Exploring emotions as social phenomena among Canadian varsity athletes

Smith, Brett; Tamminen, Katherine A; Palmateer, Tess M; Denton, Michael; Sabiston, Catherine; Crocker, Peter; Eys, Mark

DOI:
10.1016/j.psychsport.2016.07.010

Running head: EMOTIONS AS SOCIAL PHENOMENA

Exploring emotions as social phenomena among Canadian varsity athletes

Katherine A. Tamminen[1]

Tess M. Palmateer[1]

Michael Denton[1]

Catherine Sabiston[1]

Peter Crocker[2]

Mark Eys[3]

Brett Smith[4]

[1] Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education, University of Toronto
[2] School of Kinesiology, The University of British Columbia
[3] Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University
[4] School of Sport, Exercise, and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham

Corresponding author: Katherine A. Tamminen, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto, 55 Harbord St. Toronto, ON M5S 2W6
katherine.tamminen@utoronto.ca

This study was supported by an Insight Development Grant awarded to the first author by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Keywords: group, team, affect, emotion; group-based emotions; collective emotions

Abstract

Objectives: Athletes are constantly engaging with teammates, coaches, and opponents, and rather than treating emotions as manifested in the individual as is often the case, psychological analyses need to treat emotions as social and relational. The purpose of this research was to explore athletes' accounts of emotions as social phenomena in sport using qualitative inquiry methods. Method: Fourteen Canadian varsity athletes (7 males, 7 females, age range: 18-26 years) from a variety of sports participated in two semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using inductive coding, categorization, micro-analysis, and abduction (Mayan, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Results: Athletes reported individual and shared stressors that led to individual, group-based, and collective emotions, and they also reported emotional conflict when they simultaneously experienced individual and group-based or collective emotions. Emotional expressions were perceived to impact team functioning and performance, communicated team values, served affiliative functions among teammates, and prompted communal coping to deal with stressors as a team. Factors which appeared to influence athletes' emotions included athlete identity, teammate relationships, leaders and coaches, and social norms for emotion expression. Conclusions: Our study extends previous research by examining emotions as social phenomena among athletes from a variety of sports, and by elaborating on the role of athletes' social identity with regard to their emotional experiences in sport.

Exploring emotions as social phenomena among Canadian varsity athletes

Athletes report a wide variety of emotions associated with their participation in sport, which can have positive and negative consequences for performance and team functioning (e.g., Martinent, Nicolas, Gaudreau, & Campo, 2009). Researchers have focused largely on the implications of emotions at an individual level, where emotions are thought to arise as a response to an event that an individual appraises as relevant to his or her goals and that serve to help the individual adapt to their environment and deal with problems or challenges (Lazarus, 1991; 1999). Positive or pleasant emotions are generally associated with adaptive performance outcomes, while negative or unpleasant emotions are generally associated with maladaptive performance outcomes (e.g., Cerin, 2003; Wilson, Wood, & Vine, 2009), although in some cases negative emotions have been found to be beneficial for performance (e.g., Robazza & Bortoli, 2007; Woodman, et al., 2009). However, this intrapersonal approach typically has not taken into consideration the social context within which emotions occur and operate, despite theoretical propositions that emotions influence and are influenced by others (Lazarus, 1991). Additionally, researchers investigating team chemistry in sport have argued that “the interaction among shared cognitions, socio-behaviors, and affections in sports has been conceptually noted as crucial in competitive athletic settings” (Gershgoren, et al., 2016). This is also underscored in rare research on emotional life in sport and physical activity that highlighted emotions are constituted within embodied social relationships (Phoenix & Orr, 2014). In so doing, it was argued that rather than treating emotions as manifested in the individual as is often the case, psychological analyses need to treat emotion as social and relational. Such a conceptual move is reinforced in cultural sport psychology (McGannon & Smith, 2015). Athletes are constantly interacting with teammates, coaches, and opponents, and it is therefore important to explore emotional

phenomena while considering the social aspects of the sport context.

Group-Based and Collective Emotions

Group-based and collective emotions explicitly concern the social dynamics of emotional experiences. Group-based emotions refer to emotions that are tied to an individual's identification with a particular social group/team and they are thought to occur in response to events that are deemed relevant to the group as a whole (Goldenberg, Saguy, & Halperin, 2014; Goldenberg, Halperin, van Zomeren, & Gross, 2016). Collective emotions are a form of group-based emotions that are also experienced as a function of one's identity as a team member, but they are experienced simultaneously by a team or group of individuals (Goldenberg et al. 2014). Collective emotions refer to the "synchronous convergence in affective responding across individuals towards a specific event or object" (von Scheve & Ismer, 2013, p.406), which is similar to emotional contagion (Barsade, 2002). An example of collective emotions could be a team of athletes who are happy and celebrating together after winning a competition. In contrast, group-based emotions need not occur in the presence of others: for example, an athlete may feel group-based emotions such as pride or shame as a function of his or her identity as a team member, but does not need to be physically present with teammates to experience such emotions.

Sport may be a particularly valuable context for studying emotions as social phenomena. Specifically, sporting matches are collective events with specific features that contribute to collective emotional experiences or emotional synchrony among spectators (Cottingham, 2012; Paez, Rimé, Basabe, Wlodarczyk, & Zumeta, 2015). Among athletes, Totterdell (2000) investigated mood convergence among 33 professional cricket players and found that the happy moods of individual players were positively associated with the team's average level of happiness during a championship match. Athletes' own positive mood was significantly

associated with their subjective ratings of their own performance, and over the course of the match, changes in the team's aggregate positive mood were associated with changes in the team's performance. In spite of this early evidence suggesting that team collective emotions may be important for performance outcomes, athletes' perceptions of group-based or collective emotions in sport, and the social functions of these emotions, have not been explored.

Considering emotions as social phenomena also seeks to account for the social functions of emotions within the context of social relationships. Within a socio-functional perspective of emotions, emotions are thought to help individuals adapt to their environment and solve problems, but also coordinate social interactions and relationships (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Although there has been little attention to the interpersonal or social functions of emotions in sport (Crocker, Tamminen, & Gaudreau, 2015; Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014), one exception is a study by Friesen, Devonport, Sellars, and Lane (2013), who provided initial evidence that emotions function at multiple levels within the social context of sport according to a socio-functional perspective outlined by Keltner and Haidt (1999). At the individual and dyadic/peer levels, athletes' perceptions of their own emotions and the emotions of their teammates served as indicators of when they should regulate the emotions of their teammates. At the team level, changes in the team's goals were associated with new emotions and the use of different emotion regulation strategies. Emotions such as guilt, embarrassment, and anger were evoked to motivate teammates to adhere to a cultural mentality of winning and productivity. The Friesen et al. (2013) work was limited to the narratives created from two athletes' perceptions of the impact of their own emotions on interpersonal emotion regulation. We sought to build on this research by investigating multiple athletes' perceptions of the social functions of emotions, and we sampled athletes from a variety of sports that reflect the social

contexts where athletes train and sometimes compete with other team members (Evans, Eys, & Bruner, 2012).

