Coaches’ Interpersonal Emotion Regulation and the Coach-Athlete Relationship

by

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Abstract

There is evidence to suggest that athletes use self-regulation and interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) strategies to improve performance and relationships (Tamminen & Crocker, 2013); however, there is little research examining coaches’ use of IER and how this is connected to the coach-athlete relationship. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore coaches’ attempts to regulate their athletes’ emotions within the context of the coach-athlete relationship. Using a longitudinal multiple case study approach (Stake, 1995), participants included three cases each consisting of one male coach and two female athletes (total N = 9) from individual varsity sports. Coaches and athletes participated in individual interviews, a two-week audio diary period, and a follow-up interview. Athletes’ and coaches’ emotion regulation strategies were analyzed using Gross’ (1998) process model of emotion regulation: situation selection, situation modification, attention deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. There were commonalities in the ways that participants perceived coaches used IER to regulate athletes’ emotions. With respect to the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett & Meek, 2000), participants indicated that the quality of the relationship both influenced and was influenced by coaches’ attempts at IER with their athletes. A conceptual model outlining athletes’ emotions and emotion regulation, coaches’ IER, the coach-athlete relationship, and contextual factors was developed.
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Thank you for going on this emotional rollercoaster with me!
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Chapter 1
Introduction

1 Introduction

Sport can be an emotional experience for athletes, coaches, referees, and spectators (Jones & Uphill, 2012). The current literature addressing emotions in sport is largely focused on athletes’ intrapersonal emotions, emotional expressions, and emotion regulation and the relationship with athlete wellbeing, performance, and relationship quality (Hanin, 2000; Lazarus 2000a). However, since both emotions and sport are inherently social (Fridja, 1986; Lazarus 1991a; Parkinson, 1996), it is important to consider the interpersonal aspect of emotions and the potential implications for athletes and coaches within sport psychology research.

Interpersonal emotion regulation (IER), defined as the deliberate and non-deliberate attempts to influence an individual’s emotions, has recently gained attention in sport psychology research (Niven et al., 2009; Tamminen & Crocker, 2013). There is evidence to suggest that athletes’ use self- and interpersonal emotion regulation strategies to improve performance and relationships (Tamminen & Crocker, 2013), however there has yet to be a study considering the role of the coach within IER literature. While researchers have identified the influence of coaches’ emotional displays (Allan & Côté, 2016), the emotional content of coach speeches (Vargas-Tonsing, 2009), and coaches’ emotional intelligence (Thelwell et al., 2008) on athlete outcomes (e.g., performance, motivation) and the coach-athlete relationship, no research to date specifically addresses the influence of coaches’ use of IER.

Researchers have addressed IER within organizational psychology literature, predominantly within leader-follower dyads, and have found a relationship between leaders’ use of IER and network ties, leader-follower relationship quality, and follower trust, performance, and satisfaction (e.g., Little, Gooty, & M. Williams, 2016). As sport often mirrors management settings with respect to organizational, power, and communication dynamics (Cranmer & Myers, 2015), IER may have a similar influence in a sport context. Furthermore, since athletes’ perceptions of the coach and the quality of the coach-athlete relationship have been found to influence athlete psychological and physical wellbeing, performance, and motivation (e.g.,
Isoard-Gautheur et al., 2016; Staff et al., 2017), research on coaches’ attempts at IER and the coach-athlete relationship warrants attention.

The coach-athlete relationship has been previously conceptualized by the degree of closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation between the athlete and coach (Jowett, 2007), however there is a need to identify interpersonal factors that contribute to the development and maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship (Rhind & Jowett, 2010; 2012). Communication has been recognized as an essential component of quality coach-athlete relationships (Rhind & Jowett, 2010) and since interpersonal interactions and relationships are emotional in nature (Parkinson, 1996), research on IER may extend our understanding of the dynamics of the coach-athlete relationship as well as how this relationship may influence IER. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore coaches’ attempts to regulate their athletes’ emotions within the context of the coach-athlete relationship. This study may have theoretical implications with respect to interpersonal emotion regulation in sport, coaching, and the coach-athlete relationship, as well as practical implications including educating varsity coaches on their use of interpersonal emotion regulation.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

2 Literature Review

Due to the complex nature of IER, the following literature review will cover previous research on the theory of emotions, emotions in sport, emotion regulation theory, research on emotion regulation in sport, interpersonal emotion regulation theory and research, and interpersonal emotion regulation in sport, as well as literature addressing coaches’ emotions and the coach-athlete relationship.

2.1 Emotions

Defining emotions has been an ongoing challenge in the literature due to the multitude of theoretical approaches proposed in the last century (Vallerand & Blanchard, 2000). Emotions, mood, and affect are sometimes used as interchangeable constructs (Vallerand & Blanchard, 2000); however, researchers are generally in agreement on the distinctions between these terms (Fredrickson, 2001; Jones & Uphill, 2012). Affect is used as a generic term to encompass feeling states, emotions, and moods (Fredrickson, 2001), and therefore addresses many affective phenomena (Vallerand & Blanchard, 2000). Moods are more specific than affect and seen as longer lasting than emotions, as emotions are transient responses to a stimulus or object that often change from moment to moment (Jones & Uphill, 2012; Lazarus, 1991a). Jones and Uphill (2012) built on Fredrickson’s (2001) definition of emotions, positing that an emotion is “a cognitively appraised response to an event or stimulus which ‘triggers a cascade of response tendencies manifest across loosely coupled component systems’” (p. 34). While specific definitions vary throughout the literature, there appears to be a general consensus that emotions are a brief psychophysiological response which arise within a person-environment relationship (Frijda, 1988; Fredrickson, 2001; Lazarus, 1991a).

There is debate as to whether emotions should be considered as dimensional or discrete categories (Hanin, 2000; Lazarus, 1991a). With a dimensional perspective, emotions are classified based on shared properties and characteristics, with the most common dimensions including valence (i.e., pleasant versus unpleasant) and degree of arousal (i.e., high or low activation) (Hanin, 2000; Lazarus, 1991a). While many theoretical approaches include the
dimensions of emotions (e.g., Hanin, 1995, 1997), Lazarus (1991a) argued that the dimensional perspective is reductionist in nature, as it appears to devalue and oversimplify emotional reactions. Discrete emotions are distinguished by their qualitative content, including how an emotion arises and the specific action tendency (i.e., behaviour) that follows (Frijda, 1986; Hanin, 2000; Lazarus, 1991a). Frijda (1986) suggested that both dimensional and discrete views of emotions are valid when used in appropriate contexts; however, the specificity of discrete emotions evokes an understanding of the complexity and subjective importance of each emotion (Lazarus, 1991a).

Lazarus’ cognitive-motivational-relational theory (CMRT; 1991a) takes a discrete approach and posits that an emotion surfaces when an individual appraises a situation as influencing their wellbeing in relation to a goal. CMRT has received a considerable amount of attention within emotion research and has been the most widely used approach in the study of emotions in a sport context (Nicholls & Polman, 2007). The cognitive component refers to the appraisal of situational factors that precedes the evaluation of the event’s personal significance (Lazarus, 1991b). The motivational aspect of CMRT suggests that emotions arise in response to personally relevant goals, and the intensity or quality of an emotion is dependent on the strength or importance of the goal (Lazarus, 1991b). Finally, CMRT includes relational aspects of emotions, meaning that they occur within the context of a person-environment relationship and they do not occur independent of the physical and social environment (Lazarus, 1991b).

Lazarus (1991b) presented four categories of emotions including positive emotions (e.g., happiness), negative emotions (e.g., anger), borderline emotions (e.g., hope), and nonemotions (e.g., surprise); there are 15 discrete emotions within these broad categories. Each discrete emotion is described through a core relational theme, defined as “the central relational harm or benefit in adaptational encounters that underlies each specific kind of emotion” (Lazarus 1991a, p. 121). These core relational themes are brief ‘summaries’ of the appraisal process, describing how specific emotions arise, with the complete appraisal process consisting of a primary and secondary appraisal (Lazarus, 1991a, 1991b).

Primary appraisal is concerned with the importance of an event in relation to an individual’s goal and determines the strength or intensity of the subsequent emotion (Jones, 2003; Lazarus 1991b). The three types of primary appraisals include goal relevance (i.e., determining the significance of
an encounter to one’s wellbeing), goal congruence (i.e., whether an encounter is appraised as beneficial or harmful), and goal content (i.e., the type of goal at stake), and together these determine whether an emotional response will occur (Jones, 2003; Lazarus, 1991b). Secondary appraisal consists of the potential and options for coping (Lazarus, 1991a, 1991b). Three components of secondary appraisal include blame or credit (i.e., whether the self or another is accountable for the event), coping potential (i.e., whether it is possible to influence or change the emotional response), and future expectations (i.e., whether one predicts things will change for the better or worse), and together these define the subjective significance of an event (Lazarus, 1991a).

2.2 Emotions in Sport

Jones and Uphill (2012) emphasized the prevalence of a wide range of emotions experienced by athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators, and the value in understanding how these emotions influence behaviours and performance in sport. With this knowledge, individuals can better understand how to cope with or regulate their emotions to achieve optimal performance, personal wellbeing, and positive relationships (Jones & Uphill, 2012). CMRT accounts for the complexity of the emotion process in sport by highlighting the central role of cognition within appraisals and the subsequent role of coping (Jones & Uphill, 2012; Lazarus, 2000a). Lazarus (2000a) argued that discrete categories of emotions within CMRT provide the most detailed and useful information, and explain the inter- and intra-individual differences of emotions within athletes (Jones & Uphill, 2012).

Lazarus (2000) originally identified eight discrete emotions relevant to sport contexts, however there is evidence to support the experience of other discrete emotions in sport (e.g., Cerin & Barnett, 2006). Jones and Uphill (2012) also examined the outcomes of discrete emotions and determined that athletes’ emotions have cognitive, motivational, physiological, and physical consequences that may affect performance. For example, emotions such as anxiety can cause narrowed focus, decreased motivation, and increased heart rate and muscle tension in an athlete, ultimately influencing performance (Jones & Uphill, 2012). In addition, Martinent and colleagues (Martinent, Campo, & Ferrand, 2012; Martinent & Ferrand, 2015) observed professional table tennis players’ emotions during performance and found that athletes’ primary and secondary appraisals of the environment were associated with subsequent emotional
experiences (i.e., positive or negative discrete emotions). This study provided further insight into the consequences of emotions within a sport context.

Taking a different theoretical approach to the study of emotions in sport, Jones, Meijen, McCarthy, and Sheffield (2009) proposed the Theory of Challenge and Threat States in Athletes (TCTSA). The TCTSA is an extension of Blascovich and colleagues’ (Blascovich & Mendes, 2000; Blascovich & Tomaka, 1996) work with the biopsychosocial (BPS) model of threat and challenge, and it outlines the emotional responses associated with perceptions of challenge versus threat and the associated outcomes. The TCTSA aligns with Lazarus’ (1991a) theory of appraisal in that appraisals occur as an evaluation of goal-relevant stimuli; however, the TCTSA also incorporates self-efficacy within the understanding of appraisals (Jones et al., 2009). An individual with greater self-efficacy (i.e., the belief that one can accomplish a task; Bandura, 1995), greater perceptions of personal control, and approach-focused goals (i.e., goals to gain competence rather than extrinsic rewards or outcomes; Jones et al., 2009) is more likely to perceive a situation as a challenge rather than a threat (Jones et al., 2009). A challenge state is generally considered adaptive, where one has sufficient resources to meet the demands of a situation (Blascovich & Mendes, 2000). Challenge appraisals are presumed to lead to positively-toned emotions (e.g., happiness, pride, relief) and physiological activation, and consequently improved performance (Jones et al., 2009). In contrast, a threat state is predicted to lead to negatively-toned emotions (e.g., anger, sadness, shame) and physiological activation, and ultimately worse performance (Jones et al., 2009). Despite the potential applicability of this model in sport, studies testing TCTSA in sport settings have produced mixed findings (e.g., Blascovich et al., 2004; Meijen, Jones, Sheffield, & McCarthy, 2014), and past research has revealed considerable intra- and inter-individual variability regarding the beneficial and/or detrimental consequences of certain emotions on athlete performance (Jones, 2012; Jones & Uphill, 2012). These findings suggest that positively-toned emotions do not always have a positive influence on performance and negatively-toned emotions do not always have a negative influence on performance (Jones, 2012; Jones & Uphill, 2012), which highlights the idiosyncratic nature of optimal emotions in a sport context.

An additional theory focused on emotions in sport is Hanin’s (1995, 1997, 2000) Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF). This theory considers emotions in sport from a dimensional perspective rather than a discrete approach (Jones, 2012); however, it emphasizes
the individuality of optimal emotions in sport settings. While both the IZOF model (Hanin, 2000) and the CMRT (Lazarus, 1991a) highlight the role of appraisals in triggering emotions within a person-environment relationship, the IZOF approach identifies emotional profiles including five dimensions: intensity, form, content, context, and time (Hanin, 2000; Lazarus 2000a). This model focuses on “describing, predicting, explaining, and regulating performance-related psychobiosocial states affecting individual and team activity” (Hanin, 2000, p. 66). The IZOF model describes the relationship between the optimal intensity of subjective emotional experiences for performance and accounts for intra- and inter-individual differences in optimal emotional states (Hanin, 2000). For example, a study examining soccer players’ emotional profiles prior to their best and worst performances found that optimal emotional states showed significant intra- and inter-individual variability (Hanin & Syrjä, 1995). Hanin’s (2000) model has made a significant contribution to sport psychology literature on the influence of emotions in sport, however this dimensional approach to emotions has been criticized for ignoring much of the qualitative content of emotions (Lazarus, 2000a).

2.3 Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation is defined as “…the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross, 1998a, p. 275). Processes involved in emotion regulation may be unconscious or conscious, maladaptive or adaptive, target positive or negative emotions, and may serve to increase, maintain, or decrease an emotion (Butler & Gross, 2004; Gross, 1998a). Furthermore, emotion regulation requires cognitive resources and has emotional, cognitive, social, and physiological consequences (John & Gross, 2004). For example, cardiovascular responses, memory impairments, and an incongruence between intrinsic feelings and extrinsic behaviours have been associated with certain emotion regulation strategies (e.g., emotion suppression and expression; John & Gross, 2004). While this may portray emotion regulation as costly, failure to regulate one’s emotions may be detrimental to an individual’s health and wellbeing (Denollet, Nyklíček, & Vingerhoets, 2008).

The focus of this thesis is on emotion regulation, and it is worthwhile to briefly distinguish between coping and emotion regulation. Coping refers to the “cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external or internal demands (and conflicts between them) that are appraised as
taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Lazarus, 1991a, p.112). While researchers have emphasized the critical role of coping in sport and associations between coping and athlete wellbeing, performance, and life satisfaction (Gaudreau & Antl, 2008; Nicholls & Polman, 2007; Richards, 2012), coping researchers have predominantly focused on situations that are perceived as harmful, threatening, or stressful and elicit negative emotions (Lazarus, 1991a), without much attention given to the regulation of positive emotions (Jones, 2012). In comparison, research on emotion regulation accounts for the regulation of both positive and negative emotions and targets both emotion expression and experiences (Gross, 1998a). Since sport can elicit both positive and negative emotions and these emotional experiences can have distinct influences on performance (Jones, 2003; McCarthy, 2011), it is important to understand the use of emotion regulation strategies among athletes.

Gross (1998a) developed a process model for emotion regulation that includes antecedent-focused and response-focused emotion regulation strategies. Antecedent-focused emotion regulation occurs prior to the occurrence of an emotion and includes four regulatory processes: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, and cognitive change. Situation selection requires emotional knowledge to effectively seek out or avoid certain people, places, or objects to try and control the emotional experience. Situation modification involves an individual attempting to directly change a situation in order to alter the emotional response. Attentional deployment is broken into strategies of distraction, concentration, and rumination, and is described as an internal version of situation selection. For example, one may think of a situation or memory that is unrelated to the experience causing the undesirable emotional state (i.e., distraction) to change the emotional response. Lastly, cognitive change or reframing refers to efforts to modify the evaluation or appraisal of a situation. In contrast to these antecedent strategies, response-focused emotion regulation occurs after an emotion is generated. Response-focused strategies are referred to as the processes of response modulation and include emotional expression and suppression.

Cognitive reappraisal and emotion suppression have received considerable attention in the literature (John & Gross, 2004; Gross, 1998b) and have been found to have opposing outcomes. Emotion suppression is effective at decreasing outward signs of positive and negative emotions; however, it is generally considered to be a maladaptive regulatory strategy, as individuals using emotion suppression have reported feeling fewer positive emotions and increased internalization
of negative emotions overall (John & Gross, 2004; Gross, 1998b). Furthermore, emotion suppression has been shown to consume cognitive resources, increase depressive symptoms, worsen social connections due to observers’ perceptions of the suppressor’s inauthenticity, and leads to decreased well-being (John & Gross, 2004). In contrast, cognitive reappraisal is generally considered an adaptive strategy, as it is used early in the emotion generation process and findings show it leads to more positive emotions, positive social connections and support, less depletion of cognitive resources, and decreased risk of depression (John & Gross, 2004; Sheppes & Gross, 2011). While the outcomes of other emotion regulation strategies are less understood, Sheppes and Gross (2011) suggested that antecedent-focused strategies are preferred as they allow an individual to proactively manage an emotion prior to its full development (Gresham & Gullone, 2012).

How an individual regulates his or her emotions can be influenced by a myriad of developmental, individual, and contextual factors (Blanchard-Fields, Stein, & Watson, 2004; Gross & John, 2003; Gresham & Gullone, 2012). For example, infant attachment and the development of the Big Five personality factors (i.e., extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness; John & Srivastava, 1999) have been shown to influence the development of emotion regulation abilities. Children with secure parent-child attachments (i.e., parent serves as a protective figure in times of stress and a support for exploration when stress is absent; Kim, Boldt, & Kochanska, 2015; Turliuic & Bujor, 2013), high measures of extraversion, and low neuroticism appear to use more cognitive reappraisal and less emotional suppression regulation strategies than their less secure, introverted, and neurotic counterparts (Gresham & Gullone, 2012; Gross & John, 2003). With respect to individual differences, males appear to use more emotion suppression than females (Gresham & Gullone, 2012; Gross & John, 2003), ethnic minorities report greater use of emotion suppression than dominant cultures (Gross & John, 2003), and emotion suppression appears to increase as age increases (Blanchard-Fields, Stein, & Watson, 2004; Gresham & Gullone, 2012; Hofer, Burkhard, & Allemand, 2015). Finally, emotion regulation occurs in response to an individual’s goals which may vary depending on the contextual factors of a situation including social norms and the demands of the environment (Wagstaff & Weston, 2014). Sport is a unique context which evokes intense emotions, involves diverse personalities, and individuals have a wide range of goals, and has thus invited researchers’ interest with respect to emotion regulation in sport (Jones, 2012).
2.3.1 Emotion Regulation in Sport

Within sport, researchers have focused predominantly on examining how athletes’ intrapersonal emotion regulation strategies influence performance (Hanin, 2000, 2007; Uphill, McCarthy, & Jones, 2009). With respect to specific emotion regulation strategies, Uphill and colleagues (2009) emphasized that by using situation modification to ‘control the controllable’ (p. 176), athletes may be able to regulate their emotional outcomes within a sport context. However, situation modification may not always be possible due to the unpredictable nature of sport environments (Jones, 2012). Attentional deployment strategies including listening to music (e.g., Balk, Adriaanse, de Ridder, & Evers, 2014; Stanley et al., 2012; Lane, Davis, & Devonport, 2011) and using pre-performance routines (e.g., Uphill & Jones, 2005) have been associated with adaptive emotional and performance outcomes for athletes. Researchers have also examined four basic psychological skills in sport psychology literature (i.e., imagery, goal-setting, self-talk, and relaxation; Wadey & Hanton, 2008) that can be used in conjunction with reappraisal processes to change an emotional response for cognitive and physical benefits related to performance (Jones, 2012). For example, an anxious athlete may attempt to consider the competition as an exciting opportunity (i.e., reappraisal) and use breathing techniques for relaxation to try and regulate his or her negative emotions. How these emotions are appraised and how they influence wellbeing and performance greatly depends on individual (e.g., gender, age) and contextual (e.g., competition versus practice) factors (Hanin, 2000; Jones, 2012), thus it is important to explore these strategies in various sport settings.

It is often assumed that individuals regulate their emotions in order to reduce experiences of negative emotions and increase positive emotions (Jones, 2003), however researchers have also recognized the induction of unpleasant emotions for utilitarian reasons (Tamir et al., 2007). This is particularly relevant in a sport context, where athletes may believe feelings of anxiety or anger are instrumental and necessary for performance (Hanin, 2000; Stanley, Lane, Devonport, & Beedie, 2012). There is evidence to support athletes’ use of emotion regulation strategies to increase unpleasant emotions such as anxiety and anger; however, Lane and colleagues (2011) suggested that this may be unnecessary as athletes tend to naturally experience anxiety in sport. Furthermore, the cognitive, physiological, and physical consequences of emotion regulation appear to be costlier when experiencing negative emotions, therefore initiating and maintaining positive emotional states may prove more useful for athletes than trying to regulate negative
emotions (Jones, 2012; Stanley et al., 2012). For example, Wagstaff (2014) found that suppressing emotions following an upsetting video had a negative impact on an athlete’s subsequent cycling performance in comparison to cyclists who did not regulate their emotions and those who did not view the video. Tamminen, Gaudreau, McEwan, and Crocker (2016) provided further insight into athletes’ positive and negative emotions, as athletes’ attempts to worsen their own emotions was negatively associated with enjoyment and commitment, whereas efforts to improve their own emotions was associated with increased enjoyment.

Despite the large body of literature documenting the use of intrapersonal emotion regulation strategies and their influence on performance and wellbeing, researchers have also highlighted the importance of the social and interpersonal factors of emotions in developing a comprehensive understanding of these constructs (Frijda, 1986; Latimer, Rench, & Brackett, 2007; Lazarus, 1991a; Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014; Tamminen et al., 2016; Vallerand & Blanchard, 2000). Thus, the following sections consider emotions as social phenomena to address the interpersonal nature of emotions.

### 2.4 Emotions as Social Phenomena

Emotions are social and rarely occur outside an interpersonal context (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991a). Parkinson (1996) explained that emotions are defined by social, institutional, or cultural contexts and serve a communicative function, as emotions are believed to display a sender’s goals, beliefs, and attitudes. These emotional messages allow receivers to respond in appropriate and desirable ways, ultimately influencing the nature of the interaction (Côté, 2005; Lazarus, 1991a). Fischer and Manstead (2008) highlighted the affiliation function of emotions, as they help individuals build and maintain social relationships and establish roles within dyads and groups. However, emotions can also serve a social distancing function, specifically with negative emotions such as anger, contempt, or disgust, which can intimidate, sadden, or belittle the receiver and lead to relationship disengagement (Fischer & Manstead, 2008). Researchers have recognized the value in studying the effects of discrete emotions within social interactions rather than reducing the literature to comparing pleasant versus unpleasant emotions, since discrete emotions display different goals and attitudes (Côté, 2005; Lazarus, 1991a). It is clear that emotions serve an interpersonal and relational purpose and thus highlights the importance of conducting research on emotions in various social and group
contexts. The following sections will review relevant literature on the social aspects of emotions in different contexts.

2.4.1 Emotional Contagion

Emotional contagion is “the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person’s and, consequently to converge emotionally” (Hatfield et al., 1993, p. 96), and it has been shown to occur in conversation (Hatfield et al., 1993), within and between groups (Heerdink et al., 2013; Smith & Mackie, 2008), in the workplace (Latimer et al., 2007; Puig & Vilanova, 2011), and within and between sports teams (Moll, Jordet, & Pepping, 2010; Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005; Totterdell, 2000). This process of mimicking others’ emotions, which in consequence elicits the feeling of these emotions, occurs rapidly, automatically, and influences interpersonal communication (Hatfield et al., 1993).

With respect to sport, emotional contagion within and between teams has been found to play a role in team communication, collective moods, and ultimately team performance (Moll et al., 2010; Totterdell, 2000). For example, Totterdell (2000) studied emotional contagion within a team of professional cricket players, and results showed that an individual’s positive mood was linked to the collective positive mood of his teammates. Moll and colleagues (2010) reported similar findings in a study using recorded video images of soccer players’ behaviours during penalty shootouts. Through the analysis of behavioural coding, Moll et al. (2010) determined that athletes’ displays of celebratory behaviours were linked to winning the penalty shootout, potentially by evoking positivity in their teammates and having a negative impact on the opposing team. Together, these studies demonstrate a link between emotional contagion and sport performance.

