

# **A COMPARISON OF COPING STRATEGIES OF ETHNICALLY DIVERSE FOOTBALL PLAYERS**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it to any university for a degree.

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# **SUMMARY**

Stress and coping are complex phenomena that are not always fully understood. They are psychological factors that impinge on individuals and people's responses in dealing with them are described and interpreted in various ways. This study compared the coping strategies used by football players from ethnically diverse backgrounds. The aim was to explore the role that the environment, ethnicity and culture play in players' responses to stressful situations.

A sample of 33 players was drawn from a professional club in the Professional Premier Soccer League in the Western Cape, Republic of South Africa. Subjects were representative in terms of race, age, years of experience and playing positions. Eleven black, coloured and white players for each group were selected for individual interviews. Their ages ranged between 15 and 32 years.

An interpretive-qualitative research methodology was employed. Semi-structured interviews and a biographical questionnaire were used as tools to gather information. The data were analyzed using interpretive analysis or the immersion crystallization method.

The results revealed that football players were exposed to stress and there were differences and similarities in the way they conducted themselves. The similarities were recorded on matters related to match situations e.g., pressure to perform, inclusion in a starting line-up, and unruly behavior of supporters. Differences were cited on issues related to language, culture, financial matters, poor playing conditions, negative evaluation of the team by others, losing matches, referees' decisions and being away from home. These differences were found both between and within ethnic groups.

Players' perceptions of stress showed that black players were experiencing more stress than the other two ethnic groups and white players were experiencing far less stress than the other two groups. Despite this finding, the majority of players reported to have been in control of stressful situations. The perception of lack of control was reported by black and coloured players only. It appeared that background experience of stressful events was producing greater psychosocial consequences for non-white players than white players.

The football players used multiple strategies to cope with their sport challenges and there were both differences and similarities within and between the ethnic groups in the use of these strategies. Subjects used problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, passive coping, and avoidance coping in stressful situations. Problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping were the dominant strategies employed by all three groups. Passive coping and avoidance coping were the lesser-used strategies and were employed by the three groups in situations where players felt that they could not exert control e.g., playing conditions or dubious referees' decisions. Self-criticism, not blaming others, adopting a negative approach, substance use/abuse and turning to religion were the strategies that appeared only in specific groups. This finding supports the hypothesis of differences in strategies related to differences in ethnic backgrounds.

It was also revealed that football players were responding differently to stressful challenges that were presented at the different stages of the match. The dominant strategies used at the pre-match stage by the non-white group were: planning and preparation, relaxation, praying, focusing and concentration. At the same stage, white players used mostly focusing, concentration and planning. There were strong similarities between the groups in the use of these strategies. During the match

stage, non-white players used active coping, positive approach, suppression of competitive activities, focusing and concentration. White players used similar strategies including emotional expression and mental disengagement.

Different strategies were employed by players during the match stage, most of them being problem-focused strategies. In the post-match stage players used less-dominant coping strategies. Some strategies were used by players in all three ethnic groups and others appeared in specific groups only, e.g., substance use (coloured group) and passive thinking (white group).

The study further revealed that coping strategies could be classified either as sport or non-sport related. A variety of sport-related strategies were found mostly during the pre-match and match stages. The non-sport related strategies appeared mostly during the post-match stage and were used mostly by non-white players.

Concerning the processes involved in the selection of strategies, the study revealed that thought-out processes, automatic processes, influence of experience and a combination of processes were used to identify and select coping strategies. Processing of information was a preferred option used by the three groups of players to identify strategies and very few players used automatic processes. Between-group differences were found in the relationship between environmental background and previous experience and the players' selection of coping strategies. For black and coloured players this influence related mostly from factors outside their home environment. For white players it came from within their home situations.

The study showed that factors that affected the players in selecting coping strategies, were both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic factors included personal safety and protection, performance, self-control and personal experience. Extrinsic factors included stress, influence of others, institutional influences, social background, pleasing others, family obligation, opponents and research. White players used intrinsic and extrinsic factors with equal frequency. Non-white players on the other hand, used fewer intrinsic factors than extrinsic factors. The results also showed that relatively less-experienced players were inclined to use achievement motivation as a determining factor. Black players were influenced by one other factor that did not appear in the other groups, that is, family obligations.

Finally, exhaustion, cultural differences, language, absence of a family support structure, peer pressure, home circumstances, communication, diet, substance use/abuse, being in a new environment, personality differences and high expectations were identified as factors that restrict the use of coping strategy. Exhaustion and cultural differences appeared across all three groups. Group differences were however observed in language, absence of a family support structure, peer pressure, home circumstances, high expectations, and absence of compliments. These restrictive factors were experienced differently within and between the three ethnic groups and originated from exposure, challenges, and experiences that players encounter in their daily life situations.

**Key words:** Stress; Coping; Sport psychology; Football; Ethnicity.

# OPSOMMING

Stres en die hantering daarvan is komplekse verskynsels wat nie altyd verstaan word nie. Stresfaktore wat 'n invloed uitoefen op 'n individu en die response wat daarop volg, word op verskeie maniere geïnterpreteer en beskryf. Hierdie studie het die hanteringstrategieë vergelyk wat voorgekom het onder voetbalspelers vanuit diverse etniese afkoms. Die hoofdoel was om die rol wat die omgewing, etnisiteit en kultuur vervul te bepaal in spelers se response op stresvolle situasies.

'n Steekproef van 33 spelers is getrek uit 'n professionele voetbalklub in die *Professional Premier Soccer League* in die Westelike Provinsie, Republiek van Suid-Afrika. Die spelers was verteenwoordigend in terme van ras, ouderdom, ervaring en spelposisies. Elf spelers is uit elk van die swart, gekleurde en wit rassegroepe gekies vir individuele onderhoude. Hulle ouderdomme het gewissel tussen 15 en 32 jaar.

'n Interpretatiewe-kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodologie het die kern van die studie uitgemaak. Semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude en 'n biografiese vraelys is as navorsingsinstrumente gebruik om inligting in te samel. Die response is ontleed met behulp van interpretatiewe ontleding of die in-diepte kristaliseringsmetode.

Die resultate het getoon dat voetbalspelers blootgestel word aan redelik groot hoeveelhede stres en daar was ooreenskomste asook verskille in die wyses waarop hulle dit hanteer. Die ooreenskomste is waargeneem ten opsigte van faktore soos wedstrydsituasies, byvoorbeeld druk om te presteer, insluiting in die beginspan en swak gedrag van toeskouers. Verskille is gevind met betrekking tot faktore soos taal, kultuur, finansiële sake, swak speeltoestande, negatiewe evaluering van die span deur ander, wedstrydnederlae, skeidsregterbeslissings en afwesigheid

van die huis. Hierdie verskille is waargeneem beide binne en tussen die rassegroepe.

Die persepsies van die spelers van stres het aangedui dat swart spelers meer stres as die wit spelers en spelers van kleur ervaar het. Die wit spelers het die minste stres ervaar. Ten spyte van hierdie bevinding het die meerderheid van die spelers gerapporteer dat hulle in beheer van hul stres was. Die gevoel van min beheer oor stres is slegs deur enkele swart en wit spelers gerapporteer. Dit het geblyk dat die ervaring van stres groter impak vir die swart spelers ingehou het.

Die voetbalspelers het verskeie strategieë aangewend om die uitdagings van hul sport te hanteer en daar was beide verskille en ooreenkomste tussen die rassegroepe in die gebruik van strategieë. Die spelers het gebruik gemaak van probleemgerigte, emosiegerigte, passiewe en vermydingstrategieë. Probleemgerigte en emosiegerigte hantering was die mees prominente strategieë onder al drie die rassegroepe. Passiewe en vermydingstrategieë is in 'n mindere mate benut en is deur al drie rassegroepe gebruik in situasies waar die gevoel was dat spelers nie direkte beheer oor die situasie kon uitoefen nie, byvoorbeeld, speeltoestande en twyfelagtige skeidsregterbeslissings. Selfkritiek, die blaam van ander onthef, 'n negatiewe benadering, die gebruik van dwelmmiddels, en wending tot godsdienst is strategieë wat slegs onder spesifieke rassegroepe voorgekom het. Hierdie bevinding ondersteun die hipotese dat daar 'n verband is tussen die gebruik van hanteringsmeganismes en etniese agtergrond.

Daar is gevind dat voetbalspelers verskillend reageer op stresvolle situasies na gelang van die fase van die wedstryd. Die dominante strategieë wat deur die twee nie-blanke groepe aangewend is in die pre-wedstrydfase, was beplanning en voorbereiding, ontspanning, gebed,

fokus en konsentrasie. Die wit spelers het meestal beplanning, fokus en konsentrasie gebruik. Daar was sterk ooreenkomste tussen die etniese groepe in die gebruik van hierdie strategieë. Spelers vanuit die twee nie-blanke groepe het tydens die wedstrydfase meestal die volgende strategieë aangewend: aktiewe hantering, 'n positiewe benadering, onderdrukking van mededingende aktiwiteite asook fokus en konsentrasie. Die wit spelers het soortgelyke strategieë gebruik met die byvoeging van emosionele ekspressie en sielkundige onttrekking. 'n Ander stel strategieë is tydens die wedstrydfase toegepas en was meestal probleemgerig van aard. Spelers het meer nie-dominante strategieë in die na-wedstyd fase gebruik. Sommige strategieë het onder al drie groepe voorgekom terwyl ander slegs deur spelers in spesifieke groepe gemeld is, byvoorbeeld die gebruik van dwelms onder gekleurde spelers en passiewe denke onder wit spelers.

Die studie het getoon dat hanteringstrategieë geklassifiseer kan word onder sport en nie-sport situasies. Die sportgerigte strategieë het meestal voorgekom tydens die pre-wedstryd en wedstrydfases. Die nie-sport strategieë is in die na-wedstryd fase gebruik en is meestal deur die nie-blanke spelers gemeld.

In terme van die seleksie van strategieë het die studie getoon dat beplande besluitneming, outomatiese prosesse, die effek van ervaring en 'n kombinasie van prosesse geïdentifiseer is in die keuse van strategieë. Die prosessering van inligting was die voorkeuropsie wat deur spelers in al drie groepe gebruik is om strategieë te selekteer. Slegs enkele spelers het outomatiese prosesse aangewend. Omgewingsagtergrond en vorige ervaring het ook verband gehou met die spelers se seleksie van hanteringstrategieë. Daar was verskille in hierdie verband tussen spelers van die drie etniese groepe. Vir die spelers uit die twee nie-blanke groepe was hierdie faktore meestal afkomstig van buite die huisomgewing in

teenstelling met die blanke spelers waar dit afkomstig was vanuit die huissituasie.

Die studie het getoon dat die faktore wat spelers beïnvloed het in die keuse van strategieë beide intrinsiek en ekstrasiek van aard was. Intrinsieke faktore het onder andere ingesluit persoonlike sekuriteit en beskerming, prestasie, selfbeheer en persoonlike ervaring. Voorbeelde van ekstrasieke faktore was stres, invloed van ander mense, institusionele invloede, sosiale agtergrond, verwagtinge van ander, gesinsverpligtinge, opponente en navorsing. Spelers vanuit die wit groep het intrinsieke en ekstrasieke faktore met naastenby gelyke frekwensie gemeld. Spelers uit die twee nie-blanke groepe daarenteen het minder intrinsieke as ekstrasieke faktore geïdentifiseer. Minder ervare spelers het prestasie-motivering aangewend as 'n bepalende faktor. Swart spelers is deur 'n bykomende faktor, gesinsverpligtinge gelei.

Afgematheid, kulturele verskille, taal, afwesigheid van 'n gesins-ondersteuningstruktuur, portuurdruk, huislike omstandighede, kommunikasie, dieët, dwelmgebruik, nuwe onbekende omgewing, persoonlike verskille en hoë verwagtinge is faktore wat geïdentifiseer is wat die gebruik van hanteringstrategieë gekortwiek het. Afgematheid en kulturele verskille is deur spelers vanuit al drie etniese groepe gemeld. Daar was verskille tussen die groepe met betrekking tot gesins-ondersteuning, portuurdruk, huislike omstandighede, hoë verwagtinge en die gebrek aan komplimente. Hierdie beperkende faktore is verskillend ervaar binne en tussen die drie etniese groepe en het waarskynlik hul oorsprong in die blootstelling, uitdagings en ervarings van die spelers in hul alledaagse lewens.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Stres; Hanteringsmeganismes; Sportsielkunde; Voetbal; Etnisiteit.

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## **TERMINOLOGY**

The statement of terms black, coloured, and white have been used in this dissertation. I apologize if that offends anybody. This was done in order to accurately reflect the differences between the three ethnic groups. The word football is also used to refer to soccer (See the definition in page 49).

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

# **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The performance of athletes in competitive sport depends on their athletic skills and psychological functioning (Park, 2000). Their ability and emotions interact to influence performance. Athletes are exposed to stress and this phenomenon is a common feature in sport. Very few athletes would deny having experienced it. It is something that sport-persons have to deal with on a daily basis. According to Yoo (2000), it is the most pervasive factor that affects the well-being and performance of athletes, and researchers in sport psychology are showing interest in its influence and development (Anshel, Jamieson & Raviv, 2001; Anshel, Kim, Kim, Chang & Eom, 2001).

The current study investigated the impact of psychological stress on the selection and use of coping strategies by ethnically diverse football players. Psychological stress is defined as a function of highly demanding situations that are coupled with the person's limited emotional resources for coping with the demands of a situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). More specifically, stress is viewed as a set of demands posed on the individual that are caused by both the external stimuli and the organism's susceptibility. It is the result of the interaction between the individual and the environment, and a person's evaluation and decision about his/her stressful situation. Stress is not simply perceived as a report of a series of undesirable events, but rather a way in which a person appraises such events. It does not reside in the situation, but depends on the transaction of the individual in the situation and a call for his or her action.

Stress is further described by Murphy (1986: 142) as "the rate of wear and tear in the body". According to him, stress does not necessarily imply a morbid change: normal life, especially intense pleasure and the ecstasy of fulfillment but also causes some wear and tear in the body. It causes distress and brings about physical and psychological pain. According to him, stress is one of the multiple factors that contribute to performance slumps and poor functioning amongst sport-persons.

A literature review has revealed that not all individuals are comfortable with the psychological effects of stress in their lives (Kaplan, 1996; Marmot & Madge, 1995; Meichenbaum, 1983). It is the cause of many psychological problems and is affecting individuals at different levels. It affects the way people think, their emotions and behaviour. Psychological stress is contributing a great deal towards poor health and psychosocial problems in our societies (Meichenbaum, 1983) and is experienced by all individuals. Not only ordinary people but by sport-persons as well. Athletes at elite and recreational sport levels are equally affected by stress and susceptible to its effects (Park, 2000). They similarly suffer from restlessness, irritability, anxiety, loss of appetite, disturbed sleep, low resistance to physical illness, poor performance, fatigue, lack of concentration and memory problems (Kaplan, 1996; Meichenbaum, 1983; Park, 2000).

The psychological consequence of stress is a matter of concern in sport and football players across different ethnic backgrounds are exposed to this threat. The current study investigated the impact of psychological stress and its influence on the psychological functioning of football players. Research evidence revealed that stress is manifested in many forms in sport and a large number of sport-persons are affected by it. Anshel *et al.* (2001b) and Park (2000) showed that stress is the cause of psychological and maladaptive disorders such as depression, weight and

sexual problems, burnout, alcohol abuse and injuries. Stress is something that cannot be ignored which is making its toll felt in sport. It causes a morbid outlook in sport and in life in general of sport-persons.

Unlike many other psychological phenomena, stress cannot be removed or eradicated from sport and not all athletes can overcome its painful effects. Psychological stress will always exist as long as sport exists and allowing athletes to continue unaided during their stressful experiences can be devastating and detrimental to sport. According to Anshel *et al.* (2001b), experiencing stressful events and not being able to cope with stress may lead to reduced psychological functioning, decreased motivation, misdirected attention, poor focus and concentration, negative self-talk, heightened state of anxiety and increased muscle tension. Junge, Dvorak, Rosch, Graf-Baumann and Petersen (2000), maintained that if these factors are not addressed they could lead to reduced performance, chronic stress, and eventual dropout or withdrawal from competitive sport. In fact, stress can be unpleasant especially in sporting codes such as football where there is a high level of physical performance, intense competition, and pressure-filled situations.

For Holt and Hogg (2002), competing in football has the potential to be extremely stressful and taxing to players. According to them, when football players engage in sport, they find themselves in pressure-packed competitive situations that require expertise and mental skills in order to deal with such eventualities. These challenges require not only the use of technical and tactical skills but also the development and employment of arsenals of cognitive and behavioural coping strategies by sport-persons (Crocker, Kowalski & Graham, 1998). The current study focused on the investigation of the development and use of coping strategies by ethnically diverse football players. It compared the different ways in which these

football players responded to stress and examined how they choose and use their coping strategies.

In this study, the coping function is defined as a process through which the individual manages the demands of the person-environment relationships that are appraised as stressful. It is a conscious process that involves cognitive stimulation and attempt by the individual to deal with the demands of his/her situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). More specifically, coping is a conscious effort put forth to deal with stress in order to lessen its negative impact on the individual. It is an important variable, as it would be outlined later, that is under-researched which can be appropriately used to enhance growth and development in sport.

### **MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

A literature review has shown that even though there is considerable research conducted on stress, there is still less that is known about the coping strategies of ethnically diverse football players (Giacobbi & Weinberg, 2000; Gould, Finch & Jackson, 1993; Scheier, Weintraub & Carver, 1986). There were few studies that were conducted in social and sport psychology (Giacobbi & Weinberg, 2000; Gould *et al.*, 1993) with little attention given to the issue of ethnicity and coping.

Ethnicity is defined as “a complex process that encompassed development of group identity and shared patterns of rules of social interaction within a group” (Canino, 1995: 121). It is referred to as a social variable that suggests group affiliation and explains the existence of differences and ethnic orientations amongst groups. It is also used in reference to groups that are characterized by a common identity,

language, beliefs, and culture (Betancourt & Lopez, 1995) and is a key variable in this study.

Many football teams in South Africa are characterized by cross-cultural migration and interaction. Football players have a culture of their own which is transmitted through ethnic identities. Players with different cultural ideologies and practices are recruited across different racial and ethnic groups, and expected to live and play together as a coherent unit. The fact that they came from different ethnical backgrounds posed major challenges and marginalization of many of them. Individual players were to affirm their unique identities within the “plurality” of their teams and bring their unique shared history of experiences to the new environment. They were expected to adapt and cope with the environment and the psychological stress they experienced as diverse members of the team.

This study was conducted to show the challenges that threaten the lives of football players and the difficulties they experience when joining multi-ethnic teams. It was the researcher’s resolve that the coping functions of diverse football players could not be fully understood by simplistic application of research designs and interventions that are based on universal understanding of ethnic groups or culture. Instead, the research trend should take account of the complex experiences that shape the thinking and behaviour of football players. The researcher was convinced that relevant empirical studies should begin to focus on the constructions of the reality and the world as defined by ethnically diverse football players. This study attempted to address that problem by investigating the role of ethnicity and its influence in the development and use of coping strategies of ethnically diverse football players.

The focus on ethnicity was also promoted by the theoretical support for the study of this nature. For instance, Pargament, Sullivan, Tyler and

Steele (1982) suggested that peoples' functions in relation to their own cultural context are influenced by the interrelations between individuals and ethnic factors. The model postulated that persons from different ethnic backgrounds are psychosocially different and that psychological paradigms should incorporate the importance of race and ethnicity in defining its constructs and concepts. The social scientists argued that the present psychological models should acknowledge the role of ethnicity and individual interactions in their formulations of how people function and organize their lives.

In his argument for a progress towards an indigenous research paradigm, Wilson (2003) suggested a shift in terminology and understanding of knowledge. He proposed that a knowledge system should be inclusive of all and incorporate the different ways in which indigenous people think and interpret the world and its realities. This was further explained by Sera Dei, Hall and Rosenberg (2000) when they maintained the uniqueness of indigenous knowledge and showed how knowledge relates to the unique given cultures and localities. As proposed by the current study, they suggested that there are characteristic patterns of relationship and exchange among people who differ with regard to race and ethnicity. Their study reflected that the experiences of individuals and their life conditions are in part, a reflection of the person's unique individuality and in part, a function of the social milieu and historical context in which the person is socialized. This study was able to close that gap by identifying and showing the importance of context or social dynamics in understanding the coping functions of football players and the significance of conducting a research from the football player's point of view.

Equally important was the role of culture in the coping process. Research revealed that there is a lack of cultural and cross-cultural studies that

are related to coping (Aldwin, 1994; Duda & Allison, 1990; Park, 2000; Smallman, Sowa & Young, 1991) and few of these studies were conducted in Europe, Asia, and America. Their focus was on the western and oriental culture with little accommodation of other languages or cultural groups. They mainly used English-speaking athletes or sport persons as their subjects. According to Park (2000), they concentrated on the American culture and lacked a cross-cultural flavor.

Even though football is a popular sport in Africa, very little similar research was done in the region. According to sport scholars, there is a need for a cultural-specific approach to the study of stress in sport (Anshel *et al.*, 2001b; Holt & Hogg, 2002; Park, 2000). This study was then unique in the sense that it attempted to address that cultural gap. The study compared the coping strategies used by both black and white semi-professional football players within a South African context. It examined the use of coping strategies by culturally different groups, and explored the existence of any cultural differences in the stages of coping following sport-related stressful events.

Research evidence also showed that a large amount of work was done in sporting codes other than football. Studies were conducted in basketball, track and field, baseball, wrestling, swimming, boxing, tennis, golf, weight lifting, skiing, shooting, and gymnastics (Giacobbi & Weinberg, 2000; Gould *et al.*, 1993b; Park, 2000). The focus of these studies was on variables and issues related to individual sport with little attention on team sport (Gould *et al.*, 1993b). This trend resulted in the presence of gaps and overlooked the differences that existed between individual and team sport. These studies took for granted that athletes in team sport were dealing with similar issues as athletes in individual sport (Holt & Hogg, 2002). For example, evidence showed that athletes in team sport relied heavily on others to achieve success and engaged in high

frequency of interactions with teammates as compared to athletes in individual sport.

There is a dearth of research on team sport and sport scientists are not any closer in understanding how the social network of the team influences the coping processes of individuals in sport. Research evidence showed that there was a need for the study of team sport with focus on football players (Giacobbi & Weinberg, 2000; Gould *et al.*, 1993b; Park, 2000). Little was known on how the team sport environment influenced players' perceptions of stress and coping. The present study addressed that gap by focusing on football as a team sport and looking at the team context in which coping strategies are developed and providing understanding of players' perceptions of stress and coping.



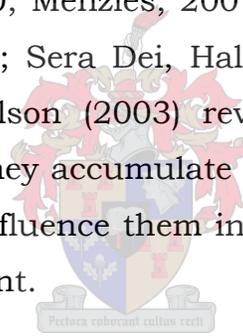
### **RATIONALE FOR IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the role ethnic differences play in the selection and use of coping strategies by football players, and to examine the interaction of ethnicity with psychological stress in the production of coping strategies or patterns. The primary research questions examined in this study were the following:

1. What strategies did ethnically diverse football players use when confronted with stressful situations?
2. Were there any ethnical differences in football players' responses to psychological stress?
3. How did ethnically diverse football players go about choosing their coping strategies?
4. At which stage did they use specific coping strategies?
5. What influenced them in selecting certain coping strategies?

These questions were explored and a closer examination of the coping process and the diverse ways in which football players coped with stress were investigated. Not only game-related psychological stress was assessed, but also the impact of the psychological demands of the football players' environment. Ethnicity was a key and an important variable in this study because it was considered playing a significant role in stress and coping, and this phenomenon was not adequately investigated in football.

A literature review in both general and sport psychology showed that ethnicity, indigenous knowledge, language and culture are variables that influenced individual's development and use of coping strategies (Aldwin, 1994; Duda & Allison, 1990; Menzies, 2001; Pargament, Sullivan, Tyler & Steele, 1982; Park, 2000; Sera Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000; Small, Sowa & Young, 1991). Wilson (2003) revealed that individuals have knowledge and skills that they accumulate as a result of being members of an ethnic group which influence them in the way they respond to the demands of their environment.



The current study investigated the role of ethnic differences in the coping processes of football players and explored the influence of different ethnic backgrounds in the development, selection and use of coping strategies by these football players.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Matters related to research procedure, data recording and analysis were identified as limitation to the study. The first challenge under research procedure dealt with gate keeping. This involved people who had vested interests or who had a say over who is let in and who is not in the

project. It was very difficult to gain access and obtain consent of players. The study was in the middle of the season and it was difficult to have contacts with the team authorities and consult with players or parties that had vested interests in the project – the management team, coaching staff, youth development officer and technical team.