Emotions are also thought to mobilize group members and coordinate collective actions to deal with problems as a group (Kelly, Iannone, & McCarty, 2014) and to meet shared goals (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Thus, another objective was to explore the role of emotions in coordinating the actions of athletes to deal with stressors collectively as a team. Drawing on collectivist frameworks of coping (e.g., Lyons, Mickelson, Sullivan, & Coyne, 1998), communal coping takes place when a stressor is perceived as "our" stressor rather than "yours" or "mine". To understand how emotions may coordinate collective actions to deal with stressors as a team or group, it is important to comprehend how athletes appraise events as relevant for the team or group. Sport stressors can have repercussions for group members even if an athlete is not directly or initially affected by the event. For example, injuries can cause changes in team lineup, teammate relationships, and the team emotional climate (Surya, Benson, Balish, & Eys, 2015). Organizational stressors (Arnold & Fletcher, 2012) can also affect an entire team or group of athletes, as they include cultural and team issues as well as leadership and personnel issues. To date, researchers have tended to adopt an intrapersonal approach to examine how athletes perceive stressors in relation to their personal goals and values (e.g., Wolf, Evans, Laborde, Kleinert, 2015; Thatcher & Day, 2008) and in examining athletes' individual responses to organizational stressors (e.g., Fletcher, Hanton, & Wagstaff, 2012). In keeping with an exploration of emotions as social phenomena, we sought to explore athletes' appraisals of stressors that were relevant for themselves and for their team, and to investigate how emotions may coordinate actions to deal with stressors collectively as a group.

The purpose of this research was to explore emotions as social phenomena in sport. The research questions were: (a) What do athletes perceive as individual and shared stressors in sport? (b) How do athletes experience and express emotions individually and collectively in sport contexts? (c) What social functions do emotions serve in sport settings? (d) What factors are associated with emotions as social phenomena in sport teams and groups?

Methods

We approached this research from an interpretivist/constructionist position (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Schwandt, 1994), which seeks to understand the complex worlds of those who live them, and wherein knowledge is portrayed as a construction of relative consensus among individuals' experiences/interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). From this perspective, interpretation is central to understanding the meanings and experiences of participants, who construct and interpret their own behaviours and those of people around them (Schwandt, 1994); accordingly, our interpretations are viewed as constructions of our participants' interpretations of their own experiences. This reflects a transactional epistemology where findings were co-created between the investigators and participants, and also through ongoing discussions between the co-investigators during the analysis and writing of the results.

Participants

We purposefully sampled male and female athletes who had a range of years of experience on their team and who participated sports which varied in terms of interdependence levels, including integrated sports (basketball, soccer, volleyball, hockey) and independent and collective or cooperative sports (e.g., swimming or track and field athletes who may compete individually and also compete together to obtain team results; see Evans et al., 2012). The participants in this study included fourteen varsity athletes between the ages of 18-26; seven

athletes were in their first or second year on the team and the other seven athletes were in their third, fourth, or fifth year on the team. Thirteen athletes identified as White/Caucasian and one identified as African Canadian. Participant codes are used in the results section to indicate the athletes' gender and sport: WBB = women's basketball (*n* = 1) ; MBB = men's basketball (*n* = 1); WVB = women's volleyball (*n* = 1); MVB = men's volleyball (*n* = 2); WSc = women's soccer (*n* = 3); WTF = women's track and field (*n* = 2); MTF = men's track and field (*n* = 1), MH = men's hockey (*n* = 1); MSw = men's swimming (*n* = 2). For example, Participant 1 was a woman basketball player: "P1, WBB".[1]

Data collection

Following institutional ethics approval, information about the study was sent to coaches to distribute to their athletes. Interested athletes contacted the researchers and completed informed consent forms prior to participating. The athletes each participated in two semi-structured interviews to explore their perceptions of the social aspects of stressor appraisals, emotional experiences, and communal coping in sport.[2] Three athletes participated in pilot interviews to test the interview questions; based on their feedback, questions were added to the interview guides to ask athletes about the influence of coaches on their emotional experiences in sport. The interviews were conducted by the second and third authors, who had both competed as varsity athletes and whose shared experiences helped to develop rapport with the athletes. Interviews were conducted in a private interview room at the university campus.

The first interview began by asking athletes about their past sport experiences, their role on their team and the general team environment, and their relationships with teammates.[3] Athletes were then asked about stressors and to describe the types of situations they typically dealt with individually or collectively with teammates or other athletes (e.g., 'Tell me about a

stressful situation you have experienced recently as an athlete.' and 'Tell me about a stressful situation that your team experienced as a group.'). The first interviews ranged from 27 to 48 minutes (M = 38 min) and were transcribed verbatim by the interviewer, who reviewed the transcripts to make notes about follow up questions prior to the second interview. The second interview was scheduled within two weeks of the first interview, and it focused on emotional experiences in sport, emotion expressions within the team or among other athletes, emotions experienced as a group or team member, and experiences of collective or shared emotions (e.g., 'Can you tell me about a time when you had an emotional reaction or expressed your emotions within the team?', 'Can you describe an example when a teammate expressed his or her emotions within the team/group?' and 'Can you describe a situation when it felt like emotions were 'shared' between teammates?'). During the second interview we also discussed our developing interpretations of emotions as social phenomena and asked athletes to comment on the developing themes to deepen interpretations. For example, in the second interview athletes elaborated on the experience of group-based and collective emotions versus individual emotions. Athletes also described additional examples of situations when emotions served affiliative or distancing functions, and examples of emotional expressions communicating team values. The second interviews ranged from 29 to 93 minutes (M = 50 min). Athletes were provided with a $10 gift card for participating in the first interview, and a $15 gift card for the second interview.

Data analysis

The analysis was led by the first author who has experience in qualitative investigations of emotions, coping, and interpersonal processes in sport. The first author read each participant's transcripts to become familiar with the data and communicated regularly with the interviewers to gain a sense of the participants' experiences and the main topics that were important within each

interview. Inductive content analysis (Mayan, 2009) was used to code chunks of data with descriptive theme labels such as ‘emotions reflect team values’ or ‘sharing emotions with others’. Each participant’s transcripts (first and second interviews) were coded together as a set before moving on to the next athlete’s transcripts. After coding, similar data and codes were grouped together (i.e., categorization; Mayan, 2009) and constant comparison (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was used to determine consistency within themes. In some cases this resulted in the creation of new themes to represent distinct ideas or collapsing similar themes together. For example, the theme ‘performance stressors’ was separated into ‘individual performance’ and ‘team performance’ to reflect stressors that were relevant to athletes’ own goals versus stressors that were relevant for them as a function of their team membership. Micro-analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) of phrases and words was also used to advance our interpretations of participants’ meanings and to further develop connections between themes. Phrases such as ‘a duty to feel proud’ and ‘manufacturing an emotional appearance’ were analyzed and interpreted in relation to the social functions of emotions, as they highlighted the importance of social norms and leaders’ attempts to influence the emotions of athletes.

Theoretical and empirical literature on individual, collective, and group-based emotions informed the topic of investigation and in developing the main interview questions, and it was also used in the latter stages of data analysis to examine congruence between existing theory and concepts identified in our analysis (Sandelowski, 1993). For example, our inductive analysis led to the identification of data related to emotional conflict, which led us to draw on theory to consider the importance of athletes’ multiple goals and goal hierarchies (Lazarus, 1999) for their experiences of individual and collective emotions. An abductive process was then used to identify relationships between the categories of data (e.g., to explore possible relationships

between group-based and collective emotions, social identity, and communal coping processes). Abduction refers to a process of identifying possibilities in the data, seeking confirmation or disconfirmation of the interpretations in the data set, and considering alternative possibilities until an overall interpretation of the data is reached (Mayan, 2009).