2.4.2 Emotions as Social Information (EASI) Model

The Emotions as Social Information (EASI; Van Kleef, 2009) model extends the literature on emotional contagion by specifying some of the social functions of emotions in a conceptual model (Van Kleef, 2010). The underlying assumption of the EASI model is that emotions disambiguate an individual’s goals, motives, and intentions within social interactions (Van Kleef, 2010) and influence the receiver’s behaviour through his or her inferences and affective reactions.
(Van Kleef, 2009). This relationship is further moderated by the receiver’s motivation to understand an emotional message and social-relational factors; therefore, the response to a sender’s emotion depends on the nature of the relationship (Friesen et al., 2013; Van Kleef, 2009; Van Kleef, 2010). The EASI model has been supported by literature on leader-follower relationships (e.g., Chi & Ho, 2014), team performance (e.g., Wang & Seibert, 2015), parent-child interactions (Van Kleef, 2009), and it has recently been applied in the sport literature to explain previous findings in interpersonal interactions and relationships in a sport setting (Friesen et al., 2013). Friesen and colleagues (2013) reviewed sport psychology literature to understand the relevance of the EASI model in a sport context, and highlighted the importance of understanding the social functions of emotions in sport as the role of emotions may vary within the unique relationships present in sport (e.g., between coaches and athletes). Furthermore, Van Kleef (2010) noted the implications of emotion regulation within social interactions, and researchers have discussed the value in exploring interpersonal emotion regulation of discrete emotions in predicting appropriate social behaviours for successful relationships (Friesen et al., 2013; Van Kleef, 2009).

2.5 Interpersonal Emotion Regulation (IER)

Gross and Thompson (2007) discussed the importance of considering both the intrinsic (i.e., regulating one’s own emotions) and extrinsic (i.e., regulating another’s emotions) regulatory processes of emotion regulation and research on the extrinsic process or ‘interpersonal emotion regulation’ has gained momentum in recent years. Interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) refers to efforts to deliberately and non-deliberately influence the emotions of another person (Niven, Totterdell, & Holman, 2009; Tamminen & Crocker, 2013). Due to some inconsistencies within the definitions of emotional terms, researchers (Dixon-Gordon et al., 2015; Niven, 2017) have recently distinguished interpersonal emotion regulation from the concepts of intrinsic emotion regulation, emotional contagion, social support, and coping. They explained that intrinsic emotion regulation is used to regulate one’s own emotions, emotional contagion may occur without intent or notice, and coping and social support almost always occur as a way to reduce stress over time. These are distinct from IER, as interpersonal emotion regulation is used to influence both positive and negative emotions, is a short-term, deliberate process, and has an extrinsic or social target (e.g., directed at another person). IER serves a number of social goals, including influencing an individual’s beliefs or attitudes, providing social support or care, and
strengthening or weakening a relationship (Niven et al., 2009). Researchers have examined IER in parenting and family life (e.g., Denham, Bassett, & Wyatt, 2014), the workplace (e.g., Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2009), and sport (e.g., Tamminen & Crocker, 2013) and there is evidence to support the implications of IER on wellbeing, relationship quality, and performance in various contexts; however, the research in this area remains in its infancy.

IER has been indirectly addressed within parenting literature, primarily through research examining parents’ attempts to develop and control their child’s emotional expressions and emotional development through intrapersonal emotion expression and regulation methods (Brumariu, 2015; Denham et al., 2014). Through both deliberate and non-deliberate modeling, reactions to emotions, and emotional coaching, parents communicate their meta-emotional beliefs (i.e., attitudes toward emotions; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997) to their child and dictate what emotions should be felt, how they should be felt, and when they should be displayed (Denham et al., 2014; Meyer et al., 2014). These parenting behaviours have been found to influence the parent-child relationship and the child’s overall emotional intelligence (Brumariu, 2015; Denham et al., 2014). Specifically, Fabes, Poulin, Eisenberg, and Madden-Derdich (2002) found that both supportive and unsupportive attitudes toward a child’s display of emotion influenced the child’s future ability to express and regulate his or her emotions. Parental support and positive attention have been found to improve children’s emotion regulation abilities and ultimately lead to more experiences of positive emotions, whereas negative parental attention or scolding of children’s emotional displays may foster anxiety and poor emotion regulation abilities (Denham et al., 2014). Furthermore, a lack of emotion or disregarding a child’s emotional experience influences the child’s expressive and regulatory behaviours, where the child may experience greater anxiety when feeling various emotions (Denham et al., 2014).

While much of the literature on emotion regulation within parent-child dyads has been focused on child development (Denham et al., 2014), researchers have also addressed specific emotion regulation strategies employed by parents and how they influence the parent-child relationship (Le & Impett, 2016). Le and Impett (2016) suggested that parents tend to suppress their own negative emotions and amplify positive emotions when experiencing emotions that are incongruent with appropriate emotional displays within parent-child interactions. For example, a parent might amplify their happiness when a child learns the multiplication table (despite the adult considering this task to be simple) to foster a sense of warmth and approval within the
parent-child interaction (Le & Impett, 2016). Le and Impett’s research among parents and children of various ages and found that parents’ suppression of their own negative emotions and amplification of positive emotions was negatively associated with parent authenticity, emotional wellbeing, and parent-child relationship quality. These findings regarding the outcomes associated with emotion regulation within parent-child dyads is further supported in the literature on IER, emotional labour in the workplace (Gardner et al., 2009), and emotional intelligence (e.g., Choi et al., 2015).

Taking a theoretical perspective of IER, a number of theoretical approaches have recently been developed to explain the use of IER, IER strategies, and the various outcomes associated with IER (Niven et al., 2011; Zaki & W. Williams, 2013). M. Williams (2007) approached IER from the perspective of threat regulation, proposing that individuals may attempt to control others’ emotions by reducing or increasing the target’s perceptions of threat. Aligning with CMRT (Lazarus, 1991a), M. Williams (2007) developed the cognitive-appraisal theoretical model outlining the process of IER within an interaction. Within this model, an individual is thought to first imagine, perceive, and understand the emotions or thoughts of another individual (i.e., perspective taking), and next deliberately attempt to reduce the target’s perceptions of a situation having a negative influence (i.e., threat-reducing behaviour). Then, the target will positively assess the situation and the regulator (i.e., reflection process), ultimately increasing positive emotions, trust, and cooperation within the relationship. Gross’ (1998a) intrapersonal emotion regulation strategies are discussed within this model with respect to threat-reducing behaviour, as M. Williams (2007) suggested that individuals might use similar emotion regulation strategies intra- and interpersonally. While this model provides insight on the process of IER and addresses the use of specific strategies (i.e., Gross 1998a), the focus is largely on how individuals improve the emotional states of others and fails to consider how one might attempt to worsen an individual’s emotional state. However, M. Williams (2007) recognized the need for further research on IER to address the lack of reliable measurement tools, the influence of IER over time, and the variations in IER across different contexts.

Recently, Niven and colleagues (2009, 2011) integrated much of the empirical research on IER into a comprehensive model; it should be noted that this model focuses on the broader concept of positive and negative affect regulation rather than discrete emotions, however this theoretical approach has been used to inform the literature on regulation of discrete emotions (e.g., Niven et
Niven et al. (2011) developed a 2 x 2 four-factor model encompassing the intra- and interpersonal aspects of affect regulation. Within this model, affect regulation is described as the combination of the Target of Regulation (i.e., one’s own or another’s affect) and the Regulatory Motive (i.e., to worsen or improve affect). For example, one may tell a friend a joke in a moment of sadness (i.e., extrinsic affect-improving) or one might ruminate to elicit feelings of anger (i.e., intrinsic affect-worsening). Moreover, specific strategies have been identified and classified into two dimensions of affect regulation strategies: behavioural (i.e., behavioural interventions) versus cognitive (i.e., changing thoughts or feelings associated with the situation), and engagement (i.e., focusing on the situation) versus diversion (i.e., directing attention away from the situation; Niven et al., 2009; Parkinson & Totterdell, 1999).

Building on the theoretical foundations of IER, researchers have begun to incorporate an element of effectiveness within models of interpersonal emotion regulation. Zaki and W. Williams (2013) developed a theoretical model of interpersonal regulation to address the social dependency of IER. Their model mirrors that of Niven et al. (2011), proposing a 2 x 2 four-factor model separating intrinsic and extrinsic targets of regulation, but it differs in that it includes a social mechanism of intra- and interpersonal regulation (i.e., response-dependent versus response-independent regulation strategies). The outcome of response-dependent regulation relies on the feedback of another person, whereas response-independent regulation does not. This does not suppose that response-independent regulation occurs outside of a social context, but rather that the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of IER is not necessarily influenced by the behaviours or actions of the target. For example, an individual may believe a prosocial behaviour will improve a target’s affect regardless of whether the target outwardly responds in this way; as such, the behaviour fulfills the agent’s regulatory goal independent of the target’s response (Zaki & W. Williams, 2013).

Dixon-Gordon, Bernecker, and Christensen (2015) recently reviewed the research on IER and extended the current view of IER in suggesting that individuals engage in interactions not only to try and control someone’s emotions, but may also seek emotion regulation from the receiver. When seeking regulation, individuals may experience an excessive reliance on others to control emotions or appropriate others may not be available for such regulation. When regulating others’ emotions, Dixon-Gordon et al. (2015) suggested that emotion regulation may not always be successful, or may be perceived as excessive and unskilled by the target. More specifically,
Dixon-Gordon et al. (2015) presented four categories of problems associated with the IER process: problematic emotion regulatory goals (e.g., conflicting goals), problems with behavior (e.g., unskilled use of IER), problems with encoding (e.g., low emotional awareness), and problems with decoding (e.g., hypersensitivity). Researchers (Dixon-Gordon et al., 2015; M. Williams & Emich, 2014) have expressed the need for studies addressing both successful and unsuccessful attempts at IER, due to the dyadic nature of IER and the number of factors that may negatively influence the process.

Previous research on IER has focussed on the intra- and interpersonal outcomes associated with IER. With respect to the intrapersonal outcomes, researchers have found that an individual’s use of IER may influence their own well-being, short-term and long-term affect, self-efficacy, and future use of IER (Niven et al., 2012b; M. Williams & Emich, 2014). Moreover, these individual outcomes appear to depend on the target’s response to regulation attempts, supporting the social dependence of IER (Zaki & W. Williams, 2013). For example, Niven and colleagues (2012b) completed a two-part study involving University students and staff, and among inmates of a high-security prison, and found that agents’ attempts to control targets’ affect led to intrapersonal changes in their own affective wellbeing one month later. These findings were further supported and extended by M. Williams and Emich (2014), who examined individuals’ failed attempts at using humour as a regulatory strategy. Using undergraduate students’ autobiographical narratives of humour episodes, results revealed that an agent’s failed attempts at improving another person’s positive affect through humour resulted in increases in the agent’s negative affect, decreases in their own self-efficacy, and decreased likelihood of future IER attempts. Moreover, these positive and negative intrapersonal outcomes associated with IER may be accompanied by a depletion of cognitive resources. Further, Martínez-Íñigo and colleagues (2013) found through participant role-play that deliberate attempts to try and regulate a target’s affect resulted in the depletion of the agent’s cognitive resources. However, it was found that when attempting to improve an individual’s affect (in contrast to worsening his or her affect), positive responses from the target may offset the reduction of cognitive resources. Together, these studies provide evidence for the social dependence and the intrapersonal outcomes associated with IER.

With respect to interpersonal outcomes of IER, researchers have predominantly focused on IER within organizational contexts and have found implications for relationship quality, as well as trust, performance, and job satisfaction (e.g., Niven et al., 2015; Thiel et al., 2015). For example,
there is evidence to suggest that IER influences the quality of both social networks (e.g., management teams) and small scale relationships (e.g., dyads). Liu, Liu, and Wu (2012) investigated the influence of leaders’ strategic emotional displays on interpersonal relationships (i.e., network ties) within an organization and found that leaders’ positive emotional displays within leader-follower interactions were associated with more organizational network ties compared to negative emotional displays. Niven and colleagues (2015) further supported the influence of IER on social networks by investigating individuals’ use of cognitive and behavioural IER strategies on building online and face-to-face social networks. In this study, the researchers found that behavioural strategies (e.g., doing something nice for someone) led to greater social networks in comparison to cognitive IER strategies (e.g., giving advice). Within smaller scale relationships, Niven and colleagues (2012a) conducted a two-part study observing interpersonal affect regulation between grocery store employees, as well as between staff and inmates at a high-security prison. Findings revealed that grocery store co-workers who attempted to use IER strategies to improve co-workers’ affect, and also perceived that others tried to improve their own personal affect, were more likely to trust and perceive their co-workers as friends. These results were replicated in the prison setting; however, they were also extended to demonstrate a longitudinal relationship, as the influence of IER on relationship trust and friendship was maintained one month later. Furthermore, Little, Gooty, and M. Williams (2016) extended findings on the influence of IER and relationship quality within leader-follower dyads. Using survey data from matched supervisor-subordinate dyads, leaders’ problem-focused interpersonal emotion management (IEM) strategies were shown to foster positive impressions of leadership and relationship quality amongst their followers in comparison to non-problem-focused IEM strategies.

Additionally, researchers have explored the positive and negative interpersonal consequences of follower performance and job satisfaction associated with leaders’ uses of IER (e.g., Glasø & Einarsen, 2008; Little et al., 2016). For example, Thiel and colleagues (2015) studied simulated leader-follower dyads and found that leaders’ combinations of person-focused and emotion-focused intra- and interpersonal emotion regulation strategies in critical situations influenced followers’ feelings of stress and subsequent performance. Specifically, leaders’ emotion suppression was perceived as punitive by followers, however when used in combination with empathy, leaders were able to reduce follower stress. Moreover, Little and colleagues (2016)
examined the influence of followers’ perceptions of leaders’ IEM strategies (M. Williams, 2007) on follower performance. Followers who perceived their leaders as using more problem-focused (i.e., situation modification and cognitive change) rather than non-problem focused strategies (i.e., attentional deployment and modulating the emotional response) reported greater job satisfaction and performance. It is evident from previous research that the use of IER has intra- and interpersonal consequences in leader-follower dyads and has important implications for IER in sport settings.

2.5.1 Interpersonal Emotion Regulation (IER) in Sport

Research on IER in a sport context is limited, however current understandings mirror findings from research in management, in that IER has been found to have both intrapersonal (e.g., performance, enjoyment, commitment) and interpersonal (e.g., relationship quality) consequences in sport settings (e.g., Tamminen & Crocker, 2013). With respect to intrapersonal outcomes, Tamminen and colleagues (2016) examined associations between the peer motivational climate and intra- and interpersonal emotion regulation in competitive sport teams with athlete enjoyment and commitment. An analysis of survey data from 451 athletes revealed that attempts to improve teammates emotions at the person-level (but not at the team-level) were positively related to athletes’ enjoyment and commitment in sport, whereas attempts to worsen teammates’ emotions were negatively related to personal enjoyment and commitment. In fact, attempts at improving others’ emotions at the team level was negatively related to athlete enjoyment, suggesting that team-level and person-level interpersonal emotion regulation may be separate constructs with distinct outcomes.

Other studies have explored relationships between athletes’ uses of IER and both intra- and interpersonal outcomes. For example, Tamminen and Crocker (2013) adopted a longitudinal case study approach to explore IER among high-performance female curlers. Athletes commonly reported using interpersonal strategies such as humour, prosocial behaviours, cueing, and positive feedback to improve connections with teammates and overall team performance. Campo and colleagues (2016) reported similar findings with professional rugby players, where athletes reported using a combination of self-regulation, co-regulation, and extrinsic regulation (i.e., IER) for both egotistic (e.g., to help oneself) and altruistic (e.g., to help others) reasons. Moreover, while not directly related to sports, Wagstaff and Weston (2014) investigated participants’ use of
emotion regulation on a team mountaineering expedition and found that individuals used combinations of typically adaptive (e.g., reappraisal) and maladaptive (e.g., suppression) (Gross, 1998a) strategies for relational and performance purposes. Despite the need for further exploration on IER in sport, preliminary evidence supports the relationship between athletes’ uses of IER and intra- and interpersonal outcomes.

Wagstaff, Fletcher, and Hanton (2012) proposed a conceptual model of IER specific to sport organizations based on semi-structured interviews with high-level athletes, coaches, and sport organization administrators to understand the role of emotional intelligence and emotion regulation in creating optimal sport environments. Findings demonstrated that participants used a variety of intra- and interpersonal emotion regulation strategies to optimize relationships; however, the particular strategies used ultimately depended on the emotional intelligence of the individual and the social context. From these results, Wagstaff and colleagues (2012) developed a sociocognitive model which encompasses the influence of emotion abilities and social norms on the selection and application of emotion regulation strategies, and the associated intra- and interpersonal outcomes within sport organizations. Emotion ability refers to an individual’s ability to identify, comprehend, process, and manage emotions. The social norms of the environment or organization emphasize the importance of understanding and abiding by acceptable behaviours and expressions of emotions. Together, these determine the selection of an emotion regulation strategy. Wagstaff et al. (2012) identified two strategies of intra- and interpersonal emotion regulation: experience regulation (i.e., managing feelings), and expression regulation (i.e., the managing a behaviour), consistent with behavioural and cognitive emotion regulation strategies (Niven et al. 2009; Parkinson & Totterdell, 1999). The model then illustrates the potential influence of these strategies on emotional, behavioural, and relational intra- and interpersonal outcomes (Wagstaff et al., 2012). Wagstaff and colleagues’ (2012) model of emotion regulation encapsulates the complexity of emotion regulation in sport organizations and mirrors previous research on emotional labour and emotional intelligence (e.g., Gardner et al., 2009; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). While emotional labour and emotional intelligence are not the focus of the proposed study, research in this area has been used for further insight on the use and influence of emotions in various contexts. Therefore, the following sections briefly review the concepts of emotional labour and emotional intelligence, as these
concepts inform the current study and its focus on the social and interpersonal aspects of emotion regulation in sport.

### 2.6 Emotional Labour and Emotional Intelligence

Emotional labour, defined as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7), has received a considerable amount of attention within management research and has been found to have intra- and interpersonal consequences within organizations (Gardner et al., 2009). Hochschild (1983) described two components of emotional labour: surface acting, when one displays phony emotions, and deep acting, when one attempts to actually feel the emotions he or she believes ought to be felt. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) later added a third component, spontaneous and genuine expression, to address an individual’s display and expression of his or her true emotion. Researchers have found that leaders’ surface acting, deep acting, and genuine expression within management influences follower wellbeing and performance. Surface acting is similar to emotional suppression and may lead to followers perceiving leaders as inauthentic (Gardner et al., 2009), which has been associated with leader burnout (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Liu et al., 2015), as well as decreased performance (Wang & Seibert, 2015) and trust (Gardner et al., 2009) in leader-follower dyads. In contrast, deep acting and genuine expression are viewed as more authentic displays of emotion and lead to increases in leaders’ emotional wellbeing (Gardner et al., 2009), follower performance (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), job satisfaction (Sharma, 2014), and leader-follower trust (Gardner et al., 2009). Gardner and colleagues (2009) developed a process model demonstrating the individual (e.g., political skill) and contextual (e.g., organizational structure) factors that may moderate the relationship between emotional labour of leaders and leader authenticity.

A related concept is that of emotional intelligence, which is defined as:

> …the ability to perceive emotion accurately; the ability to access and generate feelings when they facilitate cognition; the ability to understand affect-laden information and make use of emotional knowledge; and the ability to manage or regulate emotions in oneself and others to promote emotional and intellectual growth and well-being.  

(Salovey, Detweiler-Bedell, Detweiler-Bedell, & Mayer, 2008, p. 535)
More simply, emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and express emotions, the ability to regulate one’s own and other’s emotions, and the ability to use emotions in an adaptive way (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Salovey et al., 2008). It is assumed that emotionally intelligent individuals are better equipped to respond to their environment, think, problem solve, self-motivate, and cope with emotions (Salovey et al., 2008). Furthermore, researchers have conducted meta-analyses and determined emotional intelligence as a predictor of physical and mental health, as well as improved work performance (Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010; Schutte, Malouff, & Thorsteinsson, 2013).

Pertinent to the sport context, leaders’ emotional intelligence has been identified as a key factor in leader-follower interactions (Choi et al., 2015). Specifically, leaders with greater emotional intelligence in recognizing, using, and regulating emotions have shown to stimulate creativity (Castro, Gomes, & de Sousa, 2012), improve job performance, satisfaction, and commitment in followers (Wong & Law, 2002), and increase rapport within the leader-follower relationship (Pryke, Lunic, & Badi, 2015). While these findings emphasize the importance of leaders’ emotional intelligence and the associated effects on followers, Smollan and Parry (2011) recognized the importance of understanding followers’ perceptions of leaders’ emotional abilities. Through a qualitative investigation, Smollan and Parry found that followers reported that they experienced more positive attitudes, greater wellbeing, and felt comfortable sharing their emotions with leaders when the followers believed their leaders recognized, acknowledged, responded to, and regulated their own and others’ emotions.

Researchers have also highlighted the influence of emotions, intrapersonal emotion regulation, emotional labour, emotional intelligence, and IER on relationships and performance within the workplace and recently in sport (Friesen et al., 2013; Niven et al., 2009; Dixon-Gordon et al., 2015). Researchers have examined coaches’ emotional qualities (Vargas-Tonsing, 2009), emotional intelligence (Thelwell et al., 2008; VanSickle, Hancher-Rauch, & Elliott, 2010), emotional labour (Lee & Chelladurai, 2016), intrapersonal emotion regulation (Hill & Davis, 2014), development of emotion regulation (Wagstaff, Hanton, & Fletcher, 2013), and athletes’ perceptions of coaches’ regulation (Friesen et al., 2015a), as well as providing some examples of coaches regulating athletes’ emotions (e.g., Friesen et al., 2013). However, the examination of IER among coaches and athletes is limited and there is a need to provide empirical evidence involving both coaches’ and athletes’ uses and perceptions of IER (Friesen et al., 2015a).
2.7 Coaches’ Emotions

The importance of quality coaching in sport is well established, as coaches are often viewed by their athletes as teachers, mentors, friends, and parent figures (Becker, 2009; Côté & Gilbert, 2009). The various roles of the coach as perceived by athletes suggests that the coach not only has a great influence on an athlete’s sport experience but also outside of the sport environment, as coaches have shown to affect athletes’ overall wellbeing and success (Becker, 2009; Stewart & Owens, 2011). While specific coaching behaviours (e.g., supportive versus punitive; Smith & Smoll, 1991), and coaching styles (e.g., autonomy supportive versus transformational; Álvarez, Balaguer, Castillo, & Duda, 2009; Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2013) have been identified as contributors to effective coaching, the emotional component of coaching is less understood (Cremona, 2010).

Researchers (e.g., Jowett & Meek, 2000) have recognized the importance of coaches’ emotional qualities and it has been found that both athletes (Becker, 2009) and coaches (Cremona, 2010) deem emotions to be a critical aspect of great coaching. Coaches themselves have stressed the influence of coaches’ emotions on athlete engagement, motivation, and behaviour; however, there appears to be a discrepancy between coaches’ beliefs surrounding emotions and their use of emotions within coach-athlete interactions (Cremona, 2010). Therefore, due to athletes’ and coaches’ perceptions of the importance of emotions in coaching, sport psychology researchers have explored coaches’ emotional qualities.

The emotional aspects of coaching have been addressed in previous research within the delivery of team speeches. Vargas-Tonsing (2009) and Breakey, Jones, Cunningham, and Holt (2009) completed quantitative and qualitative studies, respectively, investigating the effects of coaches’ speeches on elite athletes. Both studies found that the coaches’ emotional content within the delivery of speeches influenced the emotions experienced by the athletes. Specifically, coaches’ emotional qualities (e.g., appearing ‘fired up’) were found to elicit similar emotions in the athletes (Breakey et al., 2009) and significantly increased athletes’ functional emotions (e.g., energy, drive) prior to performance (Vargas-Tonsing, 2009).

The influence of coaches’ expressions of discrete emotions on athlete development and wellbeing has also been examined recently in youth sport settings (Allan & Côté, 2016). Allan and colleagues (2016) developed the Assessment of Coaches’ Emotions (ACE) observational
tool measuring coaches’ overt emotions to address the interpersonal aspect of emotions in sport. This tool was then used to analyze male soccer coaches’ use of emotional expressions in a practice context and the influence on adolescent female athletes’ psychosocial development (Allan & Côté, 2016). Coaches who displayed more neutral emotions associated with inquisitive behaviours had athletes report more prosocial behaviours and less antisocial behaviours towards opponents, in contrast to athletes with coaches displaying intense emotions. While this finding demonstrates a link between coaches’ emotional displays and athlete development, it does not take the athlete’s perspective into account. Due to the previously mentioned social dependence of IER (e.g., Zaki & W. Williams, 2013), as well as the importance of coaches understanding their own and their athletes’ emotions (Breakey et al., 2009), researchers should aim to include both the coach and athlete in research on emotions and coaching.