Equally related to this problem was difficulty in gaining access to a particular group e.g., white players. It was difficult to organize and obtain the same number of white players in the sample. It appeared that there are relatively few whites playing football in this country and this has caused some difficulties in locating them. Another limitation is the related representative nature of the sample. The sample was limited to Xhosa, Coloured and White football players that were located in the vicinity of the Western Cape and this restricted generalization to the population of the Western Cape.

Another challenge was the experience of the unavailability of the coach at certain periods during the time of research. The researcher had to re-schedule or make arrangements with other people. Sometimes I would find the consulting room locked and I would be allocated in another room which does not have the necessary equipment. At other times players were not available for interviews because of injuries and other team obligations e.g., having to go for training because of an important upcoming game.

Another limitation was the use of the researcher as the only practitioner responsible for the interviews. The expertise and experience of the researcher were of an advantage but working alone was overwhelming. It would have been useful to have trained facilitators to help conduct some interviews. Closely related to this limitation is the question of language in the designing of the biographical questionnaire. There was no exact

Xhosa translation for some of the concepts used in the questionnaire. It was at times difficult to get the accurate meaning of certain words because psychology is a "new" territory and "borrowed" concept for many black people.

The size of a sample and data recording were also a limitation. Even if the sample could be increased, it would create problems with interpretation. It was very difficult to manage the data and to report full verbatim quotations. The size of the sample allowed for a big chunk of information to be presented for recording and analysis. The concern is that if the size is increased, the researcher will not be able to respect the specifications of each individual response and more material will go missing. Over-cited passages could also make a research report tedious to read, voluminous in length and distract clarity of the main commentary.

Another limitation is the time factor. The time span was not enough for an in-depth investigation and exploration of the topic of this magnitude. Some of the relevant issues could not be adequately addressed because of limited time. The study also revealed that there is a need for the development of a longitudinal data-collection method that can accommodate the unpredictable time course of stressful situations and capture the fluctuating nature of emotions, coping and cognitive appraisals. Longitudinal studies are needed to monitor the dynamic nature of the coping responses over a season and examine the effectiveness of specific coping strategy interventions. Tracking football players through the preparation, performance, and post-performance phases of major competitions, would be desirable to understand more about coping processes and the present study could not address this dilemma because of its limited scope.

## **SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

The first chapter introduced the primary goals of the research and provided some background on the definition and theoretical matters pertaining to stress, coping and ethnicity in sport. Chapter two presents a theoretical framework that has been chosen for the study. In this chapter, a transactional model was used for understanding stress and coping processes. The third chapter covered a comprehensive literature review of both qualitative and quantitative research conducted on topics related to coping strategies in football. Discussions and suggestions of previous educators and researchers were discussed. The methodology used in this study was presented in chapter four. A description of the sample studied, research design, data collection and analysis, procedure, and details regarding the instruments that were used were outlined. The fifth chapter dealt with the results of the research. The final chapter was devoted to a discussion of the results and conclusions that were drawn from those results. An attempt was made to synthesize the knowledge gained from the empirical evidence in the study, evidence from the studies reviewed and the theoretical conceptualization presented in the previous chapters. The implications for theory and practice were discussed followed by the recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

# **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The history of coping research has been plagued by differences in conceptualizations and the construct of coping has proven difficult to define and operationalize. Two postulations have been generated in describing the processes of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Kaplan, 1996; Meichenbaum, 1983). These postulations are the trait model and transactional model, and they vary in terms of how much emphasis is placed on the person or situation. Trait models placed emphasis on personal characteristics and assumed cross-situational and temporal consistency (Kaplan, 1996). It holds that individuals have a disposition to think or act in a stable manner and assumes that "people do not approach coping context anew, but rather bring to bear a preferred set of coping strategies that remain fixed across time and circumstances" (Carver *et al.*, 1989: 270).

The transactional model on the other hand, places more emphasis on an ongoing dynamic relationship between the person and environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and it is within this framework that this study was conducted. The transactional model was chosen because it best explains the intricate processes involved in stress and coping, and could relate very well with the indigenous paradigm's assumptions on ethnicity. It enabled the researcher to focus on coping as a key psychological variable and to fully explain ethnicity by putting it in its "proper" context. This theory could accurately unpack important issues related to coping and could provide an in-depth understanding of the

interrelations between coping and ethnicity. It also gave insight that was necessary for the interpretation and analysis of information.

### **DEFINITION OF STRESS**

The word stress in this study is defined as any kind of experience perceived as threatening that causes significant changes in the psychological, physiological and behavioural responses of an individual. It is any condition posed by the physical, psychological and contextual factors that creates pressure on the individual's normal functions and requires some psychophysical adjustment on his/her part. It is within this framework that stress is conceptualized.

### **THE TRANSACTIONAL MODEL**

The transactional model as proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), views the person and the environment in a dynamic, mutually reciprocal, bi-directional relationship. Individual and environment are viewed as two entities that influence each other. According to the transactionalists, how an individual copes is dependent on the cognitive evaluation of the situation and appraisal of the meaning of the situation in terms of personal well-being and coping options. The transactional model postulates that personal and situational attributes transact in the unfolding of stress. In other words, stress occurs as the result of an ongoing dynamic relationship between the person and the environment.

The transactionalists argue that any stressful encounter implies the creation of a new level of abstraction in which the separate person and environment elements are joined together to form a new relational meaning (Anshel, Kim, Kim, Chang & Eom, 2001; Carver *et al.*, 1989; Crocker, Kowalski & Graham, 1998; Gordon, 1981; Hardy, Jones &

Gould, 1996; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Unlike the trait model, the transactional model views coping as a dynamic process that depends on the condition and situation of the transaction. What is a consequence at time one can become an antecedent at time two, and the cause can either be related to the person or the environment. The model maintains that in any situation the relationship between the person and environment is bi-directional and there is no situational consistency in terms of how the person and/or the environment influence one another.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS**

The transactional-model approach to psychological stress is based on the meta-theoretical foundation of cognitive theory and emphasizes cognitive appraisals that center on the evaluation of the event as being harmful, threatening and challenging. The model defines psychological stress as "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984: 21). Stress is viewed as a rubric consisting of many variables and processes that are mediated by cognitive appraisal. The definition emphasizes the relationship between the person and the environment, that takes into account the characteristics of the person on the one hand, and the nature of the environmental event on the other hand. Psychological stress is viewed as being caused by both the external stimuli and organism's susceptibility. According to Gordon (1981), any predictions of psychological reaction to stress without reference to characteristics of the person will not be objective. Psychological stress is a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person. Gordon (1981) contends that the judgment whether a particular person-environment relationship is stressful hinges on cognitive appraisals.

## **COGNITIVE APPRAISAL**

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define cognitive appraisal as an evaluative process that determines why and to what extent a particular transaction or series of transactions between the person and the environment is stressful. It is an integral part of the coping process which is understood as "an action of categorizing an encounter and its various facets, with respect to its significance for well-being" (Lazarus & Fokman, 1984: 31). The process begins when an individual begins to interpret the facets of the event and categorizes information in order to protect the self. The process is continuous, largely evaluative, and focuses on meaning. It rests on the individual's subjective interpretation of a transaction (Aldwin, 1994). As Mendelsohn (1979) puts it, it is about how a person construes and gives meaning to the situation. According to this model, in order to understand variations among individuals, scholars must take into account the cognitive processes that intervene in those situations (Anshel *et al.*, 2001; Carver *et al.*, 1989; Crocker *et al.*, 1998; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The model contends that not only is the person a function of the situation, but also the situation is a function of the person through the person's cognitive construction of the situation and active selection and modification of that situation (Hardy, Jones & Gould, 1996). Appraisal does not refer to the environment or to the person alone, but to the integration of both in a given transaction. Any appraisal depends on a unique set of environment and person characteristics. Appraisals are transactional specific. The model distinguishes two basic forms of appraisals, the primary appraisal and secondary appraisal.

## **PRIMARY APPRAISAL**

Primary appraisal is the process of perceiving a threat to oneself (McCrae, 1984). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identify three kinds of

primary appraisal: (1) irrelevant, (2) benign-positive, and (3) stressful. Irrelevant appraisal occurs when the individual's encounter with the environment carries no implications for his/her well-being or the person has no investment in the possible outcomes of the encounter. Irrelevant appraisals are used to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant cues so as to allow individuals to mobilize for action only when it is desirable or necessary.

Benign-positive appraisals occur if the outcome of an encounter is construed as positive, that is, if it preserves or enhances well-being. Lazarus and Folkman (1984:32) maintain that, "benign-positive appraisals are characterized by pleasurable emotions such as joy, love, happiness, exhilaration, or peacefulness". These appraisals are complex and mixed, and depend on personal factors and situational context. For some people, such appraisals can generate guilt and for others, anxiety (Aldwin, 1994).

Stress appraisal on the other hand is perceived as a process that begins once an event is categorized as stressful. It includes perception labels and interpretations that are attached to stressful events such as, harm, threat, or challenge (Anshel *et al.*, 2001). Harm/loss interpretations refer to perceived stress or damage that has already occurred e.g., incapacitating injury or illness, physical or mental error, loss of a valued person, or damage to self-esteem or social esteem (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). McCrae (1984) maintains that only stressful appraisals (i.e. harm/loss, threat, and challenge) warrant the use of coping strategies and individuals that experience harm/loss appraisals are more likely to use less-mature passive coping strategies that are counterproductive. The transactional theorists contend that individuals engage in less-mature types of strategies because harm/loss appraisals usually follow events that are perceived as uncontrollable. The examples of less-

matured coping strategies include helplessness, pessimism, wishful thinking, and faith (Anshel *et al.*, 2001).

Threat interpretations refer to harm or losses that have not yet taken place but are anticipated (Mechanic, 1974). This appraisal reflects state anxiety and the individual's worry about how a situation might turn out (Anshel *et al.*, 2001). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) distinguish threat from harm or loss appraisal in terms of functions. Threat appraisals are anticipatory coping. They refer to the extent to which individuals can anticipate the future, plan for it, and work through some of the difficulties in advance as in any anticipatory work. The transactional theorists also contend that threat appraisal can become damaging to an individual if the expectation of future harm or danger is great and can create uncertainty, personal vulnerability, and irrational reaction to the problem.

Challenge appraisals are more likely to occur when the person has a sense of control over the troubled person-environment relationship. They reflect and include the experiences as well as the benefits that individuals display when overcoming a stressful encounter (Gordon, 1981). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) maintain that people who are disposed or encouraged by their circumstances to feel challenged have advantages over easily threatened people. Such individuals will have a better morale, and experience better quality of health and functioning. They possess these attributes because challenge produces in them positive feelings about their demanding encounters. The model stipulates that the quality of functioning is apt to be better in challenged persons because they feel more confident, less emotionally overwhelmed, and more capable of drawing on available resources than persons who are inhibited or blocked (Anshel *et al.*, 2001). Contrary to other coping

theories, the transactional model perceives appraisal as a complex process that influences the selection and use of coping strategies. According to these theorists, the type of strategies individuals' used is determined in part by the kind of appraisal an individual chooses.

## **SECONDARY APPRAISAL**

Secondary appraisal is viewed as the process of bringing to mind a potential response to a threat (McCrae, 1984). It is a crucial feature of every stressful encounter that involves the evaluation of what is at stake and what can be done about the stressful situation. It is a complex process that includes the application and evaluation of coping options and strategies, their success and possible accomplishments. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argue that there are two expectancies that play a significant role in the evaluation of the stressful encounter. These expectancies are the outcome expectancy and efficacy expectancy. Outcome expectancy refers to the person's evaluation that a given behaviour will lead to a certain outcome. Efficacy expectancy refers to the person's conviction that he/she can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the outcomes.

Secondary appraisal also includes an evaluation of the consequences an individual experiences after using a particular strategy or set of strategies *vis-a-vis* other internal and/or external demands that might be occurring simultaneously (McCrae, 1984). It is a more advanced stage of appraisal that involves judgment concerning what may or can be done during a stressful situation. The person engages in cognitive mediation and begins to evaluate whether a given coping option will accomplish what is supposed to be done and whether the use of a particular strategy will bring the desired goal in the context of internal and external demands. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) state that secondary and primary

appraisals are not separate processes but work interdependently to influence each another. They interact with each other in shaping the degree of stress and its strength and the quality of emotional reaction which the individual displays.

## **IMPORTANT DETERMINANTS OF APPRAISALS**

Personal and situational factors are identified as two factors that influence and determine the development of cognitive appraisals. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), these factors are interdependent variables that influence what is salient for well-being in a given encounter, shape the person's understanding of the event, and provide basis for evaluating outcomes.

## **PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING APPRAISALS**

Personal factors refer to those aspects within the individual that shape and influence the person's reactions to a stressful event. These factors include commitment and beliefs. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), commitments are expressions of what is important to people and underlie the choices they make. They contain a vital motivational quality and important in sustaining coping effort. Commitments affect appraisal by guiding people towards or away from situations that threaten, harm, or benefit them and by shaping cue-sensitivity. The depth with which a commitment is held determines the amount of effort a person is willing to put forth to ward off threats to that commitment. Lazarus and Folkman (1984: 60) state that commitments keep an organism "pursuing a goal despite many changes in drive states and environmental cues, even in the face of repeated obstacles and the deeper a person's commitment, the greater the potential for threat and challenge". The depth of commitment

can also push the person towards ameliorative action and help sustain hope. Aldwin, Folkman, Schaefer, Coyne and Lazarus (1980) maintain that commitment patterns are influential in the appraisal of threats. They argue that situations can be differently appraised with respect to threat because of commitment patterns. The model states that individuals who are predominantly orientated to achievement will be more disturbed by achievement-related threat stimuli and those who are orientated to affiliation will be more disturbed by affiliation threat.

Commitment to achievement has been cited as another personal factor that contributes to increased likelihood of stress. According to Coyne and Gottlieb (1996), commitment to achievement makes individuals vulnerable to greater debilitating stress in the event of poor performance and the greater the number of people who know about the commitment, the greater the potential for threat. By making announcements and public commitments, people put added pressure on themselves to carry through with the commitment by building up the threat of embarrassment where the performance waivers. The threat to a commitment has also a capacity to diminish self-esteem or lead to social criticism. The model is able to show the influence of commitment to coping and the pressure that individuals create for themselves by speaking to others about their commitments. This is one aspect in the coping research that was not adequately covered by other theories.

Belief is another factor that influences the person's reaction to stress. The model views beliefs as personally-formed or culturally-shared cognitive configurations. They are considered as pre-existing notions about reality and serve as a perceptual lens. In appraisal, beliefs determine what is fact, how things are in the environment, and they shape the understanding of its meaning. They operate at a tacit level to shape a person's perception of his or her relationship to the environment.

This concept of belief relates with ethnicity and about how ethnic identity is developed. It reaffirms the importance of culture, beliefs and context in the development of individual identity.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identify two sets of beliefs that are relevant to appraisal, the beliefs about personal control and existential concerns. Beliefs about personal control involve the extent to which people feel confident about their powers of mastery over the environment or alternatively, feel great vulnerability to harm in a world conceived as dangerous and hostile. Beliefs about personal control have to do with feelings of mastery and confidence in the context of challenge. The proponents of the transactional model distinguish between general beliefs that are permanent, stable dispositions and specific beliefs that are appraisals of a specific encounter or context. The latter is viewed as a product of the individual's evaluations of the demands of a specific situation, coping resources as well as his or her ability to implement the needed coping strategies (Aldwin, 1994). The former refers to a generalized way of thinking or stable personality disposition. Efficacy expectancies (expectancies of being in control) in this model are given a central role as determinants of a person's choice of activities. They affect the extent to which a person feels threatened and influence coping behaviour. Coping behaviours are not instituted because of increased efficacy expectancies, but because of the effect of the efficacy expectancies on the person's appraised relationship with the environment (Coyne, Aldwin & Lazarus, 1981).

Existential beliefs are general beliefs such as faith in God or natural order of the universe that enable people to create meaning out of life and damaging experiences. The model perceives beliefs as neutral systems that can give rise to emotion when they converge with a strong commitment in a particular encounter. They can give rise to stress when

they underlie threat appraisals (e.g., the world is hostile or dangerous), and they could be used to dampen or regulate an emotional response (e.g., belief that supportive others exist). The transactional model also maintains that beliefs can be lost through conversion to a dramatic different belief system. When a belief is lost, hope may be supplanted by hopelessness (Berger, 1994). This indicates that beliefs are not static but are dynamic processes that influence one another.

### **SITUATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING APPRAISALS**

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), commitments and beliefs are not sufficient to explain appraisal but they work interdependently with situation factors to determine the extent to which harm/loss, threat, or challenge is explained. They argue that there are situation properties that make or create the potential for threat, harm, and challenge during the encounter. These formal properties are novelty, predictability, and event uncertainty, and are not ranked according their degree of influence but affect individuals differently. The extent to which an event is stressful is determined by a confluence of personal and situational factors in a specific transaction. According to these theorists, to rank situation properties without reference to personal factors is tantamount to ignoring the role of person-situation factors in determining appraisals (McCrae, 1989).

Novelty refers to the exposure of people to situations with which they have no previous experience. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), novelty is often a source of threat and an unfamiliar situation that is stressful only if it is previously associated with harm, danger or lack of mastery. The source of threat would result in an appraisal of threat or challenge only if some aspect of it has been previously connected with harm or lack of mastery. For example, if a situation is completely novel

and no aspect of it has previously been connected with psychological harm, it will not result in an appraisal of threat. Similarly, if no aspect of the situation had been previously connected with mastery or gain, it will not result in an appraisal of challenge. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) contend that previous connections with harm or gain need not be direct, the individual might have seen, heard, or otherwise inferred it. These conditions are sufficient to give the relevant aspect of the situation the capacity to lead to threat or challenge appraisal and the coping skills are dependent on the vicarious experience that individuals have with the encountered demands.

Predictability refers to the environmental characteristics that give warning that something painful or harmful is about to happen (Aldwin *et al.*, 1980). These characteristics are also called predictable stimuli or signaled events. The transactional model stipulates that signaled events play a major role in allowing the possibility of anticipatory coping. They provide information that permits the subjects to prepare and reduce the aversiveness of the stressor and inform them when they are safe from the stressor. Predictability therefore, is interrelated with control and is about control over the environment and feedback from the transaction with the environment about what can or cannot be done.

Event uncertainty refers to the probability judgment about the event and its influence on the occurrence on appraisals. Coyne and Racioppo (2000) maintain that there is a relationship between uncertainty and arousal or stress. Event uncertainty is said to be the source of anxiety and tension. Heightened anxiety interferes with cognitive functioning and makes it difficult for the person to cope. Event uncertainty has an effect on coping processes and mental functioning. It has an immobilizing effect on anticipatory coping processes. Not knowing whether an event is going to occur can lead to a long, drawn-out process of appraisal and

reappraisal generating conflicting thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that in turn could create feelings of helplessness and confusion. The more meaningful the event is, the stronger these effects are likely to be. This model suggests that in human beings arousal increases with increased certainty. The more likely the event, the more threatening it is. The transactionalists argue that the stimulus alone does not predict arousal but the stimulus must be considered in relation to relevant personal factors and strategies of coping. This once again highlights the importance of person-environment relationship in the coping process.

Imminence, duration, and uncertainty are identified as three temporal situation factors that are important parameters of stressful situations. Imminence refers to how much time there is before an event occurs (Aldwin *et al.*, 1980). Transactional theorists argue that the more imminent an event is, the more intense its appraisal becomes, especially if there are cues signaling harm, danger, or opportunity for mastery or gain. The less imminent the events in which cues are present, the less urgent and more complex the appraisal processes become. The longer the anticipation time, the more potential there is for complexity in appraisal because of mediating coping processes. Aldwin (1994) states that the extended amount of time that individuals have before an event occurs, gives individuals time to reflect, think, plan, suffer, and make efforts to gain control. The model does not only look at coping but it also introduces the relevance of time in the process. It perceives timing as an intervening variable that affects the appraisal of the stressful encounter and individual's reaction to the situation.

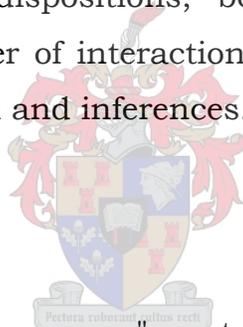
Duration refers to how long a stressful event persists (Aldwin *et al.*, 1980). According to the transactional model, the more often a person is exposed to stress, the less intense are the behavioural and physiological responses. The transactional model expresses the notion of getting used

to chronic repeated stressors in the concept of habituation. Habituation takes place when there is a perpetual stress but the individual decides that there is no need to pay attention to it and the stressor has no relevance. Coyne *et al.* (1981) maintain that habituation is the repetition of the stimulus without anything of note happening.

Temporal uncertainty refers to the concept of not knowing when an event is going to happen. This is a variable that influences how a person deals with a stressful event. Temporal uncertainty is a condition associated with heightened arousal at the onset of the stressful experience. This theory maintains that there is an indication of heightened threat that is associated with not knowing when the threat or the onset of stressful event will occur. According to the model, individuals respond differently to stressful encounters because of uncertainty about the event. The more a person knows about the event, the lower is his/her arousal and stress. This condition also allows a space for differences with respect to coping. Temporal uncertainty is considered to be strongly associated with greater vigilance and more avoidant-like coping at the end of the onset of a stressful event.

Ambiguity refers to the situation when the necessary information for appraisal is unclear or insufficient or when the environmental configuration is ambiguous (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It is present in practically every type of human encounter. As in the case of event and temporal uncertainty, ambiguity can itself be a source of threat and threat can be reduced by searching for more information, or with inferential processes or arbitrary judgments. The theory makes a distinction between ambiguity which is the lack of situational clarity and uncertainty which is the person's confusion about the meaning of the environmental configuration. McCrae (1984) maintains that the uncertainty rises from conflicting values, commitments, and goals, and

from not knowing what to do. On the other hand, even when there is ambiguity in the environment, a person can feel confident about what to do. This according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), can happen when a person arbitrarily resolves the ambiguity by choosing an interpretation and acting upon it, refusing to acknowledge or attend to the lack of clarity in the information provided. The greater the ambiguity, the more influence person factors have in determining the meaning of the environment. Coyne and Racioppo (2000) maintain that whenever there is ambiguity, person factors shape the understanding of the situation and make inferences based on knowledge gained from experience. The concept of ambiguity reflected another strength of the transactional theory in which a person is perceived as inferring meaning to his/her condition using personal dispositions, beliefs and experiences. The theory emphasizes the power of interaction and mediation processes in the regulation of information and inferences.



## **COPING PROCESS**

This model defines coping as a "constant changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984: 141). It is viewed as the process through which the individual manages the demands of the person-environment relationship that are appraised as stressful. This process is concerned with "the unfolding of events where the environment as well as the person and his/her relationship with it is constantly changing" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984: 295). In this context the definition of coping is process-oriented rather than trait-oriented. It is concerned with what the person actually thinks or does in a specific demanding context and is viewed as a conscious process that involves an individual's effort to improve his/her resourcefulness in dealing with the stressful event.

Anshel *et al.* (2001b) distinguish between coping efforts and automated adaptive behaviours by limiting coping to demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding a person's resources. Coping is limited to conditions of psychological stress that requires mobilization and exclusion of automatized behaviors and thoughts that do not require effort. Coping is also not perceived as dependent on outcomes but rather viewed as an effort to manage the stressful encounter. Transactional theory avoids the problem of confounding coping with outcomes by defining coping as all efforts to manage regardless of outcome. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) purport that coping includes anything that the person does, regardless of how well or badly it works. It is not equated with mastery over the environment but rather about how the individual "manage" the situation. In other words, managing can include minimizing, avoiding, tolerating, and accepting the stressful conditions as well as ignoring what cannot be mastered.

The transactional model conceptualizes change in coping as occurring in variable stages or sequences (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The transactional theorists maintain that what is observed in a coping process is not necessarily a progression from an inexorable maturation process or sequence of events, but rather the unfolding of adaptive patterns that reflect what is actually happening to the person (Anshel *et al.*, 2001b; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These theorists observe that there is great individual variation both in terms of how the person appraises the encounter and how he/she copes with it. Their approach to coping is that the significance of each encounter is appraised differently at different stages for different modes of coping. According to Mendelsohn (1979), each individual faces a particular set of circumstances within the context of a unique personal history, and to understand the person's reaction to stress one has to place that individual's response in the context of his/her life history.

The cognitive-phenomenological approach identifies three stages that are relevant to the coping process. These are the anticipation, the impact, and post impact stage (McCrae, 1984). The anticipation stage refers to the period before the anticipated event occurs. This includes aspects such as thinking about what issues to be appraised, what will happen, and when will it happen. The process involves evaluation of the extent to which a person can manage the threat or exercise control over the encounter. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) contend that for an impact stage to occur, the presence of a stressful stimulus or event should be acknowledged. Transactional theorists argue that a stimulus that is not detected and/or information that is not perceived will never be mediated. It will never be processed and interpreted, and will never be categorized and considered stressful. According to them, for an event to be to be considered stressful, it has to be detected first (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; McCrae, 1984).