Regular meetings were held with co-investigators throughout the analysis and writing process to present ongoing interpretations of the data and to confer with the interviewers regarding their interpretations of the data, based on their experience with the participants during the interview process and drawing on their own experiences as varsity athletes (see Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.80). Also acting as critical friends (Sparkes & Smith, 2014), other co-investigators provided critical questions and suggestions on the interpretations of results to clarify or elaborate on themes (e.g., ongoing peer review, Mayan, 2009), and later in the analytic process they also provided feedback regarding the theoretical implications of the results.

Results

The consideration of emotions as social phenomena revolved around three key themes corresponding to the first three research questions: a) athletes' appraisals of stressors as relevant for themselves and/or their team, b) the experience and expression of emotions, and c) the social functions of emotions. To address the fourth research question, we also indicate several factors which were perceived to influence the stressors, emotions, and functions of emotions in sport (e.g., athlete identity, teammate relationships, leaders and coaches, and social norms for emotion expression).

Individual vs. Shared Stressors or Experiences

Since emotions are thought to arise as a function of appraised stressors (Lazarus, 1999), any consideration of emotions as social phenomena necessarily implicates the consideration of

the social nature of stressor appraisals. We noted that athletes did describe a number of stressors that they considered individual in nature, including personal performance expectations or poor performance, balancing academics and training load, injuries, playing time, and broader life stressors such as being away from home, relationship, and family problems (see Table 1 for examples of individual and communal stressors). Conversely, athletes also perceived shared stressors as those which impacted everyone on the team: "Team problems are when more than one person is involved and it is affecting more than one person. That's a team thing" (P7, MTF). Shared stressors included: team performance expectations, poor team performance, organizational stressors (e.g., travel, food, and hotel arrangements), interpersonal conflict with teammates or coaches, coaching changes, and changes in the team lineup (e.g., due to a teammate's injury; see Table 1).

All the athletes stated that team performance expectations and team failures would be considered examples of shared experiences that had consequences for all members of the team: "winning and losing … that's probably the ultimate stressor for the team especially at our competitive level, because we are results based" (P5, MVB). Individual sport athletes also identified performance as a stressor with the potential to affect the entire team, but they made a clearer distinction between individual and team performance expectations:

> Interviewer (I): What makes a stressor the group's problem versus [your] own problem?
>
> P9: There really has to be some significant stressor that actually affects the majority of the team for it to become a team problem … As much as we are a team sport with those team points, we are primarily an individual sport … if I run well and someone else doesn't run well that doesn't really affect each other for that day, until nationals does that become a problem. (P9, WTF)

Athletes frequently used the example of an injured teammate as a stressor that could be considered both an individual stressor as well as a shared stressor in terms of the impact it could

have for the team as a whole. Participant 5 (MVB) said "depending on which teammate it is it will have a bigger impact on the team," while Participant 3 (WSc) said "When someone gets hurt it's really awful for the player but sometimes for the team too if it's a key player." One athlete described a recent situation where a teammate's personal stressors that originated outside the sport context had a negative impact on the entire team:

> One of the guys was undergoing a very stressful time with his girlfriend troubles and kind of psychological issues and they both compounded to hit him at once … for about three weeks he was visibly stressed, visibly negative … he was a terrible person to be around. He wouldn't try in the drills, people began avoiding him because he was so down and that was a very visible display of a stressor that wasn't handled well. (P14, MH)

Participant 3 (WSc) said:

> When it becomes the team's problem is when you are reflecting these encounters or situations into your play or in the way you talk to or approach your teammates. So I believe that if you can deal with your own situations and not have it impact the team in any way that is totally fine. But if you are going to deal with these situations and have negative impacts on the team, then it is the team's problem and we need to do something to help you and fix it.

Emotional Experience and Expression

Individual emotions. Athletes described a number of emotions in response to individual stressors or experiences in sport, including happiness, sadness, anger, anxiety, pride, shame, and relief. Athletes typically described positive emotions in response to individual performance success: "I actually ended up running the fastest leg of the relay. It was just a combination of shock but excitement and happiness" (P10, WTF). Conversely, athletes reported negative emotions in response to individual stressors such as injuries or performance failures: "I took one penalty shot and it got saved, no it hit the post … I was just… kind of like embarrassed I guess, and ashamed or whatever that I didn't score" (P4, WSc).

Group-based emotions. Athletes described group-based emotions as a function of their *social identity as athletes or team members* and in response to events or shared stressors that

affected the team as a whole. A basketball player said that he experienced positive group-based emotions "simply just making the playoffs this year … I felt that excitement and pride on behalf of the entire team" (P13, MBB). Another athlete said:

> When somebody exceeds the average or sets a new personal best, or has no errors in the set that makes me very happy for them even in a team if it's someone who you are competing with for a spot. Let's say you're competing with someone for a spot and they have a fantastic game, that's still a good feeling because the team is succeeding. (P6, MVB)

Participant 7 (MTF) also described feeling group-based emotions as a team member even though he could not be physically present at a championship match where his teammates were competing: "Even though I didn't directly participate in [the competition], I was super happy to hear and I was following along and when they won I was super proud of them."

Athletes further described group-based emotions that were tied to their *identity* as an athlete and as a group or team member. Participant 11 (MSw) said that as a university athlete, "It's an incredible feeling. It is a feeling of pride," while Participant 9 (WTF) said "I would say I am in general really proud of our team and excited about it and that's how I kind of feel about being on it." Athletes also reported experiencing strong group-based emotions at important team competitions; one soccer player described her feelings as a varsity athlete competing in a national championship game: "I just felt like so happy and excited to be a part of the [team] because we had everyone cheering us on and rooting for us. So as a group I think that's when I felt I guess pride and I was satisfied being here and everything" (P4, WSc). Group-based emotions were generally positive, although some participants reported negative emotions associated with their identity as varsity athletes:

> I: What kind of emotions come to your mind when you think about yourself as a [varsity athlete]?
>
> P: 50% pride, 50% failure, because I am here… I am not in the NCAA … A bit of shame in that and in myself, but also pride because being here is so much harder than any other school. I am proud of being a [varsity athlete] in that way.

Collective emotions. Collective emotions are a form of group-based emotions that are experienced simultaneously by a team or group of individuals (Goldenberg et al., 2014). Athletes easily described experiences of positive collective emotions following successes: “After any win that emotion is pretty uniform throughout the room. Guys are all happy, dancing around, celebrating and stuff. It is a very memorable thing to be a part of” (P14, MH). Athletes also easily described the experience of negative collective emotions following losses:

> At the end of the game we literally all just went to the bench and just sat and cried and our coach just talked to us then he started crying. We all walked to the change room and no one got changed right away, we all just sat there and cried. (P4, WSc)

Another athlete said that collective emotions following this loss carried over to the next practice: “Everyone was down and depressed … we lost on the Sunday, so the Monday we were all together on the field just kind of being depressed together” (P8, WSc). Overall, athletes experienced positive and negative group-based and collective emotions as a function of their identity as athletes and as members of their teams, as well as in response to events that held consequences for the group as a whole (i.e., shared stressors).

Athletes were asked to describe ‘what it feels like’ to experience emotions collectively within a team. Some athletes referred to the ‘vibe’ or the ‘climate’ when team members were experiencing the same emotions together: “I can’t really describe it. You can definitely tell when it’s a collective emotion. I don’t know. I can’t really put my finger on it” (P11, MSw). Another athlete said, “it is more you can kind of feel it, it’s not really vocal. Like if you are doing a set and you are racing your buddy and you’re training really hard and you’re going incredibly fast you kind of look at each other and know” (P11, MSw). Athletes also said that experiencing collective emotions amplified their feelings: “Definitely way stronger, like I said when you see other people crying it makes you more depressed and cry more, but when you win a big game

and you have your whole team there to help out and everyone took part in it, then that is just a greater feeling, that everyone is feeling the same way" (P8, WSc). Similarly a track athlete said, "you get a bigger emotional boost of happiness because it is something you share with people and it's like you have that prosocial emotion of sharing in others' joy" (P7, MTF).