Thelwell and colleagues (2008) examined the relationship between coaches’ self-reported emotional intelligence and their own perceptions of coaching efficacy. Results indicated that coaches’ scores on all subscales of emotional intelligence (i.e., appraisal of other’s emotions, appraisal of own emotions, optimism, emotion regulation, social skills, and use of emotions; Schutte et al., 1998) significantly correlated with athletes’ perceptions of overall coaching efficacy. The researchers highlighted that coaches who were optimistic, had strong social skills, and were able to understand and regulate their own emotions and those of others were likely better able to enhance athlete performance and wellbeing than their less emotionally intelligent counterparts. This supported previous work by Sève, Poizat, Saury, and Durand (2006) recognizing the importance of coaches being able to understand athletes’ emotions in order to respond accurately to athletes’ needs. Furthermore, Campo et al. (2016) explained the need for coaches’ emotion recognition among athletes, due to the potential for coaches to help athletes cope with their emotions and improve interpersonal interactions within a team. However, VanSickle and colleagues (2010) investigated softball athletes’ perceptions of coaches’ emotional intelligence and found a discrepancy between coaches’ self-reports and athletes’ reports of their coaches’ emotional intelligence. Coaches rated themselves higher on all subscales of emotional intelligence in comparison to his or her athletes’ scores, with a trend of older athletes perceiving coaches to have lower emotional intelligence. These results further highlight the importance of including the perceptions of both parties in research on interactions and emotion regulation between coaches and athletes.
Lastly, Lee and Chelladurai (2016) extended the emotion literature in sport by conducting a study examining coaches’ emotional intelligence as a moderator between coaches’ affectivity, emotional labour, and emotional exhaustion. This study aimed to address the potential burden and burnout experienced by sport coaches who engage in emotional labour. The researchers analyzed questionnaire data from 430 NCAA coaches and found that coaches who suppressed their emotions and expressed superficial emotions (i.e., surface acting) were more likely to report experiencing emotional exhaustion than their more authentic and expressive counterparts. Furthermore, this relationship was moderated by coaches’ emotional intelligence, where those with lower emotional intelligence exhibited higher amounts of surface acting and emotional exhaustion in comparison to coaches with high emotional intelligence. The results of this study demonstrate the potential intrapersonal outcomes (e.g., emotional exhaustion, burnout) associated with coaches’ use of emotions, extending previous literature addressing the influence of coaches’ emotions and emotional displays on athlete outcomes (e.g., emotion, development).

Overall, there has been some recognition of the importance of coaches’ abilities to regulate their athletes’ emotions within the literature on IER (e.g., Friesen et al., 2013), emotional intelligence (e.g., Thelwell et al., 2008), and emotional labour (e.g., Lee & Chelladurai, 2016); however, there has yet to be an empirical study addressing coaches’ use of IER with their athletes. Examples of how coaches may ‘fire up’ their athletes (Friesen et al., 2013), how they might excite a demotivated athlete (Becker, 2009), and how coaches may calm athletes down during periods of frustration or anxiety (Breakey et al., 2009) have been mentioned in research, yet the literature would benefit from an in-depth analysis of coaches’ specific IER strategies and goals with their athletes. Furthermore, these topics have been investigated without much consideration for the nature of the coach-athlete relationship. Considering the research describing the effects of leaders’ emotions and IER on leader-follower relationships (e.g., Choi et al., 2015; Gardner et al., 2009) and the organizational, power, and communication similarities between leader-follower and coach-athlete dyads (Cranmer & Myers, 2015), research on the influence of coaches’ IER on the coach-athlete relationship as well as how this relationship influences the use of IER warrants attention.
2.8 Coach-Athlete Relationship

Jowett (2007) defined the coach-athlete relationship as “a situation in which coaches’ and athletes’ feelings, thoughts, and behaviours are interdependent” (p.17). Early conceptualizations and models focused on coaches’ leadership qualities and behaviours that influence the athlete and the relationship (e.g., Multidimensional Model of Leadership, Chelladurai, 1990; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Mediational Model of Leadership, Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978; Smoll & Smith, 1989). While these models are distinct, both address how the relationship between coach behaviours and players’ satisfaction and evaluative reactions are influenced by situational, leader, and member factors and characteristics (Chelladurai, 2007). However, while these models have informed many studies within coaching literature, the focus on coaches’ leadership behaviours and the implications for the athlete largely ignores the dual-nature and affective components of the relationship (Jowett & Meek, 2000; Jowett, 2007). The coach-athlete relationship has been suggested to be the most important interpersonal relationship in a sport context (Jowett, 2003), and as emotions are an integral aspect of building and sustaining relationships (Cremona, 2010), it is important to consider the affective nature of the dyad.

The 3+1C’s model (Jowett, 2005, 2007; Jowett & Meek, 2000) has been applied to the study of coach-athlete relationships for the past decade to understand the closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation of the relationship. Closeness is defined as the emotional interdependence, complementarity is the dyad members’ perceptions of cooperation and effectiveness within interactions, and commitment refers to members’ intentions to maintain the athletic relationship (Jowett, 2007; Jowett & Meek, 2000;). Co-orientation addresses the degree to which members are interdependent and have a shared knowledge and understanding of the relationship through the direct perspective (i.e., a member’s perception of the 3C’s relevant to the other member) and the metaperspective (i.e., a member’s ability to accurately infer the other member’s perceptions of the 3C’s in the relationship) of coaches and athletes (Jowett, 2007; Jowett, Kanakoglou, & Passmore 2012).

Researchers have found that the quality of the coach-athlete relationship contributes to the development of athlete’s character and performance (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003), self-concept (Jowett, 2008), intrinsic motivation (Felton & Jowett, 2013), sport satisfaction (Jowett & Nezlek, 2011), athlete and coach wellbeing (Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007), coaches’ satisfaction
(Lorimer & Jowett, 2009), team cohesion (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004), and collective efficacy (Hampson & Jowett, 2014); however, it is important to understand what factors contribute to the development of the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007) and how this relationship is maintained (Rhind & Jowett, 2010; 2012).

Jowett and Poczwardowski (2007) outlined antecedents that determine the development and quality of the coach-athlete relationship including individual characteristics (e.g., age, gender, experience, etc.), social and cultural norms, and relationship characteristics. Within individual characteristics, age, gender, experience, and personality of both members play a role in shaping the nature and quality of the coach-athlete relationship. For example, Sheldon and Watson (2011) found that coaches have a greater influence and play a larger role in the lives of varsity athletes compared to club and recreational athletes. Furthermore, older athletes who have more sport experience have reported greater interdependence, satisfaction, and closeness with their coach (Jowett & Nezlek, 2011), as well as more critical perceptions of coaches’ emotions (VanSickle, 2010) in comparison to younger athletes with less experience. With respect to gender, researchers have identified differences in the nature of the relationship (e.g., closeness; LaVoi, 2007) depending on coach-athlete gender. For example, Myers, Vargas-Tonsing, and Feltz (2005) found that the gender of the coach moderated the relationship between coaching efficacy and team satisfaction, where a male coach negatively moderated the relationship between character building efficacy and team satisfaction with female athletes. Therefore, when male coaches perceived that they were able to promote character development with their female athletes, the athletes reported lower team satisfaction. Since gender within coach-athlete relationships appears to play a role and gender cannot be separated from sport (LaVoi, 2007), it is important to consider this issue in sport psychology research with coach-athlete dyads.

Researchers have also recognized the influence of social and cultural norms on the coach-athlete relationship by highlighting potential differences within the dyads in the different classifications of sports (e.g., individual versus team sports). Early research integrating the 3+1C’s model within coach-athlete relationships used the dichotomous classification of individual versus team sports and expected higher quality relationships within individual sports due to individual sports exhibiting higher amounts of one-on-one communication between coaches and athletes (Jowett & Meek, 2000), with the focus being largely on athlete development and performance (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). In contrast, researchers have argued that coaches in team sports often address
the group as a whole when communicating and that the coach’s attention is directed toward team cohesion and cooperation in these settings (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). Furthermore, athletes from individual sports have reported more positive relationships with their coaches and greater perceptions of empathetic accuracy (co-orientation) in the coach-athlete relationship compared to athletes from team sports (Rhind, Jowett, & Yang, 2012; Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). However, Evans, Eys, and Bruner (2012) have argued against the common dichotomization of individual versus team sports and instead presented a framework for classifying sports by describing their levels of interdependence. Evans et al. (2012) separated ‘team sports’ into two classifications: integrated (i.e., team members are required to work together and interact for a collective goal), and segregated (i.e., team members are required to compete together but interaction is not required). Similarly, ‘individual’ sports are separated into four classifications: collective (i.e., members compete against one another for an individual and team goal), cooperative (i.e., members compete in different classes for an individual and team goal), contrient (i.e., members compete against one another for an individual goal only), and independent (i.e., individuals compete in different classes for an individual goal only). Despite the controversy surrounding the conceptualizations of individual and team sports, there is evidence to suggest differences in the coach-athlete dyads between sport classifications.

Lastly, with respect to relational characteristics, researchers have addressed differences in the coach-athlete relationship depending on the type and duration of the relationship (Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007). As relationship quality changes over time and varies depending on individual factors (Sagar, Lavallee, & Spray, 2011), researchers need to consider the fluidity of interactions and relationship quality within the dyad. While these individual, cultural, and relational characteristics have been identified as antecedents of the development of the coach-athlete relationship, Jowett and Poczwardowski (2007) emphasized that it is the interpersonal communication between dyad members that determines how these characteristics influence the quality of the relationship.

Coaches and athletes have been found to be incongruent when reflecting on the coach-athlete relationship (e.g., Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Lorimer & Jowett, 2009), which may reflect a lack of co-orientation and communication within the relationship (Jowett, 2007). Researchers have highlighted the salience of communication within the dyad to facilitate interdependence, solve potential interpersonal conflict, and ultimately improve the coach-athlete relationship (e.g.,
Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett, 2007; Jowett et al., 2012; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). LaVoi (2007) explored the construct of coach-athlete closeness exclusively, and found that communication is reported as an essential antecedent to closeness within the coach-athlete relationship, however Moen and Kvalsund (2013) discuss the incongruence of perceptions of effective communication between coaches and between coaches and athletes. Since communication is a two-way, reciprocal process (Cranmer & Myers, 2015; LaVoi, 2007) that can both strengthen and weaken the coach-athlete relationship (Rhind & Jowett, 2010), understanding what constitutes ‘effective communication’ is important. Moreover, as emotions serve a communicative function (Parkinson, 1996), research in this area may provide a greater understanding on the role of emotions and IER within interactions, as well as how the relationship influences the use of IER.

In sum, emotions, emotional expressions, and emotion regulation appear to play a role in both coaches’ and athletes’ performance and wellbeing, and potentially the coach-athlete relationship. Thus, the purpose of the proposed study was to explore coaches’ attempts to regulate their athletes’ emotions within the context of the coach-athlete relationship. Specific research questions included:

1. What strategies do coaches use to regulate their athletes’ emotions?

2. What strategies do athletes perceive his/her coach is using to regulate his/her (i.e., the athlete’s) emotions?

3. How do coaches and athletes perceive the coach-athlete relationship influences (and is influenced) by coaches’ IER?
Chapter 3
Methods

3 Methods

This study adopted a longitudinal multiple case study with a diary interview method (Stake, 1995) to explore coaches’ use of IER within practice and competitive contexts. Researchers have encouraged the use of qualitative methods within the exploration of emotions in sport (Locke, 2003), IER (Campo et al., 2016), and coach-athlete relationships (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003) due to the complex nature of these constructs and the lack of research in this area.

3.1 Philosophical Position

The researcher approached this study with a transcendental realist ontology and an eclectic realist epistemology, within the over-arching critical realist paradigm. Critical realists aim to understand the reality of a phenomenon as it exists in real world settings through the analysis of social interactions (Clark, 2008; Easton, 2010). From a transcendental realist ontological basis, the existence of an objective reality is assumed, however reality may exist independent of awareness and can never be known with certainty (Allison, 2006; Clark, 2008). An eclectic realist epistemology is described as understanding realities in social settings, where realities are explained through interactions with social and natural objects (Easton, 2010). By focusing on participants’ reflections, the aim of inquiry was to understand the reality of coaches’ and athletes’ experiences in social, real world settings (Easton, 2010). Researchers (Clark, 2008; Easton, 2010) have considered a critical realist paradigm as particularly useful for case study research to understand, explore, and embrace complex topics within certain contexts. Through an in depth analysis of participants’ reflections on the phenomena of interest (i.e., IER and the coach-athlete relationship), the aim of the study was to explain and understand coaches’ uses of IER and the coach-athlete relationship in a sport context.

3.2 Participants and Recruitment

The researcher used purposeful sampling to recruit athletes and coaches from cooperative and collective individual varsity sports (i.e., sports where athletes compete as individuals with both an individual and team goal; Evans et al., 2012). Multicase qualitative studies often involve purposive sampling to ensure selected cases relate to the phenomenon of interest, and it also
allows researchers to explore various contexts (Stake, 2006). Varsity sport requires athletes to dedicate significant time and energy to achieve high performance and success (Sheldon & Watson, 2011) and since the intensity of emotions is thought to increase with stronger and more relevant goals (Lazarus, 1991a), the competitive atmosphere of varsity sport may evoke strong emotions and require emotion regulation to enhance performance and relational outcomes (Sheldon & Watson, 2011). Furthermore, individual sport classifications have shown to elicit more one-on-one communication between coaches and athletes (Jowett, 2003) and stronger coach-athlete relationships (Rhind et al. 2012), therefore coaches and athletes may demonstrate more direct and individual examples of IER (rather than IER being used among a group of athletes).

Participants included coaches and athletes from individual varsity sports including fencing, swimming, and track and field. Coaches and athletes were invited via letters of information and consent forms (see Appendix A and B). Three cases were included, with each ‘case’ consisting of a male head coach and two of their respective female athletes ($N = 9$). Both male and female athletes were recruited for this study, however only female athletes opted to participate. Athletes and coaches were required to have a minimum of one year of competitive varsity experience to examine coach-athlete dyads with pre-existing relationships, as it has been shown that older athletes who have been with their coaches for a longer period of time are more critical in their perceptions of the coach’s emotional intelligence (VanSickle, 2010) and they have a stronger coach-athlete relationship (Jowett & Nezlek, 2011). Participants were offered $10 following the completion of the study as a token of appreciation.

### 3.3 Data Collection

Data collection consisted of initial interviews with each participant, after which participants completed audio diaries for a two-week time period, followed by a post-diary interview with each participant (cf. Tamminen & Holt, 2010).

#### 3.3.1 Pre-Diary Interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant prior to diary data collection to gain an understanding of the coaches’ and athletes’ previous experiences with and understandings of IER, as well as the present dynamics of their coach-athlete relationship. These
interviews were also used to build rapport in order to foster comfort with the participants for the audio diary method. Interviews included main questions, probes, and follow-up questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) to delve into the phenomena of interest. Interview guide questions for athletes addressed: (1) background; (2) current sport involvement; (3) athletes’ emotions; (4) self-regulation of emotions; (5) coach-athlete interactions and relationships; and (6) wrap-up (see Appendix C). Interview guides for coaches differed slightly, with main questions addressing: (1) background; (2) current coaching involvement; (3) athletes’ emotions (4) efforts to regulate athletes’ emotions; (5) coach-athlete interactions and relationships; (6) wrap-up (see Appendix D). The researcher asked follow-up questions throughout individual conversations to inquire about topics introduced by participants in more detail, and probe questions were used throughout the interviews to elicit clarification from interviewees as needed (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). At the end of the first interview, participants were introduced to the audio diary method and the researcher described the process of completing audio diaries to ensure comfort and understanding with the procedures.

3.3.2 Audio Diaries

Audio diaries were used to collect participants’ reflections of IER and coach-athlete interactions across a two-week time period in the middle of the competitive season. Participants were instructed to record their thoughts and feelings regarding their emotions and emotion regulation, and this method of data collection allowed for an understanding of how emotions and emotion regulation may change over a two-week period within different contexts (Williamson, Leeming, Lyttle, & Johnson, 2015). In addition, audio diaries also provided participants the opportunity to reflect on their interpersonal experiences in ‘real-time’ to avoid potential limitations associated with retrospective recall (Williamson et al., 2015). McCarthy (2011) suggested that retrospective recall of emotions may blur the subjective experience due to the reduction in arousal over time, and Tenenbaum and Elran (2003) found that athletes recalled emotions and feelings differently following a 72-hour delay. Lastly, the intrinsic and routine aspect of emotions and emotion regulation (Gyurak, Gross, & Etkin, 2011) may go unnoticed without regular documentation (Smith-Sullivan, 2008); thus, audio diaries may promote the awareness and reflection on these processes.
Each participant received a portable, hand-held audio recording device at the end of the initial interview. Participants were instructed to record a diary entry on days when they had a practice or competition and were given a prompt sheet to follow to ensure entries related to IER and the coach-athlete relationship (c.f., Holt & Dunn, 2004; Tamminen & Holt, 2010). Text message or email reminders (depending on the preference of the participant) were sent to the participants on a daily basis. Prompts for athletes included: (1) Record date and time; (2) Describe your most recent practice/game?; (3) Was your head coach present at the practice/game?; (4) What emotions did you experience during the practice/game?; (5) Did your head coach try to influence your emotions in any way? If yes, what did your head coach do to influence your emotions?; (6) How do you feel now? (see Appendix E). Coaches’ prompts included: (1) Record date and time; (2) Describe your most recent practice/game?; (3) What emotions did you experience during the practice/game?; (4) What emotions do you think your athletes experienced during the practice/game?; (5) Did you try to influence the emotions of your athletes in any way? If yes, what did you do to try and influence the emotions of your athletes?; (6) How do you feel now? (see Appendix F). Audio diaries were completed in the months of November and December where each case completed the diaries across a different two-week period, however individuals within each case completed the diaries across the same two-week period. These months marked the middle of participants’ competitive seasons within their varsity sport. Each case had a minimum of one competition during the two-week audio diary period, however the number of practices differed between participants depending on their training schedules. Athletes and coaches were asked to complete entries immediately following a practice or competition but ultimately had the freedom to complete entries on their own time and in the location of their choosing.

3.3.3 Post-Diary Interviews

Post-diary interviews were conducted with each participant a minimum of one week following the completion of the audio diary period (cf. Bartlett, 2012). This meeting focused on expanding the findings from the pre-diary interviews, clarifying participants’ reflections of IER strategies and the coach-athlete relationship from audio diaries, and served as a member-checking function (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to ensure the results were in line with participants’ experiences. Main questions addressed: (1) IER strategies from analysis that participants may not have mentioned in the pre-interview; (2) participants’ perceptions of ineffective IER strategies (3) learning
emotion regulation strategies (4) the influence of gender on the use of IER and the coach-athlete relationship; and (5) experiences with the audio diary method (see Appendix G and H). Following main questions, the researcher asked different questions to individual participants based on individual audio diaries to expand on and clarify participants’ experiences and thoughts within his/her reflections.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data using inductive and deductive analyses following a similar process described by Elo and Kyngäs (2008) and Tamminen and Holt (2010). A content analysis aims to “attain a condensed and broad description of the phenomenon, and the outcome of the analysis is concepts or categories describing the phenomenon” (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 108). The analysis process consisted of data preparation, organization of the data via inductive and deductive analyses, and data reporting.

3.4.1 Data Preparation

Participants were assigned participant identification numbers to maintain anonymity. Athletes were assigned the letter A and an athlete number (e.g., A1), whereas coaches were assigned the letter C and a subsequent identification number (e.g., C3). Data analysis occurred within and between cases, however athlete and coach numbers were randomized in the final presentation of results to ensure athletes and coaches could not identify their case (e.g., Coach 1 is not associated with Athlete 1 and 2). Participants’ quotes from pre-diary and post-diary interviews were labeled ‘Pre-Interviews’ and ‘Post-Interviews’ respectively. Quotes from audio diaries were labelled with the letter E, followed by the entry number (e.g., Entry 4 = E4). Pre-diary interviews, audio diaries, and post-diary interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Pre- and post-diary interviews lasted an average of 49.1 minutes per participant and yielded 298 typed pages of transcripts ($M = 16.5$ pages per participant). Participants completed a total of 65 audio diary entries at the end of a two-week period with an average of 7.2 entries per participant. Audio diaries yielded a total of 48 pages of transcripts ($M = 5.3$ pages per participant). Participants’ compliance with the audio diary method varied, with one coach failing to complete any entries and others forgetting to or opting out of completing entries on particular days. Details of the data are presented in Table 1. Transcripts were read by the researcher multiple times prior to the organization of the data in order to become immersed in the participants’ reflections.
3.4.2 Organization of the Data

Pre-diary interviews and audio diaries were subjected to inductive and deductive content analyses to inform the post-diary interview guide. Inductive analysis consists of identifying units of meaning and grouping these units of meaning into broader categories without any predetermined categories or assumptions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Elo and Kyngäs (2008) outlined three steps to inductive content analysis: 1) open coding, where the researcher reads through transcripts and freely creates headings and categories related to the phenomena of interest; 2) creating categories, where headings and categories generated through open coding are grouped into higher order categories and organized based on similarities or ‘belongingness’; and 3) abstraction, where categories are named and organized based on subheadings and main headings to create a conceptual model and/or general description of the data. The researcher performed an inductive analysis of all participants’ pre-diary interview and audio diary transcripts to identify coaches’ IER strategies, athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies, factors influencing the quality of coach-athlete relationship, and contextual considerations with respect to IER and the coach-athlete relationship. Due to the specificity of the interview questions (e.g., can you recall a specific example of when your coach tried to influence your emotions?), it was clear when participants were discussing emotions, emotion regulation strategies, and the coach-athlete relationship. Individual transcripts were coded multiple times.
and the researcher took note of differences and similarities within transcripts, between athletes, between coaches, between coaches and athletes, and between cases. Through this process, the researcher refined the categories and subcategories to ensure all participants’ reflections were represented. While the researcher’s prior knowledge of emotion regulation research and literature influenced the inductive coding process (Smith & Noble, 2014; Tamminen & Holt, 2010), a reflexive journal was used so that the researcher could remain aware of any potential biases and the intent was to remain as open as possible to all emotions and emotion regulation strategies that were mentioned by the participants.

The researcher went on to complete a deductive analysis by comparing the inductively-derived categories of themes to research and theory in the extant literature. A deductive analysis is described as an approach “based on an earlier theory or model and therefore it moves from the general to the specific” (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 109). While it was not the initial intent to complete a deductive analysis, the inductive analysis appeared to reflect findings from other research areas. Thus, to avoid falling victim to the jingle-jangle fallacy (i.e., the notion that scales with the same name measure the same construct or that scales with different names measure different constructs; Marsh, 1994) a deductive analysis seemed most appropriate for the subsequent stage of analysis. Data reflecting coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation and athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies were re-coded using Gross’ (1998) families within the process model of emotion regulation. Data describing the coach-athlete relationship and factors influencing the dynamic of this relationship were re-coded using Jowett and colleagues’ (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) 3+1C’s conceptualization of the coach-athlete relationship and Jowett and Poczwardowski’s (2007) integrated model of the coach-athlete relationship. While other theories of interpersonal emotion regulation (e.g., Niven, 2011; Zaki & Williams) and coaching (e.g., autonomy support; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003) were considered for the deductive analysis, the inductively derived categories linked most appropriately with the specific emotion regulation strategies of Gross’ process model and the aspects of Jowett and colleagues’ conceptualization of the dyad. To avoid limiting the findings with a deductive analysis, any categories identified within the inductive analysis that did not fit within Gross’ process model or Jowett and colleagues 3+1C’s conceptualization were retained within the results. Then, in order to organize and describe the interrelationships between categories, a preliminary conceptual model was developed through an
abductive process (i.e., inferring the structure of the data to explain phenomena; Boutilier & Beche, 1995; Lipscomb, 2012).

The inductive and deductive analyses of the pre-diary interviews and audio diaries was used to inform the development of the post-diary interview guide. The post-diary interview guide addressed categories from the initial analyses that the researcher believed participants could expand on or that were unclear. Following these questions, the researcher showed participants the preliminary conceptual model from the initial analyses and had athletes and coaches share their thoughts on the findings to serve as a member checking function (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Despite the recent criticisms toward member checking as a tool for ensuring methodological rigor (Smith & McGannon, 2017), member checking aligned with the paradigmatic assumptions in this study in that it provided participants with the opportunity to expand on and clarify their realities with IER and the coach-athlete relationship. For example, athletes shed light into coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies that are not helpful or effective for them as an individual but would then explain how it may be helpful to other athletes. Participants were encouraged to expand on aspects with which they both agreed and disagreed, categories they may not have discussed previously, and anything they believed was missing or misrepresented. Post-diary interviews were then subjected to a deductive content analysis to expand on and strengthen the previously identified categories. Through the post-diary interview and member checking process, categories, subcategories, and the conceptual model became more refined as the researcher gained more insight into coaches’ and athletes’ experiences.