The impact stage occurs immediately after the anticipated event has begun. This begins when the person begins to evaluate whether the event is bad or worse than what is anticipated. The person assesses his/her reaction and control over the unfolding circumstances by making use of cognitions, cognitive appraisals and coping resources. In fact, this is a stage in which an individual makes meaning of a transaction and bringing to mind potential responses to threat. It is a complex stage that includes application and evaluation of coping options and strategies and can also be a traumatic phase for a person which can involve expression of emotions. This stage is also called a situational-redefinition stage.

A situational-redefinition or impact stage leads to a post-impact stage. The cognitive processes began during the impact stage and a host of new considerations and tasks are transferred to the post-impact stage (McCrae, 1984). The stressful encounter brings in its wake a new set of

anticipatory processes. The model posits that individuals engage in thoughts and behaviors after initiating coping strategies. These post-coping processes include remaining on task, assessing coping effectiveness, and cognitive reappraisal of the stressful situation (Anshel *et al.*, 2001a).

Cognitive reappraisal refers to "a change of appraisals on the basis of new information from the environment" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984: 38). The concept of reappraisal emphasized the constant engagement of individual with information and reorganization of coping strategies. Remaining on task involves an individual's focus on external events to minimize negative thoughts and reduces internal attention focus after a coping attempt. According to transactional theorists, the post-coping activity of remaining on task is most compatible with task demands that are continuous and cognitively demanding. On the other hand, the efficacy of a coping strategy involves the evaluation of coping effectiveness that allows the individual's future performance to be altered by preventing future stress through the use of newly acquired information. This implies that coping strategies are not necessarily consistent but vary in terms of contexts and that individuals constantly use new acquired knowledge to evaluate the effectiveness of their coping strategies and change them when necessary. This also is one aspect that makes coping research complex.

## **THE FUNCTIONS OF COPING**

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), the conceptualization of coping functions depends on a theoretical framework in which coping is defined, and/or on the context in which coping is examined. Coping function is viewed as a process that involves more than just problem solving but a process that serves multiple functions. Coping function is

distinguished from an outcome in terms of its purpose. Coping function refers to the purpose that a strategy serves, and an outcome refers to the effect of the same strategy. Coping function is therefore defined as any action that is independent of outcomes and free of its influence. This distinction was consistent with the model's definition of stress and coping, in that it views coping as not depending on the results but is defined in terms of what the person does.

In this model, Mechanic (1974) cites three coping functions namely: (1) dealing with social and environmental demands, (2) creating the motivation to meet those demands, and (3) maintaining a state of psychological equilibrium in order to direct energy and skill toward external demands. Dealing with social and environmental demands includes changing the situation out of which stressful experiences arise, controlling the meaning of such experiences before they become stressful, and controlling stress itself after it has emerged. This is considered as one of the lower levels of coping functions. The second function involves mobilization for action in response to stress and preparing the person for any eventuality. The third function includes the actual initiative of dealing with the stressful experience.

The model shows that there is a distinction between coping that is directed at managing or altering the problem-causing distress, and coping that is directed at regulating emotional response to the problem. They refer to the former coping type as problem-focused coping and the latter as emotion-focused coping. According to them, emotion-focused forms of coping are more likely to occur when there is an appraisal that suggests that nothing can be done to modify harmful, threatening, or challenging environmental conditions. They include strategies such as avoidance, minimization, distancing, selective attention, positive comparisons, and extracting positive values from negative events. Many

of these strategies are directed at lessening emotional distress and are derived from defensive processes.

Problem-solving forms of coping, on the other hand, are more probable when such conditions are appraised as amenable to change. These are strategies directed at the environment and self that include a wide range of coping functions. They encompass strategies such as motivation, active engagement, gratification and ego involvement which are aimed at altering environmental barriers and pressure. According to the transactionalist, problem- and emotion-focused coping influence each other throughout a stressful encounter and they both facilitate and impede each other.

### **COPING STRATEGIES**

Anshel and others (2001b) in their model of stress, identify approach and avoidance coping as strategies that can be used to manage and reduce stress. These coping strategies, according to them, are the function of the types of stressful event, the mediating cognitive processes and other situational characteristics. They are applicable in sport as they include dimensions of cognitive and behavioural components that are relevant in sport situations.

Approach coping reflects the intensified intake and processing of unpleasant or threatening information and is usually preferred when the individual views the coping situation as controllable. This is evident when one knows the sources of stress, is receptive to discussing the situation, has adequate time to resolve or address the issue, will be disadvantaged by failing to resolve the issue, and is highly confident in his or her ability to resolve the problem (Anshel *et al.*, 2001b). The objective of approach coping centers around improving one's

understanding or control of the stressful situation, or personal resourcefulness in dealing with stress. This can occur through thoughts (approach-cognitive coping) such as planning or analyzing, or by actions (approach-behavioural coping) such as asking for information or confrontation. Approach-cognitive coping consists of thoughts that improve one's emotional status and reduced stress intensity. Examples include thinking about or analyzing the stressful event, planning an effective response, using cognitive strategies such as positive self-talk that increase cognitive and somatic arousal, or build self-confidence. Approach behavior includes interaction with or confronting the sources of stress, or actively obtaining information, and discussing feelings with others.

According to Anshel *et al.* (2001b), avoidance coping reflects a conscious attempt by an individual to turn away from the stressful source. The purpose of using avoidance coping is to distract the individual from the stress source, particularly when the situation does not allow for a more involved reflective response. Avoidance coping is preferred when one wants to replace unpleasant, non-constructive thoughts with more positive ones. It is preferred when the situation is uncontrollable, emotional resources are limited, when the person must deal with a great deal of information load in short-term memory, the source of stress is not clear or unknown, or when there is little chance or time of resolving the stressful issue. The avoidance coping includes avoidance-cognitive and behavioural strategies. Avoidance-cognitive coping includes categories such as psychological distancing, discounting, self-depreciating, cognitive reappraisal, and rationalization. Avoidance behavioural coping is comprised of actions that physically remove the individual from the sources of stress, for example, engaging in exercise, social engineering and other maladaptive strategies such as drug or alcohol abuse, overeating, food avoidance or self-destructive behaviors.

## **COPING RESOURCES**

Coping resources are defined as resources that people draw on in order to cope (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). They involve secondary appraisals or what a person can do to relieve himself/herself from the stress of the encounter. The transactional theory maintains that how the individual copes will depend heavily on the resources that are available to him/her and the constraints that inhibit use of the resources in the context of his/her specific encounter (McCrae, 1984). To say a person is resourceful means that he/she has many resources and/or is wise in finding ways of using them to cope with the demands of situations. Antonovsky (1979) used the term *generalized resistance resources* to describe characteristics that facilitated the management of stress.

Resources are seen as factors that precede and influence coping, which in turn mediate stress. The way a person copes is determined in part by his/her resources. Resources can both be the primary properties of the person and the primary properties of the environment. Primary resources of the person include health and energy, positive beliefs, problem-solving and social skills (Aldwin *et al.*, 1980; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The environmental resources include social and material resources. According to the transactionalists, physical resources play an important role in enduring problems during a stressful transaction and in mobilizing a person. People in good health cope better than individuals with poor health and depleted energy. Positive beliefs are also regarded as a very important psychological resource for coping. They are considered as serving a basis of hope and sustenance of coping efforts in the face of adverse conditions. Hope is perceived to exist only when positive beliefs make a possible outcome seem possible and probable. In fact, not all beliefs can serve as coping resources (Aldwin, 1994; Aldwin *et al.*, 1980; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Some beliefs can dampen or

inhibit coping efforts. Negative beliefs about one's capacity to have any control in a situation or the efficacy of a particular strategy to which one is committed can discourage essential coping efforts.

Problem-solving skill is another primary resource of the person. This resource involves the individual's ability to search for information, analyze situations for the purpose of identifying the problem in order to generate alternative courses of action, weigh alternatives with respect to desired or anticipated outcomes, to select and implement appropriate plans of action (McCrae, 1984). Problem-solving skill is conceptualized in broad terms as the ability to deal with moral dilemmas, conflict, and ambiguity during a coping process. This skill is drawn from other resources i.e. a person's store of knowledge, his/her cognitive ability to use that knowledge, and the capacity for self-control.

Social skills refer to the ability to communicate and behave with others in ways that are socially appropriate and effective. These skills are perceived as important coping resources with regard to social functioning and adaptation. They are used to facilitate problem solving in conjunction with other people, to increase and enlist the likelihood of cooperation or support, and to give individuals greater control over social interactions.

Social support and material resources are environmental resources that people cultivate and use under the rubric of coping. Social support refers to the nature of the interactions occurring in social relationships that are perceived to be supportive. The types of social support that the transactional model recognizes include attachment, affiliation, emotional and informational support (Cohen & Willis, 1985). They serve three functions that include emotional support, information support and resources. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) state that having people from

whom to receive support is a great coping resource in stressful situations.

Material resources refer to money and the goods and services that money can buy. The transactional model suggests a strong relationship between economic status, stress, and adaptation. It illustrates that people with money cope much better than those without it. According to Cohen and Willis (1985), monetary resources increase coping options in stressful transactions and help provide easy effective access to legal, medical, and other professional assistance. The perception highlights the significance and moderating effect of the socio-economic status in coping. Transactional theorists perceive material resources as “gate-keepers” that protect the individual from harm caused by stressful situations. Furthermore, they are viewed together with other variables as facilitating factors in the development of coping functions.

It also appears that the presence of a given resource at a given time does not imply that it would be available for the same person to the same extent at another time. Coping resources are usually not constant over time. They are likely to expand and contract and some are more erratic than others. They are influenced and operate as a function of experience, time of life, and the requirements of adaptation associated with different periods in the life course.

### **CONSTRAINTS TO COPING**

Coping is also determined by constraints that mitigate the use of resources. Aldwin (1994) suggests that in all stressful encounters there are factors that restrict the way in which individuals deal with the environment or stress. These factors are called constraints and they arise from personal agendas and the environment. Constraints that stem from

personal agendas are called personal constraints and those that stem from the environment are called environmental constraints or agendas.

## **PERSONAL CONSTRAINTS**

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) maintain that the relationship between resources and coping is mediated by personal and environmental constraints and level of threat. Personal constraints or agendas are culturally-derived values and beliefs that serve as norms that determine when certain behaviours and feelings are appropriate or inappropriate. They are internalized constructs that are products of the person's unique development and social upbringing. Personal agendas have a strong influence on the way individuals think and respond to the demands of the stressful encounter, and they affect individuals or groups differently. In fact, they are in most instances the cause of disequilibrium in the coping process. Mechanic (1974) writes that individuals who may be adaptive and effective persons from a psychological perspective may be unable to develop solutions to particular kinds of community problems because of their values and individual orientations. Researchers in general psychology literature have shown that sources of stress, appraisals, and coping strategies in response to stressful events differed as a function of culture (Coyne & Racioppo, 2000; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). According to Anshel *et al.* (2001a), culture can affect coping in five ways namely, different sources of stress, the appraisal of the stressful event, the choice of coping strategies, various institutional mechanisms by which an individual can cope, and perceived coping effectiveness.

## **ROLE OF ETHNICITY IN IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT**

Ethnicity is another determinant that has an impact upon the psychology of the individual that is not adequately covered in the transactional theory. It is an important variable and a distinct social domain that contributes in the construction and formation of self-identity (Harris, 1995). Ethnicity is a concept that is used to assign, separate or define a group as different (in thoughts, perceptions, expectations, and actions) from the majority culture. Like many other psychological phenomena, it is acquired through experience and time. It is constructed through years of experience and shaped by the individual's development. The person develops his/her self-concept around ethnic identity through personal development, experience with one's family, neighborhood and community. According to Cross (1995), the process begins with the internalization of group values and the incorporation of ethnic identity into the structure of the self. The individual's self-concept is then built around ethnic identity. This is a stage in which the individual hold high the norms and values of his/her group and defines herself/himself in terms of his/her ethnic group. The individual assimilates group patterns, rules, social customs, language usage, thinking and the group ways of doing things into an integrated self (Canino, 1995). Gilroy (1995) defines the same process as, "the local concept of ethnic identity". Also known as the identity that is built based on a particular locality. Ethnicity is about ethnic identity and diversity. It is the identity that is constructed which makes one group different from the other.

The development of ethnicity is also perceived as a dynamic process which is constantly defined and redefined according to times. It is defined and redefined as the individual develops and is shaped by other factors such as the socioeconomic status, education, gender, politics,

and the experience of the individual. This suggests that the development of ethnicity is a fluid process that emerges and changes depending on a specific historical context, and is also a central component in the development of individuals and societies. It influences how people view their world, think and act.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS**

These are constraints that exist as much in the environment as they do in the person. They include competing demands for the same resources, especially material things such as money. The effect of these constraints is felt when the environment thwarts the effective use of resources. They occur when the environment becomes unresponsive to individuals' efforts to cope with an adverse situation. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) conclude that the environment may differ in the nature and frequency of threats posed to the individual and in the breadth of options available for addressing threatening situations, and that the environment may respond to people's coping efforts in ways that negate their strategies. In other words, environmental constraints can be inhibitors of the effective use of coping resources.

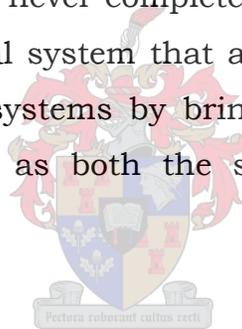
Threat appraisal on the other hand, ranges from minimal where little stress is experienced, to extreme where intense negative emotions such as fear are experienced. Along with resources and constraints, the level of threat the person experiences plays a role in determining coping. It influences the extent to which available resources can be used for coping. The greater the threat the more primitive and desperate or regressive emotion-focused forms of coping tend to be and the more limited the range of problem-focused forms of coping. According to Coyne and Racioppo (2000), excessive threat interferes with problem-focused forms of coping. It affects cognitive functioning and the capacity to

process information. The level of anxiety people experience in stressful environments leads to over-concentration on defensive mechanisms, insufficient attention to problem-solving coping mechanisms, and lowers the levels of performance.

## **INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY**

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) believe that stress, coping, and adaptation outcomes must be viewed in the context of the individual's relationship to the society. Stress is perceived in many instances as being created by a mismatch between individual and society identities. According to Baker and Chapman (1962), what people assimilate from their society and how societal values and beliefs are translated at the individual level can be the cause of mismatch. The social system is portrayed as creating demands and resources for individuals. These social demands and normative expectations influence people's thoughts, feelings, and actions, and stress results when these demands create conflict, leading to overload and ambiguity. Society is also seen as an influential factor in adaptation and plays a significant role in individual stress and coping. It is perceived as a shaper of person and provider of resources that are essential for coping or resources that can be used to live and function well. Lazarus and Folkman (1984), view society as serving the basic survival-related adaptation needs of people. Mechanic (1974: 33) in confirmation of this belief states that "man's ability to cope with the environment depends on the efficacy of the solutions that his society provides, and the skills he develops are dependent on the adequacy of the preparatory institutions to which he has been exposed". In other words, efficacy and the individual's coping abilities are fully encompassed within a view of society as an adaptation to the natural environment.

Moreover, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) state that social systems and cultural aspects have an impact on the individual's emotional life. According to Gordon (1981), the expression of emotions and how they are managed hinges on the meaning and significance that society gives to human transactions within its environment. The model contends that society helps define what is important, desirable, damaging, or ignoble, and how emotions should be expressed and managed. Since emotion is a product of interpretations of the personal significance or meaning of a transaction, cultural-based systems play a large role in determining the conditions under which emotions will occur. Though society may shape our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour, and represents a shared social reality, Kemper (1981), maintains that each of us has a private identity or a subjective world that is never completely opened to others. Not only are people born into a social system that affects their actions, but they also influence their social systems by bringing change. Human beings are viewed in this context as both the shapers and users of social systems.



### **STRESSFUL EVENTS IN RELATION TO LIFE CYCLE**

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) maintain that stressful events do not occur in vacuum, but in the context of the individual's life cycle and in relation to other events, be they distant, recent, or concurrent. These contextual properties also define the timing of events. The transactional model assumes that people have a concept of the normal life cycle that includes expectations that certain events will occur at certain times. They have a mental clock that tells them whether they are "on time" or "off time" in the life cycle. Neugarten (1979) points out that many normal life events are stressful crises only if they occur "off time". Off time events are more threatening because they are not expected and deprive the person of the opportunity to prepare or engage in anticipatory coping. Timetables for

expectable events differ from generation to generation, and from group to group (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Whether or not an event produces crises depends on its timing and how it is appraised. Coping is perceived as a complex process that does not only involve adaptation and execution of skills but is influenced by the individual's expectations and timing of events.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter emphasized the relevance and importance of the transactional theory in the conceptualization of stress and coping. Stress and coping are viewed as the products of the dynamic relationship between the person and the environment. Cognitive appraisals play a significant role in mediating the individual's responses to stressful situations. The theory also highlights the influence of culture, ethnicity and the social system in the manifestation of coping strategies. This theory was chosen because it best suited the current study and was able to provide a better explanation of issues related to coping and sport. It was within this framework that the collected data were interpreted and analyzed.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Chapter three contains a review of literature and definition of concepts. Studies that define and clarify issues related to stress and use of coping strategies in sport are reviewed. The presentation is in a form of discussion followed by suggestions presented by various researchers and sport psychologists.

All studies relevant to the topic of stress and coping in sport qualified for inclusion in the literature review. This includes qualitative and quantitative research and studies that were conducted both overseas and in South Africa. The focus was on studies that investigated chronic and acute stress in sport, intra-individual and inter-personal studies on coping, studies on team and individual sport, open-skills and closed-skills sport studies, studies on gender and coping in sport, cultural studies on coping, and measurement and assessment of coping strategies in sport. Studies that dated between 1985 and 2006 were eligible for review including those before the period that contributed in a special way. This decision was made in order to limit the amount of information and to ensure that recent data is gained on the topic. Another criterion for inclusion of studies was that research subjects or participants must have been between the ages of 15 years to 40 years. Studies on children's coping strategies and amateur players were eligible for inclusion if they provide or bring a sharper focus on any relevant aspect of the study.

The criteria were decided upon so as to cover all the essential aspects and also to delimit the area of focus to coping strategies in football. The

current study's focus is on the choice and use of coping strategies by football players and the investigation of the context and influential variables in which players chose their coping responses.

In order to access information, a literature search was conducted by performing keyword searches for articles in English on the online databases, CD-ROM databases, Internet and Dissertation Abstracts International. Using Library catalogues, SACat on SABINET and WorldCAT, books and conference presentations. Index to South African Periodicals, Social and Sport Sciences Index, Medline and Psychlit, Internet, and Websites were used to obtain reports, journals, and magazine articles. The researcher scanned the reference lists for further studies and used Dissertation Abstracts International to gain access to published and unpublished theses and dissertations.

### **DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

The following key concepts, which will be used in this study, are defined. Their definitions will assist in providing accurate understanding of the variables to be measured and investigated, and bringing sharper focus to the area under investigation. The concepts that warrant definition in this study that are central to the research topic are coping, coping strategies, stress, ethnic differences, and football.

### **COPING**

The literature contains various definitions of coping. Lazarus and Folkman (1984:141) defined coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person". For Stone and Neale (1984) coping is defined as any conscious

effort or attempt to deal with stressful demands that consists of learned behavioral responses and that lowers stress by limiting the importance of a dangerous or unpleasant condition. Gould, Finch and Jackson (1993) refer to coping as a range of purposeful responses to a stressor that includes appraisals of stressful situations and management of stress. In this study coping involves regaining one's composure, establishing the proper mental set and maintaining optimal arousal and concentration (Singer, 1982). It is a process by which an individual responds to the stressful situations as experienced in sporting arena or situations (Anshel *et al.*, 2001b).

### **COPING STRATEGIES**

Coping strategies refer to the use of physiological, cognitive, behavioral and emotional efforts in an attempt to improve athletes' performance (Gould *et al.*, 1993b). The literature revealed that there are four dimensions of coping strategies namely: thought control, task focus, behavioral based, and emotion control (Park, 2000). Thought control strategies are those most often reported strategies that include blocking distractions, perspective taking, positive thinking, and coping thoughts. Task focus strategies include controlling athletes' thought content by focusing on the task at hand and concentrating on goals. Behavioral-based strategies involve changing or controlling the environment and following a set routine that will help minimize uncertainty and focus attention. Emotion-control strategies on the other hand, include strategies that involve arousal control and visualization techniques. In short, coping strategies are a group of skills (such as goal setting, focusing, self-talk, visualization, relaxation, social support and many others) that are used by athletes to respond to stressful situations in their effort to manage specific external and/or internal demands.

## **STRESS**

Stress is referred to as the pressure that athletes endure in competitive sport. As it is defined in the previous chapter, stress is viewed as a function of highly demanding situations coupled with the person's limited emotional resources for effectively coping with the demands of his/her situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). According to Williams and Roepke (1993: 817), it is “an increased demand upon the body to readjust or adapt resulting in individuals with high exposure to life-change events, particularly those requiring greater adaptation, being at increased risk for illness”. Stress has been identified as caused by the physical and psychological demands, the environmental demands, contextual factors, sport expectations and pressure, relationship issues, and life-events (Gould *et al.*, 1993b). In this context, stress refers to the acute and chronic demands posed by the physical, psychological and contextual factors on the individual athlete.

## **ETHNIC DIFFERENCES**

Ethnicity is a complex and multifaceted construct. It is defined as “a part of an individual’s self concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1981: 255). This definition reflects the different basic facets of ethnicity. First, it views ethnicity as an identity formation process in which a sense of identity is developed through one’s membership to a particular group.

Secondly, ethnicity relates to a sense of belonging to one’s own group and is conceptualized and constructed in contrast to other groups. Ethnic identity is perceived as a process through which human beings learn about who they are and how they are connected to the social world in which they live. This sense of belonging is achieved through exclusion

or experience of contrast from other group members. It is realized when the individual's sense of belonging is strengthened by perceived differences in group membership through comparing and ascribing individuals to specific groups (Duda & Allison, 1990).

The third facet of this definition specifies the dynamic nature and the impact of the social environment in which ethnicity is built. This analysis considers values and history of people as significant in the formation of ethnic identity, and views ethnicity as a dynamic product that is achieved rather than simply given (Elizur, 1984; Phinney, 1990). Involvement in the social life and cultural practices of one's ethnic group is considered as another indicator of ethnic identity. According to Smallman, Sowa and Young (1991), ethnicity is a subculture that is created by individuals and characterized by differences in cultural issues, socio-economic status, race, education, values, norms, expectations, life experiences, and psychological make-up. It refers to group membership and the social identity that distinguishes one ethnic group from another group (Staiano, 1980). In fact, ethnicity is conceptualized as constructed through an active process of human interactions that involve decision making and continuous evaluation of transactions. It is perceived as being developmental and changes over time and context.

Lastly, the definition specifies the affective modality of ethnicity. Ethnicity is defined in terms of what a person feels about himself and his relationship with his group. In this context, it is not defined by cognitive and behavioural criteria but is perceived as one's strong presentation of his feelings about his group.

In conclusion, ethnicity is a relevant concept in sport and teams are increasingly becoming ethnically diverse and constantly changing their

compositions. Sport-persons in general are exposed and placed in contexts in which they have to mix with teammates of diverse backgrounds. There are regular contacts and interactions between players of different ethnic groups. Players move in and out and between teams. Teams at national leagues buy, sell and exchange players between themselves. Good players are no longer bound to a single team or limited to play in one country. They move between teams and countries depending on their required services and league demands.

For a majority of players these contacts between diverse groups not only bring good results and benefits but they also expose them to different challenges and psychological demands. Players have to change and adapt their former ways of doing and engaging issues. To other players, coming into contact with members of different ethnic groups may present as a “cultural shock”. These players would be expected to relate and work with individuals they do not know, who are different and coming from different backgrounds. They are put in pressure to survive and cope with these experiences are uncomfortable and psychologically demanding.

To fully understand the impact of these changes or experiences on players, it was important to investigate the role of ethnicity in football, and look at how ethnically diverse players cope with the experience of being a part of a diverse team. Evidence has revealed that there is little research in stress and coping in football (discussion on the topic is presented later in the chapter). Researchers have generally focused on studies in single groups with few mixed groups, and these studies involved primarily white and black subjects (Brand, Ruiz & Padilla, 1974; Phinney, 1990). There was a need for a cross-cultural investigation of the coping strategies of ethnically diverse football players and that need was fulfilled by the current study.

## **FOOTBALL**

Football is a team sport in which two teams of eleven players play against each other in a competitive game. The objective of the game is to kick the ball and attempt to score as many goals as possible. This sport involves a high level of physical performance, can be played by both males and females, young and old, and is organized into four categories of playing positions i.e. goal keeper, defenders, midfielders and strikers (Junge *et al.*, 2000).