Emotional conflict: Experiencing individual and group-based or collective emotions. Several athletes reported instances where they experienced individual and group-based emotions simultaneously. A track athlete who was injured during a competition said:

> Watching the relay happen and not being in it was just like, really sad. I just, I was jealous in a way, but not like in a resentment kind of way. Like I was there watching and cheering the team on and really wanting them to do well but it was definitely just sadness that I couldn't be a part of it … on the one hand you want your teammates to run as fast as they can and improve because that's better for the team and ultimately better for you because training with them will make you a better athlete. But at the same time you don't want them to run faster than you because then you might not make it on the relay or make it in the top 15 to be able to go to nationals. So that's a huge conflicting situation to deal with and it's a mixture of like, feeling like there's a duty to feel proud of them and happy for them but you can't help feeling like resentful or bitter. (P10, WTF)

Our interpretation of such data was that the athlete's multiple goals in track and field (e.g., team goal to win the competition vs. individual goal to make the top 15 and go to nationals) contributed to her experiencing positive group-based emotions and negative individual emotions simultaneously. Another swimmer described an event where he did not perform well but his team won the event:

> Last year our team won by like 100 points. So I mean team-wise great, that was good [but] that was one of the worst races of my life … I kind of just tried to brush off my individual feelings but it's not that easy to do. I was pretty bummed out. I tried to be like 'yay, we won' but I probably would have been happier had I swam fast. (P12, MSw)

We interpreted that some co-acting/individual sport athletes felt an obligation to 'perform' collective emotions that were expected of them as team members. In the quote above, Participant 10 (WTF) described 'a duty to feel proud' for the team, and Participant 12 (MSw) described how

he attempted to ‘brush off his individual feelings’ and express happiness when the team won. Team sport athletes also described these experiences, such as a soccer player commenting:

> Most of the time everyone’s just like, follows the trend like ‘oh, wow, that was a great game’ and everyone displays the emotion that they thought it was a great game, but some people might keep it inside like ‘oh man, I had an awful game’ but you are kind of forced to show an outward emotion I would say. (P3, WSc)

We inferred that experiencing individual and group-based or collective emotions simultaneously was related to athletes having multiple goals within particular situations, as well as perceptions that they ought to display particular emotions consistent with the collective emotions of the team, but which may have been in conflict with their individual emotions.

Social Functions of Emotions

Within our analyses, we identified four themes concerning the social functions of emotions for (a) team functioning and performance, (b) communicating team values and commitment, (c) affiliative and distancing functions, and (d) promoting and coordinating communal coping.

Emotions impact team functioning and performance. When asked about the impact of emotions within teams and groups, athletes generally perceived positive emotions being adaptive for the team: “When it’s positive, it rubs off, like it’s good energy” (P1, WBB). When discussing negative emotions, Participant 2 (WVB) said: “if someone comes in with a negative attitude and a few other people have that same negative attitude it does kind of dampen the spirit … it’s going to ruin the team dynamic.” However, some athletes described examples where negative emotions could positively impact other members of the team. Athletes reported that they sometimes expressed negative emotions during games to prompt teammates to work harder or to motivate others to improve their performance: “When we are yelling at each other it is not because we are mad, we are just trying to get the best out of that person like, ‘I know you can do better’ kind of

thing" (P8, WSc). Another athlete described a teammate yelling and said: "I think it is a helpful display of emotion because a lot of the times that can get guys into the game more" (P14, MH). Participant 4 (WSc) shared an example where she expressed negative emotions during a game:

> Three weeks ago during one of our games we were losing I think 2-0 and I was like… I just felt like no one was really trying so I was like … I just yelled out of frustration like, 'come on guys, let's pick this up!' kind of thing. And everyone could tell I was frustrated.
>
> I: And how do you think your teammates perceived that? Did it impact them at all?
>
> P4: I guess not too much because it was an off-season type of game so they were just like, 'ok yeah I get it' but like… people around me would try to stick their tackles more and get into position for people to have options and stuff.

Emotions communicate team values and commitment. We interpreted that athletes' emotional expressions communicated information to others about their values, their identity as team members, and the perceived importance of the game/outcome. A soccer player said, "If you were the only one in the change room happy or crying about a loss or something, I myself would feel frustrated because it would make me feel like I was the only one who really cared and wanted it" (P4, WSc). Another athlete also said:

> I feel after games are a true reflection of who you are as a person and how much you care about the team and the sport, because if you are laughing right after the game or having fun after a loss, it shows that you didn't really care what the team did or how the team performed. Whereas if you're really feeling that sense of down, sadness after a loss then you are truly showing that you are a team player and you have bought into the process of the team and what the team believes. (P5, MVB)

Connecting this theme to the previous one, we interpreted that athletes perceived expressions of negative emotions as positive for the team's functioning and performance when those emotions communicated shared team values and commitment.

Affiliative and distancing functions of emotions. Individual and group-based or collective emotions appeared to serve affiliative functions among athletes. Athletes said that when they felt positive emotions, they wanted to share their experiences with others: "every

good race I had I wanted to go upstairs and see [my parents and friends] … even if I have a good race now I will want to call them and tell them" (P9, WTF). Conversely, athletes reported that experiencing emotions individually was perceived as isolating: "I think it's when you experience it individually you just feel disconnected from everyone" (P4, WSc). Participant 1 (WBB) said:

> I think that sometimes when you feel emotions individually you are thinking 'no one understands what I am going through' kind of thing. So when you are on a team it is kind of like, well when you are sharing the same emotion with people it is nice to have people that can relate … whether it is positive or negative it is just better to share it with someone.

Participant 10 (WTF) said "I think it's easier to experience negative emotions as a group than as an individual because you're kind of all in it together even though it sucks." Collective emotions also served affiliative functions among athletes by contributing to the social bond between teammates. A volleyball player described the team's collective emotions after the final game of the season:

> I: Can you think of any other examples when emotions were shared between teammates?
>
> P5: When the fifth years were graduating and you all came into the room … I think we all felt the same emotion where we were happy and we all felt together and as one … At that moment we all felt the same emotion, we all connected and felt that sense of joy and pride, but also a sense of sadness to see them go. (P5, MVB)

Participant 14 (MH) said that facing shared stressors with teammates led to collectively experiencing emotions as a team, which strengthened social connections among his teammates. He described one situation as a 'battle' where teammates:

> … feel the exact same emotion ... That really, really brings guys together…We've had some moments like that where it doesn't matter if you are pissed off at the guy on your team or what, if he is in a situation everyone bands together and collectively addresses it, brings everyone together.

In some cases though, athletes said that teammates' negative emotions might be challenging to deal with and could negatively impact the team or cause athletes to leave each other alone:

> If someone is acting angry, then um, it's really hard to try to make them feel better or talk to them because you don't know if they are generally angry or angry at you. Like it's just a harder emotion to read … In terms of fear, that's probably one of the most contagious ones. So if someone if expressing their anxiety about a race or a hard workout, it spreads. (P10, WTF)

In another example, P9 (WTF) noted that one teammate's negative emotional expressions typically indicated to others that she preferred to be left alone: "this year there was a girl who is usually is one of those people who, when she has a bad day, she is like completely mad and angry and cuts herself off for the rest of the day." Thus, in many cases, emotions appeared to serve affiliative functions and communicate the need for support among teammates. However, in other cases emotional expressions communicated athletes' preferences for distancing and isolation from teammates.