3.4.3 Data Reporting

A finalized version of the conceptual model outlining the categories and relationships between categories for athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies, coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies, the immediate contextual factors, and the broader context of the coach-athlete relationship was developed (see Figure 1 in Chapter 4: Results). The conceptual model and descriptions of all categories and subcategories are presented in the results section.

3.4.4 Audio Diary Data

Audio diaries were further analyzed by charting athletes’ emotions, athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies, coaches’ extrinsic regulation strategies, and contextual factors on an
individual and entry-by-entry basis (see Table 2 in Chapter 4: Results). While audio diary charts differed in the number of completed entries, the process of analysis and layout of the charts remained the same for each individual. The audio diary chart was visually analyzed by observing how the phenomena of interest changed or stayed the same over time with individual athletes and coaches.

3.5 Methodological Rigour

There have been many issues surrounding what constitutes ‘quality’ or ‘rigorous’ qualitative research (Cassell & Symon, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Golden-Biddle, & Locke, 2008), and what makes a study rigorous can vary depending on various aspects of a study (e.g., purpose, methods, paradigmatic positioning; Smith & McGannon, 2016). Despite the ongoing challenges associated with evaluating qualitative research, a number of strategies have been identified to promote trustworthiness and rigor within qualitative studies (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Smith & McGannon, 2016). The primary researcher used a number of these strategies with the present study. Method and data source triangulation were used by having both audio diary and interview methods, as well as including both coaches and athletes from various sports for data collection (Guba, 1981). Researchers have identified the strength of using triangulation to increase the credibility of qualitative research results, as the use of multiple methods and data sources compensates for the limitations associated with each individual method/data source (Shenton, 2004). Furthermore, the primary researcher kept a reflexivity journal throughout the research process (Guba, 1981). Watt (2007) explains that by reflecting on thoughts, feelings, and potential biases, a researcher can understand how these factors may influence a study. Writing a reflexive journal throughout recruitment, data collection, and data analysis allowed the researcher to actively evaluate the project and maintain ontological and epistemological assumptions (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). Lastly, member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) during the post-diary interviews further supported the researcher’s interpretations of participants’ transcripts and reflections. Member checking has been described as the most crucial strategy in maintaining credibility within a qualitative research study (Guba, 1981) to ensure data sources are in agreement with the researcher’s understanding of the data.
Chapter 4
Results

4 Results

The results of this study are presented as follows: (1) presentation of the final model illustrating the relationships between main and subcategories; (2) descriptions of the main and subcategories related to emotions, athletes’ intrinsic and coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies, translation of emotion regulation strategies, the broader context of the coach-athlete relationship, and the immediate contextual factors; (3) participants’ reflection of the audio diary process.

4.1 Conceptual Model

Emotions, intrinsic and extrinsic emotion regulation, the broad context of the coach-athlete relationship, and immediate contextual factors in sport appeared interrelated. A visual representation of these relationships is presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. An integrated model of athlete and coach emotion regulation in the context of the coach-athlete relationship.](image-url)
Overall, a bidirectional relationship was apparent between athletes’ emotions and athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation, as well as with coaches’ extrinsic use of emotion regulation. A bidirectional relationship was also found between coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies and the coach-athlete relationship, in that the quality of the relationship appeared to influence coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation, and coaches’ attempts at extrinsic emotion regulation also contributed to the quality of the relationship. For example, participants frequently discussed how coaches were better able to regulate their athletes’ emotions with a strong coach-athlete relationship and conversely, athletes indicated times when the coach-athlete relationship became better or worse depending on coaches’ use of extrinsic emotion regulation strategies. A number of external factors (individual factors, the wider context, and interpersonal factors) contributed to the quality of the coach-athlete relationship and ultimately influenced athletes’ and coaches’ use of emotion regulation strategies. Factors in the immediate context (the athlete’s performance, competition versus practice, time in season, group size, and personal life concerns) contributed to athletes’ emotions, athletes’ and coaches’ use of intrinsic and extrinsic emotion regulation strategies, and the broader context of the coach-athlete relationship. The specific aspects of each category and subcategory are described below.

4.2 Emotions

In this study, the predominant emotions that athletes reported were frustration, disappointment, fear, anger, anxiety/nervousness, relief, pride, happiness, and excitement. While athletes’ discrete emotions were not the primary focus of this study, data from the interviews and audio diaries shed light on the types of emotions athletes wanted or did not want to experience and how each emotion was regulated. Athletes commonly expressed feeling disappointed, frustrated, and confused when achievements were less than expected. When recalling a poor performance in the previous season, Participant A1 said:

It went completely – it was terrible. It was terrible… Um, frustration, anger, disappointment, confusion, yeah [long pause] I was just confused! I had such a good season, I wasn’t that nervous going in, uh … I don’t, I didn’t understand what went wrong. (A1 – Pre Interview)

Coaches described similar instances when athletes experienced disappointment. Coach C3 mentioned times when athletes became devastated from not meeting expectations: “[a]nd their
expectation is that they will make the cut off to be on the national … team and they don’t make that … they’re devastated” (C3 – Post Interview).

While anger was not frequently discussed within this sample, one athlete indicated that she strives to feel angry in both practice and competition for instrumental purposes:

So when you [perform], you [perform] with your emotions … so if you’re angry, if I’m angry, I [perform] better. (A3 – Pre Interview)

Feelings of anxiety or nervousness were common prior to competition or high pressure situations. This quote from Participant A2 describes her emotions within a competitive context:

Um, before the [competition], I felt very anxious. I felt as though I was worrying about things around me and not really focusing on preparing myself for the [competition] and then during the [competition], that kind of translated all the way through. (A2 – Pre Interview)

Participant A4 expressed feeling similar emotions of anxiety and nervousness within competition, “[competitions] and stuff, like I’m fine, I’m fine and then when we get there, I get so nervous” (A4 – Pre Interview).

Happiness and excitement were experienced by the athletes leading up to competitions, following exceptional performances in both competition and practice, and when goals were created or reached. Participant A2 communicated her excitement toward an upcoming competition in an audio diary entry:

Um, the emotions that I experienced during the practice were probably um, excitement because the [competition] is coming up and we were [preparing] um, and sort of everyone was sort of excited just because we don’t really get to rest that often so we’re all pretty excited. (A2 – E1)

These quotes provide a general overview of the various emotions that athletes experience in sport. Athletes’ emotional experiences are highlighted throughout the description of subsequent categories focusing on how athletes and coaches attempted to regulate these emotions.
4.3 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Emotion Regulation

Participants indicated a number of strategies that athletes used to try and regulate their own emotions and that coaches used to try and regulate their athletes’ emotions. While the specific strategies varied across individuals and depended on a number of contextual factors (to be expanded upon in subsequent sections), athletes and coaches expressed many similarities in the strategies they used or have attempted to use to control their own or their athletes’ emotions. Athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies and coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies were categorized according to Gross’ (1998) process model of emotion regulation: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. Categories and subcategories outlining emotion regulation strategies are presented by first describing athletes’ intrinsic use of the strategy followed by coaches’ extrinsic application of the strategy.

4.3.1 Situation Selection

Athletes reported selecting a workout, workout space, or competition and distancing themselves from an environment or teammates to try and regulate their emotions. Coaches also used situation selection in attempts to regulate their athletes’ emotions by designing a certain workout or choosing a competition or competitive events for their athletes.

4.3.1.1 Selecting a Workout or Competition

A subset of athletes reported attempting to regulate their emotions by choosing a particular workout, workout space, or event within a practice or competition. While coaches needed to provide athletes with opportunities for choice in order for athletes to use situation selection, it appeared to be a helpful intrinsic emotion regulation strategy for athletes.

In selecting a workout, athletes reported choosing the difficulty and intensity of a workout to accommodate their mental and physical capabilities on a given day, which athletes indicated generally led to the experience of more positive emotions. In her post-diary interview, Participant A2 discussed the positive emotions and relief that comes with being able to choose your workout:
I mean we had choice this morning at practice and it’s just a lot nicer because … Like today for example, during exams, um, some people I could tell were kind of relieved it was make your own practice, because they can pick and choose how much they wanted to do and I think when you have the choice even when it’s not during exams, it’s sort of just nice because it creates your own like, personality to your [workout], like you’re gonna do this and it’s on your own sort of. (A2 – Post Interview)

Athletes described instances where they chose specific workouts within a weekly schedule to control their emotions. For example, Athlete A6 said in an audio diary entry that she chose to opt out of a workout due to feeling physically and mentally fatigued: “so tomorrow I think most people are [training] but I’m gonna take the day off because I’m just tired and I feel like I’m getting sick and stuff” (A6 – E8).

Athletes also appeared to choose specific workout spaces as a form of situation selection to experience more positive emotions. Participant A5 reported that she tended to experience frustration or anxiety when she practiced in an environment with people that she could not relate to or compete against, thus she would choose a workout space depending on the people who were in and around that environment to experience more positive emotions:

Cause whenever I’m [practicing] with like, beside a guy or whatever, they [are so much better] and like, it’s so hard to like, even mentally stay focused cause they’re like, whooping [you] and I’m like, um, it kind of gives me anxiety sometimes because like, this guy’s [so good] and then like, I’m not [as good] so it’s nice to be around people who are like the same, like level, like times as you, so you can push each other in the same way, like in a positive way. (A5 – Pre Interview)

Participant A5 later elaborated in her post-diary interview that she tended to prioritize choosing a workout space to surround herself with certain people over choosing a particular workout to experience more positive emotions:

When I choose a [space], I like to choose it with like, people I’m more close with. Um, who I can, again, like joke around with or like- that like make my workout better instead of working out with like, a group of guys or like people my year I find like, I’m closer
Within a competitive context, athletes indicated choosing to participate in specific competitions or aspects of a competition to try and control their emotions. Participant A5 explained in an audio diary entry that despite having the option to participate in multiple events in competition, she selected a particular event over another to experience more positive emotions:

So I thought maybe I should do the [alternate event] instead and actually like, work on my [main event] for like next time I [compete] … I actually like doing [alternate event] cause it’s just like a fun event for me to do cause my focus always on [main event], so for me [alternate event] is just like to do for fun so that was enjoyable for me to do. (A5 – E4)

While coaches’ use of situation selection was not commonly reported as an extrinsic emotion regulation strategy, some participants indicated that the coach would design certain workouts or choose specific competitions and competitive events in an attempt to positively or negatively influence an athlete’s emotions. Participant C3 explained that sometimes designing a workout to make athletes fail (thereby contributing to negative emotions) was necessary in order to challenge the athletes, however he would also design workouts to ensure athletes succeeded. This coach described a workout he designed to ensure success and elicit excitement with his athletes:

A friend of mine used to call that a gravy [workout] where you know … it’s gravy, it makes it better, he says it’s gravy meaning that they’re gonna succeed, right? You know so, they’re gonna be pretty pumped about doing that so they’re gonna be excited. (C3 – Post Interview)

Coaches and athletes also indicated that coaches would occasionally choose certain competitions or competitive events for athletes to improve their emotional state:

I’ve noticed actually [coach] will do that [pick certain events] … we started off and I [competed in alternate event] which is just like not my thing, I usually [compete in main event], but he wanted to put me in [alternate event] because [main event], if you’re not
ready and you do badly, it’s just like so painful and you know that you did badly, but [alternate event] like, you don’t really know. (A6 – Post Interview)

Participant C2 indicated that he would send certain athletes to competitions where he felt they would perform successfully and ensured athletes were aware of why they were attending certain competitions. He said that he told his athletes, “I have the confidence in you, that you are capable of um, uh, competing with these people. If I didn’t, you wouldn’t be here” (C2 – Post Interview).

These few examples show how athletes and coaches may employ situation selection to increase the likelihood that athletes will experience positive or negative emotions in competitive and practice contexts.

4.3.1.2 Distancing

Many of the athletes reported distancing themselves as a type of situation selection to try and improve their emotions or to get themselves energized for a competition or practice. This involved leaving a workout, removing themselves from a group, or moving to a private and comfortable space. Participant A6 and A4 both expressed similar instances of distancing involving leaving a workout when feeling frustration or anger toward a poor performance. “I find like when I get really overwhelmed at practice, like seeing everybody [practice] and being like [sigh] I can’t [practice]! I’ll like, just try and like, leave practice which I feel like isn’t a good idea.” (A6 – Post Interview). Athlete A4 said:

Sometimes it gets so frustrating cause you’re like, why can’t I move? Like why isn’t this working? And you’re just like, you’re about to cry or something [laughs] so like, I’ve definitely left practice before cause I couldn’t like handle, not necessarily losing but like, not [performing] well. (A4 – Pre Interview)

Both athletes also described their use of distancing within a competitive context following disappointing performances. Participant A6 described how she liked to be alone after a poor performance to deal with her emotions:

Like, I usually, I don’t like talking about it with other people for a while. Or like, I feel like I need a little bit of time for me to just like, almost be mad at myself and like, get that out of my system. (A6 – Pre Interview)
Participant A4 expressed similar sentiments in an audio diary entry:

> And I lost on that, and that like, that really frustrated me because it sucks losing that way so I didn’t feel good after that. I was actually, I was pretty mad, I like – took off my [equipment] and I went away and I wanted to be alone. (A4 – E2)

Participants A5 and A3 indicated that they used distancing as a way to prepare themselves for competition. By going off on their own, the athletes were able to get focused and prepare emotionally and mentally for competition: “Like, I like to just go behind the [competition area] and just focus on my [competition] and I don’t, like some people do like to go talk to [the coaches] but, I think that’s just a personal thing” (A5 – Pre Interview). Similarly, Participant A3 said “when I’m in a state like that [overanxious], I would prefer to be by myself, um, it’s just, it helps me get in the zone and clear my head” (A3 – Pre Interview).

While many of the athletes indicated using distancing, there appeared to be a lack of consensus as to whether it was a positive or effective way of managing emotions. Participant A4 discussed using distancing frequently to manage her negative emotions; however, she expressed that there were likely better ways for her to deal with frustration and anger:

> Yeah I think it’s – not the best because I think I just try and like isolate myself and maybe I should talk about it more with people. I don’t really know how I’d do that though, so I would definitely have to think of some better ways I think to deal with it. (A4 – Pre Interview)

Participant A5 did not report using distancing, however she commented on the negative influence that distancing appeared to have on a teammate:

> I feel like distancing is like, not … it depends on the person … I don’t know I feel like that can get … negative sometimes because it kind of makes you look like you’re like, too into your head or something like that. You know? I had a friend who did that in high school and she was just like, it was just like, never good. It was like, really negative energy when she did that, to just like, go off of like ourselves after a bad [competition]. (A5 – Post Interview)
These examples demonstrate athletes’ use of distancing and the positive and negative effect it can have as an intrinsic emotion regulation strategy.

### 4.3.2 Situation Modification

Situation modification was not reported as an intrinsic regulation strategy by athletes; however, coaches and athletes both reported that situation modification was commonly used by coaches as an extrinsic emotion regulation strategy to try and manage athletes’ emotions. For example, coaches modified workouts to try and improve athletes’ emotions when athletes experienced anxiety or frustration associated with their personal life or frustration associated with a workout. For example, Athlete A2 indicated in an audio diary entry:

> The [coaches] were pretty good at helping us out, or at least helping me out with just kind of sensing that I was tired and being like, ‘okay [athlete], you don’t have to have to do the whole rest of the [workout], you can just do, you know, half of the rest of the [workout]’ cause I think, they figured that classes are ending and exams are coming so a lot of us are kind of stressed out. So they kind of accommodate us that way. So yeah, I feel okay now. (A2 – E5)

When dealing with emotions directly associated with the workout, Participant A6 indicated that her coach would modify the workout according to how she was feeling:

> Usually at the beginning of the workout he’ll be like ‘okay this is what we’re gonna try and do but then tell me how you’re feeling during the workout and we’ll add a [exercise] or sit a [exercise] out or you’ll [work out] with this group instead of this group’ … so it’s usually like in between [exercises] or sometimes I’ll just be like ‘[coach], I’m dying!’ and he’ll be like ‘okay do this instead’. (A6 – Pre Interview)

Coach C1 discussed making modifications to workouts when athletes experienced frustration to ensure that athletes ended a workout on a positive note. He said, “if it doesn’t work, usually I change the exercise a bit just to give her some success so that, you know, she can end on a successful day rather than continuing to frustrate her kind of thing” (C1 – Post Interview).

While coaches and athletes frequently indicated that coaches’ modification of the workout had a positive effect on their emotions (e.g., provided feelings of relief, halted negative emotions),
athletes expressed that at times it caused them to feel greater frustration because they could not complete the intended workout. Participant A2 said:

I would say I guess maybe the right word would be, um, at times relieved but then at times sometimes frustrated in myself because I know that I didn’t [succeed like I wanted to]. But at the same time, relieved because it’s just sort of, I know they’re understanding of like, the current state of what I’m doing during a practice. Um, yeah so I would say, either relieved or frustrated, it varies typically, depending on what the [workout] was. (A2 – Pre Interview)

Participant A1 indicated similar sentiments where modifying the workout made her feel as though she was falling behind in training:

Usually, I hate – I hate feeling like I’m not able to do the workout because I’m scared that I’m gonna fall behind in my training, I’m scared that um, I always feel like when I have to do a modified workout that I don’t do enough. (A1 – Post Interview)

These examples demonstrate that while coaches may modify a workout to positively influence an athlete’s emotions, it can sometimes have the opposite effect and leave athletes feeling frustrated or worried about their training.

4.3.3 Attentional Deployment

Shifting attention to or away from a situation appeared to be a common intrinsic emotion regulation strategy for athletes and an extrinsic strategy for coaches both in practice and competition. In line with Gross’ (1998) categories of attentional deployment, athletes reported using distraction, concentration, and rumination strategies to regulate their own emotions, and coaches indicated attempting to use distraction and concentration strategies with their athletes.

4.3.3.1 Distraction

Athletes described distracting themselves predominantly to reduce competition anxiety and nervousness by thinking about or talking to others about positive situations unrelated to the competition. Athlete A6 said, “It’s good to distract myself cause otherwise I just like, I don’t know, I find if I’m like, more relaxed and thinking about other things before my [competition], I [perform] better” (A6 – Pre Interview). Athlete A3 described her need to distract herself when
she began to overanalyze her competitors and the competition: “I know it, I’ve done it so many times, like I’ve [competed against] this person so many times, I kind of know what I need to do, I need to stop analyzing. So distracting yourself is good” (A3 – Post Interview).

Athletes also expressed using distraction in a practice context to get through a challenging workout. Participant A5 said:

I try to tell myself like … let’s say it’s a hard [workout] like ‘oh what am I gonna have for dinner?’ You know? Like looking forward to something else like sometimes helps me … like, have more like positive emotions when I do the actual [workout]. (A5 – Post Interview)

While the use of distraction was reported as positive in many instances, some athletes reported a negative perception of the strategy or they revealed times when it was not useful. Athlete A1 said, “I think the one thing… that never really works for me is distraction. I feel like during practice I need to be focused on practice or competition, I need to be focused on what’s happening” (A1 – Post Interview). In addition, Athlete A2 explained that distraction was only useful for her when the distracting situation was positive:

Sometimes I try and focus on what’s gonna happen after practice, to sort of just get my mind off the workout, but then at times it makes me even more stressed out [laughs] because I realize like, oh I have this assignment due, and I have to do this, and I have to like, vacuum, and do all this kind of stuff. So sometimes that doesn’t always help. (A2 – Post Interview)

Participants went on to discuss coaches’ attempts at distraction to reduce athletes’ anxiety. Coach C2 said, “they’re really, really anxious, their anxiety level is you know, hitting the ceiling there, you find something else for them to do uh to calm them down” (C2 – Pre Interview). Similarly, Participant C3 described a time when he successfully calmed down an anxious athlete by distracting her:

And we got her to um, um, count the number of good looking boys [in the environment] when she was gonna stand up behind the [competition area]. Like anything to distract her from what she was doing. (C3 – Pre Interview)
A subset of participants reflected on coaches’ use of humour as a distraction strategy to decrease anxiety and increase positive emotions in workouts and competitions. Participant A6 said:

Last year [laughs] whenever I was really nervous for a workout or a competition, he used to like tell me a really bad joke [laughs]. He had like a list on his phone and that just made me laugh, which was good. (A6 – Pre Interview)

Similarly, Participant A5 described an instance in a workout where her coach used humour to make her feel better. She said:

I find that’s like, like today [coach] like, [laughs] made a joke with me and it was just like ‘oh that’s funny’ you know like, you joke around and like, that influences my emotions because it makes like – I don’t know, it makes you happy I guess. (A5 – Post Interview)

While athletes and coaches indicated times when coaches effectively regulated athletes’ emotions using distraction and humour, athletes reiterated that it was not always helpful or was only helpful in certain contexts. As stated previously, Athlete A1 indicated that distraction is not a helpful strategy and expressed her frustration when an assistant coach attempted to distract her from a competition. She said, “the assistant coach … sometimes tries to distract the athletes and I usually just remove myself. Because it doesn’t work for me. I need to be present” (A1 – Post Interview). Participant A3 said:

Yeah, I think it depends also on the situation like, sometimes I need to be more distracted because I’m thinking too much into it and I’ve analyzed it too much and now it doesn’t make sense anymore. (A3 – Post Interview)

Athletes’ intrinsic and coaches’ extrinsic use of distraction appeared to help some athletes regulate pre-competition anxiety or experience positive emotions; however, it may only be appropriate with certain athletes and in certain contexts.

4.3.3.2 Concentration

While concentration was not a common strategy reported by athletes in this study, some indicated using routines and self-talk as a means of focusing their concentration to control
anxiety and nervousness leading into competition. Participant A4 described her pre-race routine to reduce competitive anxiety:

> Whenever I’m facing someone hard or something I’m nervous about, it’s so weird, I don’t know why I do this but I do it every time, you [prepare], I turn around, I look up and I like, put my [equipment] on when I’m looking up and I like breathe out when I do it and then I turn around and I’m like, ready. (A4 – Post Interview)

Other athletes mentioned their use of self-talk to concentrate and remind themselves to focus on the current situation to try and maintain positivity in competition and workouts. For example, Participant A2 discussed how she often reminded herself to focus on the current event to bring her emotions back to a neutral state:

> I always try to remember, I remind myself to focus on the [competition] that’s happening, sort of getting focused on the current moment versus looking at – and I think that goes both ways actually, either with a good [competition] or a bad [competition] and sort of just having that um, awareness of making yourself focused again on the next race because it can very easily slip out of that I think. (A2 – Pre Interview)

While athletes said that concentrating on the situation often helped control their emotions, athletes also reported that this strategy can become negative and tiring. For example, Participant A6 said she attempted to maintain positive self-talk throughout a workout or competition, however it would often become negative self-talk and worsen her emotions:

> I guess I do a little bit of self-talk in my [competition], if I’m like, okay, or in the workout, I just try and like tell myself, like ‘keep on going’, or ‘last [exercise]!’ or something. But also I do some like, negative self-talk too, and I’m like, ‘I’m in so much pain right now!’ (A6 – Post Interview)

In addition, Participant A1 explained in an audio diary entry that by maintaining focus and awareness throughout a practice, she became mentally fatigued by the end of a workout:

> And after every single [exercise], I would reassess my body and my abilities to do an extra one, so I felt like I was mentally tired at the end of practice just because I was doing
a lot of thinking and a lot of being aware of every single muscle in my body and how it was feeling. (A1 – E5)

Participants also described instances where coaches reminded athletes to focus to calm athletes and channel their emotions toward a competition or workout. Athlete A1 said that her coach did not like when she distracted herself from competition and would remind her to concentrate:

He used to hate it when I chatted with other girls during um, during [competition] or in between [competition] so he would kind of remind me to stay focused and um, focused on what I have to do. (A1 – Pre Interview)

Similarly, Coach C1 described an emotional athlete who required reminders to stay focused and calm his emotions:

It’s a matter of giving him focus … he needs frequently, he just needs that reminder, and then give him specifically, I want you to do this as soon as you give him the objective of exactly what you want him to do then he can fixate on that, instead of the emotions themselves. Alright, and then if it’s successful, then it just builds on that and he remains a little bit calm but focused. (C1 – Pre Interview)

These examples demonstrate that participants believed athletes’ and coaches’ attempts to try and regulate athletes’ emotions using concentration could be beneficial at times; however, using concentration as an intrinsic attentional deployment strategy for athletes could become negative and mentally fatiguing.