## **RELATED STUDIES ON STRESS AND COPING**

In the following paragraphs studies related to stress and coping are reviewed. All studies that qualify or meet criteria for inclusion in literature review are discussed and divided into themes. Themes include topics such as, methodological issues and conceptual differences in coping, sporting codes and coping, personal and environmental factors in coping, studies on gender issues and coping, cultural studies on coping, and measurements or assessments in coping research.

## **METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES AND CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES**

The coping literature in sport psychology reflects an array of conceptual frameworks and methodological differences that are based on theories and variations in research designs. The research is dominated by the two main theories based either on the trait model or the transactional model. These models vary in terms of emphasis that is placed on person or situation, or the conscious as opposed to automatic processes of coping (Anshel *et al.*, 2001a; Crocker *et al.*, 1998). Researchers and theorists differ pertaining to the description of the nature of coping. The differences stem from whether coping is a conscious or automated process. For example, Hardy *et al.* (1996) argue that stress originates

from the unconscious processes and that minimal cognition is required to initiate coping strategies. This postulation supports Freud's (1936) early work in which coping is formulated and conceptualized as an individual's unconscious reaction to a stressful situation. This view has dominated stress research until the early 1980s when the matter of coping was placed on the cognitive processes.

Researchers like Lazarus and Folkman (1984) contend that coping is conscious psychological and physical efforts to improve one's resourcefulness in dealing with stressful events. Like Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Carver *et al.* (1989) argued that coping is a conscious attempt at reducing or managing stress that is accompanied by an individual's awareness of his/her cognitive or behavioral responses. According to these researchers and theorists, while anger can be a frequent response to frustration following stressful events in sport, it is not necessarily a coping strategy when the athlete's anger is impulsive and is the virtual absence of thinking and planning. If, however, athletes acknowledge that anger has a cathartic, stress-reducing effect, and forms their typical and meaningful responses to stress, then anger might be considered a strategy (Crocker *et al.*, 1998).

Recent inquiry has moved towards a consensus by defining coping as a process that is characterized by cognitive, affective, and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands (Folkman, 1992). In this domain, coping is seen as a critical mediator between stressful events and subsequent reaction, such as emotion and performance. This postulation suggests that coping can be categorized into two broad functional dimensions: (1) problem-focused and (2) emotion-focused (Compas, Malcarne & Banez, 1992; Yoo, 2001). Problem-focused coping refers to cognitive and behavioral efforts used to change the problem or challenge causing a distress. Emotion-focused

coping involves strategies that help control emotional arousal and distress that are caused by the stressor.

A review of the literature further revealed that coping dimensions are divided according to specific functions (Carver *et al.*, 1989; Crocker *et al.*, 1998; Yoo, 2001). For example, problem-focused coping is separated into distinct categories, such as, problem solving, information seeking and suppression of competing behavior. Emotion-focused coping includes mental and behavioral withdrawal, denial, avoidance, acceptance and wishful thinking. Many of these sub-types of coping are present in sport literature and vary as a function of the problem being investigated and target population (Carver *et al.*, 1989; Compas *et al.*, 1992; Crocker *et al.*, 1998).

There is also a consensus among researchers that coping should not be confused and confounded with outcomes (Crocker *et al.*, 1998). For these researchers, failing to cope does not necessarily mean that the athlete is not coping. According to them, the athlete may be attempting to cope with a demanding situation but his/her selected coping strategies may be ineffective, inefficient, or inappropriate for that specific situation. For Aldwin and Revenson (1987), coping strategies can be either effective (adaptive coping) or ineffective (maladaptive coping) depending on the individual's resourcefulness and choice of coping strategies.

## **OVERVIEW OF SPORTING CODES AND COPING RESEARCH**

Many studies were conducted in other sporting codes with very little research done in football (Park, 2000). The few studies that were conducted in football investigated skills differences (Williams, Davids, Burwitz & Williams, 1994), cognitive knowledge and football performance (Maynard, Smith & Warwick-Evans, 1995; Williams, Davids, Burwitz &

Williams, 1993), recruitment, age effect and characteristics of football players (Junge *et al.*, 2000; Musch & Hay, 1999), and visual search and selective attention (Williams & Davids, 1998).

Studies in other sporting codes were done in basketball, track and field, baseball, wrestling, skating, swimming, boxing, tennis, golf, weight lifting, skiing, shooting and gymnastics (Giacobbi & Weinberg, 2000; Gould *et al.*, 1993a; Park, 2000). These studies focused on individual sport and there was limited attention to team sport (Gould *et al.*, 1993b). Research evidence showed that there was a need for the study of team sport study with focus on football players (Giacobbi & Weinberg, 2000; Gould *et al.*, 1993b; Park, 2000).

Research also reveals that athletes participating in team and individual sports cope differently with stress in competitive sport situations. An important distinction is made between approach coping, avoidance coping, emotion-focused and problem-focused coping styles (Anshel *et al.*, 2001b; Cox & Ferguson, 1991; Endler & Parker, 1990; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Approach coping includes sensitization, engagement, vigilance, and the process of taking active steps in dealing with a stress to reduce its intensity. Avoidance coping, on the other hand, also named repression, rejection, or disengagement, which consists of turning away from the stressor perhaps through ignoring, discounting or psychological distancing (Anshel *et al.*, 2001b). Emotion-focused coping is referred to as a person orientation that consists the regulation of one's emotion to reduce or manage cognitive distress (Endler & Parker, 1990). Problem-focused coping on the other hand is referred to as task-orientation coping and involves the use of activities to achieve task objectives (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It is directed at the environment, at the self or at finding alternative channels of gratification.

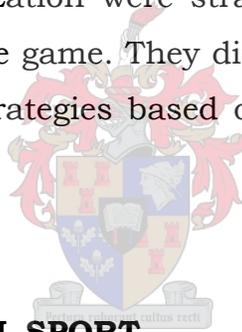
## **RESEARCH ON TEAM SPORT**

A review of literature reveals that as compared with individual athletes, team athletes use more active coping (e.g., problem- or emotion-focused coping) than individual athletes. This according to researchers is because of the fact that team athletes have more opportunities to rely on the group than individual athletes (Anshel *et al.*, 2001; Endler & Parker, 1990; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Madden, Summer and Brown (1990) in their evaluation of the influence of perceived stress on coping with competitive basketball players, found that players reporting low levels of perceived competitive stress reported less frequent use of coping strategies than players reporting high levels of perceived stress. Highly stressed players reported using increased effort and resolve, and general problem-focused coping and emotionality than low-stressed players. This observation is consistent with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) suggestion that if perceived stress is low, then the need to implement coping strategies ought to be low.

In two other studies examining acute stress in sport Anshel (1990) and Anshel, Gregory and Kaczmarek (1990) found that coping interventions markedly improved the affect of baseball and basketball players following verbal acute stress. In another study of competitive athletes from various team sports, Crocker (1992) found that athletes used active coping and problem-focused coping as highly adaptive strategies to manage the environmental contributing to stressful situations. Similar findings were made by Park (2000), in a study of coping strategies amongst the national Korean athletes. Park (2000) found that avoidance coping was a prevalent response to stressors that were beyond the athletes' control and unpleasant physical conditions. He discovered that athletes chose their coping strategies on the bases of the type of stress they encounter. For stressors that are beyond their control, athletes use avoidance responses and for those they can exert control, they used approach

responses. The findings revealed that Korean athletes used coping styles that were specific to Korea and reflected the role of ethnicity in the construction and use of coping strategies in sport.

Research also revealed that many of the stressors faced by the athletes from team sport were related to the social interactions that are situated in the context of the team environment and vary from team to team (Holt & Hogg, 2002). Studies suggest that the source and effect of coping strategies are contextual and that athletes use different strategies at different stages of a problem and strategies have different effects depending on circumstances (Aldwin, 1994). For example, in the study of field communication, Holt and Hogg (2002) found that inter-play communication and visualization were strategies used more frequently by football players before the game. They discovered that athletes have a tendency to choose their strategies based on the timing or the stage of the game.



## **RESEARCH ON INDIVIDUAL SPORT**

Krohne and Hindel (1988) conducted a study of coping strategies amongst German table tennis players and they found that elite table tennis players in contrast to their less skilled competitors tended to apply avoidance coping. They also found that athletes at both skill levels who used an avoidance-coping style exhibited less state anxiety following acute stress than did participants who tended to use an approach-coping style. Conversely, athletes whose attention was diverted by external or internal events were less likely to use technical and tactical skills. According to Krohne and Hindel (1988), avoidance coping techniques seem to protect athletes from distracting thoughts and actions, especially in situations that required immediate decisions.

In a study of the sources, intensity, and responses of Greek and Australian basketball referees to stress, Kaissids-Rodafinos, Anshel, and Sideridis (1998) found differences in the perceived intensity of stress of track and field officials in their thoughts and coping responses. These differences were attributed to vocational, sociological and dispositional differences between individuals from the two cultures. In another in-depth study of the investigation of the sources of stress amongst the former U.S. elite figure skaters, Scanlan, Stein and Ravizza (1991) revealed that elite athletes experience stress from both competition and non-competition sources and that individual differences exist among athletes' sources of stress. It was further found that figure skaters implement different coping strategies depending on the specific stressor they encounter. Athletes who had similar competition-related stressors responded in a similar way than those who had different experiences.

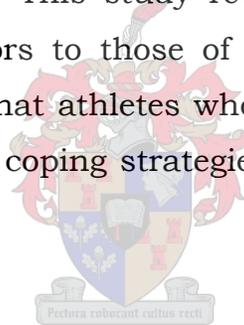
Ward and Williams (2003), in their study of the perceptual and cognitive developmental skills of British golf players, highlighted the finding that motor and cognitive skills development are contributing variables to the development of expert performance and talent in golf. The study showed that players with better developed perceptual skills use better coping strategies when encountering sport challenges. These players were reported successfully using active coping, goal setting, and planning strategies during the different phases of their golf career.

In another study of examining the acquisition and development of cognitive skills and strategies of elite male swimmers, Hanton and Jones (1999) found that Welsh elite swimmers were using four dimensions of coping strategies, namely: pre-race thought control, self-talk strategies, positive thinking, and controlling of cognitive activation. They found that swimmers experienced considerable control over their thoughts and feelings during competition by using the four strategies. Prior to the race,

they dissociate by ignoring the upcoming performance by talking to friends and family. These strategies enable them to control and manage their pre-race and race thoughts.

## **RESEARCH ON INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM SPORT**

Attention has been paid to the perceptions of differences of stress and coping between individual and team sport participants. For example, Park (2000) examined the coping strategies used by 180 male and female Korean national athletes including 76 World Champions or Olympic medallists from 41 different sports. Generally, coping themes cited by these athletes were similar to those reported by figure skaters in the Gould *et al.* (1993b) study. This study revealed that athletes in team sport have different stressors to those of athletes in individual sport. Park (2000) demonstrated that athletes who participated in team sports required different and more coping strategies than athletes in individual sport.



## **COPING AS A UNI-DIMENSIONAL PROCESS**

Another area of interest that has been highlighted in the literature is the role played by individual differences in coping processes (Carver *et al.*, 1989). Researchers maintain that there are two ways in which individual differences can influence coping. The first possibility is that there are stable "coping styles" that people bring with them to stressful situations. According to this view people do not approach each coping context anew, but rather bring to bear a preferred set of coping strategies that remains relatively fixed across time and circumstances. Compas (1987: 394) contends that "coping styles are methods of coping that characterize individuals' reactions to stress either across different situations or over time within a given situation". In other words, there may be a cross-

situational stability in people's responses to stress. When athletes are confronted with a specific type of situation, they may have the tendency to respond in a predictable manner.

In line with this approach, Crocker and Isaak (1997) investigated the consistency of the coping strategies used by swimmers across three distinctive races and across three training sessions. Results revealed that there was consistency of active coping across the three distinctive races completed by elite swimmers. The training sessions findings revealed that (elite) swimmers used active coping strategies such as planning, suppression of competing activities, positive appraisal, and seeking of social support that were consistent across the three training sessions.

Williams and Krane (1992) revealed that the coping strategies that were used by female golfers differed according to each individual's anxiety trait level. Their study showed that low-anxious participants reported low cognitive anxiety and higher self-confidence than other competitors. The high-anxious golfers reported high cognitive anxiety and low self-confidence. The high-anxious athletes were also reported to use more avoidance coping than the less-anxious group.

In a similar study investigating the consistency of athletes' coping behavior, Giacobbi and Weinberg (2000), found that high-trait anxious athletes respond to stressful situations by using different coping behaviors (e.g., denial, wishful thinking, and self-blame) than the low-trait anxious athletes. The results showed that these athletes have certain coping preferences that are consistent across various situations and have stable disposition in response to stress (Giacobbi & Weinberg, 2000).

Across a seven-year time span, McCrae (1989) also found evidence of stability in people's coping responses. He found a moderate correlation between subjects' dispositional coping styles and subsequent reports of their coping efforts. Data collected by Patterson, Smith, Grant, Clopton, Josepho and Yager (1990) provided support for this assertion as well. These researchers found a strong correlation between the use of coping strategies and personality traits. In this study, subjects who shared similar personality traits used similar coping strategies. The results suggested that the strength of cross-situational consistency in coping is dependent on personality similarity and people's appraisals of stressful events.

Similarly, Endler, Kantor and Parker (1994) showed that high levels of trait-anxiety were related to emotion-focused coping styles and maladaptive responses. The study revealed that individuals high in trait anxiety may become occupied with distressful emotions and have tendency to disengage from their goals. In another similar study, Bresler and Pieper (1992) assessed the relationship between coping resources and competitive trait anxiety among high school athletes. They found that lower levels of trait anxiety were significant predictors of confidence, goal setting and planning strategies, while high levels of trait anxiety negatively correlated with the same strategies.

Finch (1994) also examined the relationship between competitive trait anxiety and coping behaviors among 148 collegiate softball players. The results showed that the players in this sample used adaptive and emotion-focused coping strategies (e.g., planning, positive interpretation, and social support) more than maladaptive or problem-focused coping strategies (e.g., denial, and behavioral disengagement). Higher levels of trait anxiety were positively related to the maladaptive and emotion-

focused coping strategies and negatively related to the adaptive and problem-focused coping strategies.

### **COPING AS A DYNAMIC PROCESS**

The multi-dimensional view suggests that coping is a dynamic changing variable that unfolds as the nature of person/environment relationship changes (Gould *et al.*, 1993a; Folkman, 1992; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, Madden *et al.*, 1990). The followers of this school of thought view coping strategies as situational measures that vary from situation to situation and shift in nature according to stages. This view suggests that development of coping styles is counterproductive because it locks the person into one mode of responding rather than allowing the person freedom and flexibility to change responses with a changing environment. They found no support for the hypothesis that the personality dimensions would generally predict coping but preferred the measurement of coping strategies and situational coping responses (Anshel, *et al.*, 2001a; Carver *et al.*, 1989).



In their examination of the coping strategies of figure skaters, Gould *et al.* (1993b) found that figure skaters do not simply react to stress in a one-dimensional and fixed fashion by adopting the style that was automatically employed in response to all stressful situations. Rather, coping was found to involve an ongoing process in which figure skaters consistently appraised various situations and initiated a wide variety of cognitive and behavioral coping responses, simultaneously. Consistent with these findings was the study of the coping strategies used by U.S. wrestlers. In this study, Gould and others (1993a) found that U.S. wrestlers were not limited to a particular coping strategy but instead their coping reflected a dynamic process that involved a variety of

strategies. Similar findings were confirmed by Madden and his colleagues (1990) when they evaluated the influence of perceived stress on competitive basketball players.

In examining the assumptions of the coping style approach, Anshel and Kaissidis (1997) compared the coping responses of basketball players across four acute stressful situations that are related to their sport. The results of this study showed that coping strategies varied across situations and that contextual appraisal was a better predictor of coping responses than personal dispositions. The findings support the assumption of the process-oriented theory of coping.

Using multiple assessments of coping strategies during specific situations, Bouffard and Crocker (1992) tried to determine whether individuals with physical disabilities consistently used the same coping strategies across different challenging physical activities that occurred over a six-month period. For each observation, participants were asked to describe a challenging physical activity that occurred in the last 7 days and to complete the modified COPE Inventory. Results revealed that the participants' utilization of coping strategies changed across the three challenging situations.

Dale (2000) also linked stress and coping by examining how seven elite decathletes coped with distractions during their most memorable performances. The results showed that decathletes coped by using thought control strategies, reinforcing importance of competing against themselves and the use of reminders about how well they had trained when they doubted their preparation. All seven athletes that were interviewed reported using a variety of coping responses to handle distractions during their memorable performances.

In his investigation of the evolution of coping strategies over distinctive phases, Lazarus (1991) found that coping strategies such as problem-solving coping, wishful thinking, seeking social support, and distancing varied across the phases of a college assessment. Using the COPE Inventory, Carver *et al.* (1989) obtained similar findings for coping strategies like active coping, planning, suppression of competitive activities, seeking of emotional support, restraint coping and mental disengagement. Moreover, they found that athletes used different coping strategies at different stages of their competition.

Gaudreau, Lapierre and Blondin (2001) compared the coping responses of Canadian male junior golfers to determine whether their coping responses change across the different phases of competition. They compared the utilization of coping strategies between the pre-competition, competition, and post-competition phases. The study showed cross-phase variability in six coping strategies and the moderate stability of individual differences across three phases of a competitive encounter. Results indicated that the utilization of wishful thinking, active coping, seeking social support and behavioral disengagement changes across the phases of competitions.

In another study Crocker (1992) uses a modified "Ways of Coping Checklist" to reflect how athletes cope in sport situations. The instrument was administered to 237 athletes from a variety of sports asking them how they coped with recent stressful encounters. Eight general dimensions of coping emerged which include active coping, positive reappraisal, self-control, problem-focused coping, detachment, seeking social support and wishful thinking. Crocker (1992) concluded from these results that the modified "Ways of Coping Checklist" suggests that coping is a dynamic process that depends on the individual's appraisal of a stressful situation.

## **PERSONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN COPING**

Researchers also conceptualize coping as a function of the person and the environment (Aldwin, 1994; Holt & Hogg, 2002; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). According to the coping research theorists and scholars, the use of coping strategies may be influenced by personality characteristics, such as emotionality (Bolger, 1990) or environmental demands, such as destructive opponents, unruly spectators and playing conditions (Mattlin, Wethington & Kessler, 1990). The following section presents studies that were conducted in these areas.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

Studies that emphasize the environmental view contend that the psychosocial and physical environment has significant implications for behaviour and affect. These studies consider the nature of the environment in which a particular stressful episode occurs as being a potential resource that may influence the type of coping used. According to researchers, the physical and social environment plays a significant role in the shaping of coping strategies. A strong relationship has been reported between the psychosocial environment and coping functions and high levels of problem-focused coping were found to be prevalent in settings that involve family environment (Parkes, 1986). Similarly in a non-sport research, Pearlin and Schooler (1978) reported differences between work and domestic settings in the extent to which coping moderated stress-strained relations. Newton and Keenan (1985) found that coping by withdrawal was less likely among individuals without a supportive environment than those who are being supported by their environment.

Research has also confirmed that sources of stress for athletes at major competitions including contextual factors such as organization, media

pressure, unforeseen events, travel, competitive expectations and preparatory training influence how athletes chose their coping strategies (Gould *et al.*, 1993a; Orlick & Partington, 1988).

## **INDIVIDUAL FACTORS**

Individual qualities and capacities and constellation of coping skills are considered to have an influence on the choice and application of coping strategies for particular stressful episodes. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggest that coping and appraisal are influenced by individual differences in psychological vulnerability, personal resources and capacities, commitments and values. More specifically, Gaudreau *et al.* (2001) emphasized self-esteem, helplessness, and chronic anxiety as predictors of stress responses. Some relevant aspects of individual differences are assessed by sport personality inventories. For instance, relationships have been found between the types of personalities and patterns of coping and defense, between internal control and problem-focused coping and between trait anxiety and maladaptive coping (Gaudreau *et al.*, 2001; Krohne & Hindel, 1988).

In their study of the divergent strategies of optimists and pessimists, Scheier *et al.* (1986), have shown that dispositional optimism is a prospective predictor of successful adaptation to stressful encounters. The results of this study revealed a reliable positive correlation between optimism and problem-focused coping. Optimism was associated with seeking support, and positive aspects of the stressful situation. Pessimism was associated with denial and distancing with focus on stressful feelings and disengagement from the goal with which the stressor was interfering. Moreover, optimists were perceived to engage in more adaptive coping responses than do pessimists. The study revealed

that optimists tend to do better than pessimists when confronted by stressful encounters.

### **CULTURAL INFLUENCES AND COPING**

Research also demonstrated that sources of stress and coping strategies are a function of culture. According to Aldwin (1994), culture is a dynamic process that affects coping in various ways. It affects the way in which stress is conceptualized, stressful events are appraised, and coping strategies are selected. It also has an influence in the institutionalization of stress and perceived effectiveness of the choice of coping strategies. Williams, Anshel and Quek (1997) in their study of cognitive styles among adolescent athletes as a function of culture and gender highlighted that coping is dependent on cultural differences or the subject's cultural characteristics. They found that emotions and coping could not be defined without reference to social and cultural differences.

The literature reveals that although culture plays a pivotal role in the understanding of stress and coping, cultural influences on the coping processes have been virtually ignored. According to Crocker *et al.* (1998), there are few cultural studies related to athletes and coping, and the few available studies focused on the western and oriental culture. According to Park (2000), such studies have concentrated on the American culture and lack a cross-cultural flavor. They are concerned with culturally pluralistic communities and focus on countries such as the United States, Canada and England (Goldstein & Blackman, 1978). According to Duda and Allison (1990:117), "there has not been a systematic attempt to deal with culture, language, race and ethnicity as conceptual meaningful categories of human experiences" in coping. These studies

used mainly English-speaking athletes as subjects with little accommodation of other languages and cultures.

Many studies have focused on the dynamics of cultural diversity of play and game forms. Such work has established the variability of play, game, and sport activities among both primitive societies and contemporary cultures of the world. Researchers have always been intrigued by the antecedents and consequences of sport participation and performance (Duda & Allison, 1990). Many scholars have studied and contributed to issues such as race differences in metabolism, physique and body composition, and maximal and sub-maximal work capacity in sport (Bouchard, 1988; Himes, 1988). These studies focused on comparisons of professional, collegiate and Olympic athletes mainly in sport such as baseball, basketball, and track and field.

In general, the relevant literature indicates that blacks have consistently outperformed whites in basketball and baseball (Coakley, 1986; Samson & Yerkes, 1988). In track and field, blacks tend to dominate in sprint events while whites are predominately found at the elite level in the middle-distance running events. One example of these kinds of studies was the one conducted in the United States by Malina (1988) in which he found ethnic differences in motor development and performance of young athletes from diverse ethnic backgrounds. He also found that young black athletes tend to do significantly better in motor skills than white children.

Research also reveals that sport psychologists study cultural issues in sport in a much more narrow scope. According to Chu and Griffey (1985) this research has specifically examined the nature of race relations within sport teams, issues of racial and ethnic stratification, discrimination, and mobility among collegiate and professional athletes.

Research, particularly in a large pluralistic country such as the United States, has shown that ethnic minorities (e.g., Blacks, Hispanics, Native-Americans) maintain the values, norms, expectations, and behaviours of their own culture while still operating effectively within a mainstream society. Even though athletes are placed in a “dominating culture”, they still use their cultural knowledge and background to cope with their sport challenges.

Despite these limitations, few of the cultural studies have brought about significant contributions in the study of coping, especially in the investigation of culture as a form of context for individual behavior. For example, Ha and Kim (1996) examined the influence of acute stress among Korean judo athletes. They found that there are differences in the choice of coping strategies by elite judo athletes. The study revealed that Korean athletes use approach coping more frequently than avoidance in preparation for their competitive sport events.

In another study of the coping profiles of Korean competitive athletes, Yoo (2001) found that human behavior is subject to societal and cultural differences, and the style of coping people employ varies according to specific cultural coping structures. Korean athletes were found to have different coping styles to that found in the West. According to this study, they preferred transcendence coping model that is central in their culture. Korean culture has been influenced by Confucianism and Buddhism that value harmony, modesty, self-discipline and collectivism, that supports transcendence coping. Yoo (2001: 294) defines transcendence as “a coping strategy that is used by individuals which enables them to detach themselves psychologically from their sources of stress”. This type of coping allows athletes to cope better and become independent when perceiving stressful situations.

In a cross-cultural analysis of exercises in sport psychology, Duda and Allison (1990) reveal the usage of behaviour-risk strategies by U.S. and Korean athletes. These researchers found cultural differences in the use of a behaviour-risk strategy between athletes from the two countries. Behaviour-risk strategy includes changing and controlling of an environment and making of plans to avoid any risk presented by a stressful encounter. The research findings show differences in the perceptions of behaviour-risk strategy. Korean athletes found a behaviour-risk strategy as active and highly assertive, whereas the U.S. athletes perceived this strategy as normal and potentially ineffective.