Emotions promote communal coping. The affiliative functions of collective and group-based emotions also appeared to promote a communal orientation among team members and social relationships among teammates, thereby improving athletes' perceptions that they could deal with shared stressors as a team. A volleyball player (P5, MVB) said:

> With a team, emotions are universal for the most part and are easier to deal with because other people are feeling similar to you. You can kind of relate to them and they can relate to you, so emotions in that case are easier to overcome and talk about or deal with.

We interpreted that there was a reciprocal association between the experience of collective and group-based emotions with communal coping, as the athletes perceived that coping with shared stressors contribute to collective emotional experiences and subsequently stronger social ties with teammates. "Handling collective stressors as a collective is the best way to do it because it brings the guys so much closer together. If you can get through that adversity you begin to trust even more the guy beside you" (P14, MH).

Factors Influencing Emotions as Social Phenomena

In addition to experiencing group-based or collective emotions as a function of their *social identity* as described previously, athletes also said that they experienced stronger group-based emotions as a result of their *relationships with teammates*: "this year I felt like we were just more attached emotionally," which led to stronger negative emotions after a failure: "I think the most negative emotion was when we lost to [rival team] … I feel like this year because I was so much, like I bonded so much more with the team, that I was just so upset" (P4, WSc). To further illustrate this point, we identified a case in our analysis where a team did not seem to engage in any communal coping after a major loss, which had negative consequences for the social relationships within the team. One athlete said, "every time we lose a game there is always a huge after [sic] team talk," however at the end of the season, the team did not engage in any communal coping to deal with the season-ending loss:

> I don't think we handled it as well … after we lost we had about three weeks off of everything, lifts, practices, anything. Like three weeks go by and you don't even know how they are doing or if they are ok, stuff like that … I just think that I almost feel like it was bad that we had time off, I feel like we should have had practice maybe twice a week just to keep the team together and help each other out. Our team just sort of separated after the loss… which I think made it harder on everyone.

This example illustrated the importance of communal coping within teams, since a lack of communal coping to deal with a major loss led to negative consequences for team members.

Athletes also reported that *leaders and coaches* also influenced the expression and experience of emotions within groups and teams. Participant 1 (WBB) said that "the older players, the starters … I think their emotions are probably the most important as far as influencing the team's emotion." Participant 14 (MH) discussed how dominant team members influenced the team's collective emotions:

> In my first year I was here we had a great captain and he kept things very positive. We were a really strong team, but when he left some more negative minded people became the dominant voices in the room and that had a huge influence on the emotions. That

> continued for two years. Basically, until those personalities left, the dominant atmosphere in the room was negativity.

We also identified some instances where athletes described *social norms for emotional expressions* within the team, which were at times explicitly shaped by team leaders and coaches. Participant 14 said: "there is really no room for negativity in our room now. If someone is negative they will get called out as an individuals and that kind of keeps the collective more positive." Participant 1 said that "the starters … I think their emotions are probably the most important as far as influencing the team's emotion." Similarly, Participant 5 said that "leaders and big voices influence the team emotions more than, say, someone who is very reserved." Participant 3 also commented on the coach's influence on her emotions after a game where she performed well but the team lost:

> I scored a goal and got an assist so I was really happy with myself. But he was like 'that was terrible' so I wasn't really sure how to react because I felt happy but … if everyone is crying and you are super happy… I don't know. So I guess its conforming …If he told us 'wow that was terrible' everyone would hang their heads in shame …sometimes it was just kind of like follow what the coach does and not have opinions for yourself, I don't know. It's always pretty much tainted by the coach I would say.

Another athlete also shared an example where the coach attempted to explicitly influence the emotions that were expressed within the team after a loss: "… our coach pretty much put the word that there would be no laughing or smiling on the bus ride back … so collectively it was manufactured that we would have the exact same external appearance" (P6). In this situation, the athlete said that the team was "resenting the coach's decision to eliminate happiness from the team for that bus ride … I am pretty sure the entire team had the same mental state for that bus ride back." Although the coach tried to 'manufacture' a collective emotional 'appearance' among the athletes, the coach's actions appeared to have led to a collective emotion of resentment

among the members of the team towards the coach rather than collective emotions of sadness or anger over the team's performance.

Based on the results of this study and drawing on theoretical work concerning group-based and collective emotions (Golderberg et al., 2014) and the social functions of emotions (REF), we present an overview of the themes in Figure 1 as an empirical framework on the social functions of emotion in sport. Individual and shared stressors/experiences are proposed to lead to individual or group-based and collective emotions, respectively, although these may be experienced simultaneously and contribute to experiences of emotional conflict among athletes. Emotional experiences and expressions served multiple social functions within teams (impacted team functioning and performance, affiliative and distancing functions, communicated team values and commitment, and promoted communal coping). The social functions of emotions in turn also contributed to athletes' subsequent emotional experiences. For example, an athlete's expression of anger due to her team's poor performance could function to impact team functioning and communicate team values regarding effort and the value of the game, which could in turn elicit group-based shame or anger among other athletes on the team. Factors such as athletes' social identity, teammate relationships, leaders or coaches, and social norms for emotion expression are thought to influence the experience and expression of emotions as well as the social functions of emotions within teams.

Discussion

Contribution of Research Findings

This study provides an initial exploration of emotions as social phenomena in sport, and we found variation in both the forms and functions of athletes' emotional experiences. Athletes distinguished between individual and shared stressors/experiences, and they described individual

emotions relevant to their own goals, as well as group-based and collective emotions as a function of their social identity as team members. Emotions influenced team functioning and performance, communicated team values and commitment, served affiliative functions among teammates, and contributed to processes of communal coping. Overall, the results of this study and interrelationships between themes identified in Figure 1 provide a platform for investigating the social and interpersonal aspects of emotions in sport. Throughout the discussion, we consider the implications of individual and shared stressors and experiences that contribute to individual or group-based and collective emotions, the social functions of emotional experience and expression within groups and teams, and the factors that appeared to influence emotions as social phenomena.

Athletes reported that in general, individual stressors were best dealt with individually, although some stressors had the potential to become shared stressors that could impact the entire team. To date there is little research examining processes by which individual stressors become shared stressors or how ineffective coping of one athlete may impact other athletes on the team. However, researchers have recently investigated the impact of athletes' injuries on team processes, including changes to team strategy and personnel, role adjustments, interpersonal tensions, and changes in the team emotional climate (Surya, et al., 2015). The current findings support the conceptualization of injury as a potential 'shared stressor' with wide-ranging implications for teams and groups. The distinction between individual and shared stressors, and the findings concerning athletes' emotional conflict also suggest that athletes have multiple goals that are relevant for their stressor appraisals and emotional experiences within a given situation. To date, researchers examining stressor appraisals, emotions, and coping have focused primarily on competitive stressors from an intrapersonal perspective (e.g., Wolf, et al., 2015; Thatcher &

Day, 2008), although there has been recent research examining athletes' responses to organizational and interpersonal stressors, which could conceivably be considered shared stressors for teams and groups (Fletcher, et al., 2012; Hoar, Crocker, Holt, & Tamminen, 2010). Further work that examines stressor appraisals as a function of athletes' identity as team members would be beneficial, particularly in identifying if and how athletes' coping differs in response to these stressors. Methodologically this would mean asking athletes about multiple goals or values that are relevant for their stressor appraisals, including individual and team goals. It would also be important to examine goal conflict and goal hierarchies, as well as the communal orientation of athletes toward their team in predicting stressors, emotions, and coping in teams and groups (Berrios, Totterdell, & Kellett, 2015; Lazarus, 1999). Furthermore, since team cohesion concerns the satisfaction of members' affective needs (e.g., Pink, Lane, Jones, & Hall, 2000), it would be another important concept to consider in future research examining emotions from an interpersonal perspective. From an applied perspective, one implication of the findings regarding individual and shared stressors is the impact that athletes' stressors can have on the rest of their team. Stressors that might be considered 'individual' problems can affect athletes' performance and interactions with teammates. However, rather than try to minimize or avoid stressors that could potentially affect others on the team, sport psychology practitioners, coaches, and athletes may seek to find opportunities to help teammates dealing with stressors (e.g., engaging in forms of shared or communal coping).

