a professional relationship with all participants and conducted all interviews. This
218 relationship assisted in the building of rapport with participants and helped to ensure that
219 players were not distracted during matches because they were used to her presence.

220 Additionally, the previous relationships facilitated the interviewer's understanding of each
221 participant and the experiences they were describing. However, the researcher did have to
222 take care to avoid any preconceived notions regarding the players' emotions.

223 *Observation.* Participants were required to complete a minimum of four matches to
224 ensure sufficient information was gathered to understand their emotional experiences in a
225 variety of situations. The lead researcher observed each participant's matches and recorded
226 any outward behavioral reactions (e.g., swearing, throwing racquet, fist pump) and the time

227 they occurred in the match. The lead researcher noted down as many behavioral reactions as
228 possible throughout the match, which ultimately lead to a commentary of the match score,
229 what had happened in the preceding point, and any subsequent display of behaviors. The
230 decisions regarding how to describe reactions were based on the extensive pilot study
231 conducted before the match, as well as the lead researcher's 15 years of national and
232 international tennis playing experience and 10 years of coaching experience.

233 The match observations were an important in the study because: 1) They provided
234 prompts of situations that arose during matches that could then be discussed in the
235 interviews; 2) Gave the lead researcher an overall "sense" of the match (e.g., did the player
236 seem generally positive/negative in the match), and; 3) They ensured the researcher had a
237 good knowledge of match situations as the participant talked through them, which helped
238 participants to feel that their narrative and explanation of the match was understood.

239 Where possible, matches were also video recorded and used to prompt discussion
240 during the formal (final) interview conducted following the tournament. Approval to film
241 matches was sought from the participants' parents, opponents' parents, the opponent, and the
242 tournament referee. Approval was granted for 13 of the 18 matches.

243 *Post-match review sheets.* Immediately following each match, participants were asked
244 to produce written accounts of their match on post-match review sheets. The sheets
245 comprised a number of questions prompting participants to describe their emotions
246 throughout the match, whether their emotions changed, and how they coped with their
247 emotions. The sheets provided the interviewer with valuable information to encourage
248 discussion and probe responses in more detail during post-match and post-tournament
249 interviews. The use of post-match review sheets also allowed participants to reflect on their
250 emotions without feeling pressure to verbalize thoughts, which had been identified as
251 challenging for some participants in the pilot study.

252 *Interviews.* Informal (straight after matches) and formal (at the end of tournaments)
253 semi-structured interview guides were developed based broadly on CMRT, previous studies
254 examining athletes' emotions in sport (see Nicholls et al., 2010; Uphill, McCarthy, & Jones,
255 2009; Uphill, Groom, & Jones, 2012), and the pilot study. Informal post-match interviews
256 lasted between 10 and 25 minutes (Mean \pm SD; 14.5 \pm 2.91) and focused only on the match
257 the participant had just played. Informal interviews took place as soon as possible following
258 matches so participants could still recall their experiences. In most instances, participants had
259 further matches to play that day or in the tournament. Thus, it was deemed necessary to limit
260 the lengths of these interviews and the depth of questioning.

261 Formal post-tournament interviews lasted between 40 and 60 minutes (Mean \pm SD;
262 47.7 \pm 8.2) and focused on all matches played in one tournament. These formal interviews
263 aimed to build on the insights gained from participants' informal interviews and written
264 accounts. Formal interviews took place as soon as possible following the completion of a
265 tournament. They were intended to identify the main emotions experienced in different
266 matches, the precursors of these emotions, and the strategies participants used to cope.
267 Participants were also asked to comment on their overall tournament experience and whether
268 their reflections on previous matches had changed. Specific parts of match videos were
269 selected to stimulate discussion based on participants' memories of key points and on the
270 researcher's observations. The use of videos was deemed helpful in case participants were
271 unable to recall parts of matches (Uphill et al., 2012).

272 **Data analysis**

273 Interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and pseudonyms were allocated to
274 participants. Verbatim transcripts were read and reread before analysis took place to ensure
275 familiarity with the data. Interview data were then analyzed using qualitative procedures
276 recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994). Initially data reduction was conducted, which

277 occurred through three stages of coding. First, descriptive codes were allocated to the data to
278 identify raw data themes. For example, participant descriptions mentioning emotions, affects,
279 and moods were coded as emotional experience, whereas descriptions mentioning attempts to
280 manage demands were coded as coping. Next interpretive codes were generated, which
281 grouped descriptive codes into more abstract concepts. For example, descriptions of
282 emotional experiences relating to losing, winning, or certain results were coded together as
283 “influenced by outcome”. Finally, pattern codes identifying relationships between
284 interpretive codes were developed. Following data reduction, data displays were developed to
285 allow systematic reviewing of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Particularly, data displays
286 were used to identify relationships between participants’ emotional experiences, precursors of
287 emotions, and coping strategies. Conclusions were drawn from data displays and verified
288 against the original interview transcripts to construct a representation of emotional
289 experiences and coping strategies employed during competition.

290 **Methodological rigor**

291 In line with the recommendations of Sparkes and Smith (2014), a number of steps
292 were taken to enhance the methodological rigor. First, data collection procedures were
293 extensively pilot tested. Pilot testing helped improve the quality and efficiency of the data
294 collection process by revealing any issues in the design. Specifically, it ensured sufficient
295 data regarding each case would be obtained to provide a detailed account of the experience.
296 Second, using multiple data sources improved the quality of participants’ responses, thereby
297 increasing the depth of insights that could be gained. Multiple data sources also allowed a
298 broader picture to be painted of emotional experiences and coping used during competition.

299 Additionally, as indicated, there was a pre-existing relationship between the players
300 and the lead researcher (a tennis coach) who conducted all the interviews and observations.
301 The researcher was not the individual coach of any of the players but she had been on the

302 coaching staff in-group training sessions that some had attended and had also travelled as a
303 coach with the players to tournaments previously. As such, the players were very comfortable
304 around the researcher and were used to reflecting upon their tournament performances with
305 her, which we believe helped to enhance the quality and amount of information the
306 participants' provided. Additionally, the researcher was well aware of tennis terminology
307 (e.g., shanking, hacking) and certain (often subtle) behaviors associated with experiencing
308 different emotions (e.g., playing with strings is often encouraged as a strategy to calm nerves,
309 rushing between points is often characteristic of nerves or anger). Consequently, when
310 communicating with the players, the lead researcher was able to understand and use their
311 language which made the reflections and conversations easier for both parties. She was also
312 able to demonstrate an understanding of their experience which, given that data was being
313 obtained often straight after matches before other matches, was particularly helpful in
314 ensuring that conversations were appropriate for the situation and that the participants were
315 willing and keen to share their experiences.