4.3.3.3 Rumination

Athletes reported ruminating on negative aspects of a competition or workout when feeling disappointed or frustrated with their performance, ultimately intensifying the negative emotion. Participant A2 said, “I think just in my head I was focusing a lot on the negative aspects of it … because I didn’t get that result because in the moment I was just very disappointed” (A2 – Pre Interview). In her audio diary, one athlete ruminated on her poor performance at a competition:

So it kind of shook me, and made me realize well [pause] I know I’m better than them, they know I’m better than them because we [competed] in other clubs. And they thought
that I should’ve finished stronger than I did. And so, maybe I should start thinking more about my skill level and start [competing] to my skill level rather than telling myself that I- I- it’s okay for me not to do well, or try as hard – or try. So that’s something I need to work on. And now, when I finished [competing] that’s how I felt but now [pause] I kind of, um, a little bit more upset with how I did. Thinking back on maybe some techniques that I focused on, maybe I shouldn’t have focused on, I should’ve been more calm and, more in the moment and tried harder. (A3 – E1)

Athlete A6 reported ruminating on negative emotions associated with an injury that prevented her from doing her normal training:

I feel like I just worry about like, oh this is gonna be it, like I’m gonna get [worse], and I just start thinking about like, all the negatives and then also like, seeing everybody else train just makes me like, really anxious, cause then I’m like, ‘oh I wish I was out there with them and they’re all getting better and I’m just sitting here getting worse’ so yeah. It [the injury] definitely makes me more emotional. (A6 – Post Interview)

These quotes provide examples of athletes’ use of rumination during adverse or undesirable events that ultimately led to an increase of negative emotions.

4.3.4 Cognitive Change

There were a number of strategies that athletes and coaches reported using to try and modify their own or their athlete’s interpretation of a situation in both competition and practice. These strategies included goal setting, music, relaxation techniques, and a number of reappraisal strategies and were generally used to ease competition anxiety.

4.3.4.1 Goal Setting

A subset of athletes said they would set process goals (i.e., goals that focus on smaller aspects of a performance; Munroe-Chandler & Hall, 2016) rather than outcome goals (i.e., goals that focus on the end result, often relating to winning or social comparison; Munroe-Chandler & Hall, 2016) to alleviate pre-competitive anxiety and experience joy in competition. Athlete A2 said that she relied on setting process goals to avoid worrying about a race or competition:
Just really focus on the race strategy and carrying it through to the race and not worrying what the end result will be because, if you do the race strategy properly then the results should come so, yeah. (A2 – Pre Interview)

Despite athletes indicating the use of goal setting as an intrinsic emotion regulation strategy, athletes did not commonly report goal setting without the assistance of the coach. Coaches and athletes stated that coaches would set process goals with their athletes to calm anxiety or nerves prior to competition, ease frustration or disappointment following a poor performance, or to increase positive emotions with respect to the upcoming season. Coach C3 indicated that he would talk to athletes about their race strategy and the goals within a competition to ease competitive anxiety. He said, “before they go to that [competition], they usually come up to me and we talk about strategy. How are you gonna do, what are you gonna do...” (C3 – Pre Interview). Similarly, Coach C1 indicated that he would communicate small process goals to his athletes to reduce some of the pressure associated with ranking or medalling:

I have to let them know that you know, that … [winning] is not what my expectations are right? So uh, so you know, I don’t need them to achieve, you know, a medal or whatever standing, what I need to do is I need them to, let’s say attempt certain actions that we worked on, and so on. (C1 – Pre Interview)

Athletes indicated that they appreciated coaches’ use of goal setting to regulate their emotions, and it appeared effective with many athletes to reduce anxiety and elicit confidence for competition.

4.3.4.2 Music

Athletes reported using music to regulate their emotions as it elicited excitement or reduced anxiety prior to performing. Athlete A5 said, “I always listen to music … I need it to pump me up and stuff like that and then I just … really get into the zone” (A5 – Pre Interview). In contrast Participant A4 indicated using music as more of a distracting strategy to reduce pre-competitive anxiety:

What I’ve been doing lately and it’s been helping is… put on music and I don’t think about who I’m [competing against], like I don’t look at who I’m [competing against], I just like go on and that’s the person I’m [competing against] at that moment. Um, and I
just … listen to music and I like listen to the words to try and like, get myself out of the situation. Or just like try not to think about it. (A4 – Post Interview)

While music appeared to help many athletes prior to performing, a subset of athletes indicated that this was not a helpful strategy prior to competition. Athlete A2 said, “actually music doesn’t really work for me … yeah, I think that’s the only one that doesn’t really work for me. I think I’m one of the only [athletes] that doesn’t listen to music before I [compete]” (A2 – Post Interview). Athlete A3 shared similar sentiments, in that warming up to music did not help to regulate her emotional state prior to competition.

4.3.4.3 Relaxation

Some athletes indicated that using relaxation techniques like breathing control and muscle relaxation helped to relieve anxiety associated with their sport. Participant A1 said, “sometimes between jumps, I catch myself, not – not breathing obviously, but being nervous or looking at the other girls’ jumps and forgetting about just [takes deep breath], just getting that air through my body” (A1 – Pre Interview). Another athlete explained her use of progressive muscle relaxation:

Another thing I do, I learned at a training camp … it’s like when you like, think of like certain parts of your body, so you start at- like when you’re lying down or standing up, you’re like ‘think of your feet, now relax your feet, imagine them sinking into the ground’ and I can like, I’m getting like really weirdly good at it and it relaxes your body. (A4 – Post Interview)

Coaches and athletes indicated that coaches would also attempt to instruct their athletes to use breathing techniques to calm athletes’ anxiety. However, while some athletes reported the usefulness of deep breathing as an intrinsic emotion regulation strategy, coaches’ attempts to have athletes relax through deep breathing appeared unsuccessful with this group of athletes. Participant A4 said, “I feel like he’s a lot more of like, trying to help people relax and trying to help them breathe, but doesn’t do that with me as much because I don’t respond to that very well” (A4 – Pre Interview). An athlete shared similar sentiments and indicated that she could not take her coach seriously when he attempted to use breathing techniques. Despite the apparent lack of effectiveness of coaches’ breathing exercises with this sample of athletes, athlete participants mentioned that is may be a useful strategy with other coaches and athletes.
4.3.5 Reappraisal

Coaches and athletes frequently discussed the use of reappraisal to try and regulate their own or their athletes’ emotions. This strategy was often used when attempting to reduce athletes’ anxiety levels prior to competition or to improve athletes’ emotional states when experiencing frustration and disappointment in their sport. Specific reappraisal approaches included athletes reflecting on past experiences, control appraisals, coaches’ rationalization of situations, and putting things into perspective.

4.3.5.1 Reflecting on Past Experiences

Some athletes reported reflecting on past experiences to reduce their anxiety prior to competition. Athlete A1 said, “I usually rely on past experiences … I like to tell myself, ‘you’ve done this before’ or ‘you can do it’ (A1 – Pre Interview). Similarly, Athlete A2 discussed reflecting on the weak aspects of a poor performance to learn from her previous experiences and to prepare herself mentally for an upcoming competition. She indicated that reflecting allowed her to feel calm and confident for future competitions. Conversely, one athlete said that reflecting on past experiences could sometimes worsen anxiety levels. She said, “I generally do like, ‘last time I [competed against] them I lost, you’re gonna lose again!’ which is not a good thing [laughs]” (A4 – Post Interview). These examples show how reflecting on past experiences can positively influence athletes’ emotions when used to build confidence and decrease anxiety; however, it can have a negative effect when athletes become concerned with repeating past mistakes.

4.3.5.2 Control Appraisals

Some athletes indicated that thinking of the controllable aspects of a situation allowed them to ease some frustrations associated with performances that did not meet their expectations. Athlete A6 said:

I guess I had to convince myself that like, I couldn’t do anything about it and like, getting upset wasn’t gonna change anything. Um, yeah, just trying to like, see what was like, within my control and what wasn’t. (A6 – Pre Interview)
Another athlete said that by reminding herself that she was only in control of her own actions, she was better able to deal with frustrations related to uncontrollable factors. She discussed using this strategy when faced with controversial calls from referees:

> I am a lot better at it [thinking about what she is in control of] than some people but some people are just like ‘what are you talking about! Like that’s not the right call!’ and they get so mad and so upset and it makes you [perform] like shit or it makes you do any sport like shit right? [Laughs] So like, you just have to know that like, just don’t do that thing if they’re calling it. (A4 – Post Interview)

Participants also reported coaches’ attempts to point out controllable versus uncontrollable aspects of a situation, predominantly to try and reduce athletes’ frustration associated with competition and injury. Athletes indicated that being reminded of what they could control helped reduce frustration and either focus on their capabilities with a task or move on. Athlete A6 described an instance during an injury when her coach reminded her that she could not have controlled the incidence of her injury to make her feel more positively about the situation:

> He kinda took me aside and was like ‘you have no reason to be upset,’ um, ‘well like I know why you are upset but you have been training so hard and like, you couldn’t have done anything differently … you didn’t ask to get injured and you can’t blame yourself for that’ and that. Like, I was obviously still really upset but it made me feel a little bit better. (A6 – Pre Interview)

Similarly, Athlete A3 described a time when her coach regulated a teammate’s frustration with a referee:

> So he went up and he was like, ‘this isn’t your fault, there was nothing you could’ve done, this referee is a shitty referee, we all know that, I am also very upset…so it doesn’t matter how well or how badly you guys lose during this competition … I need you to know that.’ So that was something that was very helpful. (A3 – Pre Interview)

While coaches pointing out controllable and uncontrollable aspects of a situation to athletes appeared to help ease athletes’ frustration, Coach C1 expressed in an audio diary entry that it was frustrating when athletes would not do this for themselves. He said:
So that sometimes is a little bit frustrating in terms of – of getting them to understand that uh, they’re in control of the actions that they do so it’s up to them to decide how to change that and just try to change that whether it’s successful or not. (C1 – E2)

These examples demonstrate the usefulness of using control appraisals to regulate athletes’ emotions, however coaches may not always view this reappraisal technique as their responsibility.

4.3.5.3 Coaches’ Rationalization

Coaches used rationalization (i.e., explaining a situation in logical terms) to try and help athletes control their frustration and anxiety. By providing a logical explanation of a situation, it provided athletes with a better understanding and helped reduce athletes’ emotional reactions and negativity. Coach C2 explained that athletes needed to be given rationales for workouts to ease anxiety associated with their training and progress, as athletes often worried that they were doing too much or too little in workouts. He said:

All the workouts … you have to tell them why you tweak certain things because when they see- there are some athletes when they see something … ‘[gasp] oh my gosh! Am I doing all of that tonight? There’s no way I could do it!’ and there are some athletes that you – you didn’t do one repetition for whatever reason, ‘[gasp] oh my gosh! I’m not going to be good, I didn’t do enough tonight, I didn’t do everything … aw this is so bad’ and it haunts them for the rest of the night. (C2 – Pre Interview)

Coach C3 expressed similar sentiments regarding explanations of workout design and modification to reduce athletes’ anxiety associated with their training:

I mean if the whole- if the whole workout’s a disaster, then I’ll actually stop the workout and then say ‘well it’s obvious that we’re too tired …’ like I’ll give them a very rational uh, explanation as to why it’s just- you know, ‘you’re not failures, you’re just – this workout was too hard today. We’ll come back and revisit it in a couple of days when we’re more ready to do it. (C3 – Post Interview)

Athletes and coaches also mentioned coaches’ use of rationalization in a competitive context to reduce anxiety prior to competition, and to help athletes understand the reasons for successful or
unsuccessful performances. Athlete A4 explained how her coach’s rationalization of an event, competition, or competitor helped her calm down and focus on the task when she was too excited or anxious prior to competition:

Because you’re not necessarily in a calm mindset to be thinking like, rationally. You’re just like, kind of like, pumped up, you’re just like, ‘oh my god, go!’ [laughs] and that doesn’t always work. (A4 – Post Interview)

Coach C3 described his use of rationalization after athletes performed in competition:

Usually it’s me explaining why they didn’t accomplish what they wanted because [athletes] have very lofty goals and they usually don’t attain them until the end of the year. I’m trying to give them a reason as to why their performance was or was not what they expected. (C3 – Pre Interview)

These quotes demonstrate that coaches’ use of rationalization may help athletes reappraise and think logically about a situation to help ease anxiety, excitement, or disappointment; however, participants reported that this did not always happen as often as athletes needed or wanted, and it was not always possible for coaches to use rationalization with their athletes. Coach C3 described his use of rationalization in workouts in his post-diary interview, however he had indicated in his pre-diary interview that he only used this strategy within a competitive context: “I don’t give them those reasons for training … the [competition] is much more one on one with every athlete” (C3 – Pre Interview). So while coaches’ use of rationalization appeared to help regulate athletes’ emotions, coaches may not have been aware of their use of this strategy in both workouts and competition prior to the study.

4.3.5.4 Putting Things into Perspective

Athletes and coaches attempted to ease their own or their athletes’ disappointment associated with performance by putting things into perspective. Putting things into perspective differed from rationalization in that putting things into perspective consisted of reappraising a situation by comparing it to a larger context, whereas rationalization consisted of explaining a situation in logical terms. Participant A1 explained how she put things into perspective as an intrinsic emotion regulation strategy to get past a disappointing competition:
I don’t, I didn’t understand what went wrong but, I had to put it in perspective. It was my first [name] competition ever. ‘Hey, people will still love you, people are still proud of you no matter how you do.’ So that kind of helped me get back up. (A1 – Pre Interview)

Another athlete said in her audio diary entry that she put things into perspective after she opted out of participating in an event following a poor competition:

I felt like I wasn’t prepared for it like, like I kind of feel like I gave up on myself but then again … I don’t know like, putting things into perspective like, also [sport] is not everything [sigh] there are other things to worry about so it’s like, not [completing event] it’s not gonna be the end of the world, I can like, I can do it another time or like, yeah. (A5 – E4)

While putting things into perspective appeared to help athletes improve their emotional state when facing disappointment, some athletes indicated that it did not have an immediate effect and it took a few days or weeks for this strategy to be effective. Participant A2 said:

But then afterwards like, kind of, put into perspective and kind of just looked at it in the bigger picture and, tried to tell myself that it is just one [competition] and it wasn’t you know, the end of the world in that sense. So I think that was an important turn that I had to try and make, but it did take like a day or so just to get over the disappointment I think. (A2 – Pre Interview)

Participant A1 shared similar sentiments: “Not on the moment. I think, I wasn’t able to cheer myself up on that moment… it took me, I’d say a month just to deal with it myself” (A1 – Pre Interview).

In addition, participants frequently discussed coaches putting things into perspective for athletes during competition and when dealing with an injury. Athlete A5 described a time when an assistant coach put things into perspective when she was feeling anxious about an upcoming competition:

Like I’ve talked to [coach] about like, having anxiety in a [competition] one time [laughs] and she was like ‘well why do you have anxiety like, it’s just this [competition]’, like it’s
true, it’s just a stupid [competition]. Like who cares, you know, like, at the end of the day it doesn’t really matter, no one cares. (A5 – Pre Interview)

Similarly, Athlete A6 mentioned that her coach would often put things into perspective when she was disappointed or upset with her performances. She said:

I think [coach] a lot of the time will be like, ‘don’t worry, this isn’t like the be all end all. We still know you’re [good]’, which helps a lot. Or he’ll be like, ‘this [competition] doesn’t reflect you’, my old coach used to say that a lot, ‘this one [competition] doesn’t define you as an athlete’, which I found helped. (A6 – Pre Interview)

Participants also described times when coaches put things into perspective to help athletes deal with negative emotions associated with an injury. Athlete A6 explained how her coach consistently used this strategy to help her deal with her injury:

He always tries to tell me like, ‘oh I’m not worried, this isn’t the worst injury I’ve ever seen, we still have time’… because I feel like, yeah, you start to like, jump to the worst conclusion so, he definitely helps to like, remind me that it’s not the end of the world [laughs]. (A6 – Post Interview)

Coach C2 expressed that putting things into perspective was a key strategy to help athletes manage the negative emotions associated with an injury. He said:

Yeah you’ve got this injury but uh, you know, it’s a concern, not a problem … But you have to put things uh, as much as you possibly can into perspective and you have to show them how setbacks like this are only going to make them stronger. (C2 – Post Interview)

These examples demonstrate the usefulness of coaches putting things into perspective when helping athletes deal with negative emotions toward competition and injury. However, coaches also described their difficulties with this strategy, as frequently putting things into perspective to help manage athletes’ negative emotions appeared to be tiresome and frustrating for coaches. Coach C3 explained his struggle with putting things into perspective for athletes who express frequent negativity, as these athletes tend to create a negative environment for athletes and coaches. Coach C2 shared similar sentiments when attempting to put things into perspective for an athlete who was frustrated with his lack of performance and talent in sport:
Not the most talented kid but he really worked, he worked his rear end off and a high school kid comes in and just [performs better] and he gets so down on himself and he says ‘aw I suck at everything! Like, I am so bad. You know, like, why am I doing this? It’s got no meaning for me whatsoever’. So when he said ‘I suck so bad at everything’, I asked him what he did the previous summer … He says, ‘well I volunteered…’. Hm, ‘and did you help anybody…?’, ‘yep.’ … You have to use extreme, stupid examples but, so you are really gonna tell me that you suck at everything that you do? Come on! (C2 – Pre Interview)

Putting things into perspective appeared to help athletes in this study reappraise a situation and helped regulate negative emotions, however could be challenging for coaches as an extrinsic emotion regulation strategy.

4.3.6 Response Modulation

Response modulation was used to try and increase athletes’ experiences of both positive and negative emotions. Athletes reported expressing and suppressing their emotions to influence subsequent emotional responses.

4.3.6.1 Emotion Expression

Athletes mentioned expressing both positive and negative emotions as a form of response modulation; however, it appeared that emotions were only expressed when they were at extremes (i.e., extremely positive or extremely negative). Athletes reported cheering, screaming, and smiling when experiencing excitement or happiness in response to a performance. Athlete A6 said:

That was probably the most excited I’ve ever gotten after a [competition] and like, I feel like I like, jumped up and went like [raises arms] or something [laughs]. And then I was like ‘oh why did I do that?’ But yeah, I usually, if I do really well, I’ll get like a little burst of like, ‘ee!’ [smiles]. (A6 – Pre Interview)

Participant A3 described a time where she yelled due to relief and happiness after winning a competition on a frustrating day:
Sometimes … you turn around and you scream and it was just such a frustrating day, that when I [won], cause I was so focused, and I just turned around and I yelled. [Laughs]
And that was pretty awesome. (A3 – Pre Interview)

Similarly, athletes only reported expressing negative emotions when they experienced deep anger, frustration, or disappointment. Participant A5 mentioned crying after a frustrating performance at a championship competition:

And it was probably my best shot at [succeeding], it was just like really frustrating and I’m pretty sure I ended up like, crying after [laughs] and it was just like, yeah it was just like, not good. (A5 – Pre Interview)

4.3.6.2 Suppression

Athletes reported suppressing predominantly negative emotions in both practice and competition for a variety of reasons. Participant A1 indicated that she would suppress negative emotions associated with poor performances to avoid carrying negativity into subsequent competitions. She said, “yeah, usually it’s, ‘okay onto the next one’. You can’t drag that emotion on the next [competition]” (A1 – Pre Interview). Conversely, Participant A2 explained that she suppressed her negative emotions in competition to avoid negatively influencing her teammates’ emotional states:

A lot of the time when people have bad [competitions], people tend to keep it to themselves just because, mutual respect, people kind of don’t want to bring others down at the meet, so if someone had a bad race they don’t want to distract someone from their upcoming [competition] or something. (A2 – Pre Interview)

Participant A4 also described suppressing positive emotions to avoid influencing her teammates’ emotions. She explained that she suppressed happiness to avoid appearing ‘cocky’ to bystanders and her teammates:

I saw this one person, like a really high level [athlete], whenever they’d win a medal, they’d take like a photo with the medal and then they’d take it off and they’d like, put it in their pocket … I love when people aren’t cocky, so I always try to be that myself, so I’m definitely just like, back to normal a lot faster when I win. (A4 – Post Interview)
Lastly, athletes mentioned suppressing their emotions because they were unsure of how to express them in a way that would signify a request for support from their coach. Athlete A4 described a situation where she suppressed her frustration in a workout because she did not know how to bring up her frustrations to her coach: “that was like an internal monologue. Because like, sometimes you don’t know how to bring it up” (A4 – Post Interview).

While emotion suppression appeared to be common within this sample of athletes and was reported as necessary in some contexts (e.g., prior to a subsequent competition), athletes generally indicated the desire to eventually have coaches and teammates understand their emotional state. It appeared that suppression could be useful to regulate athletes’ emotions in the short term, however this strategy may be ineffective as a long-term emotion regulation strategy.

4.4 Positive Reinforcement

Participants reported coaches’ use of positive reinforcement to elicit positive emotions among athletes as well as to reduce the intensity of negative emotions associated with performance in workouts and competitions. Positive reinforcement consisted of encouraging words, high fives, and hugs. Participant A6 explained how her coach would use positive reinforcement during workout:

   He’ll [coach] come and do the same thing like during an interval, if you’re like, struggling and he can like see it on your face, then he’ll like, yeah, say some encouraging words and stuff. (A6 – Pre Interview)

Similarly, coaches in this sample reported using positive reinforcement and encouraging words to help athletes deal with negativity. Coach C2 said:

   Our tendency is to look at the negative, I want to stay away from that. I want to focus on what you did right. I want to build on what you were doing right. Because if we can build on that, we can build on and eliminate a lot of that negative stuff that happened. (C2 – Pre Interview)

Positive reinforcement was also used by coaches to affirm and attempt to increase athletes’ experiences of positive emotions. Athlete A4 described her excitement when her coach noticed that she was performing well:
Yeah, sometimes when coaches like, know that you’re working hard, they’ll be like good and they’ll like acknowledge that you’re working hard and that’s like … sometimes, this sounds very weird, but like, the coach will be like, ‘good! Yes! That’s right!’ and they’ll scream it. So that’s really encouraging. Which it’s like, ‘woah, he thinks I’m doing like, things right’ [laughs]. (A4 – Pre Interview)

Athlete A5 expressed that her coach would also use positive reinforcement in a competitive context, which increased her positive emotions following a successful performance: “Yeah usually, definitely would acknowledge it and be like ‘oh yeah [athlete], that was really good’ … like he’ll for sure notice it and like, um, tell me good job” (A5 – Pre Interview).

While athletes reported the positive influence of coaches’ use of positive reinforcement on their emotions, coaches’ explained that they reserved this strategy for outstanding or key moments to ensure it is effective. Coach C1 indicated that positive reinforcement was not something he used frequently, and as a result it had a greater effect on athletes’ emotions when he used positive reinforcement with them:

I mean I think my athletes will totally say that the positive reinforcement is not one of my best qualities, one of my strongest qualities, but whenever they hear something positive they [laughs] say- usually they really notice it, so. (C1 – Post Interview)

These examples indicate that positive reinforcement may be used by coaches to try and elicit more positive emotions and decrease negative emotions with their athletes, however participants perceived that the strategy may have a greater effect when used selectively.

4.5 Yelling and Guilt-Inducing Criticism

Coaches and athletes reported instances of coaches yelling or using guilt-inducing criticism to worsen athletes’ emotions. While this strategy was not frequently discussed, it appeared that worsening an athlete’s emotions may have contributed to improved athletic performance. This suggests that worsening an athlete’s emotions may have served an instrumental purpose with this group of athletes. Athlete A3 indicated that anger helped her performance and she needed coaches to use strategies that encouraged frustration and anger in order to perform well:
Similarly, coaches reported using this strategy to try and improve current and future performances among their athletes. Coach C3 said:

It would be me trying to rally them, a little bit of shaming, and I don’t mean shaming in the bad way, okay, shaming – that’s a bad word, um, a little bit of harsh reality that you’re not training hard enough and you’re not training often enough and if you don’t, you’ll be fine, but you’re not gonna beat the other guys… and so if we’re gonna do this, we’re gonna have a bigger commitment here, you can’t [miss] workouts … we’re gonna demand that everyone does that. (C3 – Post Interview)

Coach C2 shared a similar example, where he would remind athletes of their training program as a means to induce negative emotions and ensure they would plan and prepare themselves mentally and physically in the future:

Have they prepared during the week for that particular workout? We don’t [perform specific workout] too often, uh, twice a week maximum, uh, so if they come in and tell you ‘oh I’m tired, I’m this, I’m that’ um, I ask them, ‘what did you do? … you know we were doing this quality work’. (C2 – Post Interview)

While it appeared that yelling or using guilt-inducing criticism helped some athletes’ performance, this was not the case for all athletes, and participants indicated that this strategy should be used with caution. Athlete A4 recalled a time when she broke down emotionally in response to yelling from her coach:

And then I was [training], he was like, yelling at me to like, do these things, he’s like ‘why didn’t you do it?! We just did it! Why didn’t you do it?’ and I just like, I just broke. I was like, nope … I went outside because I was like, crying. (A5 – Pre Interview)

Athlete A3 also indicated that this would not work for some of her teammates. She said, “Someone else on my team, you can’t tell her she needs to do better, she’s not doing well,
something like that, that would probably be very hurtful and destructive” (A3 – Pre Interview). She went on to explain her views of the strategy in her post-diary interview:

If you do it too much and overuse that technique and you just get angry and frustrated at the person all the time, then maybe it would be considered shaming but you’re not doing it to specifically make your athlete feel like shit. Like, that’s not the point of it. Maybe at that point you want them to feel bad because that emotion also helps regulate your performance but, once or twice through the year or maybe one or maybe- I don’t know, depends on your type of athlete, but it is helpful. (A3 – Post Interview)

Coaches expressed that they used this strategy infrequently and strategically to try and ensure it did not harm the athlete and would help their performance. Coach C3 explained that he did not act spontaneously and would plan out when using yelling and guilt-inducing criticism would be most beneficial for his athletes:

I have to be able to plot when I’m gonna do that kind of thing, you can’t just-well it could be spontaneous, but I don’t think a good coach makes it spontaneous. I think you figure out when you’re gonna get the best benefit … If I’m gonna do some kind of a change or a- you know, an emotional… initiative, I guess … I’ve gotta figure out where is the best bang for the buck. (C3 – Post Interview)

These quotes demonstrate that coaches perceived that the use of yelling and guilt-inducing criticism to worsen athletes’ emotions may help athlete performance, however they reported it should be used selectively and strategically to ensure the largest benefit and minimize harm to the athlete.