Athletes perceived that emotional expressions had an impact on team performance, and in many cases emotions served affiliative functions and promoted communal coping among team members to deal with stressors. There is evidence that anger can be facilitative for athletes' own performance (Robazza & Bortoli, 2007; Woodman, et al., 2009), and our findings support the

idea that in some cases expressions of negative emotions such as anger and sadness may be important for the team's performance (Friesen et al., 2013; Hanin, 2010). Furthermore, athletes perceived that emotions were important for communicating team values, commitment, and expressing the importance of competitive outcomes, which is consistent with the idea that emotions help to define group boundaries and to identify group members as 'one of us' (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Thus, expressions of positive and negative emotions may promote behaviours among teammates that are consistent with team norms and that promote positive performance or demonstrations of effort and acceptance of team goals and values. A practical implication of these findings may include encouraging leaders and coaches to consider the impact of their emotional expressions on other team members and to express emotions that are consistent with the team's desired goals and values.

Conversely, some athletes reported feeling forced to express particular emotions in a team or group setting, which supports previous research suggesting that social norms for emotional expressions influence the degree to which athletes consider certain emotional displays to be appropriate (Wong, Steinfeldt, LaFollette, & Tsao, 2011). This is an important finding since little research to date has examined the expression and suppression of emotion and perceptions of conformity and group membership in sport (see Goldenberg et al., 2016 for a discussion of the regulation of group-based emotions). Is it possible that athletes who do not express the appropriate emotions in certain situations (e.g., not expressing sadness after a loss) may be perceived as 'not one of us', thereby undermining group cohesion and performance. In addition to examining intrapersonal performance outcomes of emotion regulation, it would be valuable to also examine the social consequences of emotional suppression and forced emotional expression among athletes. Additionally, leaders' and coaches' emotional expressions appeared

to be important for influencing emotional phenomena in teams, which supports recent experimental research that demonstrated leaders' expressions of confidence in their team's ability to succeed were associated with increases in athletes' team identification and with team performance (Fransen et al., 2015). Taken together, the implication of these findings is that through their emotional expressions, team leaders may have the capability to strengthen (or weaken) team members' social identity and connection to the team, potentially contributing to emotional experiences that promote better (or worse) performance and communal coping.

Dealing with negative emotions as a team was often viewed positively and athletes perceived they contributed to strengthened social bonds between teammates, which is consistent with theory and research that individuals are motivated to share emotions with others (Rimé, 2009). Discussing negative group events can lead to negative group-based emotions but also increased group-based identity (Yzerbyt, Kuppens, & Mathieu, 2015), and individuals with a strong need to belong express preferences for group-based sadness and also expect that group-based sadness would be socially beneficial for their connections with others (Porat, Halperin, Mannheim, & Tamir, 2015). Within sport, researchers examining mutual-disclosure team sharing interventions have provided support for improved teammate relationships and communication (Holt & Dunn, 2006; Windsor, Barker, & McCarthy, 2011), and it is possible that one mechanism by which these positive outcomes are achieved is through increases in social identity (Evans, Slater, Turner, & Barker, 2013). One applied implication from these findings is that athletes may actually benefit from opportunities to cope with failure and negative emotions collectively as a team, since the absence of such opportunities may lead to weakened relationships with teammates.

The fact that individual and team sport athletes both reported group-based and collective emotions was not surprising, since sports that require less task interdependence (i.e., individual sports) are embedded in social contexts where athletes train and sometimes compete together (i.e., they are interdependent in other ways; Evans et al., 2012). However, this study is among the first to examine group-based and collective emotions in a sport context and to examine emotions as social phenomena among team and individual sport athletes. Importantly, this study draws attention to athletes' social identity as team members or as varsity athletes as an important aspect of their emotional experiences in sport.

Methodological Reflections and Future Research

The methodological coherence and rigor (Mayan, 2009) of our study is reflected through the alignment of our research question with our interpretive position, the use of purposeful sampling and multiple interviews with participants, and by explicitly acknowledging our own experiences in the research process (e.g., considering the roles of the interviewers as former varsity athletes) and by engaging in ongoing peer debriefing to discuss interpretations of the data. Some criteria that may be used for judging such interpretations within an interpretivist/constructionist perspective include thoroughness, coherence, comprehensiveness, and a determination of whether the interpretations put forth are useful, original, and significant (Schwandt, 1994).

One limitation of this study was that we focused primarily on athletes' descriptions of stressors that led to individual and group-based or collective emotions; however, there were other events such as teammate successes that athletes identified as experiences which contributed to group-based emotions such as pride or happiness. Events or experiences that lead to positively toned emotions are those which have meaning for the individual, but they might not be

considered as stressors that are appraised as “taxing or exceeding one’s resources” (Lazarus, 1999, p.141). Thus, appraisals of events which might not be considered as ‘stressors’ could still evoke positively-toned emotions, and furthermore the term ‘stressor’ is not often used in contemporary emotion theory (see Brosch, 2013; Feldman Barrett, 2014; Fredrickson, 2001). The focus on stressors may be too narrow to adequately capture the range of events and experiences that are relevant for the study of emotions as social phenomena, particularly when studying positively toned emotions. Moving forward, researchers may wish to avoid using the term ‘stressor’ when considering the appraisal of a broader range of events that may have significance for athletes.

There are some additional constraints and limitations to this study that provide avenues for future research. The examination emotional expressions within teams may have led athletes to provide responses that were socially desirable, which is a limitation of studies investigating social phenomena. It may be advantageous to conduct longitudinal research and use participant observations to explore the social functions of emotions within teams over the course of a season. Observational methods may also enable researchers to identify additional examples of the social functions of emotions that athletes might not discuss in interviews. Additionally, the use of focus group interviews would be valuable to stimulate discussion among athletes regarding the social functions of emotions in sport. We did not interview coaches in the present study and further research is required to examine the role of coaches in establishing social norms for emotional expressions in teams, as well as their contribution to collective and group-based emotions. Based on our findings we have proposed associations between group-based and collective emotional experiences, connection among teammates, and communal coping

processes, however the relationships between these concepts remain tentative and should be explored in additional studies.

[1] In some cases there is no participant number associated with quotes in the results section in order to protect the anonymity of the athletes who provided the information.

[2] One participant was not able to schedule a time for his second interview since he was attending an international training camp. To accommodate his schedule, the topics from both interviews were conducted in the same session.

[3]The interview guides are available from the first author upon request.

References

Arnold, R., & Fletcher, D. (2012). A research synthesis and taxonomic classification of the organizational stressors encountered by sport performers. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 34,* 397-429.

Barsade, S. G. (2002). The ripple effect: Emotional contagion and its influence on group behavior. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 47,* 644-675.