316 Due to the lead researcher's previous relationship with the players and her experience
317 in the sport we were cognizant that her own experiences and thoughts might impact upon the
318 player's responses and subsequent interpretation of the responses. Recognizing this, the lead
319 researcher took time to bracket (Sparkes & Smith, 2014) her own thoughts about tennis and
320 emotion prior to the starting the study. This was undertaken through a number of detailed
321 conversations with the research team, as well as via independent reflection. During this
322 process, the lead researcher also reflected upon her knowledge of CMRT and recorded her
323 preconceived ideas regarding how this might emerge at tournaments and in the data that were
324 obtained. The lead researcher also reflected individually and with the research team after each
325 tournament to ensure that the ideas that were obtained and developed were present in the data
326 and had not been forced upon the data. The videos and observation notes were particularly

327 helpful in facilitating these reflections because they provided an opportunity for the
328 researcher to return to each match as she was examining the interview data and look for
329 “evidence” of the experience that was shared by the player.

330 **Results**

331 In the following section detail of each of the four players are provided to give context
332 for the subsequent results section. Next, the emotional experiences of the participants are
333 described, based around the main precursors of their emotions. In line with the focus of this
334 study being on youth athletes’ experiences, we have sought to express the emotional
335 experiences of participants using their own words and ideas. Thus, rather than trying to “re-
336 label” the “emotions” participants recalled based on theory, when participants explanations or
337 language were more aligned with affect rather than a discrete emotion, we have chosen to
338 include these and continue to use their language. Following the results, a summary of each of
339 the cases is provided to illustrate the links between each element of the CMRT as
340 experienced by each participant.

341 **Participants**

342 **Beth.** Beth was a 12-year-old female with four years’ playing experience. She was
343 ranked as one of the top players in Great Britain for her age (top 24). Beth’s rating and
344 ranking allowed her to compete in national and international events, which as she said, she
345 “enjoyed a lot.” Beth was experiencing great success at tournaments during the time of this
346 study and was continuing to rise up the rankings rapidly. Consequently, Beth was feeling
347 very confident about her tennis, but could be concerned about certain players if she perceived
348 them to be stronger than her. She explained, “I get a bit nervous when I know she [the
349 opposition] is good and I had watched her before and heard some of her results have been
350 quite good.” Additionally, due to her run of success, Beth was often the highest ranked player

351 in tournaments, which led to some feelings of anxiety, as she said, “I was quite confident but
352 also quite nervous because I was number one seed... it’s quite a lot of pressure.”

353 **Adam.** Adam was a 12-year-old male with eight years of competitive tennis
354 experience. Adam had previously represented his country but, at the time of this study, was
355 mainly competing at regional and county level. Adam viewed the drop in competition level
356 as, “a bit annoying because I do like those [national-level] tournaments, like the higher ones.”
357 Further, he expressed a recent loss in self-confidence associated with his drop in form,
358 making statements such as, “I have been in a bit of disbelief that I could make it as like, to
359 the top in the country.” Due to his current form, Adam indicated feeling under pressure to
360 improve his results. Adam perceived a need to impress coaches at tournaments because he
361 did not want to be excluded from regional and national training camps. Additionally, Adam
362 described a desire to impress his father. For example, Adam explained that he often said to
363 himself, “please don’t lose or dad is going to be so annoyed at you.” Adam was also
364 recovering from injury to his playing arm and a short illness. The injury had led to Adam’s
365 training program being inconsistent in the two-months prior to this study.

366 **Daniel.** Daniel was a 15-year-old male with ten years of playing experience. Ranked
367 in the top 30 in Great Britain for his age group, Daniel was competing mainly at regional and
368 national level events. All of Daniel’s siblings also played competitive tennis to a high level.
369 Daniel had recently recovered from an injury to his left foot, which had kept him out of
370 training and tournaments for three-weeks. Due to his injury, Daniel indicated being less
371 concerned with the matches because, “I am just sort of not thinking like about what I want to
372 do like I just don’t want to worry about it too much.” Additionally, despite being out of tennis
373 for a few weeks, Daniel indicated that he was generally feeling confident about his tennis.

374 **Chloe.** Chloe was a 15-year-old female with 11 years playing experience, who was
375 currently ranked within the top 16 in Great Britain. Chloe performed extremely well over the

376 summer season but was struggling with her form during the winter season. Chloe believed
377 that this was due to her reduced training program and inconsistent tournament schedule.
378 Although Chloe said she wanted to train and compete regularly but her parents were not
379 willing for this to happen because she was in her final year of compulsory schooling.
380 Consequently, Chloe thought she could not control her performances and expressed that she
381 was not enjoying her tennis because her results had been poor.

382 **Perceptions of Opponent's Ability and Performance**

383 When considering the precursors to their emotions, participants provided many
384 examples of how their perceptions of their opponent's ability and consequently the
385 anticipated outcome of a match could influence the emotions they experienced before a
386 match. For instance, prior to his first match, Adam expressed feeling confident and relaxed
387 before the match because of his opponent's lower ability, and thus he perceived that he was
388 very likely to win. Adam's confidence was evidenced in statements such as, "I felt confident
389 because I knew that he wouldn't challenge me too much but at the same time I was relaxed
390 because I had to wait a little while [before playing]." Adam's confidence in the outcome of
391 the match led to him feeling happy, as Adam stated, "I even felt happy before going on
392 because I knew it was a match where I could mess about and still win."

393 In contrast, before all her matches, Beth expressed feelings of anxiety. As Beth
394 explained before her first match, "I was a bit nervous because I knew she was good and I had
395 watched her before and heard some of her results have been quite good." This made Beth feel
396 uncertain about the outcome of the match, so she said, "I was just like doing riddles to relax
397 me." However, before her fourth match, Beth expressed feeling anxious because, "I never
398 played the girl before so that made me quite nervous because I didn't know if she was good
399 or bad." To cope with this Beth warmed up because, as she said, "when I warm up I don't
400 think about playing the game I think more about warming up and that makes me relax."

401 Similar emotions were expressed during the early stages of the match, as the players
402 began to gain further insights into how they matched up against their opponents. For instance,
403 at the start of his second match, Daniel expressed that he felt positive because he immediately
404 identified his opponent's weaknesses, stating, "I sussed out that he was not a good mover so I
405 decided to move him around." Daniel felt relaxed because he was leading throughout the
406 match and was winning comfortably. Beth, similarly, recalled feeling relaxed and confident
407 as her second match started because, as she wrote, "I was going to win because in the warm-
408 up she was rubbish so I just relaxed really." For both Daniel and Beth, it seemed that as they
409 felt their goal (i.e., to win) was not under threat they were able to relax and enjoy the start of
410 the match. However, as Beth's match continued she explained that she started to feel bored
411 because, "Every time I would just hit the ball back she would miss so it was not a proper
412 rally?" Thus, it would appear that beyond a desire to win, Beth wanted the match to reach a
413 certain performance threshold. To cope with this boredom, Beth changed her game plan and
414 attempted to hit more winners and finish the points more quickly.