4.6 Listening

Participants expressed that having coaches listen when athletes vented their emotions helped to decrease athletes’ experiences of negative emotions and increase positive emotions. Coach C2 expressed his views about coaching and said that listening is not done enough by coaches and is invaluable to an athlete:

We [coaches] don’t listen. We don’t listen to hear what the real concern is – sometimes young people, and it’s not because of the different, um, lingo or whatever is out there …
they disguise how they’re feeling. So we have to listen. And we have to listen very carefully. (C2 – Pre Interview)

Coach C1 also reported listening to his athletes vent about frustrations or problems in their lives. He said, “I would talk to them a little bit, sort of get their feeling and usually let them vent [laughs] their frustrations and so on um, and I think for most cases, they like to vent a little bit” (C1 – Pre Interview).

Athlete A5 described how listening increased her self-esteem and helped her experience more positive emotions when she needed to vent about personal and sport-related issues:

I talked to her [assistant coach] a couple times about that and she was really helpful and like, made me feel like a lot better about myself [laughs] … She’s just like really good at listening and she wouldn’t judge you and she wouldn’t like um, get mad at you, she would just like, listen to you talk and cry even, like I’ve cried in front of her a couple times. (A5 – Pre Interview)

Thus, it appeared that coaches in this sample could attempt to modulate athletes’ emotional responses by listening to their emotional expressions in addition to using verbal or overt emotion regulation strategies.

### 4.7 Learning Emotion Regulation Strategies

Athletes described that they learned to use intrinsic emotion regulation strategies predominantly through past experience (i.e., trial and error) and coaches’ use and teaching of emotion regulation. It appeared that coaches’ use of extrinsic emotion regulation strategies was associated with athletes’ subsequent use of these strategies as a form of intrinsic emotion regulation.

#### 4.7.1 Past Experience

Athletes indicated trying various strategies to control their emotions over the course of their athletic careers and would continue to use strategies that were effective for them. Athlete A6 expressed that she experienced competitive anxiety due to overthinking and she learned to talk to other athletes to distract herself from various competitions:
Through experience, I’ve probably learned like at [competitions] to like, I don’t know, try and like, talk to other people and like, get my mind off the actual [competition] and have fun because I think when I was first starting out … I was like, really nervous and wouldn’t talk to anybody and that just like, made it so much worse. And then like, I’d slowly start to talk to more people and then be like ‘wow this actually made me feel better’ and then, yeah. (A6 – Post Interview)

Athlete A3 reported that when she realized anger was an emotion that helped her performance, she attempted using various strategies to discover what worked for her:

For me specifically, just like, everyday activities that you do, you realize what gets you angry and what doesn’t and what motivates you and what doesn’t, and so bringing those into [sport], it’s easier. Just trying stuff out, seeing what’s helpful and what isn’t helpful. (A3 – Post Interview)

These quotes suggest that athletes in this sample may have developed intrinsic emotion regulation strategies over time through a process of trial and error with previous experiences.

4.7.2 Learning from Coaches

Athletes also indicated that they learned intrinsic emotion regulation strategies as a result of their coach’s use of extrinsic emotion regulation and coaches’ encouragement of emotion regulation strategies. Athlete A6 explained that a previous coach would regulate her emotions before competition and when she moved on to a new coach, she was forced to implement the strategy on her own:

Like in control one, my [past coach] taught me that. He was just like, before every [competition], he’d be like, ‘okay like, let’s go over the things that we know are gonna happen and then all of the things that we can’t control’ … and that just like helped me to… see what I could control and what I couldn’t control. Um, and at first, I was like ‘oh this is stupid.’ But when I went to University and he wasn’t doing that with me anymore, I was like ‘oh this is actually helpful’. (A6 – Post Interview)

Athlete A5 described a similar experience where her coach suggested using music to control her emotions and she had been using it ever since:
Also just like talking with my coaches and stuff like that, with one on one talk… One time one of my coaches was like, ‘put some music on and walk with like, swagger or something like that to like, you know, make yourself feel like, confident.’ So I think [I learned that from] talking with coaches. (A5 – Post Interview)

In addition, coaches indicated that teaching athletes emotion regulation strategies and giving athletes the ability to control their own emotions should be a long-term coaching goal. Coach C1 said, “so at some point in time, they have to be able to gain whatever they get from the coaching and give it to themselves” (C1 – Pre Interview). Similarly, Coach C2 explained that while he was there to attempt to regulate his athletes’ emotions, they needed to learn how to control their own emotions in case a coach would not be able to do so:

It’s not just throw them out into the cold … but as much as possible, you make it … a learning [experience] for them. Because you’re not going to be at every single [competition] to tell them what time that they [compete] … again it comes down to that ownership, they’ve got to be prepared for what they’re doing. (C2 – Post Interview)

Participants reported that this was a long term process and athletes required time and experience to learn what emotion regulation strategies were effective for them as an individual and in different contexts. However, it appeared that athletes in this sample learned emotion regulation strategies from their coaches’ use and encouragement of emotion regulation strategies.

4.8 Broader Context: Coach-Athlete Relationship (3+1C’s)

Coaches and athletes described the coach-athlete relationship in ways that reflected the aspects of Jowett and colleagues’ (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) 3+1C’s theoretical conceptualization of the coach-athlete relationship. Participants’ reflections were coded using the concepts of closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation/communication, however it appeared that co-orientation/communication was most salient to the participants and complementarity was not mentioned. Therefore, results are described by outlining participants’ perceptions of closeness and commitment within the coach-athlete relationship and the importance of co-orientation/communication when considering emotion regulation. It appeared that when coaches and athletes had relationships that were close, committed, and had open communication to
facilitate co-orientation, coaches appeared more confident in their ability to regulate their athletes’ emotions and conversely, athletes’ perceptions of coaches’ effective extrinsic emotion regulation appeared to contribute to a stronger coach-athlete relationship.

4.8.1 Closeness & Commitment

Coaches and athletes indicated that a strong coach-athlete relationship consisted of trust and respect, reflecting the closeness aspect of the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002). Coach C2 said:

Trust, respect. That’s all. I mean it sounds very simple but when you dig into uh, the outer layers of those, I mean obviously there are quite a few emotional ties, uh, but trust and respect. Um, if that isn’t there then there’s no foundation at all. (C2 – Pre Interview)

He expanded on this comment in his post-diary interview, saying, “uh, and we don’t have to like each other… but we’ve got to respect each other” (C2 – Post Interview). Coach C1 had similar views about a strong coach-athlete relationship, explaining that he communicated the expectation of respect with his athletes:

From them to me, one of my most uh, you know, most frustrations are, is simple courtesy and respect. Um, and simple courtesy and respect, what I’m talking about is for example, you don’t show up to practice, let me know, let me know why. So those are the kinds of things I really sort of stress and push with my athletes to do. (C1 – Pre Interview)

Athletes also indicated the importance of trust and respect between coaches and athletes to have a strong relationship. Athlete A2 said, “I have a very good relationship with [coaches] as well, just because I respect them very much I would say” (A3 – Pre Interview). It became evident throughout participants’ reflections on emotion regulation and the coach-athlete relationship that this closeness within a coach-athlete dyad played an important role in coaches’ attempts to regulate their athletes’ emotions and that coaches’ attempts at regulating their athletes’ emotions contributed to the closeness in the relationship. Athlete A1 said, “um, I don’t know. Maybe it just provides extra comfort having that coach that you can trust with your emotions?” (A1 – Pre Interview). In addition, Athlete A5 discussed that she felt closer to her coach who listened and who helped regulate her emotions, in comparison to her coach who was more emotionally distant: “[A]nd I feel more comfortable with [coach], like talking about stuff like that
[emotions]…then [other coach] is just more like, professional, not professional but like, not the emotional side of it” (Athlete A5 – Pre Interview).

In addition, coaches and athletes expressed a desire for future maintenance of the athletic relationship and commitment to the sport, which aligns with the commitment aspect of the 3+1C’s model (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002). Athlete A2 indicated her hope for future communication with her coaches, “I think going into the future, I think we’ll maintain that communication” (A2 – Pre Interview). Similarly, Athlete A6 indicated that her relationships with assistant coaches were not as strong since they have other obligations outside of her sport:

Something that would contribute to the quality is if the coach is like a full-time or a part-time coach, um … if they have another job, cause I know that um, like some of the assistant coaches we don’t see every day because they have like, other stuff to do so I don’t have as good of a relationship with them because I just like, don’t see them as much and they’re kind of busy. They don’t have as much time to put into you. (A6 – Post Interview)

Athletes expressed that emotion regulation came predominantly from head coaches due to the perception that head coaches were more committed and more involved in the athletic relationship. Therefore, it appeared that athletes’ and coaches’ investment in the coach-athlete relationship may have contributed to coaches’ ability to successfully influence an athlete’s emotions.

4.8.2 Communication and Co-Orientation

Participants talked about the importance of communication within the coach-athlete relationship to maintain a common ground, and this communication contributed to coaches’ ability to regulate their athletes’ emotions. Coach C1 indicated the importance of communication with his athletes:

Communication is key. Um, the ability to communicate with uh, with each other is sort of crucial, both from a- you know from a, me to them, it’s a matter of giving them the tools they need. (C1 – Pre Interview)
Similarly, Athlete A2 indicated that she liked that her coach maintained open communication with his athletes:

[Coach] usually meets with us usually, like, every couple weeks so, and then we just talk about [sport] and like school and just life in general so that kind of helps to like, build our relationship and like, get open communication about everything which is nice. (A6 – Pre Interview)

However, it appeared that it was the responsibility of the athletes to communicate with their coach, especially concerning emotions and emotion regulation. Athlete A2 mentioned that coaches did not always know or notice when an athlete required emotion regulation, support, and communication, and that coaches preferred if athletes communicated their needs to coaches:

I think it’s hard because [coaches], you know, you could be like, you’re stressed, or you’re tired, or you could be nervous about something and [coaches] don’t always know, so they prefer when you communicate it with them. (A2 – Pre Interview)

Athlete A6 also indicated the importance of athletes’ initiation of communication and that her coach had stronger relationships with those who initiated open communication:

[Coach], he definitely, I would say, has a better relationship with the people that go and seek out support from him. The people that don’t or like won’t go and meet with him and set up like, meeting times with him probably don’t have as great of a relationship with him just cause, I don’t think that they’re really like allowing the relationship to happen. (A6 – Pre Interview)

While participants in this study seemed to agree on the importance of communication, athletes did not always feel comfortable initiating such contact, nor did they necessarily understand what emotion regulation they required from their coach. Athlete A5 expressed that she did not want to constantly ask for attention from her coach, for fear that her teammates might judge or question her actions:

I mean I’m not gonna be like, oh yeah like [coach], ‘what can I do to like fix this?’ or like… I have before but like, in a practice setting, I’m not always gonna be like ‘why was that crap?’ or whatever like…last night I wasn’t gonna be like ‘why am I [performing]
like shit?’ [Laughs] like um, yeah like I guess like, you, you want them to like say something but like, you don’t want to be like, well I don’t wanna be known as, is anybody gonna be like ‘oh.’ You know like, [laughs] ‘what did I do wrong?’ or ‘why am I not feeling this?’ (A5 – Pre Interview)

Athlete A3 expressed that while she did not have a problem communicating with her coach, she did not always understand or know what she needed from her coach with respect to emotion regulation:

I think a lot of my other coaches, because I wasn’t really sure how I [performed] or what kinds of emotions, emotional state I needed to be in and I didn’t know how to ask for it, so with one of my older coaches, I would go to competitions with him and he would tell me ‘oh you need to improve on this, you need to improve on that’, but I always tried to regulate my emotions myself, rather than asking them because I didn’t know that I needed a different emotion for [performing]. (A3 – Pre Interview)

Participants reported that communication was vital to a strong coach-athlete relationship and for a coach’s ability to regulate athletes’ emotions, however some athletes may not know how to initiate open communication nor understand what they need from a coach.

4.8.3 Contributing Factors to the Coach-Athlete Relationship

Participants in this study indicated a number of external factors that contribute to the quality of the coach-athlete relationship and ultimately coaches’ ability to regulate their athletes’ emotions. External factors were categorized into Jowett and Poczwardowski’s (2007) categories with the integrated model of coach-athlete relationships: individual differences (athlete/coach experience, personality), wider context (cultural norms, team size), and interpersonal factors (relationship length, athlete/coach sex). Results are presented in Appendix I with a more detailed description of the influence of gender on the coach-athlete relationship.

4.8.3.1 Coach and Athlete Gender

Due to the complex nature of the influence of coach and athlete gender on the coach-athlete relationship, a longer description has been allocated to this subcategory. Participants in this sample agreed that it was generally easier to connect with a coach and athlete of the same sex.
As all the athletes in this study were female and the coaches were males, the athletes indicated that they might feel a greater connection, more comfortable, and a greater sense of empathy from a female coach. Athlete A6 said that she felt there was a common understanding between women that may influence the coach-athlete relationship:

I feel like a female coach would be more empathetic [laughs] and like, understand what you’re going through a little bit more. Whereas like, male coaches, especially the ones that have like, experience in the sport, I feel like just, try and do the things that helped them when they were, I guess a female coach would maybe do the same thing but like, male coaches a lot I find, don’t really understand why you’re so nervous [laughs] whereas I feel like a female coach, cause like girls typically get… more anxious and stuff before [competition], would understand that a little bit more. (A6 – Post Interview)

With all coaches in this study being males, they expressed difficulty regulating females’ emotions due to a lack of understanding of females’ emotional experiences and the differences between coaching female and male athletes. In general, coaches in this study agreed with the athlete participants, in that they attempted to provide a greater sense of caring to female athletes in comparison to their male athletes. Coach C3 said:

Just that there’s empathy and concern alright? Male or female, just – it seems to resonate a little bit more with the females but it’s really just being aware if things don’t look good. You know if they’re coming to the [workout] and… they’re not what they usually are then, we … need to pull them aside and we need to talk to them. (C3 – Post Interview)

Despite coaches indicating their attempts to empathize and listen more to their female athletes to accommodate their needs, coach participants expressed the difficulty of coaching female athletes as a male coach. Coach C1 said:

So I do find in so, being a male and based upon most of my, especially competitively as a male right? So I think like a male and all that … so I do find that while I’m able to over the years to be able to learn and adapt a lot of strategies to work with women and athletes, I do find it more personally more draining, emotionally. (C1 – Post Interview)

Coach C3 explained the benefit of having a female figure to provide support for female athletes:
Um, I think women want to talk to women, I have absolutely, one hundred percent belief that that’s true and it should be true. And I think that’s a real problem with a lot of programs is that they only have a male figure. (C3 – Pre Interview)

Participants in this study indicated that the coach-athlete relationship may be stronger when the members are of the same gender, as females may have an easier time connecting with other females and male coaches may experience difficulty relating to female athletes and their emotions.

4.9 Contextual Factors

Participants indicated a number of contextual factors in coaches’ and athletes’ immediate environments that influenced athletes’ emotions, athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies, coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies, and ultimately the broader context of the coach-athlete relationship. The immediate contextual factors reported by participants in this study were the athlete’s performance, competition versus workout, group size, competitive expectations, injury, and personal life concerns. The influence of these factors on athletes’ emotions and emotion regulation became especially evident when the athletes completed audio diary reflections over a two-week time span. These results are presented in Appendix J.

4.10 Audio Diaries

Although it was not the primary purpose of this study, it is important to consider that emotions and emotion regulation may change across time and situation. By charting the participants’ audio diary reflections over a two-week period, it became evident that emotions and emotion regulation changed on a day-to-day basis. It appeared that athletes experienced a variety of emotions both within a practice or competition and across the two-week period. In addition, participants indicated changes in the person responsible for the emotion regulation. Participants reported that coaches frequently engaged in extrinsic emotion regulation to try and influence their athletes’ emotions across the two-week period, and athletes seemed to employ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies solely when the coach did not use extrinsic strategies. An example of an athlete’s emotions and the use of intrinsic and extrinsic emotion regulation across a two-week period is illustrated in Table 2. This particular athlete experienced a variety of emotions across diary entries and a number of intrinsic and extrinsic emotion regulation strategies were used in
attempts to manage these emotions. When considering who employed the emotion regulation strategy, the athlete appeared to regulate her own emotions only when she perceived that the coach did not use an extrinsic emotion regulation strategy. Similar patterns were observed across athletes, suggesting that athletes may reserve intrinsic emotion regulation for when a coach does not attempt to regulate the athlete’s emotions via extrinsic emotion regulation strategies.

Table 2. Visual representation of an athlete’s emotions and intrinsic/extrinsic emotion regulation across a two-week period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athlete Emotions</th>
<th>Disinterest</th>
<th>Anger</th>
<th>Disappointment</th>
<th>Frustration</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Happiness</th>
<th>Excitement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENTRY</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Emotion Regulation (ER) Strategy**

- Situation Selection
- Situation Modification
- Attention Deployment
- Cognitive Change
- Response Modulation

**Note.** X = coach’s use of ER strategy; O = athlete’s use of ER strategy; ▲ = other’s (e.g., teammate) use of ER strategy.

### 4.11 Methodological Reflection

Participants reflected and provided feedback on the audio diary experience. Athletes indicated that they enjoyed the reflexive nature of the audio diaries, the freedom to complete the entries on their own time, the ability to recall information due to the immediacy of the entry, and the comfort of reflecting without the presence of another person. Athlete A1 said:

Yeah I think it’s a great way [to collect information] because it’s … it can be anonymous so I feel safe, the participant feels safe talking to the audio diary and then um, it’s
intimate. So you’re not talking in front of people … so you can say what you really think and what you really felt… without being afraid that someone might hear you or stuff like that. (A1 – Post Interview)

Participant A4 said that she could remember everything due to the ability to reflect for a short period of time, immediately following a workout or competition:

The good thing about the audio diaries is that like, it’s just like that one two-minute, three-minute clip that you remember everything and then like, the next day you remember everything. Whereas if I went to like, three practices and we talked on Friday, like I wouldn’t remember all of the things that I remembered. (A4 – Post Interview)

However, participants also indicated that they did not have time to reflect on their emotions, they felt unsure of what to talk about, experienced guilt when forgetting to complete an entry, and some believed that a two-week period was too short to represent the overall picture of athletes’ emotions and coaches’ use of extrinsic emotion regulation. Coach C2 indicated the audio diaries were a nuisance: “it’s a pain to come down … because of everything else that we’ve … we’ve got going on to sit down and sort of reflect uh, at the end for five minutes, ten minutes, twenty, thirty minutes” (C2 – Post Interview). Athlete A5 expressed some positive aspects of the method but also went onto say that she would occasionally forget to complete an entry and it added another task to her daily routine:

So it wasn’t like that bad, it’s just sometimes I would like, forget … ‘oh shit I have to do it’ type of thing um, yeah I didn’t hate it. I was just like, I would forget at the time like ‘oh crap I have to like, do that’ but … in a way it was … good to like, reflect on it [emotions]. (A5 – Post Interview)

Coach C3 explained that while the method itself may provide useful information, a two-week period was not representative of interactions between athletes and coaches, suggesting that they only provide a snippet of information:

I kind of pitied you listening to it, because it was virtually the same thing every day, you know? And I guess my comment would be, it would be really great if you could do it at different stages of the season … cause there was nothing on the line when we were, you
know, well no I shouldn’t say that. We were going to a [competition] so everyone was in a really good mood. There’s no stress, there’s no midterm exams, it was uh, an easy lead in, so day by day, it’s gonna be pretty similar. (C3 – Post Interview)

Participant reflections on the audio diary method showed that the method may suit certain individuals who enjoy the process of reflection and who prefer to share information in private and it may be useful to have participants complete audio diaries over a longer period of time (e.g., a competitive season) to capture a larger picture of emotions and emotion regulation. Alternatively, different methods of data collection could be explored that may be more appealing to participants.
Chapter 5
Discussion

5 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand how coaches of individual varsity sports attempted to regulate athletes’ emotions within the context of the coach-athlete relationship. Through an in-depth analysis of coaches’ and athletes’ interviews and audio diary reflections, a conceptual model was developed outlining the relationships between athletes’ emotions, athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies, coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies, contextual considerations, and the coach-athlete relationship (see Figure 1 in Chapter 4: Results). Overall, athletes’ and coaches’ intrinsic and extrinsic emotion regulation strategies were organized within Gross’ (1998) process model of emotion regulation, and these strategies appeared to both influence and be influenced by the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. These findings are discussed by relating and contrasting the results with previous literature on athletes’ emotion and emotion regulation strategies, parent and coach interpersonal emotion regulation, coaching behaviours and styles, and the coach-athlete relationship.

5.1 Athletes’ Emotions and Intrinsic Emotion Regulation

While the specific research questions of this study addressed coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies, athletes’ emotions and intrinsic emotion regulation strategies are clearly important when considering how coaches may attempt to regulate athletes’ emotions. Individual athletes’ perceptions of optimal emotions for sport performance differed and thus, athletes reported needing and using individualized emotion regulation strategies to try and experience the emotions they considered optimal for performance. Consistent with previous literature, the majority of athletes (n = 5) indicated that they aimed to experience positive emotions prior to performing (Lane et al., 2011), however there were athletes who discussed the performance benefits of negative emotions such as anger and frustration (Lane et al., 2011; Ruiz & Hanin, 2011; Ruiz & Hanin, 2011). The results of the present study are consistent and provides further evidence for Hanin’s (1997, 2000) Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF) model addressing the individuality of emotions with successful and unsuccessful performances, and emphasizes the need for individualized approaches to emotion regulation for athletes. Taken
together, these results suggest that it is important for coaches to understand their athletes’ emotional preferences in order to effectively regulate their athletes’ emotions.

With respect to athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies, athletes reported using strategies that were categorized within the families of Gross’ (1998) process model of emotion regulation: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. Athletes reported using specific emotion regulation strategies within these families that have been identified in previous studies, including the use of pre-performance routines (e.g., Uphill & Jones, 2005), music as a form of distraction (e.g., Mesagno, Marchant, & Morris, 2009) and cognitive change (e.g., Lane et al., 2011; Yeats et al., 2014), goal setting and self-talk (Wadey & Hanton, 2008), and reappraisal strategies (e.g., Balk et al., 2013). Certain strategies with respect to athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation were of particular interest as they appeared to be influenced by the coach or influenced a coach’s ability to regulate athletes’ emotions. For example, a coach may encourage the use of certain emotion regulation strategies, or an athlete’s use of an intrinsic emotion regulation strategy may influence a coach’s ability to use extrinsic strategies. In particular, these findings included athletes’ suppression and expression of both positive and negative emotions, and athletes’ experiences with situation selection and modification.

In this study, athletes reported expressing and suppressing both positive and negative emotions. It appeared that athletes only expressed intense emotions (e.g., when feeling extremely happy or deeply frustrated) and athletes indicated that these expressions were often unintentional (e.g., an outburst of tears due to a frustrating performance or a cheer in response to an exciting event). Suppressing both positive and negative emotions seemed to be common with this sample, and athletes reported suppressing emotions to avoid being perceived as ‘cocky’ by others with extremely positive emotions and to avoid appearing weak with the expression of negative emotions. This could be explained by previous research on the social aspect of emotion expression and suppression. Researchers have recognized in a broad context that emotion suppression typically occurs in social settings (English et al., 2017) and individuals may be perceived as more likable when they suppress positive emotions after outperforming peers (Schall et al., 2016). Similarly, in a sport context athletes’ emotion expression and suppression may be influenced by social norms within a team and emotional expressions may serve affiliative or distancing functions between teammates, impact team performance, and communicate team
values (Tamminen et al., 2016). In addition, Kalokerinos et al. (2016) found a temporal influence on the selection and effectiveness of specific emotion regulation strategies, where emotion suppression was typically used immediately following negative emotional experiences and distraction and reappraisal strategies were used later on in the emotion regulation process. Kalokerinos and colleagues (2016) hypothesized that individuals were not ready to use certain regulation strategies early on in the emotional episode due to the intensity of emotions and therefore used emotion suppression until they were prepared to use strategies like reappraisal or distraction. It is possible that the participants in the present study suppressed their emotions because they were not prepared to use other strategies (e.g., cognitive change), or this could also indicate that athletes were not prepared to express their emotions in social contexts. Taken together, athletes’ use of response modulation strategies (i.e., expression and suppression; Gross, 1998) as forms of intrinsic emotion regulation may be influenced by social and temporal factors. Future research could examine how the social context influences athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation at different points in time during emotional episodes.