Berrios, R., Totterdell, P., & Kellett, S. (2015). Investigating goal conflict as a source of mixed emotions. *Cognition and Emotion, 29,* 755-63. doi: 10.1080/02699931.2014.939948

Brosch, T. (2013). Comment: On the role of appraisal processes in the construction of emotion. *Emotion Review, 5,* 369-373. doi: 10.1177/1754073913489752

Cerin, E. (2003). Anxiety versus fundamental emotions as predictors of perceived functionality of pre-competitive emotional states, threat, and challenge in individual sports. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 15,* 223-238. doi: 10.1080/10413200305389

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cottingham, M. D. (2012). Interaction ritual theory and sports fans: Emotion, symbols, and solidarity. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 29,* 168-185.

Crocker, P.R.E., Tamminen, K. A., & Gaudreau, P. (2015). Coping in sport. In S. Hanton & S. Mellalieu (Eds.), *Contemporary advances in sport psychology: A review* (pp.28-67). New York: Routledge.

Evans, M. B., Eys, M. A., & Bruner, M. W. (2012). Seeing the “we” in “me” sports: The need to consider individual sport team environments. *Canadian Psychology, 4,* 301-308. doi: 10.1037/a0030202

778 Evans, A. L., Slater, M. J., Turner, M. J., & Barker, J. B. (2013). Using personal-disclosure
779 mutual-sharing to enhance group functioning in a professional soccer academy. *The Sport*
780 *Psychologist, 27,* 233-243.
781 Feldman Barrett, L. (2014). The conceptual act theory: A précis. *Emotion Review, 6,* 292-297.
782 doi: 10.1177/1754073914534479
783 Fischer, A. H., & Manstead, A. S. R. (2008). Social functions of emotion. In M. Lewis, J.
784 Haviland, & L. Feldman Barrett (Eds.), *Handbook of emotion* (3rd ed.). New York:
785 Guilford.
786 Fletcher, D., Hanton, S., & Wagstaff, C. R. D (2012). Performers' responses to stressors
787 encountered in sport organisations, *Journal of Sports Sciences, 30,* 349-358. doi:
788 10.1080/02640414.2011.633545
789 Fransen, K., Haslam, S. A., Steffens, N. K., Vanbeselarer, N., De Cuyper, B., & Boen, F. (2015).
790 Believing in “us”: Exploring leaders’ capacity to enhance team confidence and
791 performance by building a sense of shared social identity. *Journal of Experimental*
792 *Psychology: Applied, 21,* 89-100.
793 Fredrickson, B. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology. *American*
794 *Psychologist, 56,* 218-226.
795 Friesen, A. P., Devonport, T. J., Sellars, C. N., & Lane, A. M. (2013). A narrative account of
796 decision-making and interpersonal emotion regulation using a social-functioning
797 approach to emotions. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 11,* 203-
798 214. doi: 10.1080/1612197X.2013.773664
799 Gershgoren, L., Basevitch, I., Filho, E., Gershgoren, A., Brill, Y. S., Schinke, R. J., &
800 Tenenbaum, G. (2016). Expertise in soccer teams: A thematic inquiry into the role of

Shared Mental Models within team chemistry. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 24*, 128-139. doi: 10.1016/j.psychsport.2015.12.002

Goldenberg, A., Halperin, E., van Zomeren, M., & Gross, J. (2016). The process model of group-based emotion: Integrating intergroup emotion and emotion regulation perspectives. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 20,* 118-141. doi: 10.1177/1088868315581263

Goldenberg, A., Saguy, T & Halperin, E. (2014). How group-based emotions are shaped by collective emotions: Evidence for emotional transfer and emotional burden. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 107*, 581-596. doi: 10.1037/a0037462

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 191-216). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hanin, Y. (2010). Coping with anxiety in sport. In A. R. Nicholls (Ed.), *Coping in sport* (pp. 159-176). New York: Nova.

Hoar, S. D., Crocker, P. E., Holt, N. L., & Tamminen, K. A. (2010). Gender differences in adolescent athletes' coping with interpersonal stressors in sport: More similarities than differences. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 22,* 134-149.

Holt, N.L., & Dunn, J.G.H. (2006). Guidelines for delivering personal-disclosure mutual-sharing team building interventions. *The Sport Psychologist, 20,* 348–367.

Kelly, J. R., Iannone, N. E., & McCarty, M. K. (2014). The function of shared affect in groups. In C. von Scheve & M. Salmela (Eds.), *Collective emotions* (pp.175-188). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Keltner, D. & Haidt, J. (1999). Social functions of emotions at four levels of analysis. *Cognition and Emotion, 13,* 505-521.

Lazarus, R. S. (1991). Progress on a cognitive–motivational–relational theory of emotion. *American Psychologist, 46,* 819-834. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.46.8.819

Lazarus, R. S. (1999). *Stress and emotion: A new synthesis*. New York: Springer.

Lyons, R. F., Mickelson, K. D., Sullivan, M. J. L., & Coyne, J. C. (1998). Coping as a communal process. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 15,* 579-605.

Martinent, G., Nicolas, M., Gaudreau, P., & Campo, M. (2013). A cluster analysis of affective states before and during competition. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 35,* 600-611.

Mayan, M. J. (2009). *Essentials of qualitative inquiry*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

McGannon, K.R., & Smith, B. (2015). Centralizing culture in cultural sport psychology research: The potential of narrative inquiry and discursive psychology. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise,* 17, 79-87.

Paez, D., Rimé, B., Basabe, N., Wlodarczyk, A., & Zumeta, L. (2015). Psychosocial effects of perceived emotional synchrony in collective gatherings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 108,* 711-729. doi: 10.1037/pspi0000014

Phoenix, C., & Orr, N. (2014). Pleasure: A forgotten dimension of ageing and physical activity. Social Science and Medicine, 115, 94–102.

Pink, M. J., Lane, A. M., Jones, G. J. W., & Hall, M. P. (2000). Perceptions of group cohesion and mood in sport teams. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice, 4,* 244-253. doi: 10.1037/1089-2699.4.3.244

Porat, R., Halperin, E., Mannheim, I., & Tamir, M. (2015). Together we cry: Social motives and preferences for group-based sadness. *Cognition and Emotion.* Advance online publication. doi: 10.1080/02699931.2015.1039495

Rimé, B. (2009). Emotion elicits the social sharing of emotion: Theory and empirical review. *Emotion Review, 1,* 60-85. doi: 10.1177/1754073908097189

Robazza, C., & Bortoli, L. (2007). Perceived impact of anger and anxiety on sporting performance in rugby players. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 8,* 875-896. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2006.07.005

Sandelowski, M. (1993). Theory unmasked: The uses and guises of theory in qualitative research. *Research in Nursing & Health, 16,* 213-218.

Schwandt, T. A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 118- 137). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014). *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product.* New York: Routledge.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research.*Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Surya, M., Benson, A. J., Balish, S. M., & Eys, M. A. (2015). The influence of injury on group interaction processes. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 27,* 52-66. doi: 10.1080/10413200.2014.941512

Tamminen, K. A., & Gaudreau, P. (2014). Coping, social support, and emotion regulation in teams. In M. R. Beauchamp & M. A. Eys (Eds.), *Group dynamics in exercise and sport psychology: Contemporary themes* (2nd ed., pp. 222-239). New York: Routledge.