415 In instances where participants had identified their opponent's weaknesses and
416 perceived themselves to be the "better" player, they often expressed frustration if they were
417 unable to execute their game plan. For instance, in his third match, Adam indicated that he
418 was confident at the beginning of the match because he knew his opponent's weaknesses and
419 started the match well. However, as the match progressed Adam lost his first game and, as he
420 said, "I think there were a few loose shots and I got a bit frustrated." He tried to cope with his
421 frustration by "just thinking of my strengths and like playing to his weakness."

422 Similar feelings of frustration and anxiety were apparent when participants'
423 opponents were playing well and preventing the participant from executing their game plan
424 or performing at their best. For instance, in his second match, Adam expressed feeling
425 frustrated because his opponent was playing well. As he explained, "I had to get into difficult

426 positions to hit the shot so I wasn't hitting the ball well and I was getting a bit frustrated.”
427 Nevertheless, Adam indicated that he still felt positive because he perceived that he was able
428 to beat his opponent. Beth, meanwhile, explained that she found it frustrating to deal with her
429 opponent's performance in one of her matches. She explained, “I couldn't really make her
430 move because it didn't work and it was getting me so angry because she was just getting the
431 ball back and it was frustrating and it wasn't very nice just standing there.” Beth tried to
432 adapt her tactics as she said, “I tried to hit it a bit harder to make her run a bit and do angles
433 but every time I did it I think like 4/10 times I got them in.” The inability to counter her
434 opponent's play led to increasingly intense anger.

435 **Opponent's Behavior**

436 In addition to their opponent's ability, participants also described emotions arising as
437 a result of their opponent's behavior or temperament. As with perceptions of ability,
438 emotional responses appeared to arise a result due to the potential for such behaviors to
439 prevent the participants from winning matches or performing to their highest level.
440 Specifically, opponent's cheating was associated with feelings of anxiety and frustration. For
441 instance, prior to starting his semi-final match Adam expressed feeling anxious because the
442 referee had warned him that his opponent made poor line calls (cheated). Based on past
443 experiences of playing people who cheat Adam explained, “Sometimes I panic when I am
444 playing those people. If they do bad line calls I panic and lose my concentration or get really
445 frustrated.” To cope, Adam told himself not to hit too close to the lines and thus limit
446 opportunities for his opponent to cheat.

447 For Chloe, there were a number of issues with varying opponents that resulted in
448 negatively toned emotions. For instance, in her second match she thought that her
449 opponent was cheating, which resulted in her feeling, “really pissed off [angry] because she
450 called so many big points wrong and I could have won the game.” Her feelings of anger were

451 further exacerbated in that match when she was subsequently hit in the face by one of her
452 opponent's shots. To cope with her anger Chloe said, "I just chucked the racquet a few
453 times." Similar coping strategies were used in her next match, when Chloe explained that she
454 found her opponent, "irritating and her behaviour was making me feel angry." For example,
455 when her opponent was shouting "come on" between points Chloe perceived this was a
456 purposeful action in an attempt to irritate her, which made her angry.

457 Finally, Daniel experienced a range of emotions in response to his opponent cheating
458 in one match. Initially Daniel viewed this as "quite funny", however as the match went on,
459 and the impact of the behaviors on his performance were more apparent, he said, "when he
460 started to carry on doing it, it got me a bit angry... I thought I let it affect me too much which
461 is disappointing." When Daniel was trailing by two games in the second set the referee came
462 on court for six minutes to try and sort a dispute over the score. Daniel felt frustrated because
463 he believed his opponent was trying to change the score and said, "He was trying to make me
464 look really stupid." Daniel went on to lose the game but expressed that the break in play
465 when the referee came on helped him to refocus, he stated:

466 I think like the time that was taken with having what is it called the ref person on...
467 umm... and the time taken by change of ends, I thought I had thought about what I
468 needed to do, which was literally just go back to the basics and just play like, do like
469 ten percent [better].

470 **Match Score and Ongoing Performance**

471 With the participants strongly tied to their goals of winning matches and performing
472 well, the impact of being in the lead or being behind in matches appeared to be closely tied to
473 their emotional experiences.

474 **Leading in matches.** Taking the lead in a match, particularly early on, was
475 accompanied by feeling confident and happy. As Adam explained, in match one after taking

476 an early lead, he felt “feeling confident. I was hoping to win without dropping a game.”
477 Adam believed that feeling confident improved his performance, as he explained,
478 “[confidence] adds a little bit of playing well.” As he continued to play well, Adam described
479 feeling happy and relaxed as he was winning so comfortably. However, he also indicated that
480 he, “was getting a bit bored towards the end of it... so had to make sure I kept my focus.”
481 Such feelings of boredom arose as Adam did not feel he was being challenged in the match.

482 However, leading too easily in matches also appeared to trigger negatively toned
483 emotions. For instance, Beth won the first game of her first match without dropping a point.
484 When commenting on how this made her feel Beth wrote, “excited because I won the first
485 game... I like going one game up so I know I can win the match and this relaxes me.” Beth
486 also said, “I always like to win the first game because it makes you feel more confident and it
487 makes me feel like I can do this.” As the match went on Beth indicated that her emotions
488 changed, she stated, “I went more worried and anxious, I didn’t want to like miss because she
489 was getting everything back... I was worried about losing and like not playing very well, I
490 was worrying about the outcome and thinking about losing the match.” In this instance it
491 appeared that Beth’s early success in the games resulted in her increasing her expectations of
492 her performance and subsequently placing pressure on herself to win and win well.

493 **Trailing in matches.** For participants, it appeared that feelings of anxiety were
494 particularly prevalent if they lost the opening games of a match and became concerned that
495 they might not have a successful outcome. As Beth explained after her third match, “the first
496 game I lost so I was still feeling nervous.” To cope with her nerves in this situation Beth tried
497 to slow things down by taking more time in between points. Beth believed that her nerves
498 were affecting the way she was playing in the first set, which further exacerbated her anxiety.
499 When commenting on her experience during the match Beth wrote, “I got nervous every time

500 I lost a game and more confident when I won one... I tried not to go for so much and play
501 defensively so she would miss [to cope with nerves].”