In the study of gender and ethnic differences in student-athletes psychological responses to stressful life events, Smallman *et al.* (1991) found that black athletes perceived stressful life events as more aversive than white athletes. According to them, black athletes are placed at higher risk for psychological harm by the different stressful life events they experience. Smallman and others (1991), relate their athletes' responses to the interaction effect of ethnicity within athletic participation.

There were also few cross-cultural studies in America, Europe and Australia. Examples of these kinds of studies include the study conducted by Aldwin (1994) comparing USA and Australian Athletes. In this study Aldwin (1994) observed that athletes of different countries have a different understanding of "stress leave" and intentions to missing training sessions. In another related study, Anshel, Williams & Hodge (1997), compared coping styles of male and female U.S. and Australian athletes following different sources of acute stress. Using the approach-avoidance coping framework, these researchers found that there are significant differences in the way in which athletes from different

cultures use coping strategies. Coping styles were culturally relative and found to be a function of gender and other ethnic variables.

The literature study also highlighted the importance and effects of culture on perceptions and affective responses. It was found that ethnic groups vary in their orientations to time and space, general life values, and perspectives toward competition and cooperation (Anshel & Weinberg, 1995; Hall, 1977; Madsen & Shapiro, 1970). Anshel and Weinberg (1995) in their study of American and Australian basketball referees found that there were cross-cultural differences in the sources of stress amongst the American and Australian subjects. The study demonstrated that individuals with different cultural backgrounds have different perceptions and affective responses to stress. It revealed that there is an existence of cognitive and behavioral differences between the Australian and American basketball referees. These differences were demonstrated in three coping components namely, the sources of selected stressors, cognitive appraisal of these stressors, and the amount and type of coping responses and the study showed that cultural factors had influence in the development of these differences.

### **ETHNICITY AND COPING**

Ethnicity was also highlighted as another influential variable in the development of perceptions about stress and use of coping strategies in sport. Research evidence showed that ethnicity was not merely the independent variable that defined group membership and structural position, but is more related to basic psychological processes of perceptions, cognition, intellectual functioning, value acquisition, personality development and expression, and social interaction (Jackson, 1989; Duda & Allison, 1990). It is a key variable that influenced stress and other psychological processes which cannot be ignored in coping

research. Duda and Allison (1990) maintain that the failure to consider this variability among and between ethnic groups will diminish its influence within the sport domain and leave the theoretical understanding of human condition in sporting contexts biased and distorted.

Research on ethnicity in sport revealed that theoretical writings outweigh empirical evidence. Most studies concentrated on theory, ethnic development and self-identification models (Parham, 1989). They focused on the conceptualization of ethnicity as well as its related aspects. These studies were based on one of the three broad perspectives: social identity theory, acculturation and culture, and identity formation (Phinney, 1990). There was also a considerable overlap amongst frameworks on which studies were based and a great variation in the extent to which the relevant framework was discussed and applied to the research.

Much of the research was conducted within the framework of the social identity as conceptualized by social psychologists. The earliest statement of the importance of social identity was made by Lewin (1948), who asserted that individuals need a firm sense of group identification in order to maintain a sense of well-being. This idea was developed in considerable detail in the social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner (1979). According to the theory, being a member of a group provides individuals with a sense of belonging that contributes to a positive self-concept. A number of studies addressed this issue. For example, a strong and secured ethnic identity is proved to correlate positively with self-esteem and optimism (Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts & Romero, 1999) and scholastic self-competence (Davey, Eaker, Fish & Klock, 2003). A Dutch study on the other hand, found a strong relationship between ethnic self-esteem and global self-esteem among Turkish than Dutch participants (Verkuyten, 2001).

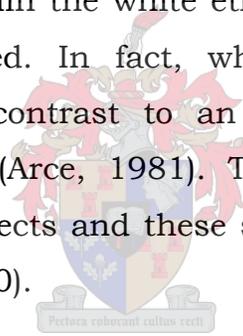
In contrast, Banks (1976) discovered that low-status group results in low self-regard. The study reveals the presence of the notion of “self-hatred” among disparaged ethnic groups with reference to black American groups. His findings suggests that if the dominant group in society holds characteristics of an ethnic group in low esteem, then ethnic group members are potentially faced with a negative social identity. In fact, Cross (1978) found that the identification with an ethnic group of lower status in society is related to a poorer self-concept.

Studies on acculturation framework dealt broadly with changes in cultural attitudes, values, and behaviour that result from contact between two distinct groups. These studies were concerned with individuals and how they relate to their own group as a subgroup of the larger society. An important empirical issue in this area was the question of the extent to which ethnic identity is maintained over time when a minority ethnic group comes in contact with a dominant majority group (Glazer & Moynihan, 1970) and the impact of the process on psychological adjustment (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987).

The social identity framework on the other hand suggests that ethnic identity is achieved through an active process of decision making and self-evaluation. According to this theory, ethnic identity is formed over time as the individual explores the ethnicity in his/her life. This perspective drew on psychoanalytic theory and developmental psychology, and its main influence being the theories and empirical studies of Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1980). Erikson (1968) maintain that ethnic identity is the result of a period of exploration and experimentation that leads to decisions or commitments in various areas of life such as, religion, occupation and political orientation. The formation of ethnic identity is thought of as a process similar to ego identity formation that takes place over time as people explore and make

decisions about the role of ethnicity in their lives. A number of conceptual models in this area have described ethnic identity in minority adolescents and adults. Cross (1978) uses the framework to describe a model of the development of black consciousness during the Civil Rights era. In a dissertation, Kim (1981) describes Asian-American identity development in a group of young adult Asian-American women. A model of ethnic identity formation was also proposed by Atkinson, Morten and Sue (1983).

Empirical studies like theoretical writings also concentrated on single groups and used a variety of subjects. The largest group of studies dealt with white ethnic groups, such as Jews, French Canadians, and Greek and Italian Americans. Within the white ethnic groups, Jews have been the subgroup most studied. In fact, white subjects were included primarily as a group in contrast to an ethnic minority group e.g. Hispanic, Black or Asian (Arce, 1981). The second largest group of studies included black subjects and these studies were mostly from the United States (Phinney, 1990).



Studies focused on a number of factors, such as, psychological adjustment and ethnicity, relationship between age and ethnicity, gender effect on ethnicity, ethnic differences in relation to motor development and sport performance, participation patterns in competitive sport, and variations in exercise and physical activities. Earlier interest in the studies of adjustment and ethnicity stemmed from the work of Clark and Clark (1947) which examined the relationship between psychological adjustment and some measure of ethnic identity. The findings reveal that black children from a low-status background have poor self-image than those from the white or high-status background. Similar findings were reported in the coping study of the Israeli high school students. Tzuriel and Klein (1977) find that ego identity which is suggestive of good

adjustment was higher among those with high ethnic group identification than among those with low identification.

Other studies reveal no relationship between ethnic identity and various measures of adjustment. For example, White and Burke (1987) their study of the relationship between self-esteem and ethnicity find that there is no relationship between self-esteem and ethnic identity in the semantic differential scale. In another study of the collegiate students, the research findings reveal that black and white attitudes were not related to the measures of self-esteem (Houston, 1984).

Many other studies investigated the relationship between age and ethnic identity (Phinney, 1992). Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind and Vedder (2001) have presented evidence of a positive correlation between age and ethnic identity. These findings were challenged by Branch, Tayal and Triplett (2000) who found no age effect on ethnic identity. Other researchers find a negative correlation between the two variables (Davey *et al.*, 2003). The findings were discrepant and inconsistent. These discrepancies may be explained by the assumption that ethnic identity reaches its peak during the late adolescence and that age influences ethnic development to a particular level.

Social scientists have also been intrigued by the ethnic differences in motor development and sport performance. Malina (1988) finds that black children, starting from infancy tend to do significantly better in motor skills when compared to white or Hispanic children. In explaining these findings, the researcher maintain that the potential influence of the social environment on motor development cannot be discounted and factors such as parental reinforcement and child-rearing patterns are influential factors in explaining differences.

Other studies have attempted to identify race differences in performance and focused predominantly on comparisons of professional, collegiate, and Olympic black and white athletes in sport such as baseball, basketball, and track and field events (Coakley, 1986; Samson & Yerkes, 1988). Literature in general indicates that blacks have consistently exhibited greater performance than whites in basketball (Eitzen & Yetman, 1977; Johnson & Marple, 1973). In track and field, Coakley (1986) finds that Americans tend to dominate in sprint events while American whites are predominantly found in long-distance running events. The underlying reasons for such performance, according to Duda and Allison (1990), are not yet clear from the research conducted. Sport sociologists attribute differences in performance to socialization differences and processes (McPherson, 1975). Biological factors are frequently used to explain performance differences between black and white athletes. Research also identifies psychological factors such as motivation, expectations, or perceived ability as influential in ethnic differences in sport performance.

Duda (1986) studied the impact of ethnicity on goal perspectives and individual's definition of success and failure. Her work suggested that participants from varied ethnic backgrounds perceive goal accomplishment in different ways. When contrasted with Navajo (native Americans) male and female interscholastic athletes, Anglo athletes (athletes of British origins) were found to be more likely to use social comparison to process success and failure in sport and based their success or failure on the demonstration of high ability or low ability, respectively. Winning a competition was clearly the primary goal emphasized by Anglo males. Navajo athletes, on the other hand, tend to define their goals in terms of personal mastery and performance process. The exerting of effort rather than the demonstration of competence was more central to perceived goal accomplishment among the Navajo athletes. This study showed that identifiable patterns exist in the

cognitive processes and behaviors of culturally diverse groups and that people from diverse ethnic backgrounds perceive and hold distinct views about success and failure.

Very little research has dealt with gender effect on ethnic identity. For example, Smallman, Sowa and Young (1991) study the examination of gender and ethnic differences in student-athletes psychological responses to stressful events. They find significant ethnic differences on the perceptions of experienced stressful life events by athletes. Black athletes reported significantly higher ratings of aversiveness than did white athletes and gender differences on the Anxiety Scale. The study suggested that Black athletes were placed at higher risks for developmental and psychological harm and this showed that sport persons' of different ethnic groups are subjected to different stressful life events which place them in different psychological and developmental levels.

In another study, Phinney (1990) investigates gender variation and sport involvement. The study reveals significant differences between genders on athletic involvement. It suggests that women are more involved in ethnic identity issues than males. These findings were supported by what Ting-Toomey (1981) discovered in her research with Chinese-American college students. She reveals that Chinese-American women are more oriented to their ancestral culture than men. Other studies find that women are more indifferent than men to ethnic identity matters (Hjort & Frisen, 2006). For example, the Jewish boys in Canada show greater preference for Jewish culture than girls. A similar trend was noted among blacks. Parham and Helms (1985) find that black men are more likely than black women to endorse cultural values and attitudes. The Chinese-American women, Jewish boys and black males reflected the relativism of culture and ethnicity.

Research also showed that ethnicity is a critical factor in predicting participation patterns in competitive sport and physical activities. Studies reveal that the realm of competitive sport is not culturally homogeneous. In popular American team sport such as basketball, football and baseball, the ratio of minority participants far exceeds their representation in the general American population (Duda & Allison). In many other popular American competitive sports such as golf, tennis, swimming and gymnastics there is a striking under-representation of minority. In professional sport, the percentage of white, black and Hispanic athletes involved is quite different from their relative representation in the general population. For example, in 1988 approximately 75% of the NBA players were black (Koch & Vander Hill, 1988), whereas blacks make up only 11% of the U.S. population. The participation of blacks in America was not representative.

A similar pattern emerged when examining the number of male and female athletes that are involved in college sport. In 1990 for example, 61% of Division 1 basketball athletes were black whilst they were a minority in America (Berghorn, F., Yetman, N. & Hanna, W. (1988). The representation of black female athletes in collegiate basketball was somewhat lower than the percentage for black male athletes, yet there was still twice the ratio of black females in collegiate basketball as in their comparable age group in the general population.

Several other studies indicate that blacks tend to be more peer-oriented and likely to use urban recreational facilities while whites are more individualistic in their behaviour patterns and prefer outdoor recreational activities (Hutchinson, 1987). In a comparison of recreational activity patterns between blacks, whites and Hispanics in parts of Chicago, Hutchison and Fidel (1984) find that black and whites tend to participate in a greater percentage in mobile activities such as

jogging and bicycling whereas Hispanics tend to participate to a greater extent in stationary activities such as sitting and talking. When sports such as tennis, basketball, baseball were analyzed, Hispanics engage more in those sports than do blacks and whites (Hutchison & Fidel, 1984). In sum, a review of literature demonstrated that ethnic groups differ in the degree and type of participation in competitive and recreational sport and that there is, in the majority of cases, ethnic variability in motor development, physical/sport performance, and exercise involvement.

### **LIFE STRESS AND COPING**

Life stress is another confounding variable that has been explored in coping research. Very few studies have focused on this area. Many studies have examined the actual sport context and athletes' reaction to those conditions. According to Crocker (1992) the majority of studies have concentrated on how athletes cope with game-related demands and requirements of managing time, interpersonal relationships, media, injury and finances.

Holt and Hogg (2002) in their study of the perceptions of stress and coping strategies prior to the 1999 soccer world-cup finals revealed that stress is related to day-to-day survival and extent of one's experience. According to these scholars, stress and coping strategies are affected by the living conditions on which people reside. In order to understand the coping mechanisms of athletes, these researchers stressed that one has to investigate the conditions under which athletes play or live. Zeidner and Saklofske (1996), in their study of the effectiveness of coping methods, found that track and field athletes used preferred coping methods that are relative to their world views or orientation.

Smallman *et al.* (1991) in their study of student-athletes' responses to stressful life experiences found that there is a significant difference between black and white athletes, and male and female athletes in their perception of stressful life events prior to experiencing the event. The study also highlighted differences in the number of stressful life events experienced by these subcultures of athletes.

In another study of the evaluation of perceived stress on coping strategies, Madden *et al.* (1990), found that basketball players who reported low levels of perceived life stress indicated less frequent use of coping strategies than those players who reported high levels of perceived stress. In another study of stress coping in male and female high school basketball players, Rider and Hicks (1995) identified a positive relationship between life-event stress and coping in basketball. Studies on physical education students (Lysens, Auweele & Ostyn, 1986), and female gymnasts (Kerr & Minden, 1988) yielded similar relationships between life-event stress and coping with sport injuries. (This will be in more detail in the section dealing with coping and sport injuries). In contrast, Williams, Tonymon and Wadsworth (1986) found no difference in the occurrence of injuries between female collegiate volleyball players scoring high or low on a measure of stressful life events. Similar results were reported for basketball and cross-country athletes as well (Williams *et al.*, 1986).

### **GENDER ISSUES IN COPING**

The current literature on coping also suggests the existence of gender differences in coping responses (Crocker & Graham, 1995; Madden *et al.*, 1989). Researchers hold that sex role stereotypes and role expectations predispose male and female athletes to respond differently to stress. Few studies indicated that female athletes are more likely to use emotion-

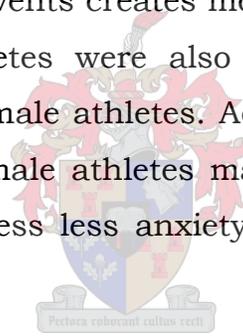
focused coping and avoidance coping particularly in response to uncontrollable stressors (Miller & Kirsch, 1987; Ptacek, Smith & Zanas, 1992), whereas male athletes are more likely to use problem-solving and approach coping in dealing with stress (Carver *et al.*, 1989).

In a study of gender differences in the perception of stress for athletes, Madden *et al.* (1989) reported that female middle-distance runners used more emotion-focused coping in response to injury than male runners. Anshel *et al.* (2001a) on the other hand, found that female athletes used approach-emotion coping in response to acute stressors in sport (e.g., bad calls, and cheating opponents) than males. Crocker and Graham (1995) also provided some evidence that females use higher levels of seeking social support for emotional reasons and increasing effort than males. Yoo and Park (1998) in their study of problem-focused coping amongst male and female Korean athletes, found that male athletes from various sports used problem-focused coping while avoidance coping was more common among female athletes.

Similar findings were obtained in a study of coping strategies with acute stress among male and female Israeli athletes. Anshel *et al.* (2001a) found that male and female Israeli athletes differ in the way in which they deal with different kinds of stressors. Female athletes were reported using avoidance coping on many occasions during their sporting careers whilst males preferred to use approach coping to the same sport challenges. The results also revealed that while females and males preferred certain coping strategies, males were more likely to use avoidance coping after experiencing the stressor "cheat". Females, on the other hand, were more likely to use approach coping following the stressor "error".

With regard to skilled athletes, Haney and Long (1995), revealed that there are minimal gender differences among skilled athletes when coping with acute sources of stress, especially stress experienced during sport contests. In this study male athletes, however, employed avoidance coping more often-after four of eight sources of stress than their female counterparts. These findings supported those of the earlier study by Anshel *et al.* (1997) in which females were reported using approach coping more than males, following a bad call and a cheating opponent.

In another study of gender differences in student-athletes (baseball, track and field, tennis, soccer, basketball, volleyball, swimming and golf) responses to stressful events, Smallman *et al.* (1991) showed that the experience of stressful life events creates more anxiety for males than for female athletes. Male athletes were also reported to experience less competitive anxiety than female athletes. According to the results of the study it would seem that male athletes may be more comfortable with sport competition and express less anxiety related to competition than female athletes.



## **COPING WITH INJURIES**

The incidence of injuries in sport and recreation has been estimated to be very high, with injury rate representing about one third in interscholastic sport (Hanson, McCullagh & Tonymon, 1992). Despite technological advances in safety equipment, improved coaching, emphasis on proper physical conditioning, athletic injuries continue to increase in all sport. Unfortunately, the variables that predispose athletic injuries are not clearly defined.

Past research has examined physical, environmental, and psychosocial factors that predispose athletes to injury. For example, Holmes and Rahe

(1967) developed the *Social Readjustment Rating Scale* and found that the risk for injuries was higher for individuals with high as opposed to low, life-stress scores. Sarason, Johnson and Siegel (1978), a decade later developed the *Life Experience Survey* and found that negative life stress were significantly related to several physical and psychological measures. The *Social Athletic Readjustment Rating Scale* and *Athletic Life Experience Survey* were also developed to increase the appropriateness of life-event measures for an athletic population.

Using these measures (*Social and Athletic Readjustment Rating Scale* and *Athletic Life Experience Survey*), primarily with collegiate football players, Cryan and Alles (1983), found a positive correlation between life stress and athletic injury. They found that injured college football players reported higher levels of life stress than their uninjured counterparts. In addition, this study demonstrated the negative effects of life stress in football populations.

Similar studies were conducted in non-contact sports. Researchers examined life-stress relationships in athletic populations, such as adult runners (Schafer & McKenna, 1985), elite gymnasts (Kerr & Minden, 1988), physical education students (Lysens *et al.*, 1986), volleyball (Williams *et al.*, 1986), tennis, baseball, and softball (Hardy & Riehl, 1988) and the majority of which confirmed the positive correlation between life stress and athletic injuries. They reflected a strong relationship between high-stress life events and sport injuries.

Williams *et al.* (1986) employed a retrospective design and self-report measure of athletic injury among male and female collegiate volleyball players and found that in non-contact sport, athletes with high life-stress scores experienced no greater injury occurrence than athletes with low

stress scores. In contrast, Hardy and Riehl (1988) examined life stress and injury among male and female athletes in baseball, softball, tennis, and track and found that total life change and negative life change were significant predictors of injury frequency in sport. However, this study failed to consider the potential effect of other variables, such as social support and coping resources when measuring the frequency and severity of athletic injuries.

To address this limitation, Andersen and Williams (1988) presented a dynamic, multidimensional examination of the study of moderating variables in life stress-injury research. They examined the possible mechanisms underlying stress-injury relationship and athletic risk to injuries and found three broad categories that influence an athlete's stress response. The first category pertains to personality characteristics, such as hardiness, locus of control, trait anxiety, achievement motivation, and sensation-seeking attitude. These characteristics were portrayed as influencing the cognitive appraisal of stressors, which in turn influences the stress response. The second category is the individual's history of stressors. This includes major and minor life events and past injuries. The third antecedent includes coping resources and social support that moderate the effect of life stress on physical and psychological outcomes. In short, these scholars suggest that psychological stress and physical injuries are the resultant of personality characteristics, individual's resourcefulness, and cognitive mediation. They further maintained that the psychosocial variables have a direct effect on the individual responses to stress and only the stress responses have direct influence to injury susceptibility.

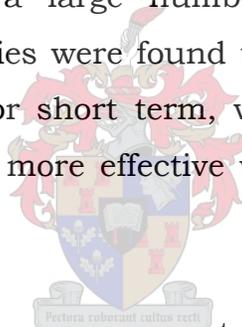
In response to the centrality of coping resources in the cognitive appraisal process, researchers have examined this variable within life stress-injury relationships (Blackwell & McCullagh, 1990; Hanson *et al.*,

1992; Petrie, 1993; Smith, Smoll & Ptacek, 1990). In their study of male and female high school athletes, Smith *et al.* (1990) reported no direct relationship between psychological coping skills and athletic injury, but found that athletes experienced the strongest stress-injury relationship under conditions of low coping skills and low social support with life stress. Williams *et al.* (1986), however, found a direct relationship only between coping resources and injury, whereas Hanson *et al.* (1992) reported that athletes with higher levels of coping resources were less likely to suffer injury than those reporting lower levels.

Another area that has been the focus of research is the exploration of how competitive trait anxiety influences stress-injury relationships. For example, Hanson *et al.* (1992) examined whether competitive trait anxiety moderates the effects of life stress. They reported that competitive trait anxiety weakly discriminates between levels of injury severity, but was not related to injury frequency. Passer and Seese (1983) on the other hand, found that neither general nor competitive trait anxiety moderated the stress-injury relationship. Negative life stress was related to injury for low-competitive trait anxious players. Blackwell and McCullagh (1990), however, reported that competitive trait anxiety level differentiated between those Division 1-A football players who were severely injured, with high trait anxious players experiencing more injuries. Petrie (1993) divided his sample on the basis of playing status into two groups (starting vs. non-starting players) to evaluate the relative effects of negative and positive life stress and anxiety. He found that negatively appraised life events place players at risk of injury, and for starters competitive trait anxiety moderated the effects of positive life stress. Although these studies have provided initial information concerning the effect of coping resources on the life stress-injury relationship, additional research appears warranted to broaden the understanding of this important psychosocial variable.

## **ASSESSMENTS IN COPING RESEARCH**

The most compelling indication of the importance of testing and measurement of coping comes from the work of Mullen and Suls (1982). These theorists maintained that there are a variety of measurements and instruments available to study coping strategies and these instruments are influenced by the methodologies used to explain coping (Crocker *et al.*, 1993; Kowalski & Crocker, 2001). According to Matheny *et al.* (1986: 527) "measurement technology is expected to display variety since the science of stress is relatively young". These models vary in terms of how much emphasis is placed on the person (dispositional coping styles) or situational characteristics (situational coping strategies) or the duration of the measurement outcomes. Mullen and Suls (1982) identified a consistent pattern across a large number of studies, namely that rejection (avoidance) strategies were found to be effective when outcome measures were immediate or short term, whereas attention (approach) strategies were found to be more effective when the outcome measures were long term.



Research also revealed that measurement instruments are selected on the basis of the purpose of research and the timing of coping strategies. For example, performance behavior, such as on-field communication cannot be measured by the same scale that is used to assess communication before the game. Different instruments are used for different reasons at different times. The *Ways of Coping Checklist* (Crocker, 1992) and the *COPE* instrument (Crocker & Graham, 1995) are mostly used in research to assess coping strategies during sport contests and self-report inventories are used to assess coping strategies before and/or after contests. These instruments are also used to examine stress or competitive encounter at a single point in time and they advocate for a trait view of stress and coping. They assume that there is temporal or

situational consistency in coping and ignore the multiple points in the assessment of the stress encounter.

According to Anshel *et al.* (2001b), there is a need for the development of sport-specific measurement instruments. Most coping studies in sport use adapted versions of assessment instrument borrowed from the general psychology. Inventories such as the *COPE* (Carver *et al.*, 1986), and *Ways of Coping Questionnaire* (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and the *Multidimensional Coping Inventory* (Endler & Parker, 1990) have been extensively used throughout the coping literature, despite having limited utility in sport settings. Eklund, Grove and Heard (1998) examined the psychometric properties of the *COPE* inventory with an instrument called *MCOPE* to describe the athletes' coping responses to performance slumps. This instrument was restricted in the sense that it omitted personal and situational factors that influence coping and did not address other components of coping process. As a result, Madden, Kirkby and McDonald (1989) adapted the *Ways of Coping Checklist (WCC)* to sport and this led to the development of sport-specific instrument, *Ways of Coping Checklist for Sport* that was used to assess the coping strategies of middle-distance runners. Crocker (1992) modified the *Ways of Coping Checklist for Sport* to measure coping based on recent stressful athletic situations. Haney and Long (1995) further modified the *WCC* to assess higher order coping (engage and disengagement coping) and physical activity context. Smith, Schultz, Smoll and Ptacek (1995) developed the *Athletic Coping Skills Inventor-28*.