Thatcher, J., & Day, M. C. (2008). Re-appraising stress appraisals: The underlying properties of stress in sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 9,* 318-335. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2007.04.005

Totterdell, P. (2000). Catching moods and hitting runs: Mood linkage and subjective performance in professional sport teams. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85,* 848–859. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.85.6.848

von Scheve, C., & Ismer, S. (2013). Towards a theory of collective emotions. *Emotion Review, 5,* 406-413. doi: 10.1177/1754073913484170

Wilson, M. R., Wood, G., & Vine, S.J. (2009). Anxiety, attentional control, and performance impairment in penalty kicks. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 31,* 761-775.

Windsor, P. M., Barker, J., & McCarthy, P. (2011). Doing sport psychology: Personal disclosure mutual sharing in professional soccer. *The Sport Psychologist, 25,* 94-114.

Wolf, S. A., Evans, M. B., Laborde, S., & Kleinert, J. (2015). Assessing what generates precompetitive emotions: Development of the precompetitive appraisal measure. *Journal of Sports Sciences, 33,* 579-587. doi:10.1080/02640414.2014.951873

Wong, Y. J., Steinfeldt, J. A., LaFollette, J. R., & Tsao, S. C. (2011). Men's tears: Football players' evaluations of crying behavior. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 12,* 297-310. doi:10.1037/a0020576

Woodman, T., Davis, P. A., Hardy, L., Callow, N., Glasscock, I., & Yuill-Proctor, J. (2009). Emotions and sport performance: An exploration of happiness, hope, and anger. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 31,* 169-188.

888 Yzerbyt, V., Kuppens, T., & Mathieu, B. (2015). When talking makes you feel like a group: The
889 emergence of group-based emotions. *Cognition and Emotion.* Advance online
890 publication. doi: 10.1080/02699931.2015.1045454

Table 1. Examples of individual and shared stressors or experiences

Main theme	Sub theme	Example quote
Individual stressors or experiences	Personal performance	"I would say the most thing as an individual that you stress about is your performance." (P4, WSc)
	Sport-academic balance	"Most of my stressors come from school. Just being able to manage volleyball and school." (P2, WVB)
	Injury*	"I think injuries are an individual struggle … injury can be quite a solitary process on an individual team." (P10, WTF)
	Playing time	"The first individual stressor would be playing time, having to work every day in the hopes of getting play time." (P13, MBB)
	Life stressors	"Just being so far from home … I am completely in charge my finances, I am completely in charge of my bills. So just really being thrust into the real world right away." (P11, MSw)
Shared stressors or experiences	Team performance expectations	"No one said it but everyone kind of figured we would lose to them." (P1, WBB)
	Poor team performance	"A stress to a team is your collective identity of like how good you are as a team." (P7, MTF)
	Organizational stressors	"It took two weeks to get an ok to stay in the hotel. During that period we were constantly wondering if we were going to have to travel in the morning, I don't know, it was really stressful for us." (P8, WSc)
	Officiating	"I think a more particular one that we are trying to control as a team is if the ref makes a bad call and everyone reacts badly to it." (P6, MVB)
	Coaching changes	"The best example would be our coach when we all freaked out about losing him because he was the best coach anyone on our team has ever had … finding out it was a possibility that he was leaving was really stressful." (P4, WSc)
	Interpersonal conflict	"Where we have to address it as a group is more [team] relationship stuff or general trends … if there is one guy who is making everyone pissed off on the team then we will address that as a team." (P7, MTF)
	Changes to lineup (e.g., due to illness or injury)	"Last year at our provincial championships for example, in the 4x800 team, one girl was sick, had a bad race the day before, and decided that she wouldn't run the relay. So our alternate, she had to step up and run. So, that involved everyone on the team." (P10, WTF)

*Injury was identified as having the potential to become a shared stressor, depending on which athlete was injured.

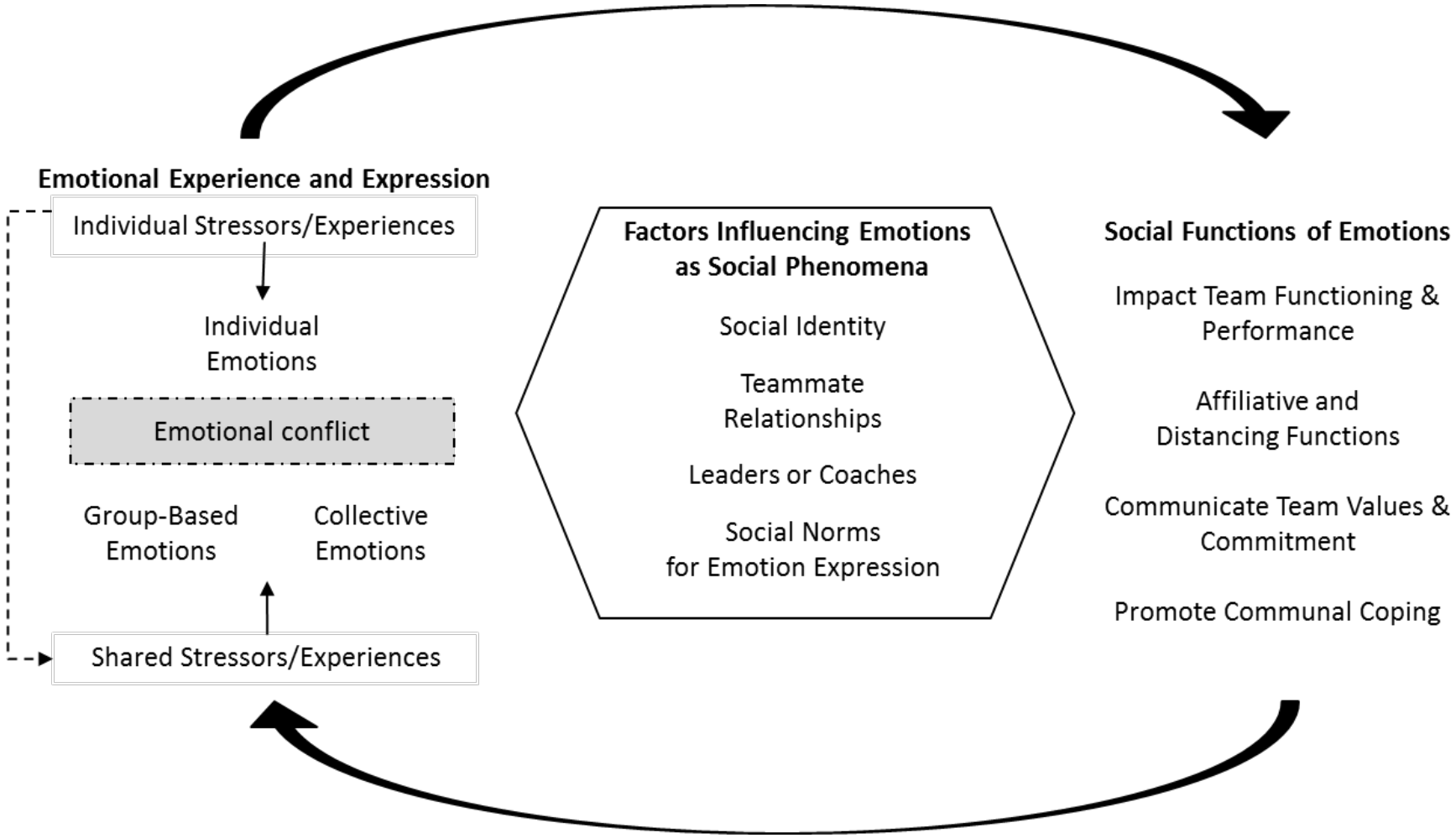

Figure 1. Emotions as social phenomena – overview and interrelationships between themes