502 In some matches, initial feelings of anxiety appeared to progress to anger if their
503 performance did not improve. For instance, Chloe lost her opening service game of the
504 second match, which made her feel nervous and lose confidence. To cope with her nerves
505 Chloe said, “I used breathing techniques and umm I shock my hand out.” As the match
506 progressed, Chloe explained how she began to feel angry:

507 I went from nervous at the start to angry... I started missing a lot of balls and umm
508 when I was losing points. I started to like get on a roll of winning a game and then the
509 next game it would be junk and missing so many shots.

510 When commenting on her experience throughout the first set Chloe said, “when I was angry I
511 just got frustrated and got down about not winning enough points... I lose focus because I am
512 just not really caring ...I thought I was going to lose so then I don’t care.” Chloe attempted to
513 cope with her frustration by slowing her breathing down but expressed that it did not work.
514 Rather, simply accepting that she was going to lose (i.e., disengaging from her goal)
515 eventually lead to her anger dissipating but being replaced by feeling “down”.

516 However, in contrast, Adam was able to remain positive after losing the first couple
517 of games in a match because, as he explained he was, “telling myself like not to panic
518 because I knew that he was playing well and I wasn’t doing anything wrong with my shots.”
519 Adam then went on to win the next three game and lead for the first time in the set. However,
520 at this point, Adam explained that he lost focus because “I was thinking too much about it
521 umm like going, like saying I have to win this set now.” Adam placed a lot of importance on
522 winning this game because, as he said, “I had just worked really hard to get it back to that
523 score line and then like it’s just a waste really if I mess it up.” Adam believed that focusing
524 on the outcome of the match caused him to panic and “tense-up.”

525 The transfer from one set to another set seemed to be a key moment when
526 participants' emotions might change as they "reset" the match in their mind. For instance,
527 after losing the first set of her second match, Chloe conveyed feeling some hope with the
528 statement, "I thought I could get back in it because it was a new set and third set is only a
529 match tiebreak so easy to win it could go either way." Although Chloe had a poor start to the
530 second set she stated, "I still felt I could win because even though I was 3 games down I
531 started to play a bit better than I had been so I was making a few more balls and getting a bit
532 of a rhythm."

533 However, if players were not able to enhance their performance from one set to the
534 other, feelings of anxiety and frustration became increasingly apparent. For instance,
535 describing one of his matches Daniel explained that at the start he was, "pretty calm at the
536 start I was making a lot of errors at the start but I tried not to let them affect me." But, as the
537 match progressed Daniel began to feel nervous:

538 The further the match went on the more nervous I got because I was losing and that
539 probably like sparked something to say like I am actually losing I've got to like win
540 this round ... so I sort of used those nerves maybe to give me a bit more energy to like
541 actually turn the match around.

542 Despite attempts to use his feelings of anxiety to push himself to improve his performance,
543 Daniel explained that they affected his movement and stopped him from hitting through the
544 ball because his muscles got tense. When asked what Daniel did to cope with his nerves he
545 said, "just breathe, do the basic things well and basically just try not to let it affect me too
546 much just obviously like do my routine at the back of the court." Despite losing this match,
547 Daniel did think his performance improved as a result of these coping strategies.

548 **Fluctuating Score Line and Performances**

549 In the majority of the matches, the score and the players' performances changed
550 regularly, and such changes appeared to trigger a range of emotions, particularly as the end of
551 matches drew closer.

552 **Losing a lead.** Participants indicated a variety of reasons for losing a lead in the
553 match, all of which subsequently influenced the emotions they experienced. For instance,
554 after losing the first game of his third match, Adam went on to win five games in a row
555 taking a one set and three games to love lead. Adam expressed feeling very relaxed and
556 confident during this part of the match because he was winning comfortably. However,
557 Adam's emotions started to change as his performance changed, as he stated, "I started to
558 make more errors... I was making some silly errors because I probably got too big for my
559 boots and then I was getting frustrated at that because of the type of shots I was missing like
560 easy shots." Such frustration resulted in Adam's "muscles tightening up" and he did not
561 know what to do to cope with the frustration. Subsequently, Adam started to panic about the
562 score as he was unsure what to do and he felt that he "couldn't let him win this because I had
563 like a good lead." Such panic resulted in feelings of anxiety and further frustration.

564 The reason for losing points, and subsequently games, appeared to largely affect the
565 types of emotions participants experienced. For instance, expressing views held by many,
566 Beth explained, "it annoyed me when I was making the mistakes when it was unforced, when
567 it was forced I didn't mind but when it was unforced errors it would get to me." To cope with
568 her annoyance Beth mentioned a variety of strategies including putting her hands up in the air
569 because she thinks it helps her get rid of her anger, looking to her parents for support and
570 reassurance, shadowing her swings, and playing with her strings at the back of the court. The
571 success of these strategies appeared variable, but in many instances appearing to exacerbate
572 feelings of anger as Beth's performance did not improve.

573 Making errors and losing points, especially after playing well, appeared to result in
574 participants' feeling that the match outcome was in jeopardy and subsequently feelings of
575 anxiety emerged. For instance, Chloe described her final match, stating:

576 In the first set I was quite hopeful and confident... I was playing well especially like
577 the first four games I just felt like I was dossing about like toying (in control) because
578 she wasn't that good the first set and then I was just happy.

579 After winning the first set Chloe expressed feeling very happy because she thought she might
580 win the match. However, Chloe lost the opening few games in the second set and stated:

581 I changed from hopeful to a bit nervous because I was losing points and then I
582 thought maybe I was going to lose so I was getting a bit nervous and then I was
583 getting angry because I was missing shots that I shouldn't have.

584 **Coming back from behind.** In contrast to the negatively toned emotions that arise
585 when losing a lead, when participants starting winning matches a range of positively toned
586 emotions were apparent. For instance, having lost the first game of his fourth match, Adam
587 then faced points to go two games to love down and he indicated feeling worried about the
588 core. Adam won the game and level the match at one game all. Having won this game, Adam
589 reflected, "I was quite pleased with myself that I had stuck in the game and won it" but
590 explained he was also "relieved" and "amused" at the same time because his opponent had let
591 him off the hook and given him the lead back (His opponent had lost track of the score and
592 told Adam it was 2-1 when it was 1-1).

593 Similarly, Daniel managed to fight back and level the score in the opening set of his
594 first match, which lead to him feeling "happy and relieved." However, having levelled the
595 score, he explained that he got "a bit too confident" and he began to over hit and be a bit too
596 aggressive, which led to errors. Eventually Daniel narrowly lost the set, which made him feel
597 disappointed because he had worked hard to fight his way back into the match. To cope with

598 this disappointment Daniel took a toilet break to give him self time to regroup and focus on
599 what he needed to do to win the second set. On returning to the match, Daniel lost the
600 opening game of the second set, which made him feel frustrated because as he said, “I just
601 wanted to win.” Here Daniel stated:

602 I just sort of went back to basics and thought what I do best and tried to execute it... I
603 got quite pumped in that second set because I wanted to win it and I didn't want to
604 give him any hope that he was going to win that second set so I did like shout “come
605 on” and stuff quite a few times.