A study of the literature also revealed that validity and reliability are key concerns to the measurement and use of test instruments in sport psychology (Crocker *et al.*, 1998). Researchers discovered that at this time, the coping measures that are used in sport research have been

norm referenced rather than criterion referenced. Measurements are based on individual differences where the test scores are compared to other scores in the distribution, as opposed to emphasis on the proportion of the domain mastered. Moreover, reliability of tests is assessed by looking at the consistency of scores for an individual over time and estimate them using correlations.

A review of literature also showed that there are different research designs applied in the study of stress and coping. Studies highlight certain research methods such as, longitudinal, prospective, micro-analytic approaches (closely studying the details of what is happening intra-personally as well as inter-personally or causal variables), and cross-sectional research. The cross-sectional studies are those studies that can only demonstrate a correlation between A and B but cannot prove causality. The examples of these studies include the investigations of the relationship between personality differences and coping (Cox & Ferguson, 1991), examination of relationship between coping and mental health (Aldwin & Revenson, 1987), evaluation of the coping strategies of elite basketball athletes (Madden *et al.*, 1990), and active coping amongst diverse athletes (Crocker, 1992). These studies focused on problem- and emotion-focused coping.

Prospective longitudinal research on the other hand, allows the researcher to predict later events from measures obtained earlier. This requires repeated measurements on the same persons who are observed from time to time across diverse circumstances. Much time is spent obtaining repeated measures with the same athlete and the size of sample is limited by the cost of obtaining measurement instruments. This kind of research allows researchers to identify psychological structures and psychological reactions over time and diverse conditions

and very few of these kinds of studies were conducted in sport psychology.

The majority of studies were both ipsative and normative. Comparisons were made within persons and between or among persons. Most ipsative research included studies on competitive trait anxiety and sport injuries (Blackwell & McCullagh, 1990; Petrie, 1993), and studies on coping styles and personality traits (Carver *et al.*, 1989, Scheier *et al.*, 1986, Gaudreau *et al.*, 2001). Normative research, on the other hand, included studies on coping strategies and coping as a dynamic process (Anshel *et al.*, 2001, Madden *et al.*, 1990, Gould *et al.*, 1993), gender studies and coping (Crocker & Graham, 1995; Ptacek *et al.*, 1992; Yoo & Park, 1998), and cultural studies on coping (Smallman *et al.*, 1991).

## **CONCLUSION**

The conclusion that can be drawn from the literature review is that coping research in football is still in its infancy stage. Knowledge of stress and coping as related to football are clearly in the genesis stage. There are several fundamental conceptual issues awaiting clarification and these issues have implications for future research and measurement of coping. Theoretical conceptions of stress displayed considerable variety. There are multiple constructions of stress with no common or universal definition. Literature varied in conceptualization and terminology as applied to this concept.

An increased amount of high-quality research was however reviewed and these studies were conducted on various topics. The research evidence showed that the majority of them were done in the USA and Europe, and very few in Africa and Asia. Evidence showed that there was not enough

research on cross-cultural sport and assessment of coping as a dynamic changing construct.

The review also revealed that there were a significant number of qualitative and quantitative studies. The majority of studies focused on performance enhancement, stress management and investigation of how athletes deal with performance slumps and competitive demands. They used within-persons and between-persons research designs. The focus of these studies were to demonstrate the causal relationships and comparing individuals' responses to stress and coping. They employed qualitative techniques such as, interviews, participation observation, case studies, life history and analysis of historical records (Anshel *et al.*, 2001; Giacobbi & Weinberg, 2000; Gould *et al.*, 1993b; Park, 2000; Scheier *et al.*, 1986; Ward & Williams, 2003) and the pursuit of this line of inquiry was influenced by the complexity of stress as a construct under investigation.

Quantitative studies focused mainly on the coping measures that were developed to assess athletic populations (Anshel, 1996; Crocker & Graham, 1995; Madden *et al.*, 1989). Many researchers investigated the predictive value of variables such as cognitive appraisal (Anshel & Kaissidis, 1997), trait anxiety (Finch, 1994), perceived stress (Madden *et al.*, 1990), affects (Crocker & Graham, 1995), gender (Crocker & Graham, 1995; Kolt, Kirkby & Lindner, 1995), and level of competition (Madden *et al.*, 1989). Studies also showed that research examining stress and coping in football is not enough. Even in the USA and Europe where there are few studies, evidence indicates that there is scant research examining stress and coping in football (Giacobbi & Weinberg, 2000; Gould *et al.*, 1993b; Scheier *et al.*, 1986).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

# **METHODOLOGY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the methodology utilized to gather and analyze data will be presented. The chapter includes a description of the sample, research instrument, research design, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations.

### **SAMPLE**

The study was conducted amongst black and white professional football players in the metropolitan region of the Western Cape, Republic of South Africa. A purposive sampling strategy was employed (Ritchie, 2003) and a sample of thirty-three football players was drawn from a club in the *Professional Premier Soccer League*. The criteria for the selection of the club are discussed in detail on page 101. Participants were selected with a purpose to reflect and represent features of the investigated group. Race, age, educational level, playing position, years of experience in the team, and marital status were used as the population characteristics for the basis of this selection.

The theoretical and empirical evidence has revealed that these variables are significant and related with respect to ethnic identity, stress and coping (Bonney, 1955; Constantinou & Harvey, 1985; Phinney, 1990; Smallman, Sowa & Young, 1991). In a study of the dimensions of ethnic differences amongst Greek Americans, Constantinou and Harvey (1985: 255) indicate that the “intergenerational differences in ethnicity are influenced by factors such as education, place of origin, place of residence and individual attitudes”. According to them, the impact of

these factors on ethnicity should form the focus of ethnic studies. Similar observations were captured in Phinney's (1990) study of ethnic identity in adolescents and Smallman, Sowa and Young's (1991) study of ethnic differences in athletes' responses to stressful events. Smallman, Sowa and Young (1991) found that variables such as athletic participation, socioeconomic status and sociological factors are related to the development of coping responses in athletes.

The transactional theory also confirms the importance of the role of experience, social structure and context in coping processes. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identify *novelty* and *anticipation* as two of the situational factors that influence coping. They maintain that the exposure of people to situations with which they have no previous experience coupled with lack of confidence or anticipation can serve as sources of threat that inhibit effective coping. In fact, these conditions or variables were perceived as having a confounding effect on matters related ethnicity and coping.

Furthermore, an attempt was made to make the sample as diverse as possible within the boundaries of the defined population. Diversity was needed to optimize the chances of identifying the full range of factors that are associated with the investigated phenomenon. This particular sample was chosen in order to investigate whether there are cultural, environmental and experiential differences in the way football players select their coping strategies. Three groups of eleven football players each were selected from an ethnically diverse group of black, coloured and white players. These groups included three goalkeepers, twelve defenders, nine mid-fielders, and nine strikers (See *Appendix D*). The coach was a co-selector and responsible together with the researcher who led and guided the process of the selection of respondents from the different team lists. The inclusion of the coach in the selection process

was carried out in the spirit of respect of the social dynamics and structural functions of the team, building of trust and transparency. This decision is discussed as a possible sampling limitation under the subheading *Ethical Considerations*.

The group's ages ranged between 15 and 32 years. The average age of black players was 22 years, 17 years coloured players, and 24 years for white players (See *Appendix F*). Eleven of the 33 players came from provinces other than the Western Cape. They were from KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga. Twelve of the participating players attended high school, 8 were at tertiary institutions, 6 were working, while 9 of the 33 players did not provide information about their educational status. The experience of players with the team varied from 1 year to 9 years. Most players had 2 years' experience with the team. Seventeen of the 33 players were regular starters and 16 were non-starters.

A small-size sample was opted for in order to allow data to be properly managed and analyzed. According to Ritchie (2003: 83), qualitative samples are small because there is no requirement to ensure that the samples are of a sufficient scale to provide estimates or to determine statistically significant discriminatory variables. In qualitative studies, there is no need to draw statistical inferences with the required precision demanded from other methods. Lastly, the type of information this qualitative study yields is rich in detail. There are therefore many "bites" of information from each unit of data collection. In order to do justice, the sample size has to be kept to a reasonably manageable.

With regard to club selection, the club was chosen because it was conveniently situated for the researcher who was familiar with it and knew some of its coaching staff. It is located in the center of Cape Town

and has quite a significant number of black and white players. According to the statistics of the *Professional Premier Soccer League*, it is one of the most successful football teams in the Western Cape and its players are exposed to a fair amount of pressure. Because of its performance record, players are expected to produce good results. It also has one of the best coaches in the country. He was selected “coach of the year” for 2004/5 season and won three leagues titles with three different clubs. The club also has a successful scouting programme that is based in the townships and urban areas. Their developmental team won the 2004/5 league title and had many players that are represented in the national team.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study employed an interpretive-qualitative methodology to generate data. This methodology was chosen because it was considered the most appropriate method to produce social explanations that are generalizable to the research question. One of the major distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research is the fact that it attempts to understand people in terms of their own definition of their world (Becker, 1992; Bell, 1993; Mouton, 2001; Streat, 1998). It is concerned about “how the social world is interpreted, understood, or experienced” (Mason, 1996: 4). Qualitative methodology can also be strategically conducted and yet be contextual and flexible. This means that the researcher will be able to make decisions on the basis of a sound strategy, but also be sensitive to the changing contexts and situations in which the research takes place. By utilizing a qualitative approach an attempt was made to understand the behaviour and choice of coping strategies from the football players’ point of view.

According to Hall and Hall (2004), qualitative research is about understanding the world of the subjects, listening to their voices, and

allowing those voices to be heard in the analysis and the report. The data are collected as open-ended narratives without attempting to fit programme activities or people's experiences into predetermined, standardized categories such as the response choices that comprise typical questionnaires and tests. Qualitative approaches seek to measure what people have to say in their own words (Patton, 1986). They permit the researcher to understand the world as seen by the respondents and allow them (researchers) to describe the experiences of other people in detail and depth.

Qualitative methods allow interaction or dialogue between the researcher and informants. Such an environment permits nuances to be captured, questions to be clarified and adapted, and new ones to be improvised (Arksey & Knight, 1999). The absence of a prescribed set of rules in this approach creates the opportunity for a researcher to use his intuition and display his research skills and knowledge in the investigation of the defined phenomenon.

Principles and practices of the so-called “Indigenous Paradigm” were also incorporated in order to eliminate dilemmas, contradictions, and distortions that are generated when researchers are involved in work with ethnically diverse groups. It allowed the researcher to become sensitive and able to understand issues related to ethnicity. Kahakalau (2004:20) defines the indigenous paradigm as a “unique research methodology that is accountable to the indigenous communities and congruent with the native values and traditions”. It is a method that is framed entirely from a native perspective (Menziés, 2001) that bridges the gap between the western and indigenous research methodologies (Wilson, 2003). It involves a paradigm shift in the way the social scientists deal with research, research participants and processes.

In the current study, an attempt was made to follow the indigenous groups' knowledge procedures and protocols in the way data were acquired and collected. The researcher utilized the understanding of how the different ethnic groups communicate and participate in the activities of knowledge construction. This was achieved by establishing a personal relationship with participants or what Kahakalau (2004) refers to as the *engagement phase* or *initial dialogue* according to Menzies (2001).

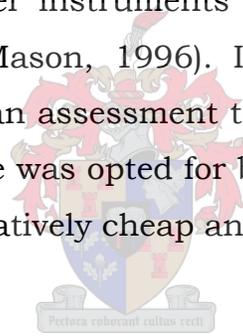
A full plan was prepared in advance for the meeting and personal research guidelines were developed that contributed in creating respectful relations. Participants were made to feel safe, valued and respected in the way the research was conducted and how they were treated. The researcher discussed the research method and topic with them and allowed them “to speak as the insiders” (Menzies, 2001: 28). By adopting this approach the misplaced political correctness (producing knowledge in a fairly unfettered fashion) was avoided and the knowledge system was inclusive and relational. Not an individual or imposed entity but a construct that is gained through establishing genuine respectful relationships with all creation and becoming answerable to all relations in the research process (Wilson, 2003). This contributed in making the research a meaningful effort that deepened the researcher's understanding of the studied phenomenon and its participants.

## **DATA COLLECTION**

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were used as a method of generating data. Interviews were opted for as a main source of data collection because it is believed that participants are more responsive and spontaneous in an informal, semi-structured setting (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Shaw, 1997; Mason, 1996) and oral communication or talk story is an indigenous way of collecting data (Kahakalau, 2004).

Interviews have an advantage of being flexible and ensure that the respondent understands the question and purpose of the study (Lankshear, 1993). They also create space for the researcher to have a range of themes to cover. Furthermore, they emphasize the relativism of culture, active participation of the interviewer and the importance of giving the interviewee a voice as indicated earlier (Mouton, 2001). The success of these interviews was determined largely by the facilitator, who was responsible for creating a non-threatening, supportive climate that enabled participants to express their views.

Qualitative interviews can also involve some techniques that are commonly associated with other methods, for example, observing, generating, and use of other instruments such as biographical checklists and questionnaires (Mason, 1996). In this study a biographical questionnaire was used as an assessment tool to supplement interviews. A biographical questionnaire was opted for because it was a quick way of collecting information, is relatively cheap and easy to analyze.



## **PROCEDURE**

Permission to carry out this study was gained through consultation with the management staff and head coach of the club. The purpose of the study was explained and permission was granted. In addition, informed consent from the participants was obtained. Participants completed questionnaires a week before the interviews. Interviews were completed in two weeks at the clubhouse, in April 2005. Each interview lasted between 60 and 120 minutes and was conducted in the mother tongue of respondents so as to facilitate participation.

An interview question guide was developed in advance by the researcher. It was piloted prior to its main administration with 15 players that came

from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This was done in order to check the wording and ascertain whether it was understandable to the intended sample. Furthermore, piloting was carried out to assess the completion time of the question guide and to allow the researcher to "ensure the data that is collected is suitable for the purpose of the study and also to dry run at analyzing the data" (Gratton & Jones, 2004: 127).

The question guide was divided into "primary and secondary" research questions as stipulated in the *Interview Guide* in *Appendix C*. The "primary" questions were first assembled and then sub-divided into "secondary" research questions. Each primary question has a set of corresponding secondary questions. The primary and secondary questions were developed in a way that allowed new questions to emerge. The "script" was not rigid and space was created for the process of interaction to help develop new questions. To make sure that secondary questions correspond to the research question and are assisting in answering the primary research question, cross-referencing of questions was done. The format of question guide, topics, and questions were cross-checked and discussed with the promoter and other researchers.

Interview sessions were audio-taped with the permission of participants and the following steps were taken to enhance reliability:

1. A researcher experienced in qualitative research and interview techniques conducted interviews.
2. Interviews were conducted in a secluded environment and confidentiality was ensured.
3. A code-recode procedure was used (Krefting, 1991). After coding the data, the same data were re-coded two weeks later and the results compared.

Two different ways were employed to validate qualitative data. The first concerned internal validation and the second external validation. This is discussed under the sub-heading *Data Analysis*. In fact, the idea of seeking reliability and validity is often avoided in qualitative research because of the different epistemological basis of qualitative studies and inappropriateness of the concepts. Instead, researchers discuss similar issues using terms and concepts that are felt to have greater resonance with the goals and values of qualitative research. A number of scholars used terms such as *consistency*, *dependability*, *confirmability*, *credibility* and *soundness* in favour of reliability and validity (Brink, Van Der Walt & Van Rensburg, 2006; Patton, 2002). For others, such language as *trustworthiness* and *authenticity* is used (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003; Patton, 2002). *Trustworthiness* is referred to as “the process of verifying and cross-checking accuracy and truth in social enquiry by allowing access to the research process for others to do so for themselves” (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 274). Patton (2002) refers to the same concept as an evaluators’ aim for neutrality and fairness or the seeking of high qualitative data that are credible, trustworthy, authentic and balanced about the phenomenon under study, and fair to the people studied.

Internal validity in the context of qualitative research was achieved through the process of method selection. The researcher made sure that the logic of the method was well matched to the kind of research question the study required and the kind of social explanation it is intended to develop. Semi-structured interviews were chosen in preference to other data generating instruments because they were valid in this context and served as a better way to demonstrate validity. According to Mason (1996) the fluidity and flexibility of methods such as semi-structured interviewing enhances validity. She points out that rigidity and standardization of structured instruments and environment

lack sensitivity to validity and have excessive concerns with reliability and quantification in analysis. This compromises validity at the expense of reliability and size. Furthermore, a *triangulation method* was used to operationalize concepts and explore research questions. A research strategy was worked out to evaluate how well the interviewing or sources of data illuminated concepts, and how concepts were identified, observed and measured.

An *audit trail* was also done to authenticate the findings of the study (Kelly, 2002; Merriam *et al.*, 2002; Patton, 2002). A report was compiled using an analytic diary and was presented to an external audit or expert in research presentations (See *Appendix: E*). The audit trail described in detail how data were collected, how categories were compiled, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry. The expert, peer reviewer was invited to scrutinize and render judgment about the quality of data collection and analysis. The process helped close cracks and strengthen the research project.

Generalization is different and not easy to achieve in qualitative research (Mason, 1996). Qualitative studies cannot be generalized on a statistical basis because they are contextually grounded to the strategies that produce them. They are not dependent on the statistical representativeness of samples or use of non-responsive and standardized interviewing. Representational generalization was pursued in this study. This option was followed because the study involved a relatively small sample which was not selected to be statistically representative. It was at the level of the execution of the research and explanation of methodology that generalization was achieved. The accuracy with which the phenomenon was captured and interpreted and the representative nature of the current sample necessitated the generalization of the research findings. Generalization was drawn from issues of reliability and

validity with different formulations that are considered in statistical or positivist research. It was concerned with robustness, credibility and trustworthiness of research evidence (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) as indicated earlier and the research strategies employed were appropriately honed to present a scientific study.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using interpretive or thematic content analysis (Breakwell *et al.*, 1997; Donnelly, 2002; Gratton & Jones, 2004; Ritchie, 2003; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002) based on the five main questions the study attempts to answer. Analysis was contextualized in the indigenous ethnic model and reflected the realities of the ethnic groups' experiences, cultures and values. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2002) identified two types of interpretive analytic styles, the quasi-statistical style and the immersion/crystallization style that is used in this study. Immersion/crystallization style involves the process of becoming thoroughly familiar with a phenomenon, carefully reflecting on it and writing up an interpretation. This process followed five steps.

The first step was the *Familiarization and immersion phase* and it involved development of ideas and theories about the studied phenomenon. The analytic step began with the transcription and translation of interviews. The researcher transcribed and checked information for unclear passages, consistency and accuracy in transcription. Slight editing was done on the transcripts to leave out interviewers' responses like "uh" and "yeah". Transcripts included utterances of both interviewer and respondents. The researcher then

read through the interview transcripts, worked with the text, made notes and tried to gain an understanding of data.

The following step one was the *Themes inducing phase*. In this phase the researcher studied the material to ascertain what the organizing principles are that naturally underlined the material. Raw data were organized into categories or themes. The language of interviewees rather than abstract theoretical language was applied to label categories and themes that naturally emerged from the data.

Step 3 was the *Coding phase* and it began with the coding of data. According to Terre Blanche and Kelly (2002: 143), coding is "the breakdown of a body of data into labeled meaningful pieces with a view to cluster the coded material together under coded headings and further analyze them both as a cluster and in relation to other clusters". Coding means breaking up the data into analytically relevant ways. Data were coded into manageable schemes or classifications. The body of data was cut, labeled and pasted into meaningful pieces (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Chunks of speech were coded and cut out of the transcripts and pasted with similar items under a category or topic heading. The researcher viewed phrases, lines and passages where similar codes or combination of codes occur by using the within and across comparison of documents. Similar thematic materials were grouped together and developed into broader explanatory categories. The researcher looked for emerging patterns in the data. Themes were then categorized in order of importance, for example, lower-order and higher-order themes and were identified based on Spradley's (1979) recommendations for assessing the contextual meaning of data. The higher-order themes were grouped into general dimensions and the process continued until no new information was generated from the categories. The data were now grouped together into major themes and sub-themes.

This step was followed by the *Elaboration phase*. At this stage themes were explored more closely. The researcher gained a fresh view of the data by carefully comparing sections of text that appeared to belong together. The purpose was to capture the finer nuances of meaning not captured by the original coding system (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002) and to come up with the correct way of structuring the material. This process of elaborating and recoding was continued until no further significant insights appear to emerge.

The final step was the *Interpretation and checking phase*. The phase involves the organization of interpretation and the presentation of the written account of the studied phenomenon. The researcher visited thematic categories and went through the process of interpretation, checking and commenting on recurring regularities, contradictions and instances of over-interpretation. The final report includes a tabular representation of raw data themes in *Appendix O* to illustrate how the process of interpretation was concluded.

Finally, to validate the interpretation of data, a triangulation method was employed. Findings were cross-checked using multiple analyses (Ritchie, 2003) or audit trail as suggested earlier by Guba and Lincoln (1981) and Merriam *et al.* (2002). The researcher used other analysts to trace the route of interpretation, how sections of data came together, and demonstrate how interpretation of data was reached. These researchers were invited to help improve or confirm the precision of the research findings and demonstrate the integrity thereof. They were both a white and a coloured post-graduate researchers who specialized in research methodologies with vast experience in the field. They are informed of current research trends and regular publishers.

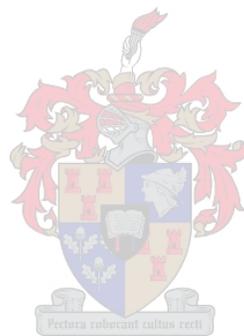
## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

A set of ethical principles was developed at each stage in the research process. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the relevant people and structures as indicated in the *Procedure* sub-heading. Informed consent of all participants and people proposed to be interviewed in the research was gained and the persuasive influences that operate on people when asking them to consent were acknowledged. For example, the role of the coach was carefully monitored to establish if he had an influence on potential interviewees into saying yes. The choice interviewees really have about participating was looked at carefully. Participants were asked to consent to whatever questions they were asked and options were given to them to say no. This same consent was renegotiated at several points during the interaction. The interviewees were also asked to give the researcher the right to use the data generated through interviews in ways that the researcher sees fit. A right to interpret and analyze data, and to publish and reproduce the material was also gained.

The researcher also ensured that the confidentiality of participants in this research was protected. The information received was kept confidential and anonymous. At the completion of the study copies of the dissertation were made available to the participating team and the *Professional Premier Soccer League*. Arrangements were also made to present the results orally to the team. The presentation was conducted both in a format that is understood by the indigenous group and a format accepted by academia (Kahakalau, 2004).

One major concern, however, was the use of coach as the co-selector in the sampling process. The coach could be biased and possibly not be knowledgeable about key psychological issues that impact in the

selection of participants. There was therefore a possibility of sampling bias something that can be considered as a major limitation to the study.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# RESULTS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the presentation of research findings of the investigation of coping strategies amongst football players from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Four key questions were asked as an attempt to provide answers to the main topic. The questions revolved around the *identification*, the *selection*, the *manifestation* and *timing* of coping strategies.

The chapter is structured in three sections. The first section focuses on matters related to the sample. This section is then followed by a discussion of the sources of stress amongst football players. The third section concentrates on the categorization of data into lower-order and higher-order themes and identification of coping strategies. Themes that emerged from the chapter were compiled from the responses that were recorded from the interviews.

### SOURCES OF STRESS

There were 30 different kinds of sources that caused stress amongst ethnically diverse football players in the Western Cape (See *Appendix K*). Of the 30 sources, 30% were found across all three racial groups; 36.6% appeared in two groups; and 33.4% in individual groups. Two thirds of the sources were shared by two or three ethnic groups.

The sources were further categorised into upper category and lower category groups. The upper category included sources that appeared more frequently, which are in the top section of the list. The sources in the lower category were sparsely represented and located in the bottom section of the list. This descriptive categorization was considered problematic by other scholars. According to them just because the sources of stress are mentioned frequently does not automatically indicate they were influential or important and that is a debate that could be levelled at another forum.

The sources that appeared in the upper category were *poor performance, strong opponents, high expectations, pressure of being a professional player, concerns about injuries, inclusion in a starting line-up, unfair referees' decisions, player jealousy, and the coach*. According to the research findings, the sources that appeared across the three ethnic groups were *poor performance, playing against strong opponents, pressure of school and workload, high expectations from others, pressure of being a professional football player, injuries, inclusion in a starting line-up, and dubious referees' decisions*.