Athletes also reported suppressing emotions due to a lack of emotional understanding and not knowing how to ask a coach for help with emotional issues, suggesting that coaches may play a valuable role in athletes’ emotional expression and suppression. Athletes’ emotions may be influenced by coaches’ encouragement or discouragement of emotion expression and the coaches’ establishment of social norms surrounding emotions (Tamminen et al., 2016); however, an athlete’s expression or suppression of emotions may influence coaches’ ability to recognize athletes’ emotions and to use extrinsic emotion regulation strategies. Researchers have emphasized the need for emotion expression to have an observer react to emotions (Van Kleef, 2009, 2010) and the importance of leaders and coaches understanding their subordinates’ or athletes’ emotions to effectively employ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies (Campo et al., 2016; Smollan & Perry, 2011). Therefore, the results from the present study suggest that if athletes are suppressing their emotions or expressing only extreme emotions, coaches may not fully understand when and how to try and help regulate their athletes’ emotions. Coaches and athletes should strive to communicate optimal emotions and emotion regulation strategies to improve coaches’ ability to effectively regulate their athletes’ emotions.

Athletes in this study reported using situation selection as a means of intrinsic emotion regulation and appeared comfortable using this strategy. Situation selection included athletes choosing a
workout, choosing a workout space to surround themselves with certain equipment or people, or selecting particular competitions or competition events to experience more positive emotions associated with training and competition. Interestingly, there seems to be a lack of research considering athletes’ use of situation selection and situation modification within Gross’ (1998) framework of emotion regulation. Uphill and colleagues (2009) indicated that situation selection is not always possible for athletes due to the unpredictability of sport settings; however, the role of the coach has not been considered with regard to athletes’ ability to use situation selection or situation modification as a strategy to regulate their emotions. That is, athletes might use situation selection or modification more often when provided with opportunities to do so by their coaches. In this study, it was assumed that the coach may have influenced the athletes’ ability to use situation selection and modification. For example, an athlete would be unable to select a workout or competition when training with a controlling coach, whereas a coach who offered choice would give athletes the opportunity to use situation selection and modification as a means of intrinsic emotion regulation. Providing athletes with choice has been identified as a key aspect of autonomy-supportive coaching along with giving rationales, acknowledging feelings, allowing independence, providing non-controlling feedback, avoiding overt control, and avoiding measuring performance relative to others (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1987; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Autonomy-supportive coaching has been linked with a number of favorable outcomes for athletes including performance (Pope & Wilson, 2015), motivation (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007; 2009; Bartolomé, Sáenz-López, & Moreno, 2010), needs satisfaction (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2009), and prosocial behaviour (Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011). However, it is unclear whether coaches’ autonomy-support influences athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies. There is evidence to suggest that individuals used more positive self-talk on cognitive tasks when given autonomy-supportive instructions for a computer-based task (Oliver et al., 2008), and researchers have found a relationship between adolescents’ use of more adaptive emotion regulation strategies and perceptions of maternal autonomy-support (Brenning, Soenens, Van Petegem, & Vansteenkiste, 2015), therefore future research may examine the influence of autonomy-supportive coaching styles on athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies, particularly the use of situation selection and modification.
5.2 Coaches’ Extrinsic Emotion Regulation

Coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies were also categorized according to Gross’ (1998) process model of emotion regulation (i.e., situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation), and many of these strategies were similar to those reported by athletes (e.g., distraction, reappraisal, etc.). This finding was not surprising considering previous literature identifying teammates’ interpersonal use of these strategies (e.g., Campo et al., 2016; Tamminen & Crocker, 2013) and athletes’ reports of wanting and receiving emotional support from coaches (Bengoechea et al., 2007). However, this study is one of the first to explore coaches’ interpersonal emotion regulation with their athletes, and therefore the identification of the specific IER strategies that coaches used provides a novel contribution to the literature and a foundation for future research examining IER and coaching. Particular findings of interest with respect to coaches’ extrinsic strategies were coaches’ use of strategies that appeared to align with research on autonomy-supportive and controlling coaching behaviours, coaches’ difficulties with extrinsic emotion regulation, and the apparent correspondence between coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies and athletes’ intrinsic use of these strategies.

Coaches reported using rationalization, positive reinforcement, and listening to try and regulate their athletes’ emotions. These strategies have all been identified as autonomy-supportive coaching behaviours (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Reeve, Bolt, & Cai, 1999; Reeve & Jang, 2008; Hagger et al., 2007). With respect to rationalization, participants in this study indicated that coaches provided athletes with rationales for training programs, training progress and performance, and coaches also attempted to rationalize competition performance in an attempt to reduce athletes’ anxiety associated with their sport. In addition, it appeared that the coaches in this study used positive reinforcement as a tool to try and improve athletes’ emotional states, and participants reported the importance of coaches’ listening skills when athletes needed an outlet for venting negative emotions. The need for research on the influence of coaches’ rationalization in sport settings has been recognized (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), and researchers have developed various scales to measure autonomy-supportive leadership and coaching including the Autonomy Supportive Coaching Questionnaire (ASCQ; Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007) and the Perceived Autonomy Support Scale for Exercise Settings (PASSES; Hagger et al., 2007), which include specific questions addressing leaders’ rationalization, listening, and positive
reinforcement. There is evidence to suggest an indirect relationship between autonomy-supportive coaching and athletes’ increased enjoyment in sport (Álvarez, Balaguer, Castillo, & Duda, 2009), however this is just one positively valenced emotion and there is a need to explore the influence of autonomy-supportive coaching with a wider range of athletes’ emotions. Therefore, in addition to researching how autonomy-supportive coaching may influence athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies as described above, it may be useful to look at the relationship between autonomy-supportive coaching behaviours and coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies, and how these influence athletes’ emotions in sport.

Participants also reported coaches’ use of controlling coaching behaviours including yelling and guilt-inducing criticism (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2009) as a means of regulating their athletes’ emotions. Despite participants mentioning instances of coaches shaming their athletes (within participant quotes in Chapter 4.5), their actions appeared to reflect efforts to induce guilt, which occurs when an individual attributes the emotion to a behaviour while shame is induced when an individual attributes the emotion to the self (Sabiston et al., 2010; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992). While controlling coaching behaviours have been associated with a number of negative athlete outcomes (for a review see Bartholomew et al., 2009), participants in this study indicated that these controlling emotion regulation strategies could be helpful for performance when used at appropriate times. Researchers have identified an association between workplace guilt and workers’ commitment to an organization (Flynn & Schaumberg, 2012), body-related guilt and intrinsic motivation for physical activity (e.g., Sabiston et al., 2010), and it has been argued that managing workers’ emotions to feel guilt in response to failure may increase individuals’ motivation and performance in the workplace (Bohns & Flynn, 2013); however, there is little known about the potential positive role of athlete guilt in a sport context. Bohns and Flynn (2013) explored literature addressing the emotions of guilt and shame within organizations and outlined that guilt is induced when an individual perceives that they are in control of a negative outcome, the event is caused by something highly specific, and the event caused harm to someone or something else. A coach in the current study discussed a time when he attempted to induce guilt in his athletes to improve performance; it might be assumed that if athletes felt they were in control of improving the negative outcome (e.g., performance results), it was attributable to something specific (e.g., practice attendance), and it caused harm to someone else (e.g., the team or their relationship with the coach), then this
could lead to athletes experiencing guilt, but also ending up more motivated in their sport. It could be interesting for future research to examine the potential positive benefits of controlling coaching behaviours such as yelling and guilt-inducing criticism on athletes, and the relationship with interpersonal emotion regulation rather than solely the negative outcomes as previously outlined. While this is a complex issue and this discussion point is not meant to say that controlling coaching behaviours are necessarily ‘good’, it may suggest that these behaviours are not universally ‘bad’ and coaches may be able to use yelling/guilt-inducing criticism strategically to benefit and motivate their athletes.

Coaches reported some difficulty and fatigue associated with attempting to regulate athletes’ emotions. For example, a coach indicated that putting things into perspective for athletes, a form of cognitive change, became exhausting after prolonged use of the strategy. In addition, another coach described the emotional fatigue experienced when attempting to regulate female athletes’ emotions, as he said he did not fully understand when and how to use extrinsic emotion regulation with female athletes. This could be explained by research on emotional labour (Hoschild, 1983), where engaging in the display of phony emotions can lead to emotional exhaustion (Lee & Chelladurai, 2016) and leader burnout (Liu et al., 2015). Emotional labour is described as the management of feelings for public displays of emotion (Hoschild, 1983) and when considering interpersonal emotion regulation, Niven (2016) argued that leaders engage in emotional labour when attempting to regulate followers’ emotions purely out of obligation rather than an intrinsic desire. Therefore, while it was not necessarily coaches’ own displays of emotion contributing to their emotional labour in this study, their attempts to manage the emotions and emotional displays of their athletes may have had an exhaustive effect on coaches if they felt obligated to do so. Coaches in this study did not discuss any long-term issues associated with regulating athletes’ emotions; however, this was not the primary focus of the study and participants may have provided greater insight into the topic of emotional labour if they had been asked specific questions surrounding the difficulties associated with extrinsic emotion regulation. Overall, this study provides some evidence that coaches’ attempts at regulating their athletes’ emotions may also contribute to coaches’ emotional labour, and future research could explore how managing others’ emotions relates to the construct of emotional labour, coaches’ emotional exhaustion, and coach burnout.
Coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation strategies appeared to not only influence their athletes’ emotions, but they also appeared to influence the intrinsic strategies that athletes used to regulate their own emotions. Athletes described situations when they would attempt to regulate their emotions using similar strategies as their coach, when their coach was not present or was unable to regulate the athlete’s emotions. Similarly, coaches indicated that they hoped athletes would become more independent over time when it came to regulating their own emotions. This suggests that coaches may teach emotion regulation to their athletes and that athletes may learn emotion regulation strategies from their coaches. Researchers examining parent-child relationships have identified parents as key socializers for a child’s development of emotion regulation strategies (Morris et al., 2011; Denham et al., 2015), through modeling of positive and negative emotions and emotion regulation (Bariola, Hughes, & Gullone, 2011; Morelen et al., 2016), reactions to children’s emotions (Hurrell, Hudson & Schniering, 2015), and through emotion instruction (Yap et al., 2008) and that as children age, the emotion regulator shifts from the parent to the child as children become more independent (Grolnick et al., 1998; Thompson, 1991). While the development of athletes’ emotion regulation has yet to be explored within sport literature, there has been evidence to suggest that coaches’ stress influences athletes’ emotions, emotional displays, behaviours, and relationships in sport (Thelwell et al., 2017), coaching behaviours indirectly influence athletes’ emotions before and after competition (Boardley, Jackson, & Simmons, 2015), and coaches appear to play a role in athletes’ development and learning of coping strategies by creating supportive environments and using specific coaching behaviours (e.g., questioning and reminding; Tamminen & Holt, 2012). In addition, researchers have found that coaches’ autonomy-support may have a compensatory effect on a number of athlete outcomes (e.g., psychological needs satisfaction, sport achievement, sport motivation) when parents are low in autonomy-support (Gaudreau et al., 2016), which may indicate that coaches could play a role in the development of emotion regulation as well. Denham and colleagues (2015) emphasized the need for research on the influence of other socializers (e.g., teachers, caregivers, coaches) on the development of a child’s emotion regulation, and given the present findings aligning with the parent-child literature and the coping in sport research, it could be interesting to explore the coach’s role in the athletes’ development of emotion regulation strategies.
5.3 Influences on Extrinsic Emotion Regulation

Athletes and coaches described the coach-athlete relationship similar to Jowett and colleagues’ (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) 3+1C’s conceptualization of the dyad comprised of closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation. It was not surprising that participants indicated a stronger coach-athlete relationship when referring to trust and respect, the future maintenance, and active communication within the relationship, given the alignment of these concepts with the 3+1C’s model and the considerable amount of research supporting this framework (e.g., Felton & Jowett, 2013; Hampson & Jowett, 2014; Jowett, 2008; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). In addition, factors contributing to the quality of the coach-athlete relationship were consistent with Jowett and Poczwardowski’s (2007) categories within the integrated model of coach-athlete relationships: individual factors (i.e., personality, coach experience, athlete performance level), the wider context (i.e., cultural norms, team size), and interpersonal factors (i.e., length of the relationship, coach-athlete gender). The quality of the coach-athlete relationship has been shown to influence athletes’ psychological needs satisfaction (Choi, Cho, & Huh, 2013), sport burnout (Isoard-Gautheur et al., 2016), intrinsic motivation (Adie & Jowett, 2010), physical self-concept (Jowett, 2008), and coping (Nicholls et al., 2016; Staff, Didymus, & Backhouse, 2017), however this was the first study to look at the relationship between the coach-athlete relationship and emotion regulation. Within the present study, the quality of the coach-athlete relationship appeared to influence coaches’ attempts at regulating their athletes’ emotions, and coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation appeared to influence the quality of the coach-athlete relationship.

Parenting researchers have found relationships between parent-child attachment style and parents’ approach to emotion regulation (Denham et al., 2015; Guo et al., 2015; Morris et al., 2011). More specifically, insecure attachment styles (i.e., parent does not serve as a protective figure or support exploration; Kim, Boldt, & Kochanska, 2015; Turliuc & Bujor, 2013), have been shown to relate to mother’s controlling behaviours towards children’s emotion expressiveness (e.g., suppress a child’s negative emotions; Berlin & Cassidy, 2003) and mothers’ expectations that the child will self-regulate (Main, 1990). However, it appears that much of the literature in this domain has focused on the child’s development of intrinsic emotion regulation and the unidirectional relationship of how parent-child attachment influences emotion regulation rather than the reverse relationship (Brumariu, 2015). Within the sport domain, there has been
evidence to support the bidirectional relationship between coach-athlete relationship quality and dyadic coping between coaches and athletes (Staff et al., 2017). More specifically Staff and colleagues (2017) found that coaches and athletes cope with stress as a collective and this both depends on and contributes to the quality of a coach-athlete relationship consisting of trust, communication, and support. This finding is consistent with the results of the current study, however the present study is the first to explore and identify the potential link between coach-athlete relationship quality and coaches’ interpersonal emotion regulation. Niven (2016) developed a theoretical framework to describe the motives for interpersonal emotion regulation in the workplace, and not only identified coaching purposes for leaders’ interpersonal emotion regulation (i.e., attempting to elicit emotions in others that are beneficial for performance) but also recognized leaders’ use of interpersonal emotion regulation to improve relatedness and relationship quality. Altogether, there is evidence to support the influence of relationship quality on interpersonal emotion regulation, as well as the influence of interpersonal emotion regulation on relationship quality. Future research can establish this relationship through quantitative measures and examine the direction of the relationship (i.e., does relationship quality or effective use of IER strategies come first).

Participants in this study also described a number of immediate contextual factors that influenced the use of emotion regulation strategies to regulate their own or their athletes’ emotions and the effectiveness of these strategies. These factors included the performance of the athlete, whether it was a competition or a practice, the group size, athletes’ and coaches’ performance expectations, the presence of an injury, and aspects of one’s personal life. For example, a coach described his use of different strategies depending on the athlete’s performance outcomes, while an athlete indicated that she had a harder time regulating her emotions in sport when experiencing stress or strong emotions related to other aspects of her life. While participants did not go into great detail as to why these contextual factors influenced the use of emotion regulation strategies, it is possible that the motivation and goals behind emotion regulation are situation-specific. Tamir (2016) developed a taxonomy of motives for emotion regulation and described hedonic (i.e., the desire to feel immediate pleasant or unpleasant emotions) and instrumental (i.e., the desire to achieve immediate performance goals for future benefits) reasons behind one’s use of emotion regulation. This categorization of the motives behind emotion regulation could apply to athletes’ and coaches’ uses of emotion regulation strategies and explain how different contextual factors...
influenced athletes’ and coaches’ choice of strategy. For example, one could speculate that an athlete or coach may be more motivated to regulate emotions for prohedonic purposes in a workout, where there is less pressure to perform, and for instrumental purposes in a competition, where performance is more critical (e.g., Adegbesan, 2007). Therefore, the influence of contextual factors on the use and effectiveness of emotion regulation strategies could be explained through the different motives for emotion regulation, and future research could examine how emotion regulation motives may change based on contextual demands. By identifying the different motives (e.g., hedonic versus instrumental) for emotion regulation within different contexts, coaches and athletes can gain a better understanding of what emotions are desirable and the selection of specific intrinsic or extrinsic emotion regulation strategies.

5.4 Implications, Strengths, and Limitations

The present study has both theoretical and practical implications. Given that this is the first study to explore coaches’ use of interpersonal emotion regulation with their athletes, the findings serve as a foundation for future research on coaches’ and leaders’ use of interpersonal emotion regulation in sport. In addition, these results build on previous research regarding athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation strategies and the coach-athlete relationship. Overall, the conceptual model outlining the relationships between athletes’ intrinsic emotion regulation, coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation, the coach-athlete relationship, and additional contextual factors (see Figure 1 in Chapter 4: Results) can provide researchers with a preliminary framework to examine the construct of interpersonal emotion regulation and the coach-athlete relationship in different contexts.

The findings of this study also have practical implications for coaches and sport organizations. Given the apparent importance of emotions, emotion regulation, and the quality of the coach-athlete relationship for individual athletes, coaches should remain aware of their use of extrinsic emotion regulation strategies. By communicating with athletes and understanding what each individual athlete needs in terms of emotion regulation, coaches can build the coach-athlete relationship and effectively regulate athletes’ emotions. Furthermore, coaches can facilitate active communication with their athletes to ensure athletes are able to effectively regulate their own emotions if coaches are not present. Sport organizations can also use this information to understand the importance of emotion and emotion regulation in sport and implement...
information about emotion regulation into coaching courses and training. For example, by presenting coaches with emotion regulation strategies, the different situations in which these strategies may be effective or ineffective, and encouraging active communication between coaches and athletes with respect to emotions and emotion regulation, coaches may be better equipped to handle the emotional aspect of coaching.

Despite the theoretical and practical implications of this study, there were limitations associated with the sample, the conceptual model, and data collection. The small sample including only male coaches and female athletes makes it difficult to generalize the findings to other sports, different age groups, different performance levels, and different genders. This issue should be stressed when considering the applicability of the conceptual model to other contexts, as aspects or relationships presented in the model may differ with other samples. There is evidence to suggest differences in athletes’ and coaches’ perceptions of the coach-athlete relationship in individual versus team sports (Lorimer & Jowett, 2007) and same-sex versus other-sex relationships (Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007). In addition, researchers have identified gender differences in emotion regulation, expression, reflection, and socialization within children, adolescents, adults, and parent-child relationships (Denham, Bassett, & Wyatt, 2015; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012). For example, fathers have been found to dismiss their children’s negative emotions more than mothers, and mothers have been found to dismiss their sons’ negative emotions more than their daughters’ (Zeman, Perry-Parish, Cassano, 2010). Therefore, future research should examine the dynamics of emotion regulation and the coach-athlete relationship in other sport contexts and between male coaches and male athletes, female coaches and female athletes, and female coaches and male athletes to strengthen the results of the current study and extend findings beyond this homogeneous sample. With respect to data collection, interviews and audio diaries were all completed in a two-week time period during the middle of participants’ competitive seasons. Tamminen and Holt (2010) found that athletes’ reported different stressors and coping strategies across a competitive season and there is potential for similarities in coaches’ and athletes’ uses of emotion regulation across a season. Researchers could consider adopting a prospective approach to examine how coaches’ and athletes’ uses of emotion regulation at various time points fluctuate across a season. This information would also shed light on whether the motives for emotion regulation or emotion regulation strategies change along with competitive demands.
With respect to the process of data collection for this study, there were benefits and challenges associated with the use of participant audio diaries. While it provided some insight as to how emotions and emotion regulation changed over time, and also allowed for the researcher to identify the regulator of emotions within the context of sport, it also presented barriers with participant recruitment, participant compliance, and consistency in the quantity of data from each participant. The researcher had difficulty obtaining male participants due to the audio diary method, as potential male athlete participants were unwilling to complete the diary aspect of the study. This may be because women have been found to be more emotionally expressive than men (see Chaplin, 2015) and therefore may have been more willing to share and reflect on their experiences with emotion. This may also reflect the challenges associated with studying emotions and emotion regulation in general due to the sensitivity of these topics and individuals’ comfort with reflecting on their emotions. With respect to participant compliance and the inconsistencies in the amount of collected data from participants, previous studies involving the use of audio diaries have had similar issues. The lack of researcher involvement with the audio diary method may evoke uncertainty in the participants in terms of what to discuss and it forces participants to remain motivated throughout the duration of the study to continue completing entries (Monrouxe, 2009; Pilbeam et al., 2016; Williamson et al., 2016). Despite having prompt sheets and daily reminders to remind and guide participants through the audio diary process, athletes and coaches still indicated difficulties with adhering to daily diaries. Future studies may consider using audio diaries less frequently (e.g., once per week rather than everyday), providing clearer guidelines and prompt sheets to direct reflections, lessening the emphasis on emotions within the information letter, or naming the method something different (e.g., audio reflections), to avoid potential prejudice or judgements with respect to the word ‘diary’ to increase the strength of audio diaries as a method of data collection.
Chapter 6
Conclusion

While there has been a considerable amount of research examining emotions and emotion regulation in sport (e.g., Hanin, 2000; Lazarus, 2000b), researchers have predominantly focused on athletes’ intrapersonal emotions and emotion regulation with little attention given to the role of the coach in this area. Given the influence of coaches and the coach-athlete relationship on a number of athlete outcomes (e.g., performance, motivation, wellbeing; Jowett, 2008; Felton & Jowett, 2013) and the importance of athletes’ emotions and emotion regulation in sport (e.g., Jones, 2012), the purpose of this study was to explore coaches’ use of interpersonal emotion regulation within the context of the coach-athlete relationship. The specific research questions included: 1) What strategies do coaches use to regulate their athletes’ emotions?; 2) What strategies do athletes perceive his/her coach is using to regulate his/her (i.e., the athlete’s) emotion?; and 3) How do coaches and athletes perceive the coach-athlete relationship influences and is influence by coaches’ IER?

The researcher conducted a multiple case study (Stake, 2006) within a critical realist paradigm to address these research questions. Aligning with a critical realist perspective, the researcher aimed to understand the reality of participants’ experiences by exploring the phenomena of interest in social, real-world contexts (Clark, 2008; Easton, 2010). Three cases were included, each consisting of one male head coach and two of his respective female athletes ($N = 9$) from individual varsity sports. Coaches and athletes participated in individual pre-diary interviews, a two-week audio diary period, and individual post-diary interviews. With respect to the audio diary period, participants were given digital audio recorders and asked to reflect on emotion regulation and the coach-athlete relationship following practices and games. Interviews and audio diaries were transcribed verbatim and subjected to inductive and deductive analyses following Gross’ (1998) process model of emotion regulation and Jowett and colleagues’ (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007) 3+1C’s conceptualization of the coach-athlete relationship. Audio diary data were analyzed further by charting fluctuations in emotions and emotion regulation across the two-week diary period.
Following the analyses, a bidirectional relationship was identified between coaches’ extrinsic emotion regulation and the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. In other words, the quality of the coach-athlete relationship appeared to influence coaches’ ability and effectiveness with regulating their athletes’ emotions, and a coaches’ use of extrinsic emotion regulation appeared to influence the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. With respect to specific emotion regulation strategies, coaches and athletes seemed to use extrinsic and intrinsic emotion regulation strategies that aligned with Gross’ (1998) process model of emotion regulation: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. Participants reported a number of factors that influenced the use of certain emotion regulation strategies including the emotion the athlete was feeling and desired to feel, and factors within the immediate context including athlete performance, competition versus practice, group size, performance expectations, and personal life factors. Coaches and athletes also discussed the coach-athlete relationship in alignment with Jowett and colleagues’ (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) 3+1C’s conceptualization of relationship (i.e., closeness, commitment, complementarity, and communication/co-orientation) and described the influence of individual factors (e.g., personality), the wider context (e.g., cultural norms), and interpersonal factors (e.g., coach-athlete gender) on the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. A conceptual model was developed to identify the relationships between athletes’ emotions and use of intrinsic emotion regulation, coaches’ extrinsic use of emotion regulation, the coach-athlete relationship, and immediate contextual factors.