606 **Situation Criticality**

607 On examining the participants' descriptions of their matches, it was apparent that
608 certain points were deemed more critical or important, and these were consistently associated
609 with feelings of anxiety. The most apparent situation was when participants were trying to
610 “close-out” a match (i.e., win the final game). For instance, in her first match, Beth was
611 serving to win the final game and she hit two double faults. She said, this made her tense up
612 despite the fact that she had not dropped a game in the match because she was thinking,
613 “what if I go back to three games all.” Beth thought she had double faulted at this point in the
614 match because she had got too excited about winning. To cope with double faulting and
615 losing the point Beth was reassured herself that she was going to win the game and the
616 match.

617 In contrast, when Adam had numerous match points and lost them in his first match
618 he said he was thinking, “just don't crack,” which he felt had a negative effect on his tennis.
619 At this point Adam expressed feeling angry and was visibly losing his temper by shouting out
620 comments such as “stop making mistakes” and “come on” after missing shots. Adam stated,
621 “I think I was thinking too much about the score... I was just trying not to make errors but I

622 always did.” To cope with his anger and the mistakes Adam tried to use breathing techniques
623 to relax but he said they did not work.

624 In addition to the anxiety experienced in the final game of a match, when the score
625 line was close, extra pressure and subsequently feelings of anxiety could be experienced. For
626 instance, Beth had been trailing in the second set of her third match and managed to level the
627 match at three games all. At this point Beth said she relaxed because she believed she could
628 get back into the lead. However, because the game was close Beth “got a bit more nervous
629 just thinking what if she wins this game I am going to be four, three down ... if it went to a
630 tiebreak like she was going to be on top.” These thoughts made Beth panic so she tried to be
631 more consistent and disciplined with her shot selection.

632 In close matches, it appeared that any fluctuation in the score near the end was
633 particularly pertinent. For instance, in his third match, Daniel had opportunities to take the
634 lead and be in a position to serve for the match. However, he expressed feeling nervous
635 because he started to lose a few more points and consequently started thinking, “just get it
636 over with just play solid tennis again just don’t let it go that close because then you will give
637 him a bit of hope.” To cope with the situation Daniel stated, “I just went back to basics and
638 thought about winning instead of thinking about how I am going to play better.”

639 **Match Outcomes and Perception of Performance**

640 When reflecting on their matches, the participants generally described positively
641 toned emotions with winning and negatively toned emotions with losing. For instance,
642 following her loss in her fourth match, Beth simply stated feeling, “Just pissed off, depressed
643 I guess... I just want to go home to be honest.” In contrast, following her win in her first
644 match Beth expressed feeling, “happy because I had won, so that’s what I wanted to do.”
645 However, although winning matches was generally associated with positively toned emotions
646 they could be tempered by the situation. For instance, in her final match, Chloe’s opponent

647 withdrew which resulted in Chloe saying she was annoyed because, as she explained, “What
648 a waste of time! I was going to win that I was actually going to win that and then she pulled
649 out so technically it wasn’t really a win.”

650 For Adam, the success of his emotional regulation – which was a key focus of his for
651 the summer – appeared to largely influence his feelings after matches. As such, when Adam
652 lost matches but managed to fulfil his goal of controlling his emotions he indicated that he
653 felt, “good because I knew that I had kept my emotions.” Adam described, “keeping his
654 emotions” as not losing his temper or showing any emotional reactions to his opponent. Even
655 when he won his final match, Adam indicated that he was unhappy because, as he said, “I am
656 feeling pleased because there were tricky situations in there but not so pleased about my
657 emotions.... I panicked too much in the second set.”

658 Participants’ perceptions of their performance, independent of, or in addition to, the
659 outcome, also appeared to influence their emotions. For instance, following her second
660 match, Chloe indicated the match went very badly. When asked what was bad about the
661 match Chloe replied, “everything.” Chloe expressed feeling upset with the score of the match
662 and said, “I wasn’t even close to winning the match.” Chloe was also angry at the way she
663 performed and stated, “I didn’t make many balls and if I had a short ball I kept missing it and
664 I didn’t really do anything with the game to be honest.” When asked what she was trying to
665 do to cope with her emotions now that her match had finished Chloe wrote “nothing.” In
666 contrast, despite losing Beth said after one of her matches:

667 I was happy even though I lost as I said I like missed shots that I could have probably
668 got in but yeah I was feeling happy but also upset... I was upset because I had lost
669 and happy because I had played well.

670 Beth said, “I felt proud of myself” and to cope with the defeat she was talking to her friends.

671 If, however, participants were unsuccessful and perceived others would judge this
672 outcome because they “should have won” they described feeling disappointed, angry, and
673 embarrassed even if they had played well. For instance, following her second match Chloe
674 expressed that the anger she felt on court continued because, “what’s making me most angry
675 is that I should have beaten her.” Chloe further explained that she was disappointed and
676 embarrassed because she thought she had performed poorly and stated, “if people are looking
677 at the results they’ll think she’s [Chloe’s opponent] rubbish and I should have beaten her
678 quite easily.” Chloe stated this upset her because, “they [other players] will think they are
679 better than me.” To cope with these feelings Chloe said she was going to ask her parents to
680 increase her training programme. Adam shared similar feelings of disappointment when he
681 lost quite easily to a lower-rated player. He explained that other players, coaches, and his
682 father would judge him for losing to a lower-rated player and he “definitely thought about
683 having that ratings loss and other people looking at the score line.” Adam tried to cope with
684 his disappointment by reassuring himself that he did his best.

685 **** Table 1 here ****

686 **** Table 2 here ****

687 **** Table 3 here ****

688 **** Table 4 here ****

689 Discussion

690 The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of adolescent tennis players’
691 emotional experiences during competition by considering what emotions adolescents
692 experience, the precursors of these emotions, and how adolescents attempt to cope with these
693 emotions. Overall, our results indicate that the athletes were predominately focused upon the
694 outcome of their matches (i.e., they had the goal of winning matches) and situations such as
695 opponent’s behavior, their own performance, and the score line, were appraised against these

696 goals. Consequently, depending upon the impact on their achievement of their goals, athletes
697 experienced different emotions during matches and tournaments. Athletes also employed a
698 variety of emotion- and problem-focused coping strategies, which varied in effectiveness.