The sources that appeared in two ethnic groups (black and coloured players) were *destructive thoughts, allowing early goals, culture and language issues, home circumstances, financial matters, being away from home, transport problems, intolerant players, media, player jealousy, and the coach*. Sources that appeared in one group (coloured players) only were *captaincy, fears of making mistakes, substance abuse, losing friends, losing matches, playing at different levels, poor playing facilities, level of competition or big game effect, early promotion, and negative evaluation of the club by others*.

The study also revealed that sources of stress were associated with the environment in which football players find themselves. There were sport-related and non-sport related sources. The sport-related sources included *poor performance, strong opponents, high expectations, pressure of being a professional player, injuries, inclusion in a starting line-up, unruly supporters, dubious referees' decisions, allowing early goals, losing a game, thinking about the results, destructive thoughts, pressure of being a captain, poor playing facilities, big game effect, early promotion, playing at different levels, fear of making a mistake, negative evaluation of club by others, intolerant players, player jealousy, and pressure caused by the media and coaching staff.* These sources appeared across all three ethnic groups and were the most cited causes of stress amongst football players. As indicated in *Appendix K*, of the 18 sources of stress that black players identified, 10 were match-related. From the 24 sources, players of colour reported 16 match-related sources. White players cited 15 match-related sources out of a total of 17 factors.

Non-sport-related sources included *schoolwork and work-load, home circumstances, language and cultural factors, financial matters, issue of losing friends, family matters, being away from home and transport problems.* These sources appeared mostly in the black and coloured groups. Players of colour and blacks cited most of the non-sport related sources as the cause of stress. For white players, the sources of stress were mainly match-related. For black players, both factors outside and during the match situation were equally responsible for causing stress amongst the group.

### **SOURCES OF STRESS COMMON TO ALL THREE GROUPS**

The research results revealed that most players in all three ethnic groups were under pressure to perform as professional football players. As

indicate in *Appendix K*, 9 of the 11 black players cited *under-performance* as the cause of stress in their football career. One of the black players indicated that "being a professional football player and not being able to deliver is a matter of concern" for him. Similar findings were recorded with coloured and white players. For the coloured group, 8 players from 11 participants cited *poor performance* as the cause of stress in their football. Seven of the 11 white players also cited the same phenomenon as one of the main cause of stress in football.

The results also revealed that the three ethnic groups of players experienced stress because of pressure of *wanting to be included in a starting line-up*. This source appeared in the upper category of the levels of classification in all three groups. For black players it was cited 9 times, players of colour 6 times, and white players 3 times. This suggests that wanting to be included in a team was a stressful situation for all three groups of players. The three groups of players were also worried about *the strength and abilities of their opponents*, and *incurring sport injuries*. Concerns about the strengths and abilities of the opponents appeared 9 times in the black group, 5 times in the coloured group, and four times in the white group. This source of stress appeared in the upper category of classification for all three ethnic groups and this once again indicated the influence of this aspect on players' performance. *Sport injuries* as the sources of stress, on the other hand, were recorded 6 times in the black group, 5 times in the coloured group, and 4 times in the white group, which places it in the upper category. The results indicated that coping with injuries was a matter of concern for all three ethnic groups.

It would appear as well that *the behaviour of unruly supporters*, *the pressure caused by schoolwork* and *workload* were the causes of stress

that appeared in all three ethnic groups. For black players, the actions of unruly supporters were recorded 8 times as the source of stress. In both the coloured and white groups it was recorded 4 times. For black and white players the source appeared in the upper category and for players of colour it appeared in the lower category of classification.

There were group differences in the players' experience of *unruly supporters*. It appeared that black and white players felt strongly about actions of supporters, whereas in the players of colour it was not as strong as compared with the other two groups.

*Schoolwork* or *workload* seemed to generate stress in the three groups of football players and this source appeared in the upper category of the classification of sources of stress. For black players the source appeared 7 times, for coloured players 8 times, and for white players 5 times. This was an important finding because 20 of the total number of players were either school going or at tertiary institutions and 4 were working. The findings suggested that schooling and working were the additional sources of stress in the three ethnic groups.

*Referees' dubious decisions* were also recorded as a matter of concern for the three groups. For the players of colour this source appeared in the upper category of the classification of sources of stress, and for the other two ethnic groups (black and white players) it appeared in the lower category of classification. It appeared 5 times in the coloured group, 3 times in a black group and only once in a white group. Once more, group differences were recorded with regard to this aspect. Players of colour reported as being more affected by *dubious referees' decisions* than black and white players.

## **SOURCES OF STRESS COMMON TO TWO GROUPS**

*Conceding early goal(s)* and *early promotion* appeared for both coloured and white players as the source of stress. This source appeared in the upper category of the classification of sources of stress for both groups. For players of colour it was recorded 6 times and for white players 3 times. It appeared that black players were not affected by this factor as it was with the other two ethnic groups. Early promotion appeared twice in the white group and only once in the coloured group. For the white group the source was classified in the upper category and for the coloured group it appeared in the lower category. Ethnic differences were recorded in this area as well. It appeared that black players were not affected by early promotion and some white players were more affected than players of colour.

There were discrepancies in other sources of stress as well. The stress caused by *home circumstances* was higher amongst black players than players of colour and did not feature in the white group. Eight black players and 4 players of colour out of the total of 22 players identified *home circumstances* as a cause of stress in their football life. The results suggested that there are major differences in factors causing stress amongst football players, particularly between non-white (black and coloureds) and white players. Similar findings were recorded for *culture* and *language*. Black players and those of colour were the only two groups that identified culture and language as a cause of stress in football. The fact that players were coming from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds was stressful to many black players. Since the majority of players were Afrikaans-speaking, the language players used amongst themselves was Afrikaans and many black players had little knowledge of the language. The coach and assistant coach were also English- and Afrikaans-speaking and they would communicate in these

two languages when dealing with players. This made matters difficult for players who were not proficient in English or Afrikaans.

Culture and language as a source of stress appeared 6 times for black players and only once for players of colour and it was placed in the upper category. No response in this regard was recorded among the white players. Results indicated that *language* and *culture* were aspects that caused stress particularly amongst black players.

*Intolerant players, transport problems* and *player jealousy* were also recorded as sources of stress for black and coloured players. The aspect of *intolerant players* was evident in the upper level for players of colour and lower level for black players. This was recorded 4 times with players of colour and 3 times with black players. Players of colour seemed to be the most affected group by intolerance of players. *Transport problems* were cited twice as the source of stress for black and players of colour. Player jealousy appeared once in the black group and 4 times in the coloured group. Ethnic differences were recorded for *transport problems* and *player jealousy*. It appeared that only players of colour and black players were affected by transport problems and player jealousy.

*Being away from home* appeared almost equally for both black and coloured players. This factor was cited 5 times amongst black players and 4 times amongst players of colour. Once again, this factor was not recorded in the white group and it suggested that only black and players of colour were affected by being away from home. It also makes sense because all white players were originally from the Western Cape. Four black players also reported *financial matters* as contributing to their stressful life as football players. For coloured players this was cited only once in the lower category of sources of stress. *Financial matters* affected

some black and players of colour and black players were more affected than players of colour. It would appear that for both ethnic groups stress was somehow a result of many other factors other than those that existed in the match situation.

*High expectations, pressure caused by the media and the coach* were the three stressors shared by black and white players. High expectations appeared in the upper category for both black and white players. For the black group this source appeared 8 times and three times in the white group. Players of colour were not affected by this factor. The *media* and *the coach* appeared in the lower category for both black and white players. For black players the *media* appeared 3 times and once for a white player. The pressure caused by the *coach* was recorded once only for both ethnic groups and in the lower category.

### **SOURCES OF STRESS IN ONE GROUP ONLY**

The following were sources of stress that were recorded in the group of white and coloured players only. Black players shared most of their sources with one or two of the other ethnic groups. A number of sources were identified that were specific to each ethnic group. *Fear of making mistakes, negative evaluation of club by others, substance use or abuse, pressure of being a captain and playing at different age levels* were sources that were recorded with players of colour. *Fear of making mistakes* appeared in the upper category of sources of stress and was a strong stress-contributing factor for some young players of colour. Other sources of stress that were identified by players of colour fell in the lower category of sources of stress. This suggests that these factors were not as influential as the previous ones in determining stress amongst players of colour. *Negative evaluation of the club by others* was cited 4 times and

problems related to *substance abuse* 3 times as the causes of stress. *Pressure of being a captain and playing at different age levels* appeared once as the source of stress in the group.

*Big game effect, poor playing conditions, losing matches and destructive thoughts* were sources of stress identified by white players in this study. Big game effect was recorded in the upper category of levels of classification of stress. Results indicated that some white football players were affected when participating in big games.

*Poor playing conditions, high levels of competition, losing matches and destructive thoughts* were recorded in the lower category of levels of stress. *Poor playing conditions* were cited twice. *Level of competition, losing matches and destructive thoughts* were recorded once. The stressors were sparsely distributed within this ethnic group and posed little threat to players.

Finally, the study also differentiated the players' duration of their experience of stress. This data were collected from a stress-rating scale in which players were requested to report the duration of their experience of stress. Participants' responses were categorized into three groups, namely, short term, long term and contingent. The duration of stress, as indicated in *Appendix I*, indicates that 70% of players reported experiencing stress for a short period of time, 21.2% of other players experience it for a long duration of time, and the final 9.1% of players recorded the duration of stress as depending on the circumstances. The experience of stress for a short period of time meant that stress comes and goes and stays for a short duration of time and disappears. For a long duration of time it meant that it stays with them for a long period.

Even though the experience of stress was recorded as being felt more on a short duration of time in all three groups, 4 of the 11 black players experienced it for a long time, and only one white player and 2 players of colour experienced it in the same way. This suggests that there were an equal number of black players (36%) that experienced stress for a long duration of time. The findings reveal that for most players, especially white players, stress caused by sport comes and goes, and for the other two groups, it remains longer. This might be attributed to the stressful experiences outside sport as suggested by the research evidence. Home circumstances, being away at home, financial matters and transport problems were considered as some of the factors that contributed to this effect.

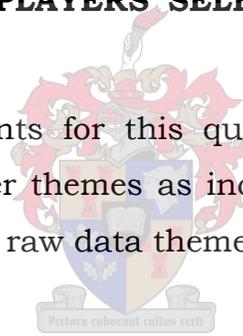
Furthermore, players' report of their experience of stress, as indicated in *Appendix J*, showed that black players were experiencing more stress than the other two ethnic groups. The stress rating scale of 1 to 10 was used to determine players' self-report of their experience of stress. The mean rating for black players on this scale was 4.5, for coloured players 3.8, and white players 3.1. The mean score for the three ethnic groups' total was 3.8. The findings suggested that coloured players were experiencing stress on an average level as compared to the other two groups. White players' experience of stress on the other hand was recorded as falling below the average score and black players above the average score. This implied that black players were experiencing more stress than the other members of the two ethnic groups and white players experienced lesser stress than the two other groups.

## **COPING STRATEGIES**

Five key questions were asked in an attempt to investigate the choice and use of coping strategies by ethnically diverse football players. The first key question revolved around the identification of strategies that football players choose or use in stressful situations. The second question focused on how football players go about selecting their coping strategies. The third main question was directed at football players' experiences when choosing coping functions. The fourth question centred on the timing of coping strategies. The final question looks at the factors football players encounter when choosing or using coping strategies.

## **STRATEGIES FOOTBALL PLAYERS SELECT WHEN DEALING WITH STRESSFUL SITUATIONS**

The responses of participants for this question were categorised into higher-order and lower-order themes as indicated in *Appendix L* and in the summary compiled from raw data themes in *Appendix O*.



### **Higher-order themes**

Higher-order themes included *problem-focused coping (PFC)*, *emotion-focused coping (EFC)*, *passive coping (PC)*, and *avoidance coping (AC)*. The *problem-focused coping* concentrated on tasks and behaviour control. *Emotion-focused coping* dealt with emotional arousal and control. *Passive coping* included passive reactive strategies to stressful situations. *Avoidance coping* involved the use of coping activities that are geared towards avoiding dealing directly with stressful situations. This coping data are linked to the stressor data in *Appendix O*.

As illustrated in *Appendix M*, the *problem-focused coping* strategies were used mainly during the *pre-match* and *match* stages. *Emotion-focused*

*coping* strategies were mostly used during the *post-match* stage. Generally, players from the three ethnic groups used *problem-focused coping* for stressors such as *poor performance, strong opponents, work load, inclusion in a starting line-up, allowing early goals and losing friends*. For stressors caused by the *coach, financial matters, home circumstances and transport problems*, players across the three ethnic groups used *social support* and *emotion-focused coping*. For situations they could not control, for example, referees' decisions, unruly supporters and destructive thoughts, players used mainly *relaxation* and *avoidance coping*. For *injuries, playing conditions and negative perceptions about the club*, most players used *problem-focused* and *passive coping* (See Appendix N for details).

There were slight differences and similarities in the use of coping strategies by the three different ethnic groups of players. For all three ethnic groups the main coping strategy used, were *problem-focused coping* and *emotion-focused coping* and the lesser used functions were *passive coping* and *avoidance coping*. Patterns were observed in which specific strategies were matched with specific stressors.

Differences were recorded on the two main coping strategies used by the three ethnic groups. It appeared that non-white players (black players and coloured players) were using more problem-focused strategies than white players. Seventeen *problem-focused coping* and 13 *emotion-focused coping* strategies were used by black players. Players of colour reported 23 *problem-focused coping* and twenty *emotion-focused coping* strategies. White players identified 14 *emotion-focused coping* and 13 *problem-focused coping* strategies. This suggests that black players preferred to deal directly with stressful situations by focusing on solutions and tasks at hand. For the other two ethnic groups this distinction was not clear.

The study revealed that both white and coloured players preferred to use *problem-focused coping* and *emotion-focused coping* on equal terms.

All three ethnic groups recorded *passive coping* and *avoidance coping* as lesser used coping functions in dealing with stress. *Passive coping* appeared 7 times for black players, 6 times for coloured players and 5 times for white players. *Avoidance coping* appeared 5 times for black players, 6 times for players of colour and 5 times for white players. This suggests that all three ethnic groups were not inclined to use *passive* and *avoidance coping*. They preferred to work hard and engage actively with their sport-related challenges. Evidence also revealed that *avoidance* and *passive coping* were strategies used mostly in situations where players had no control e.g., playing conditions, match results, dubious referees' decisions and an angry coach.

### **Lower-order themes**

The findings as indicated in *Appendix L*, revealed that black players were using *problem-focused* strategies more frequently than other strategies. The strategies consistently used in this group were *active coping*, *planning*, *suppression of competitive activities*, *focusing*, and *adopting of a positive approach*. Similar observations were made in the group of players of colour but the distinction between *problem-focused* and *emotion-focused coping* was not obvious. The strategies the group used, were *active coping*, *focusing*, *relaxation*, *adopting of a positive approach* and *suppression of competitive activities*. White players recorded similar strategies even though *emotion-focused* strategies were dominant among them. There was uniformity in all three ethnic groups regarding the use of these strategies.

Nine black players cited *active coping* as the strategy they used in dealing with stressful situations. It appeared that this group preferred to engage actively in addressing and resolving the challenges presented to them by football stress. This experience was shared with the other two groups. *Active coping* was selected 8 times in the white group and 7 times in the group that is composed of players of colour. There was also an indication that this function was used along with planning by black players. Seven of black players identified *planning* as a preferred option when dealing with stressful situations. This strategy appeared on the lower end of the coping list for the other two ethnic groups.

*Focusing and concentration* was another important strategy that was identified by the three groups. Six black players, 6 players of colour, and 7 white players mentioned that they preferred to concentrate/focus when confronted with stressful situations. The other 4 of the black players, 4 players of colour, and 3 white players preferred to deal with the same situations by suppressing any competitive activities that interfered with their performance and coping.

*Relaxation and adopting of a positive approach* were the other two strategies that fell in the upper category of the coping list for the three groups. It appeared that all three ethnic groups were inclined to use relaxation strategies and a positive approach as coping mechanisms to stressful situations.

*Self-motivation, self-support, goal setting, and constructive talk* were the lesser used coping strategies that fell in the lower category of the coping list for black players. *Goal setting, self-support, motivating others, planning* and *self-criticism* were the coping strategies recorded by

coloured players. *Planning, goal-setting, motivating others and constructive talk*, were strategies that were cited by white players.

There were ethnic and individual differences in the selection and use of these strategies by players from diverse backgrounds. Responses varied from one ethnic group to another or one individual to another. *Motivating others* and *goal setting* were the only two strategies that featured in all three groups. Coloured and black players shared *self-support* as a coping strategy. *Constructive talk* was a strategy shared by a black and a white player. One coloured player used *self-criticism* as a strategy. *Planning* was reported by one coloured player and white player only at this level. It appeared that some players from the three groups dealt with their challenges by setting goals and working towards them or by trying to motivate and encourage others. Ethnically diverse football players were using less of these (lower category) *problem-focused coping* strategies when dealing with stressful situations.

Differences amongst the three ethnic groups were recorded concerning *emotion-focused coping*. Black players identified only four coping functions as strategies to deal with the stressful situations caused by football. These strategies were *seeking social support, emotional expression, mental engagement* and *not blaming others*. White players and players of colour cited most of the emotional strategies. Players of colour identified *seeking social support, emotional expression, behavioural disengagement, mental disengagement, mental engagement* and *self-blame* as viable strategies for them. White players on the other hand, identified *emotional expression, seeking social support, mental disengagement, mental engagement, adopting of negative approach, behavioural disengagement* and *blaming others* as strategies used by the group to deal with pressure.

*The emotion-focused strategies that were used by all three ethnic groups were seeking of social support, emotional expression and mental engagement. Seeking of social support was recorded 9 times by the black group, 8 times by players of colour and 5 times by white players. Black players and players of colour used the strategy on an equal basis and more compared to white players. Although emotional coping was the second most used coping function by black players, seeking social support was one of the two mostly used strategies by black players in general.*

*Emotional expression was cited 8 times by white players, 7 times by players of colour and 4 times by black players. White players and players of colour seemed to use more of this strategy compared to black players. The results suggest that these players were once again reacting emotionally to stressful situations.*

Individual differences were recorded for most of the remaining strategies. *Not blaming others* was the least-used strategy in the black group and did not appear in any other group. This was the less popular strategy in this level for the group. Only one player cited *not blaming others* as a strategy.

Players of colour and white players shared *mental disengagement* and *behavioural disengagement* as coping strategies. It appeared that these players preferred to disengage when confronted with stressful situations. They either tried not to act or think about the stressful situations presented to them by their sport life. *Self-blame* was cited twice by players of colour. It appeared that some players of colour would direct blame to themselves when things do not go well in their sport. *Adopting a*

*negative approach* and *blaming others* were strategies recorded by one white player each.

Other less-popular strategies used were *passive coping functions* and *avoidance coping functions*. A variety of responses were recorded for *passive coping functions*. Few strategies were shared between ethnic groups and individual groups identified few others. The three ethnic groups shared *acceptance*. It was recorded 5 times by the black group, 4 times by players of colour and once by a white player. Some football players had a tendency to cope with stressful circumstances by accepting their situation.

*Turning to religion* was a strategy shared by black players and players of colour. Four black players and 3 players of colour identified this strategy. *Acceptance* and *turning to religion* were important and useful strategies to the group even though they were the least used functions (See Appendix L).

*Avoidance* and *ignoring* were the two *avoidance coping functions* that appeared across the three ethnic groups. *Avoidance* was recorded 4 times in the black group, 3 times in players of colour and white group. *Ignoring* appeared 4 times in the black group, 3 times in players of colour and once among the white players. For black players the two strategies appeared more frequently than other strategies in the upper category of levels of coping classification. For example, *problem-focused coping* strategies such as *adopting of a positive approach*, *self-motivation* and *goal setting* appeared less than *avoidance* and *ignoring*. This implies that *avoidance* and *ignoring* were important functions in the black group. The study revealed that players of colour used *avoidance coping functions* that were not found among the other ethnic groups e.g., *losing focus* and

*substance use/abuse*. Two players of colour mentioned that they used drugs to cope with the pressures of football.

## **HOW FOOTBALL PLAYERS GO ABOUT SELECTING COPING STRATEGIES**

The following responses were elicited and recorded in Table 5.1 when participants were asked to indicate the processes involved when choosing coping strategies:

Four processes were involved in the selection of coping strategies by football players from diverse ethnic backgrounds, namely: *thought-out processes*, *automatic processes*, *influence of experience*, and *combination of processes*.

All three ethnic groups were using mainly the *thought-out processes* when engaged in the selection of coping strategies. Their responses seem to indicate that a large number of players (14) across the three racial groups preferred to thoroughly process their reactions before selecting coping strategies. Four black players, 5 coloured players, and 5 white players indicated that they use *thought-out processes*. Two of the black players mentioned that they "put their mind on the game and read the situation" before they can choose effective coping strategies. Five coloured players cited that they "concentrate and make sure they are mentally ready" when choosing coping strategies. For the white group of players, it was about "focusing one's mind on the game and concentrating".

**Table 5.1: Processes involved in the choice of coping strategies**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>THOUGHT-OUT PROCESSES</b>	<b>AUTOMATIC PROCESSES</b>	<b>INFLUENCE OF EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>COMBINATION OF PROCESSES</b>
<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	You put your mind on the game. Follow a certain pattern. Mentally fit before the game. Read the situation.	No real plan. Coping just comes naturally.	Learn from other experiences. Parents and upbringing. Learn a lot at home. Learn from others.	You think about what to do and sometimes learn from others.
<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	I always process the stuff. Its' all in the mind. I think about the stuff. I concentrate. Make sure I am mentally fit.	Its' the way I am.	It comes with experience. I use previous experience. Areas like Elsie's taught me. I use experience.	The skills you possess and your own experience and environment. You learn through mingling with others and use your mind too.
<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>	Stay focused and think about the game. Its' about your concentration level and your character. I focus. You must get mentally focused.	Its' difficult to plan. Not the guy that process stuff.	Dad was a professional player and has been helpful.	Both processes are involved. You process the stuff and learn as well. Its' both processes.

Generally, there were few players that used *automatic processes*. Only 5 players indicated that they would use this option when selecting coping strategies. Two of these players were black and they indicated in their responses that they "do not have a real plan" and that "coping just comes naturally". For one player of colour, the selection of coping strategies was about "the way he is". Two white players shared similar sentiments. These players indicated that for them "it is difficult to plan" how they

would respond when confronted by stressful circumstances and that they are not "the kind of people that process too much stuff". The selection of strategies for them was the process that comes naturally.

The *influence of experience* was also cited as one process that reflects what happens when players are faced with a situation of having to select coping strategies. When players make their decisions about coping they do not frequently use this option. Only 8 of the 33 players referred to the *influence of experience* when choosing coping strategies. Four of the 8 players were black players, 3 were players of colour, and one was a white player. It appeared that for black and coloured players this process was used more compared to white players. Experience plays an important role in the black and coloured players' selection of strategies. The majority of these players were regular starters and had other leadership responsibilities such as captaining their teams.

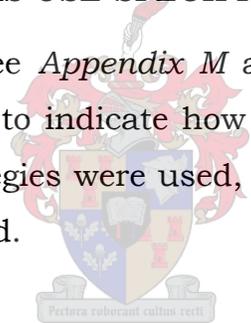
Two of the black players cited that their coping functions were "influenced by their experience and what they have learned from others". The other two players indicated their "upbringing, parents and home circumstances" played a role in their selection of strategies. Players of colour mentioned that their background and previous experiences influenced the selection of coping strategies. One player indicated that "I use my previous experience each time I am placed under duress". When a follow-up question was asked, he mentioned that "Areas like Elsies (township) taught me how to cope". Two other players also cited life experience as very influential in their selection of coping strategies. They mentioned that for them "it comes with experience". Only one white player cited experience as an important factor in the selection of coping strategies. When asked which processes he used and what influenced him in selecting the strategies, he indicated that "my dad was a professional football player and has been helping me". Unlike players

from the other two groups, the experience of this player came from within his family and not the “outside” environment or struggle with life.

The remaining 6 of the 33 players suggested that they used a *combination of two or three processes*. The white group of players seemed to be the one that mostly followed this trend of thinking. Non-white players (black and coloured players) preferred to use a particular process over others but not the combination. Perceptions regarding control of stressful situations both white and non-white players indicated experiencing little control over stressful conditions.

### **TIMES FOOTBALL PLAYERS USE SPECIFIC COPING STRATEGIES**

The following responses (See *Appendix M* and *N* ) were reported when football players were asked to indicate how they used coping strategies, at which time specific strategies were used, and how the different stages of the game were approached.