Overall, this study provides a preliminary conceptualization of coaches’ interpersonal emotion regulation within the context of the coach-athlete relationship. The results of this study have novel theoretical contributions to guide future research on interpersonal emotion regulation and the coach-athlete relationship, as well as applied implications for varsity coaches and athletes. Similarities were found within and between cases in terms of preferences for emotion regulation and the quality of coach-athlete relationship, however a great amount of individuality also became apparent throughout participants’ descriptions of these constructs. Therefore, interpersonal emotion regulation is likely not a one-size-fits-all construct and coaches and athletes should communicate and strive for congruence when considering IER strategies that are best for each individual athlete.


Kim, S., Boldt, L. J., & Kochanska, G. (2015). From parent–child mutuality to security to socialization outcomes: Developmental cascade toward positive adaptation in


workplace interpersonal conflict and perceived managerial family support. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 100*, 793-808. doi:10.1037/a0038387


Tamminen, K. A., Palmeateer, T. M., Denton, M., Sabiston, C., Crocker, P. R. E., Eys, M., & Smith, B. (2016). Exploring emotions as social phenomena among Canadian varsity...


Appendix A
Athlete Consent Form and Letter of Information

Project Title: Interpersonal emotion regulation and the coach-athlete relationship

Primary Investigator: Courtney Braun, MSc Student

Research Supervisor: Dr. Katherine Tamminen, Ph.D.

Affiliation: University of Toronto

You are invited to participate in a research study on emotions and relationships within Varsity sport because of your position as a Varsity athlete. This letter will give you the information you need to make an informed decision to participate in this study.

We want to understand how coaches and athletes influence each other’s emotions and how this relates to the coach-athlete relationship. We are interested in learning about different features of this relationship because of its impact on performance and wellbeing. Participants will be University of Toronto Varsity head coaches and senior athletes from individual sports. Athletes must have played with the University of Toronto team for at least one year.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be invited to complete two interviews and a two-week audio diary. You will be asked to talk about your experiences with emotions and coaches in sport. Interviews will be at a location that is convenient to you and should take 45-60 minutes. Audio diaries may be done at any location and may be any length.

**Benefits**
Some people report a calming effect with diaries and you may gain a new way of looking at your sport experience, however this is not guaranteed. By participating in this research, you will help us learn about emotions and coach-athlete relationships. Your stories and experiences will contribute to a field of research that aims to improve sport experiences and relationships between athletes and coaches.

**Risks**
It is unlikely there are any risks associated with this study, however contact information for mental health centres are attached and will be given to participants again if necessary. You do not have to answer any questions in the interviews or diaries that you find inappropriate or uncomfortable. You may stop interviews or audio diaries at any time.

**Freedom to Withdraw**
Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you do not have to participate. If you want to withdraw from the study, you may email the primary researcher before February 1, 2017 and all of your information will be removed and deleted. There are no negative consequences if you choose not to participate.
Confidentiality
Interviews and diaries will be recorded, typed out, and saved on a password-protected computer at the University of Toronto. Only the primary researcher and research supervisor will be able to see this information. All of your information will remain confidential and your name will be removed. Athletes and coaches will not be told the names of other participants in the study. Athlete and coach responses will not be shared with other participants. This means that the researcher will not tell coaches or other athletes about the people who are participating in the study.

In order to maintain the integrity of the research project, we ask that you not discuss your answers in the interviews or the audio diaries with other people until the study is completed (e.g., after the final interview).

Results will be presented in a public Master’s defense, conference, and published in an academic journal. You are welcome to have the results at the end of the study and a copy of the results can be requested from the researcher.

The research study may be reviewed by a representative at the Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) to make sure laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, HREP may view data or consent materials, however all information will be held to the same standard of confidentiality that has been outlined in this letter.

Your signature below indicates that you are aware that you may contact the primary investigator, research supervisor, or the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or (416) 946-3273 if you have any questions or concerns regarding the research study or procedures.

Your signature below indicates that you have read this letter of information and agree to participate in the current research study.

Name (Print) _______________________________  Date ___________________
Signature __________________________________  Date ___________________
Researcher Signature _________________________  Date ___________________
Appendix B
Coach Consent Form and Letter of Information

Project Title: Interpersonal emotion regulation and the coach-athlete relationship

Primary Investigator: Courtney Braun, MSc Student

Research Supervisor: Dr. Katherine Tamminen, Ph.D.

Affiliation: University of Toronto

You are invited to participate in a research study on emotions and relationships within Varsity sport because of your position as a Varsity head coach. This letter will give you the information you need to make an informed decision to participate in this study.

We want to understand how coaches and athletes influence each other’s emotions and how this relates to the coach-athlete relationship. We are interested in learning about different features of this relationship because of its impact on performance and wellbeing. Participants will be University of Toronto Varsity head coaches and senior athletes from individual sports. Coaches must have coached the University of Toronto team for at least one year.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be invited to complete two interviews and a two-week audio diary. You will be asked to talk about your experiences with emotions and coaches in sport. Interviews will be at a location that is convenient to you and should take 45-60 minutes. Audio diaries may be done at any location and may be any length.

**Benefits**

Some people report a calming effect with diaries and you may gain a new way of looking at your sport experience, however this is not guaranteed. By participating in this research, you will help us learn about emotions and coach-athlete relationships. Your stories and experiences will contribute to a field of research that aims to improve sport experiences and relationships between athletes and coaches.

**Risks**

It is unlikely there are any risks associated with this study, however contact information for mental health centres are attached and will be given to participants again if necessary. You do not have to answer any questions in the interviews or diaries that you find inappropriate or uncomfortable. You may stop interviews or audio diaries at any time.

**Freedom to Withdraw**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you do not have to participate. If you want to withdraw from the study, you may email the primary researcher before February 1, 2017 and all of your information will be removed and deleted. There are no negative consequences if you choose not to participate.
Confidentiality
Interviews and diaries will be recorded, typed out, and saved on a password-protected computer at the University of Toronto. Only the primary researcher and research supervisor will be able to see this information. All of your information will remain confidential and your name will be removed. Athlete and coach responses will not be shared with other participants. This means that the researcher will not tell coaches or other athletes about the people who are participating in the study.

In order to maintain the integrity of the research project, we ask that you not discuss your answers in the interviews or the audio diaries with other people until the study is completed (e.g., after the final interview).

Results will be presented in a public Master’s defense, conference, and published in an academic journal. You are welcome to have the results at the end of the study and a copy of the results can be requested from the researcher.

The research study may be reviewed by a representative at the Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) to make sure laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, HREP may view data or consent materials, however all information will be held to the same standard of confidentiality that has been outlined in this letter.

Your signature below indicates that you are aware that you may contact the primary investigator, research supervisor, or the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or (416) 946-3273 if you have any questions or concerns regarding the research study or procedures.

Your signature below indicates that you have read this letter of information and agree to participate in the current research study.

Name (Print) ______________________________
Signature __________________________________ Date __________________
Researcher Signature _________________________ Date __________________
Appendix C
Pre-Diary Interview Guide – Athletes

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview as part of my Master’s research thesis. This will be the first of two interviews, the second will occur after a two-week audio diary period is complete where you will be asked to complete daily audio diary entries. I will explain the audio diaries in greater detail at the end of this meeting. I am interested in learning about your emotional experiences within your sport, as well as your perceptions of coaching. There are no right or wrong answers, and you do not have to share any information or respond to any questions that you are not comfortable with. All of your answers will be kept confidential, and your name will be removed from the transcript when the interview is typed up. I will be the only one reading your anonymous transcript, however my supervisor, Dr. Katherine Tamminen, will also have access. Do you have any questions before we start?

Background
  1. Tell me about yourself; how would you describe yourself to someone?
  2. Tell me about your overall sport experience.
    a. What sports do you/did you play?
    b. For how long?
    c. Competitive level?
    d. Tell me about one of your best sport experiences; could you describe it to me?
       • Probe questions (e.g., Who was there? Where were you? When did it happen? What did it look like? What did it feel like?)
    e. Tell me about one of your poorer sport experiences; could you describe it to me?
       • Probe questions (e.g., Who was there? Where were you? When did it happen? What did it look like? What did it feel like?)

Current Sport Involvement
  3. Tell me more about your involvement with (VARSITY SPORT).
    a. Take me through a typical practice.
       • Probe questions (e.g., Where are you? Who is there? How do you feel?)
    b. Take me through a typical competition day.
       • Probe questions (e.g., Where are you? Who is there? How do you feel?)
    c. Tell me about your coaches and teammates.
       • Probe questions (e.g., What are interactions like? What is it like with everyone at practice/competition? What sorts of things do you talk about?)

Athletes’ Emotions
Let’s focus more on how you are feeling in all of the situations we just discussed.
  4. Can you tell me about a time where your emotions have really stood out to you, either in a positive or negative light?
     • Probe questions (e.g., What brought on this emotion? Did you recognize how you were feeling at the time? Did it influence any actions or behaviours thereafter?)
Efforts to Regulate Athletes’ Emotions
5. Are there any strategies you use or have considered using to experience or push away certain emotions in practice?
   • Probe questions (e.g., Do you find them effective or ineffective? Why?)
6. Are there any strategies you use or have considered using to experience or push away certain emotions in competition?
   • Probe questions (e.g., Do you find them effective or ineffective? Why?)
7. Has anyone ever used any strategies to influence your emotions in sport?
   a. Probe questions (e.g., Who? What specific strategies? Practice or competition? Have these worked? Why/Why not?)
8. Has your head coach ever tried to influence your emotions in practice?
   • Can you recall a specific event or example?
   • Probe questions (e.g., Was this positive? Negative?)
9. Has your head coach ever tried to influence your emotions in competition?
   • Can you recall a specific event or example?
   • Probe questions (e.g., Was this positive? Negative?)
10. Can you recall a particular event or example where you wanted your head coach to influence your emotions but they did not?
    • Probe questions (e.g., What emotions were you experiencing? What strategies would you have liked from your head coach?)
11. Have your assistant coaches ever tried to influence your emotions?
    • Can you recall a particular example?
    • Does this resemble or differ from your head coach?

Coach-Athlete Relationship
Changing topics slightly, I want to understand your opinions on coaching.
12. What kind of relationship do you have with your current head coach?
    • Probe questions (e.g., Has this perception changed at all throughout your relationship? Does this differ from your relationships with other coaches?)
13. What kind of relationship do you have with your current assistant coaches?
    • Probe questions (e.g., Has this perception changed at all throughout your relationship? Does this differ from your relationships with other coaches?)
14. What qualities in your current head coach stand out to you?
    • Probe questions (e.g., What did they do/say? How did you interact? How did they make you feel?)

Wrap-Up
Now just to tie everything together.
15. Is there anything we have talked about today that you’d like to discuss further?
16. Is there anything we didn’t talk about that you’d like to mention?
17. Do you have any questions?
Appendix D
Pre-Diary Interview Guide – Coaches

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview as part of my Master’s research thesis. This will be the first of two interviews, the second will occur after a two-week audio diary period is complete where you will be asked to complete daily audio diary entries. I will explain the audio diaries in greater detail at the end of this meeting. I am interested in learning about your experiences with coaching. There are no right or wrong answers, and you do not have to share any information or respond to any questions that you are not comfortable with. All of your answers will be kept anonymous, and your name will be removed from the transcript when the interview is typed up. I will be the only one reading your anonymous transcript, however my supervisor will also have access. Do you have any questions before we start?

Background
1. Tell me about yourself; how would you describe yourself to someone?
2. Tell me about your overall coaching experience.
   a. What sports do you/did you coach? For how long?
   b. Competitive level?
   c. Do you have a coaching philosophy or style?
   d. Tell me about one of your best coaching experiences; could you describe it to me?
      • Probe questions (e.g., Who was there? Where were you? When did it happen? What did it look like? What did it feel like?)
   e. Tell me about one of your poorer coaching experiences; could you describe it to me?
      • Probe questions (e.g., Who was there? Where were you? When did it happen? What did it look like? What did it feel like?)

Current Coaching Experience
3. Tell me more about your coaching experience with (VARSITY SPORT).
   a. Take me through a typical practice.
      • Probe questions (e.g., Where are you? Who is there? How do you feel? How do you think your athletes feel?)
   b. Take me through a typical competition day.
      • Probe questions (e.g., Where are you? Who is there? How do you feel? How do you think your athletes feel?)
   c. Tell me about your athletes.
      • Probe questions (e.g., What are interactions like? What is it like with everyone at practice/competition? What sorts of things do you talk about?)

Athletes’ Emotions
Let’s focus on how you think your athletes are feeling in the situations we just discussed.
4. Can you tell me about a time where your athletes’ emotions have really stood out to you, either in a positive or negative light?
   • Probe questions (e.g., What do you think brought on these emotion? Did you recognize how they were feeling at the time? Did it influence any actions or behaviours thereafter?)
Efforts to Regulate Athletes’ Emotions
Let’s delve a bit more into these emotions that you are describing.

5. Are there any strategies you have noticed your athletes’ use to control the types of emotions they experience in practice?
   • Probe questions (e.g., Have these worked? Why/why not?)

6. Are there any strategies you have noticed your athletes’ use to control the types of emotions they experience in competition?
   • Probe questions (e.g., Have these worked? Why/why not?)

7. Have you ever used any strategies to influence your athletes’ emotions in practice?
   • Can you recall any specific examples of when you tried to influence your athletes’ emotions?
   • Probe questions (e.g., Have these worked? Why/why not?)

8. Have you ever used any strategies to influence your athletes’ emotions in competition?
   • Can you recall any specific examples of when you tried to influence your athletes’ emotions?
   • Probe questions (e.g., Have these worked? Why/why not?)

9. Can you recall an example of when you wanted to influence an athletes’ emotions but didn’t or couldn’t?
   • Probe questions (e.g., What strategies would you have used?)

10. Have you ever noticed anyone else trying to influence your athletes’ emotions?
    • Probe questions (e.g., Who? Have these worked? Why/why not?)

Coach-Athlete Relationship
Changing topics slightly, I want to understand your opinions on coaching your athletes.

11. What kinds of qualities do you think make for an ideal athlete?

12. Have you had an athlete that stands out to you, either positively or negatively?
    • Probe questions (e.g., What did they do? How did you interact? How did they make you feel?)

13. What kind of relationships do you have with your athletes?
    • Probe questions (e.g., How do you interact? Is this consistent between athletes?)

Wrap-Up
Now just to wrap everything up.

14. Is there anything we have talked about today that you’d like to discuss further?

15. Is there anything we didn’t talk about that you’d like to mention?

16. Do you have any questions?
Appendix E
Audio Diary Prompts - Athletes

Please record an audio diary each day you have a practice or game addressing the prompts below. Feel free to discuss as much or as little as you feel comfortable, as well as talking about topics outside of the prompts as you see fit.

1. Record date and time.

2. Describe your most recent practice/game? What was it like? What happened? Use as much detail as you like.

3. Was your head coach present?

4. What emotions did you experience during the practice/game?

5. Did your head coach try to influence your emotions in any way? If yes, what did your head coach do to influence your emotions?

6. How do you feel now?
Appendix F
Audio Diary Prompts - Coaches

Please record an audio diary each day you have a practice or game addressing the prompts below. Feel free to discuss as much or as little as you feel comfortable, as well as talk about topics outside of the prompts as you see fit.

1. Record date and time.

2. Describe your most recent practice/game? What was it like? What happened? Use as much detail as you like.

3. What emotions did you experience during the practice/game?

4. What emotions do you think your athletes experienced during the practice/game?

5. Did you try to influence the emotions of your athletes in any way? If yes, what did you do to try and influence his or her emotions?

6. How do you feel now?
Appendix G
Post-Diary Interview Guide – Athletes

Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this research study as part of my Master’s thesis. This will be the second/last of two interviews. I am interested in exploring a little further some of the things brought up in your audio diaries, hearing your thoughts on the audio diary experience, and having you look at, expand and comment on the findings thus far. There are no right or wrong answers, and you do not have to share any information or respond to any questions that you are not comfortable with. All of your answers will be kept confidential, and your name will be removed from the transcript when the interview is typed up. I will be the only one reading your anonymous transcript, however my supervisor, Dr. Katherine Tamminen, will also have access. Do you have any questions before we start?

1. Since our first interview, are there any strategies you have used to influence your emotions in practice or competition that you did not notice previously or did not mention?
   a. When did you/do you use these strategies? Are they effective?
   b. Are there any strategies you have used/use currently to try and influence your own emotions that are ineffective?
   c. Why do you think they are ineffective?
   d. Are they always ineffective?

2. Since our first interview, are there any strategies your coach used to influence your emotions in practice or competition that you did not notice previously or did not mention?
   a. When do they use these strategies? Are they effective?
   b. Are there any strategies your coach has used/uses currently to try and influence your own emotions that are ineffective?
   c. Why do you think they are ineffective?
   d. Are they always ineffective?

3. How/where did you learn the strategies you use to influence your emotions?

4. What influence do you think the gender of the coach has on how they influence your emotions?

5. What influence do you think the gender of the coach has on the coach-athlete relationship?

6. How did you find the audio diary experience?
   a. Do you think this is an effective/ineffective way to collect information? Why or why not?
Appendix H
Post-Diary Interview Guide – Coaches

Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this research study as part of my Master’s thesis. This will be the second/last of two interviews. I am interested in exploring a little further some of the things brought up in your audio diaries, hearing your thoughts on the audio diary experience, and having you look at, expand and comment on the findings thus far. There are no right or wrong answers, and you do not have to share any information or respond to any questions that you are not comfortable with. All of your answers will be kept confidential, and your name will be removed from the transcript when the interview is typed up. I will be the only one reading your anonymous transcript, however my supervisor, Dr. Katherine Tamminen, will also have access. Do you have any questions before we start?

1. Since our first interview, are there any strategies you used to influence your athletes’ emotions in practice or competition that you did not notice previously or did not mention?
   a. When did you/do you use these strategies? Are they effective?
   b. Are there any strategies you have used/use currently to try and influence your athletes’ emotions that are ineffective?
   c. Why do you think they are ineffective?
   d. Are they always ineffective?

2. How/where did you learn the strategies you use to influence your athletes’ emotions?

3. What influence do you think the gender of the athlete has on how you influence their emotions?

4. What influence do you think the gender of the athlete has on the coach-athlete relationship?

5. How did you find the audio diary experience?
   a. Do you think this is an effective/ineffective way to collect information? Why or why not?
Appendix I
Influential Factors on the Coach-Athlete Relationship

Table 3. Influential factors on the coach-athlete relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athlete Performance Level</td>
<td>Athletes at high performance levels reported a stronger relationship and received more emotion regulation from their coach.</td>
<td>[Coach] had to like, like watch everybody and I definitely noticed that there were some people on the team that like, did not get a lot of attention and they were typically the ones that like, wouldn’t be going to OUAs or CIS. (A6 – Pre Interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>So I suppose there’s a little bit more special attention to the truly elite athlete, um, so I think they would appreciate that attention and focus (C3 – Pre Interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach Experience</td>
<td>Athletes reported a stronger relationship with and were more willing to accept emotion regulation from coaches who were experienced in the sport and in coaching.</td>
<td>Other ones are coaches that try really hard to help you and who have, who could be very potentially, could be very good coaches but aren’t the greatest [athletes] and so they give you input but you can’t take their input too seriously because they’re not a hundred percent sure how they’re doing. (A3 – Pre Interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>The compatibility of the coaches’ and athletes’ individual personalities appeared to influence the quality of the coach-athlete relationship and how coaches regulated their athletes’ emotions.</td>
<td>It kind of just depends like… I think the personality of the coach too, like how they make you feel. Because … you feel like comfortable with somebody, it doesn’t really matter … if it’s male or female, in my opinion at least. (A5 – Post Interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You know so it’s really about their personality right so and then, and be it male or female … that’s not going to determine whether or not I have that open rapport with them or not. Um, it’s gonna be their personality that uh, that rapport and how I interact with them. (C1 – Post Interview)</td>
</tr>
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Table 3. Influential factors on the coach-athlete relationship (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Norms</td>
<td>The quality of the coach-athlete relationship appeared to be influenced by the broader Canadian sport culture.</td>
<td>I heard a lot of like, horror stories about [the US]. I had a lot of friends that went down there and didn’t do well and like, especially with like, the coaches and programs, it seemed … they kind of had you there for athletics first and academics second and I didn’t really like the idea of that … the full scholarship would’ve been nice but it was kind of like they owned you. (A6 – Pre Interview)</td>
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<td>It’s probably unfair to say this but it’s [the US system] somewhat militaristic with the general and all the little soldiers … I tried to do that at the first year of University cause I thought that, this is the big program and so … I tried to be the general and not really relate to the athletes and be a little bit colder so that they would be somewhat intimidated … it didn’t work. (C3 – Post Interview)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Size</td>
<td>Coaches appeared to have stronger relationships with individual athletes within a smaller team, as it allowed for more one-on-one communication.</td>
<td>The only problem with that and certainly in a sport like [sport] … you know I have a team of like, you know, almost forty athletes so I can’t be beside everybody a hundred percent of the time. (C1 – Pre Interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subcategory</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Quotes</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of the relationship</td>
<td>The quality of the coach-athlete relationship appeared to be stronger, closer, and more cooperative as time progressed.</td>
<td>I think it’s having gone through different experiences, having gone through disappointments with him, having gone through really great times with him um, I just feel like I know him more and he knows me more. (A1 – Pre Interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach/Athlete Gender</td>
<td>Coaches and athletes of the same gender may have a stronger relationship.</td>
<td>Um, I think women want to talk to women, I have absolutely, one hundred percent believe that that’s true and it should be true. And I think that’s a real problem with a lot of programs is that they only have a male figure. (C3 – Pre Interview)</td>
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Appendix J
Influential Factors in the Immediate Context

Table 4. Influential factors in the immediate context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Description of Subcategory</th>
<th>Example Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athlete Performance</td>
<td>The quality of an athlete’s performance in competition or practice.</td>
<td>The ones that win and are happy, they don’t need any time. They really don’t, they don’t. They really don’t need any time … But for the kid that fails, you need to talk to them. (C3 – Pre Interview)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competition vs. Practice</td>
<td>The context in which sport performance occurred and the parameters of the competition or practice.</td>
<td>So you gotta do some stuff that’s gonna give them that ability to deal with the emotions of the [competition]. The emotions in a workout aren’t nearly as critical as they are in a competition. (C3 – Post Interview) And the type of competition is going to be a factor. Is it a championship? Is it um, a competition that we’ve just been training through? … If you listen to the words the athletes use, uh, you can figure out very quickly how confident they are, you can figure out even the colour of the parachute that they’re building for that particular day. (C2 – Pre Interview)</td>
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<td>Group Size</td>
<td>The number of athletes at a workout or competition; coach-to-athlete ratios.</td>
<td>Yeah so I do better when I train with people I think. I find that, like a lot more motivating than like, just a couple people, as long as it’s not like too crowded but … yeah cause you can like, challenge each other … It’s like more motivating. Yeah. I don’t like, really like small groups that much. (A5 – Post Interview) So it was kind of a smaller group today … which is good and bad I guess. More good because [coach] can pay more attention to people and um, it’s not as like hectic (A6 – E4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Expectations</td>
<td>Expectations for performance prior to a practice or competition.</td>
<td>Last year I did pretty well … like it was obviously good but I feel like now I have a standard to uphold which is kind of stressful because everyone expects you to do well and especially being injured, I’m like what if the first time I race, I’m not gonna run fast and then people are gonna be like ‘why isn’t she running fast?’ so that’s stressful. (A6 – Post Interview)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Injury</td>
<td>The presence of a physical trauma that may affect performance quality and/or training program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Life</td>
<td>Situations outside of sport that may have an impact on an athlete’s performance, emotional state, or both.</td>
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Yeah, absolutely their expectations play a role in the sense that, if their expectation is that they will win and they finish fourth, they’re pretty devastated right? And then on the other hand is the goal was X and they win, they’re pretty happy … [laughs] (C3 – Post Interview)

So, I know that I have, my knee’s bothering me and I need to control like, my frustration and anger because I already have something bothering me so if the rest falls apart then my performance is not gonna be good. So knowing that you have a little pain somewhere, I don’t know, for some reason, automatically, I try to control everything else. Everything that is in my control. (A1 – Post Interview)

So sort of just coming back to reality … sometimes, especially in University, your mind might be somewhere else, like a midterm or something that you did earlier so sort of just having to bring your focus back to the practice and not really straying away from that. (A2 – Pre Interview)

And especially at this time of year where we’ve got this thing called midterm season uh……I mean I guess we’re just close to the end of it right now but you don’t know what they’re coming into from the day. (C2 – Pre Interview)