699 Our findings support previous research that has suggested athletes' goals and
700 appraisals are associated with the elicitation of emotion (Graham, Kowalski, & Krockner,
701 2002; Uphill & Jones, 2007). Athletes reported experiencing a range of positively and
702 negatively toned discrete emotions – including the 15 identified by Lazarus (1991).
703 However, consistent with numerous other studies (e.g., Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow,
704 1996; Zeelenberg, Van Dijk, Manstead, & van der Pligt, 2000), the participants also
705 described a number of positively and negatively toned affective states beyond Lazarus'
706 discrete emotions. Although these affective states may not fall within the traditional
707 classification of emotions, the athletes in this study clearly identified with them and
708 perceived them to influence their performance. Thus, it may be beneficial for practitioners to
709 account for these affective states, as well as the traditional emotions, when working with
710 youth athletes to ensure that sufficient strategies are developed.

711 When participants were leading in matches or had won they almost exclusively
712 reported experiencing positively toned emotions (e.g., happy) as a result of the outcome. This
713 is unsurprising and aligns with existing literature that has proposed that when individuals
714 benefit from a person-environment relationship they experience positively toned emotions
715 (Lazarus, 1991, 2000; Uphill & Jones, 2007). However, the findings diverge a little from
716 those of Nicholls and colleagues (2010) who found that although positively toned emotions
717 were more common in favorable situations among elite adolescent golfers, negatively toned
718 emotions were also experienced. Within the current study, negatively toned emotions when in
719 favorable situations were very rarely recalled. When negative emotions were recounted they
720 were associated with a perception of poor or inappropriate behavior from the participant or

721 their opponent, or a change in the athlete's focus, which subsequently resulted in them
722 making more mistakes and either struggling to maintain a lead or losing. Lazarus (2000) has
723 previously suggested that losing in competitions might be perceived as harmful to individuals
724 and this was clearly evidenced when the participants found themselves becoming frustrated
725 as their performances decreased. Interestingly, in the current study it seemed that one of the
726 most prominent perceptions of harm from losses was that losses would damage participants'
727 reputations. Such a difference between these findings and those of Nicholls and colleagues
728 may be due to the almost exclusive focus on winning and losing described by the participants
729 in the current study, resulting in a dichotomous view of matches and subsequent emotions.

730 When participants lost matches they all reported experiencing negative emotions. In
731 line with Lazarus' (1991) CMRT it was apparent that such negative emotions arose because
732 participants' experienced harm to the achievement of their personal goals (of winning). Only
733 one participant, Beth, mentioned experiencing a positive emotion in the form of happiness
734 following defeat. Beth explained that she felt happy because despite losing she had
735 performed well. In this instance, it seemed that Beth's goals for the match were aligned with
736 her performance (rather than the outcome) and thus although she lost, the defeat had not
737 threatened her personal goals. Again, this finding differs somewhat from Nicholls and
738 colleagues' (2010) study with adolescent golfers, who although generally recalling negatively
739 toned emotions in unfavorable situations, also recalled positively toned emotions as well.

740 In line with contemporary approaches to examining emotions in sport (Smith,
741 Bundon, & Best, 2016; Tamminen & Bennett, 2016; Tamminen et al., 2016), despite tennis
742 being an individual sport it was apparent that some of the emotions the participants described
743 arose as a result of their interaction with their opponents and their anticipated interaction with
744 their peers and parents following matches. That is, participants described specific (generally
745 negatively toned) emotions arising as a result of disputes with their opponents, irritation at

746 their opponents' behaviors, and also concerns regarding how parents and peers would
747 perceive losses or poor performances. Within these situations, it was apparent that current
748 social interaction with opponents, and anticipated interaction with parents and peers,
749 influence participants' appraisals of the situation and subsequently the emotions they
750 experience (Tamminen & Bennett, 2016). As such, in seeking to help young athletes develop
751 strategies to manage emotions, it would appear pertinent to first help them to understand how
752 their emotions might arise and examine the interpersonal influences on their experiences
753 before or in addition to teaching individual coping strategies.

754 The results of the current study also supported CMRT's contention that both problem-
755 and emotion-focused coping are used to influence the type of emotions experienced (Lazarus,
756 1991). However, the strategies described by the participants in the current study also appear
757 to align closely with Gaudreau and colleagues (2005) categories of task-, distraction-, and
758 disengagement-oriented coping. All participants described drawing on a variety of task-
759 orientated coping strategies, particularly logical analysis of the situation and thought control,
760 particularly when feeling anxious or angry. Further, suggestions of distraction-oriented
761 coping were also prevalent, with participants indicating that they tried to think about other
762 things prior to matches or when they were feeling nervous during games. Perhaps, most
763 interestingly, Chloe specifically described many situations in which she resigned herself to
764 defeat (disengagement-orientated) as a strategy to manage her anxiety and disappointment
765 associated with her poor performances and concerns over losing.

766 Nevertheless, the extent to which participants were able to identify coping strategies
767 to effectively manage situations leading to different emotions was variable. In general,
768 participants discussed strategies to manage feelings of anxiety but had limited strategies to
769 manage frustration and anger. Unfortunately, for the participants in this study, their inability
770 to manage situations leading to initial negatively toned emotions often resulted in feelings of

771 helplessness and further negatively toned emotions. As such, the findings reaffirm the critical
772 need to enhance young athletes' coping abilities to not only enhance performance but also
773 increase the enjoyment they experience when playing (Tamminen & Holt, 2010). As
774 adolescent athletes have been acknowledged as learning to cope in various ways, including
775 through trial and error (Tamminen & Holt, 2012), and given the extent to which different
776 emotions were intertwined in these matches, it would seem necessary to help athletes reflect
777 on their different coping efforts in an attempt to evaluate their effectiveness. Providing
778 athletes with a 'toolbox' of coping strategies, which can be practiced in different situations
779 and then retained or discounted depending on the consequences would seem useful.

780 A consistent feature across contemporary models of coping (e.g., Aldwin, 1994;
781 Lazarus, 1991; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) is that cognitive appraisals and coping are
782 fundamental to individuals' efforts to manage demands. In this study, when participants were
783 able to make positive appraisals of demands and emotions, coping appeared to be more
784 effective than when negative appraisals were made. Consequently, in line with previous
785 literature, it was apparent that facilitative interpretations of negative emotions could add
786 positive value to performance, whereas debilitating interpretations of negative emotions can
787 be detrimental to performance (e.g., Mellalieu, Hanton, & Fletcher, 2006; Neil, Hanton, &
788 Mellalieu, 2009). As such, helping adolescents to understand the role perceived negative
789 emotions, such as anxiety, have in helping them to appropriately prepare for competitions
790 might help athletes to reframe their emotions. Similarly, providing adolescents with strategies
791 to reappraise emotions would appear to be a beneficial strategy to help not only enhance their
792 performance but also increase their enjoyment of that performance.

793 **Limitations and Future Directions**

794 In the current investigation the selection of a case study approach meant that the
795 sample of athletes was comparatively small. A larger sample would present a greater

796 opportunity to look for trends in athletes' emotional experiences in the competition
797 environment. For example, the current study has so far shown each participant's emotions
798 were related to the status of their goals. Consequently it would be interesting to see if such
799 trends continued to arise in a larger sample of athletes. A further limitation of this study was
800 that the assessment of the intensity of emotion was absent. Research has highlighted that
801 understanding intensity of emotions can add insight into why athletes interpret emotions
802 differently to upcoming performance (Mellalieu et al., 2006). Therefore, taking emotion
803 intensity into account could further extend understanding of athletes' emotional experience in
804 competition and help to explain individual differences.

805 The findings of the present study have highlighted that cognitive and social
806 developmental differences within participants may have influenced their ability to feedback
807 on emotional experience. Literature has also strongly suggested that developmental
808 differences need to be considered when attempting to understand emotion in adolescents
809 (e.g., Crocker et al., 2004). In the present study, Adam and Beth were both twelve-years old
810 and there were noticeable differences in their ability to feedback about the content of their
811 emotional experiences. Adam was able to describe his emotional experience with more ease
812 and in greater detail than Beth. Accounting for such developmental differences in future
813 studies may be beneficial.

814 **Conclusion**

815 The present study has allowed various practical findings to be drawn regarding
816 adolescent athletes' emotional experiences at tennis tournaments, which are of importance to
817 coaches, athletes, and sports psychologists. The findings have illuminated the emotions
818 adolescent athletes experienced, the precursors of these emotions, and the strategies used to
819 cope with emotions during tennis matches. Taken together, the findings of this study provide

820 an initial base from which practitioners can work to help young athletes better understand and
821 cope with the emotions associated with competition.

ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

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926

ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

927 Table 1. Beth's Tournament Experiences

Timing	Emotional experience	Precursor to emotional experience	Coping strategies
Pre-match	Confident	Certain of outcome Beaten opponent previously	
	Relaxed		
	Positive		
	Nervous	Number 1 seed Expected to win Aware of opponent's ability Close previous meetings Uncertain of opponent's ability Perception of opponent ability Lost in previous matches	Took time Warmed up Distracted self from match
	Excited	Opportunity to qualify for another tournament	
During match	Relaxed	Leading in match Opponent making errors Won first set Levelled match score in second set	
	Confident	In control of match Won first set Won first game of second set	
	Bored	Winning too easily	Finished match quickly Played aggressively
	Nervous	Poor start Lost points and games Trailing in the match Close score line Possibility of losing Serving for match	Took time between points Adapted game plan Took time between points Adapted game plan Took time between points
	Frustrated	Making errors Opponents' game style Losing points	Looked to parents for support Shadowed shots Focused on game plan Took time between points Took time between points
	Angry	Making errors Opponents' game style	Played with strings Focused on game plan Took time between points
	Excited	Close to winning Won opening game	
	Anxious	Making errors Opponents style of play	Reassured self Adapted game plan
	Disappointed	Lost points and games	
Post-match	Happy	Performed well Won	
	Relieved	Won the tournament	
	Upset	Lost Limited chance of qualifying	Took mind off match Spent time with friends

928 Table 2. Adam's Tournament Experiences

Timing	Emotional experience	Precursor to emotional experience	Coping strategies
Pre-match	Confident	Perception of opponent ability	
	Relaxed	Perception of opponent ability No pressure Spent time socializing	
	Happy	Feeling he could win	
	Nervous	Opponent's rating Perception of opponent's ability Opponent reputation as "cheat"	Focus on positives from previous matches Limit chances to cheat
	Positive	Certain of winning Recent success against opponent	
During match	Confident	Leading in the match Winning games	Exploit opponent's weakness
	Relaxed	Know opponent's weakness Leading in the match Feel more capable than opponent	Exploit opponent's weakness
	Happy	Leading in match In control of match Certain of positive outcome Won tough game	
	Bored	Winning too easily	Focus on game plan
	Positive	Performing well Perceive doing all he could Aware of opponent's weakness Gained control of match	
	Panic	Focused on outcome	
	Angry	Lost lead Lost games	Kept thoughts in present Focused on "fight" Focus on strengths Target opponent's weaknesses
	Nervous	Opponent playing well Opponent's style of play	Played with caution Focused on strengths
	Down	Making errors Perceive lose first set	Focused on strengths
	Frustrated	Losing Lost important game Opponent's style of play Lost service game Perceiving lost opportunities Making errors	Hid emotions Positive self-talk Reassured self Focused on strengths Adapt game plan Breathing techniques
	Lacking confidence	Trailing in match	Focus on tactics Focus on fight
	Worried	Opponent created opportunities	Adapted game plan
	Relieved	Regained lead	
	Post-match	Happy	Performed well/won Maintained emotions
Confident		Performed well	
Disappointed		Lost Concerned re. consequences of losing Being judged	Reassured self Took mind off match
Positive		Injury gone	
Uneasy		Confusion over score	
Sad		Poor emotional control in match	

930 Table 3. Daniel's Tournament Experiences

Timing	Emotional experience	Precursor to emotional experience	Coping strategies
Pre-match	Calm	Not focused on match Not thinking about match	
	Positive Confident	Confident will win Not focused on match Unaware of opponent Previous good performance	
During match	Nervous	Trailing in match Closing match out Poor previous performance Losing points Importance of match Underperforming Uncertain of outcome	Breathing techniques Shadowed swings Planned for following point Focused on game plan Adapted game plan Raised intensity levels
	Angry	Training in match Altercations with opponent	Threw racquet Used strategy from coach
	Relaxed	Winning	Focused on maintaining play
	Confident	Not being challenged Performing well Turned match around Improved performance	Told himself he was out of match
	Disappointed	Lost first set	Took toilet break Took time Focused on how to play
	Frustrated	Training in match Underperforming	God "pumped" up Positive emotional reactions Adapted game plan
Post-match	Angry	Opponent's behavior	
	Happy	Won Performed well Looking forward to final	
	Frustrated	Lost Missed opportunities Thought should have won	Focused on positive from match

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932 Table 4. Chloe's Tournament Experiences

Timing	Emotional experience	Precursor to emotional experience	Coping strategies
Pre-match	Relaxed	Not thinking about match Did not care about outcome of match Expected to lose	
	Nervous	Not timing ball well in warm up Uncertainty of match outcome Miss hitting ball in warm up	Breathing techniques Tried to relax muscles Slowed breathing
	Angry	Previous performance	
	Confident	Prepared well for event Expected to win match	
	Depressed	Previous match	
During match	Nervous	Poor warm-up Trailing in match Possibility of losing	Breathing techniques Tried to relax muscles Breathing techniques Tried to relax muscles
	Frustrated	Missed opportunities Lost set Underperforming Trailing in match Making errors	Focused on quitting tennis Stopped caring out outcome Focus on fighting for points Focus on not losing temper
	Angry	Making errors Trailing in match Opponent cheating Lost games	Threw racquet Threw racquet Threw racquet Took mind off match
	Despondent	Underperforming Trailing heavily Missed opportunity Lost games	Shouted at self Took mind off match
	Relaxed	Trailing in match	Not focused on match
	Hopeful	Realized had a chance of winning Won games Performing well Chance of winning	Concentrate on match Work harder
	Disappointed	Trailing in match Missed opportunity	Shouted at self Threw racquet
	Confident	Leading by a set	Focused on game plan
Post-match	Upset	Performed poorly Lost	
	Angry	Performed poorly Lost	
	Disappointed	Lost	Focused on increasing training
	Embarrassed	Feel others are judging performance	Focused on increasing training
	Depressed	Lost Performed poorly	Focused on going home and quitting tennis
	Frustrated	Opponent withdrew	
	Happy	Won	

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Appendix A

938 **Post-match review questions, informal interview guide and formal interview guide.**

939 The format of these documents has been altered for publication.

940 When starting the study, all participants were provided with an explanation of the study and
941 within this they were given an explanation of emotions and coping. Specifically, participants
942 were informed that emotions are discrete (specific) feelings that arise quickly in response to
943 situations. Coping refers to thoughts and behaviours that are used to try and manage demands
944 that you find taxing (e.g., different attempts to manage thoughts or situations that arise
945 before, during, or after the match that might be leading to you feeling different emotions).
946 These explanations were reiterated at the start of each formal interview.

947 **Post-match review sheet:**

948 Name:

949 Date:

950 Opponent

951 Score:

952 Pre-match: How did I feel before the match? What did I do to cope with this?

953 Start of match: How did I feel at the beginning of the match? What did I do to cope with this?

954 During match: How did my emotions change during the match? What did I do to cope with
955 these different emotions?

956 End of match: How did I feel at the end of the match? What did I do to cope with that?

957

Informal Interview Guide	Formal Interview Guide
<p><u>Introduction:</u> Before each interview I will remind the players everything they tell me is confidential and they can stop the interview at anytime. They can also choose not to answer questions if they don't want to. I will also remind them there are no right or wrong answers and I am just interested in what they have to say. I will ask them if they have any questions before we start the interview.</p>	<p><u>Introduction:</u> Before beginning each interview I will remind the players that everything they tell me is confidential and they can stop the interview at any time. They can also choose not to answer questions if they don't want to. I will also remind them that there are no right or wrong answers and I am just interested in what they have to say. I will ask them if they have any questions before we start the interview.</p>
<p><u>Introductory questions</u> How do you feel that match went for you? - Overall experience-positive, negative? (Probe for stories about the overall match performance, so the player isn't only focused on the outcome, defining moments). - Did you have any expectations for this tournament/ match before starting?</p>	<p><u>Introductory questions</u> Now that you have had a chance to reflect on your matches at the tournament, how are you feeling about it? - Overall experience -positive, negative? - Did you meet your expectations? - How are you feeling about your performances? - Do you feel differently about the matches compared to your initial reaction?</p>
<p><u>Main questions</u> 1. What were your emotions before starting your match? - Probe regarding positive & negative emotions, what influenced these emotions? (e.g., why did you felt happy/sad/anxious etc) 2. What did you do to manage this situation (each specific emotion described)? - Does that work for you, how were you feeling after trying to manage this emotion? 3. Talk to me a bit about your emotions once you started the match, did they change at all? - Probe regarding positive & negative emotions, what influenced these feelings? 4. Did you try to do anything to manage the situations leading to different emotions? (work through each emotion discussed). 5. Did you feel like your emotions were changing at any points in the match? (use notes from watching the match to stimulate the questions). - Probe regarding positive & negative emotions? - What influenced these emotions? - How was this making you feel, what effect was it having on you/your performance? - Did you try to manage these feelings? - How were you feeling after trying to manage this emotion?</p>	<p><u>Main questions</u> 1. Thinking about all your matches what were the main emotions you experienced this week? - Probe for both positive and negative emotion examples 2. What do you think are the main reasons you experience these emotions? - Probe for examples that match up with the different emotions. 3. What are the main strategies you use to try and cope with the situation leading to your emotions? - Probe for examples that match up with the different emotions. - How effective did you find these strategies? (e.g., do they work?) 4. Do you feel like your emotions changed match to match? - Probe for reasons why, how that impacted their performance. 5. Now we are going to review each of your matches from the tournament (using the video or the notes from the observation). - Do you feel there were any key moments in this match the influenced your emotions? - Probe for positive and negative emotions - What factors do you think influenced these key moments?</p>

<p>Repeat these questions for second and third set as necessary.</p> <p>6. Now that your match is over how are you feeling about it? - Probe for positive & negative emotional experiences. -What factors influence these feelings? -What are you trying to do to manage this? (if necessary) - Do you have any expectations for your next match? (dependent upon result).</p> <p>7. If you could play the match again would you do anything differently? - Overall- preparation, proactive, reactive? - Probe regarding any factors that may improve performance.</p>	<p>-What did you try and do to deal with your emotions in these moments?</p> <p>6. Based on these key moments and the moments in the video/notes, the following questions will be asked: - In this situation (give example): how were you feeling? - What do you think was causing you to feel like this? (probe this question to try and get to the underlying reasons) - Did you do anything to try and cope with this emotion? (Try and make it go away?) - Did it work? If it didn't work did you try something else?</p> <p>These questions will be repeated for all the main instances from each of the matches.</p>
<p><u>Summary Questions</u></p> <p>1. Overall, what were the main emotions you experienced during your match today?</p> <p>2. What were the main reasons you think you were experiencing those emotions?</p> <p>3. What were the main things you did to try and cope with the emotions you were experiencing?</p> <p>Thanks for chatting. That's all my questions for now. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?</p>	<p><u>Summary questions</u></p> <p>1. Can you summarise for me your emotions throughout the tournament and how you felt your emotions changed throughout the tournament (coping- effective or not?)</p> <p>2. How are you feeling about your tennis now?</p> <p>Thanks for chatting. That's all my questions for now. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?</p>