The findings revealed that ethnically diverse football players approached the various stages of the game differently and multiple strategies were used to deal with a variety of sport challenges. Coping strategies were different according to *pre-match*, *match* and *post-match* situations. Distinct patterns were observed in terms of how players responded to pressure at different stages of their game. The findings showed that there were dominant and less dominant strategies. The incidence and frequency of these strategies led to the identification of these differences. The dominant strategies were classified as those that occurred three times and more on the table. The strategies that were recorded two times or less were regarded as less dominant strategies.

The dominant strategies that were utilised in the pre-match stage for the black group as indicated in Table 5.2 were *planning/preparation, relaxation, praying, and focusing/concentration*. *Planning/preparation* was the most commonly used strategy at this stage. This strategy appeared 7 times as a coping function used to deal with stress experienced at the *pre-match* stage. A few players indicated that they "prepare, plan and train very hard" to make sure everything is in place during this stage.

**Table 5.2: Summary of dominant coping strategies at different stages**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>PRE-MATCH</b>	<b>MATCH</b>	<b>POST-MATCH</b>
<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	Planning (7) Relaxation (3) Praying (3) Focusing (3)	Active (6) Talking to others (4) Positive (3) Focusing (3) Ignoring (3) Suppression (3)	Seek advice (3) Acceptance (3)
<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	Planning (5) Relaxation (3) Focusing (3) Positive (3) Praying (3)	Active (5) Focusing (5) Self-talk (3) Suppression (3) Positive (3) Relaxation (3)	Mental engage (4) Talking to others (3) Emotional (3)
<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>	Planning (6) Focusing (4)	Emotional (5) Active (4) Relaxation (3) Focusing (3) Mental engage (3)	Talking others (4) Reflection (3) Emotional (3)

Black football players used multiple or a variety of coping strategies during the match situation. The dominant strategies that appeared at this phase were *active coping, talking to others, a positive approach, focusing/concentration, ignoring and suppression*. Many of the coping strategies that players used occurred mainly at this stage. *Active coping* was the most commonly used strategy by this group of players at this stage. As indicated in *Appendix M*, players cited a variety of responses in adaptation to the match situation. Their responses varied from “working very hard” to “try to solve the problems” they encountered.

Few coping strategies were reported for the *post-match* stage. The two dominant strategies that black players used at this stage were *seeking advice* and *acceptance*. It appears that these players dealt with the stress by either accepting their situation or looking for advice from others. One player mentioned that “I always talk and ask for advice when confronted with stressful situation”. For other players, if disappointments come they accept it "as part of life".

The dominant coping strategies that were recorded by coloured players at the *pre-match* stage were *planning/preparation, relaxation, focusing/concentration, a positive approach* and *praying*. Like the black group, *planning/concentration* was the commonly used strategy at this stage. Five players reported using *planning/preparation* as a strategy to deal with the challenges faced at the *pre-match* stage. It was reflected that these players “follow plans and work hard” to try dealing with stressful situations.

Like the black group, coloured players used many of their coping strategies at the *pre-match* stage. The strategies identified for this ethnic group were *active coping, focusing, self-talk, suppression, a positive*

*approach* and *relaxation*. Three players each were recorded having used *self-talk* and *relaxation* strategies. The most prominent strategy was *active coping*. Players preferred to deal with the pressure caused by match situations by directly engaging themselves and trying to solve whatever problem they experience. The responses of players on this aspect are contained in *Appendix M*.

The dominant strategies identified for the players of colour at the *post-match* stage were *mental engagement*, *talking to others*, and *emotional expression*. *Talking to others* was the only strategy that the group shared with the black group. It appeared that players of colour expressed their emotions and processed mentally the challenges they experienced during the *post-match* stage. The results revealed that the most commonly used strategy by the group at this level was the *mental engagement* strategy. For example, one player mentioned that "I think about what to do to alleviate my condition after a match".

*Planning* and *focusing* were the only two coping strategies recorded by the white group of players at the *pre-match* stage. These were the only strategies displayed by the group at this stage. It would appear that similar to the other two ethnic groups, to plan and prepare was the dominant strategy these ethnic groups used to deal with the stress associated with *pre-match* situations. Players mentioned that whenever put under such pressure, they "do the necessary preparations", "have plans in terms of what to do" or "set targets and work towards them".

*Emotional expression*, *active coping*, *relaxation*, *focusing* and *mental disengagement* were the dominant strategies identified by the white players during the match situation. The white group shared all the other coping strategies with other two ethnic groups except *emotional*

*expression* and *mental disengagement*. It appeared that whenever this group of players is confronted with challenges at this stage they "switch-off", "take it out of their mind" or "don't want to think about it". Furthermore, *emotional expression* was the most commonly used strategy to deal with such pressure and it occurred in the white group only. It seemed that white players dealt with the match-situation pressure by expressing their emotions. One player mentioned that "I get frustrated when things are not going well". The other two players mentioned that they "fight with their players" or "become anxious" when the stressful circumstances prevailed.

*Talking to others*, *reflection* and *emotional expression* were coping strategies that was reported by the white group as regards the post-match situation. *Reflection* was the strategy that was reported by this ethnic group only. Three players mentioned that they "reflect on their game" and "talk and discuss" at the *post-match* stage. Similar to the black group, *talking to others* was the most commonly used strategy among the white players. It seemed that, like black players and a few players of colour, white players dealt with the stress caused by *post-match* conditions by seeking the support of others. They "talk more to people", "talk to people with experience" or "talk to the coach or captain" when confronted by stress.

Generally, when the three ethnic groups were compared, *problem-focused coping* was used by all three groups to deal with the circumstances surrounding the *pre-match* situation. The study revealed that *planning/preparation*, *focusing/concentration*, *adoption of a positive approach*, and *relaxation* were the strategies used by all three ethnic groups. There were a fair number of similarities and little variation in terms of the strategies these players used. The difference was recorded

when it comes to passive coping function. Only some black players and those of colour used this function to cope with the pre-match situation. The strategy that these players used was *praying* or *turning to religion*.

For the actual match situation, players used a variety of strategies. These strategies included an *emotion-focused*, *problem-focused function* and *avoidance coping* strategy. The majority of strategies used by all three ethnic groups were the problem-focused function. Similarities were recorded in this function as well.

The *problem-focused functions* that were identified and commonly used by the black group were, *active coping*, *adopting a positive approach*, *focusing/concentration* and *suppression of competitive activities*. The emotion-focused function used, was, *talking to others* or *seeking social support*. Avoidance coping was another strategy that the black players used and it was maintained through the use of *ignoring* strategy. Coloured players, on the other hand, used only the problem-focused function at this stage of the game. The strategies included *active coping*, *focusing/concentration*, *self-talk*, *suppression of competitive activities*, *adoption of a positive approach* and *relaxation*.

White players used *emotion-focused* and *problem-focused* functions. These functions were spread evenly within this group e.g., two emotion- and two problem-focused functions. The *emotion-focused* functions were *emotional expression* and *mental disengagement*. This was a striking difference because only white players used these strategies at this stage. The problem-focused strategies that the group used were *relaxation*, *focusing/concentration*. All three ethnic groups shared *focusing/concentration*. *Relaxation* was shared with players of colour.

For the post-match situation, players from the three groups showed similarities in the use of dominant coping strategies and there were very few strategies used by players at this stage. The coping functions used, were emotion-focused and passive coping. Emotion-focused function appeared in all three groups and ethnic differences did not play a role in the selection of this coping function. It appeared that for all three ethnic groups, *seeking social support* was a preferred way of dealing with pressure caused by post-match stress.

The results revealed that black players seek advice or accept the situation when confronted by post-match situations. The black group differed from the two other ethnic groups in terms of passive coping. For both white and players of colour emotion-focused function was the only function used to cope with post-match situations. Players of colour used *mental engagement, talking to others* and *emotional expression*. White players on the other hand, used *talking to others, reflection* and *emotional expression* as dominant coping strategies.

Table 5.3 is a record of less-dominant coping strategies used by the ethnically diverse football players. Similar to the dominant strategies, very few coping strategies were identified during the *pre-match* stage. Strategies at this stage were sub-categorised as *problem-focused* and *emotion-focused* functions. The black players used two strategies, which were *active coping* and *taking advice*, and the more common of the two was active coping, which is classified as problem-focused function. Similar to the dominant strategies, black players also used problem-focused function to deal with the pressure resulting from pre-match conditions.

**Table 5.3: Summary of the less dominant coping strategies at different stages**

	<b>PRE-MATCH</b>	<b>MATCH</b>	<b>POST-MATCH</b>
<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	Active (2) Taking advice (1)	Acceptance (2) Emotional (2) Motivate others (2) Goal setting (1) Self-motivate (1) Constructive talk (1) No planning (1) Relaxation (1)	Mental engage (2) Talking to others (2) Avoiding (2) Emotional (2) Active (1) Encourage other (1) Seek advice (1) Not blaming (1) Praying (1) Act think (1) Planning (1) Suppression (1)
<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	Active (2) Talking others (2) Goal setting (2) Self-motivate (1)	Acceptance (2) Emotional (2) Disengage (2) Self-support (1) Social support (1) Ignoring (1) Active (1) Men. Disengage (1)	Disengage (2) Substance use (2) Social support (2) Self-criticism (1) Acceptance (1) Active (1) Suppression (1)
<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>	Relaxation (2) Active (2) Act think (2)	Positive (2) Suppression (2) Ignoring (1) Self-care (1) Avoidance (1) Give advice (1) Disengage (1) Negative (1) Constructive talk (1)	Acceptance (2) Active (2) Self-blame (2) Social support (1) Positive (1) Others advise (1) Motivate others (1) Engage (1) Ignoring (1) Pass think (1) Suppression (1)

Similarly to black players, players of colour used problem-focused and emotion-focused function to cope with pre-match situations. The strategies used by these players were *active coping*, *self-motivation*, *goal setting* and *seeking social support* or *talking to others*. *Active coping*, *goal setting* and *talking to others* were the most commonly used strategies. Players were cited saying "I try to be quick on the ball", "I set goals for myself" and "I talk to others" especially their mothers and the coach. It would appear at this stage that players used both problem-focused and emotion-focused functions to deal with stress caused by football life.

The less-dominant coping strategies used by white players were *relaxation*, *active coping* and *active thinking*. White players were using problem-focused coping to deal with the situation and the three strategies were used at an equal frequency. There seems to be similarities in terms of how the three ethnic groups of players responded at this stage. Players mainly used problem-focused coping and differences were only encountered in the selection of specific strategies e.g., *taking advice* as an option given by the black group, *self-motivation* an option given by the players of colour, and *active thinking* as an example given by white players.

For the actual match functioning, a variety of less-dominant coping strategies (multiple strategies) were identified. These strategies differed according to the levels or particular sources of stress. Players were using more or less the same strategies. The pool from which players select their strategies was the same but differences were evident in the actual choice of strategies at a particular time.

The strategies used by black players included *acceptance*, *no planning*, *goal-setting*, *self-motivation*, *motivating others*, *relaxation*, *constructive talk*

and *emotional expression*. These were categorised into problem-focused, emotion-focused and passive coping functions. Players were using a variety of strategies and it is noteworthy to observe that *not much planning, preparation, and talking to others* were used as coping strategies at this stage. It would appear that a match situation demanded a different set of coping strategies for the players as reflected by the reported dominant strategies in Table 5.3. At this level there was not much time for *planning, talking or goal setting*. Players focused and concentrated on playing the game.

Similar observations were made among the coloured players. These players were using multiple strategies that included *emotional expression, mental disengagement, behavioural disengagement, social support, active coping, self-support, acceptance and ignoring*. The coping functions that these players used were problem-focused, emotion-focused, passive coping and avoidance coping functions. Unlike the black and white group, players of colour were using more of the less-dominant emotion-focused functions. For example, *emotional expression, mental disengagement, behavioural disengagement and seeking social support* were the strategies used mostly by this ethnic group.

*Adopting a positive approach, suppression of competitive activities, giving advice, adopting negative approach, self-care, behavioural disengagement, ignoring and avoidance* were the less-dominant strategies used by white players at the same stage. These players used problem-focused, emotion-focused and avoidance coping functions. Again, a distinct pattern was observed for this group as well when it comes to less-dominant strategies. It appeared that white players preferred to use problem-focused function to deal with some of the pressure caused by match situation. The example of this function included *adopting a positive*

*approach, suppression of competitive activities, giving advice and adopting negative approach.* The *adopting of a negative approach and self-care* were the strategies that were displayed only by the white group. One of the players mentioned that "I don't take it nice if there is no foundation for criticism". For the other player if he was not performing well he mentioned that "I try not to put pressure on myself".

Unlike with the dominant coping strategies, the *post-match* stage was characterised by the less-dominant coping strategies. There were more less-dominant coping strategies at this stage compared to the previous findings of dominant coping strategies. Thirty different coping strategies were used at this stage compared to 25 different dominant coping strategies during the match situation.

*Active coping, encouraging others, active thinking, planning, suppression of competitive activities, emotional expression, mental engagement, talking to others, seeking advice, not blaming others, praying and avoiding* were the less dominant strategies used by black players at post-match level. These were sub-divided into problem-focused, emotion-focused, avoidance and passive coping functions. *Not blaming others* was the new and only strategy used by black players as it was indicated in the earlier section.

*Behavioural disengagement, seeking social support, self-criticism, active coping, suppression of competitive activities, acceptance and substance use* were the less dominant strategies used by coloured players at the *post-match* stage. The responses that were elicited by the participants varied widely and included problem-focused, emotion-focused, avoidance coping and passive coping functions. These strategies were more or less the same compared to the black group. The only two less dominant

strategies which never appeared in the other two ethnic groups, were *substance use* and *self-criticism*.

*Acceptance, passive thinking, self-blame, seeking social support, mental engagement, accepting others' advice, active coping, adopting a positive approach, motivating others, and suppression of competitive activities* were the less dominant strategies used by the white players. These functions ranged between problem-focused, emotion-focused and passive coping functions. Like in the other two ethnic groups, players in this group used a variety of coping strategies that differed according to a specific situation. *Passive thinking* was the new and only less dominant strategy used by the group alone.

## **SPORT AND NON-SPORT RELATED COPING STRATEGIES**

This investigation revealed that there were two categories of coping strategies used when participants were asked to indicate whether their selection of strategies were the same or different across the three phases of the game. Coping strategies that were used by players could either be linked to football or indirectly associated with the sport. The directly-linked strategies that are identified in other research (e.g., Gould *et al.*, 1993; Madden *et al.*, 1989) are those strategies associated with football that have mostly been identified during pre-match and match situations. The indirectly-linked strategies were associated with stress that did not pertain to football and were identified mostly during post-match situations. The directly-linked strategies were recorded amongst the three groups of players and varied widely according to ethnic groups. The indirectly-linked strategies appeared mostly in the two non-white groups and scarcely featured in the white group. Generally, the strategies were the same for sport and non-sport situations. Tables 5.4 and 5.5 provided

a summary of sport and non-sport related coping strategies as indicated by players.

### **COPING WITH THE PRESSURE OF A POOR PERFORMANCE**

*Active coping* and *focusing* were the two sport-related coping strategies that have been identified by the three groups of football players when coping with the pressure caused by poor performance.

Five players of colour, 3 white players and 2 black players reported using *active coping* as a strategy. It appeared that when these players were confronted with the pressure, they prefer to engage actively with the situation. One blackplayer mentioned that he would prefer to do something by “making introspection in an attempt to improve the situation”. A few players of colour cited that they “train very hard, try to improve and work on the game”. Three white players mentioned that they dealt with the same situation by “trying to work on mistakes in the training session”.

These players have also cited *focusing* or *concentration* as the strategy they use in dealing with poor performance. One black player indicated that when confronted with the challenge of poor performance “I try to concentrate”. For coloured players under the same circumstances one player reported that “I focus on the game”.

*Self-support*, *adoption of a positive approach*, and *suppression of competitive activities* were reported as the strategies that black and players of colour used in dealing with the same stressful situation. Two black players and four coloured players reported using the *self-support*

strategy. When confronted with these circumstances it would appear that these players look after themselves by adopting a positive approach and suppressing activities that interfere with their performance. The results revealed that black players "motivate themselves and make sure they remain confident" during those trying times. For the players of colour it would appear that to cope with similar circumstances they "try to lift themselves by building their confidence".

**Table 5.4: Sport-related coping strategies used in a poor performance situation**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Active coping	2	5	3
Focusing and concentration	1	2	2
Self-support	2	4	-
Adopting a positive approach	4	3	-
Suppression	1	3	-
Social support	7	-	3
Emotional expression	3	-	2
Acceptance	4	-	2
Mental engagement	-	-	4
Motivating others	-	-	1
Goal-setting	-	2	-
Relaxation	-	5	-
Turning to religion	1	-	-
Planning	3	-	-

Both black and players of colour try as well to “stay and think positive” when confronted with this situation. For other four players (black: 1, Coloured: 3), they suppress the pressure by not allowing the competition to affect their performance.

*Seeking social support, emotional expression, and acceptance* were recorded amongst the black and white players. Seven black players and 3 white players cited *social support* as a strategy they use under this category. These players would prefer to talk or use others as source of support for their stress. Both black and white players indicated that they would “speak to the coach, captain, friends and family members” when they experience stress caused by poor performance.

Six strategies of a group of two were identified for each ethnic group of players. *Mental engagement and motivation by others* were recorded in the white group. *Goal setting and relaxation* were recorded in the coloured group, and turning to religion and planning were recorded in the black group.

Results showed that many black players preferred to use *acceptance* and a *positive approach* strategies to deal with poor performance as well. Players of colour on the other hand, used *active coping* and many white players preferred *mental engagement*.

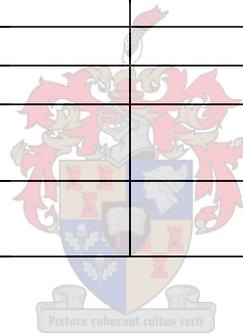
### **COPING WITH THE PRESSURE CAUSED BY STRONG OPPONENTS**

For most of the time *problem-focused* coping was used by players from the three ethnic groups to deal with strong opponents. *Emotion-focused* coping was used by the white and coloured players as well. To deal with

the stress caused by strong opponents, black players used *social support*, *suppression* and *turning to religion* at times.

**Table 5.5: Sport-related strategies used when coping with strong opponents**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Active coping	3	2	4
Emotional expression	-	2	1
Focusing and concentration	-	2	1
Adopting a positive approach	3	-	1
Social support	3	-	-
Planning	3	-	-
Suppression	3	-	-
Turning to religion	1	-	-
Mental engagement	-	-	1

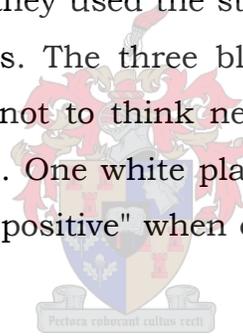


Active coping was the only strategy used by all three groups. Three black players, 2 players of colour and 4 white players reported using this strategy. One black player mentioned that "I make sure that I attend every training session and work on my weaknesses". Two of the coloured players stated that they "I try to be quick on the ball" or "I execute my moves fast". White players cited that they "use the situation to work hard" or "put in more effort to remain physically fit". It appeared that 9 players from the three ethnic groups preferred to act and do something when confronted with pressure caused by strong opponents.

*Emotional expression* and *focusing* were the strategies used by coloured and white players to deal with similar situation. Two of the players of

colour and one of the white players reported using *emotional expression* as a coping strategy. One coloured player mentioned that "I get nervous when confronted by the situation" and the other one indicated that he stresses under those conditions. The white player on the other hand cited that "I scream at my players when I see them being intimidated by their opponents". Similar observations and recordings were made about the *focusing/concentration* strategy. Two players of colour and one white player suggested that they "focus and concentrate" to avoid making errors when pressurised by the strong opponents.

*Adopting a positive approach* was the only strategy in this category that was shared by the black and white players. Three black players and one white player indicated that they used the strategy to deal with the stress caused by strong opponents. The three black players maintained that they "stay positive and try not to think negatively" every time they are faced with such a challenge. One white player indicated that "one must not be intimidated but stay positive" when confronted with this stressful situation.



The rest of the other strategies including *seeking social support*, *planning*, *suppression of competitive activities*, *turning to religion* and *mental engagement* were recorded by individual ethnic groups and there were great discrepancies. Three black players reported at each category having used *social support*, *planning* and *suppression of competitive activities* as strategies they employed to deal with strong opponents. These players mentioned that they "seek the support of the coach or listen, take instructions and advice from others". Others mentioned that they "prepare and plan very well" when they are facing strong opponents. For the three others, *suppression of competitive activities* is the preferred option. These players mentioned that they "concentrate as much as

possible and become more involved in the game". One player cited religion as a solution to his problem and indicated that "I pray when confronted by the challenge".

The results revealed that many black players used *active coping, social support, adopting a positive approach, suppression* and *planning* in dealing with pressure caused by strong opponents. Coloured players on the other hand, used *active coping, emotional expression* and *focusing*. White players used *active coping*.

Findings revealed that the three ethnically diverse groups of players used mainly *problem-focused* and *emotion-focused* coping to deal with the pressure caused by high expectations. *Focusing* and *active coping* were the strategies that were commonly used by all three groups. Two black players, three coloured players and one white player reported using the *focusing and concentration* strategy. One black player mentioned that "I try to stay focused when experiencing pressure from others". For the 3 players of colour, 2 of them mentioned that "I concentrate on the game" and "I believe I have to be mentally strong and focused". One white player cited that for him the situation requires that "I sort out things and get focused".

## **COPING WITH HIGH EXPECTATIONS**

Two black players, 1 coloured player and 1 white player indicated using *active coping* as a strategy to deal with the pressure caused by high expectation. One black player cited that when experiencing pressure, "I work hard to improve my game". For the 3 coloured players they "worked on the mistakes during training sessions". The white player mentioned that, "I try to get things right".

*Seeking social support* was also recorded in both black and white players. Four of the black players and 2 white players suggested that they seek out for social support when put under pressure. The four black players indicated that they would "seek advice about what to do, talk about the situation and ask for assistance". White players on the other hand, mentioned that they would "talk to others especially, the senior players". It would appear that for the two groups the best thing to do under such circumstances was to go to others, seek for advice or talk about their difficulties.

**Table 5.6: Sport-related strategies used when coping with high expectations**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Focusing and concentration	2	3	1
Active coping	2	3	1
Social support	4	-	2
Goal-setting	-	1	1
Mental engagement	-	-	1
Emotional expression	-	-	2

The results under this category further revealed that white players were also using *mental engagement* and *emotional expression* as strategies to cope with this stress. Two white players indicated that they "get annoyed and emotional about the situation". The other white player mentioned that when these circumstances present themselves "I try to think and become level headed".

When dealing with high expectations it appeared that many black players used *social support* as their coping strategy. Many coloured players used *focusing* and *active coping*. White players used *emotional support*.

### **COPING WITH PRESSURE OF BEING A PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL PLAYER**

In response to the pressure of being a professional football player, participants responded in different ways. Their responses varied between problem-focused emotion focused passive and avoidance coping. The study however, revealed that all three ethnic groups used social support and active coping as their strategies to deal with the stress of being a professional football player. Two black players, 4 players of colour, and 1 white player reported using *social support* as their strategy. For this group of players the convenient way of dealing with such pressure was to "talk to parents, the coach and professional players" about their experiences. A white player also mentioned that "dad was a professional player and he taught me a few tricks".

**Table 5.7: Sport-related strategies used when coping with the pressure of being a professional football player**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Social support	2	4	1
Active coping	3	1	1
Acceptance	3	-	-
Praying	2	-	-
Goal setting	-	2	-
Using drugs	-	2	-
Avoidance	-	1	-
Relaxation	-	-	3
Suppression	-	-	1

The results also displayed a clear distinction in players' responses to pressure. Five black players indicated that they used *acceptance* and *praying* as strategies for coping with the stress of being professional football players. Three players of colour on the other hand, used avoidance and substance use as their coping strategies. Four white players used *relaxation* and *suppression of competitive activities* as their strategies.

The results showed that many black players used *active coping* and *acceptance* in dealing with the pressure caused by being a professional football player. Coloured players, on the other hand, used *social support* and white players used *relaxation*.

### **COPING WITH INJURIES**

In dealing with injuries, it became evident that the three ethnic groups of players were using *active coping* and *acceptance* as coping strategies. Six black players, 4 players of colour and 2 white players reported using *active coping*.

**Table 5.8: Sport-related strategies used when coping with injuries**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Active coping	6	4	2
Acceptance	2	2	1
Emotional expression	-	3	2
Turning to religion	1	-	-
No planning	1	-	-
Social support	-	1	-
Avoidance	-	-	2
Mental disengagement	-	-	1

Three of the 6 black players indicated that they protect themselves "by not getting involved in hard tackles, looking after their injuries and visiting their physiotherapist and medical staff". Players of colour recorded similar responses. Two players indicated that they keep themselves free from injuries "by being very careful when playing" and "working on their injuries".

The results showed that players opted for *acceptance* as a strategy if *active engagement* with injuries was not working. Two black players, 2 players of colour and one white player indicated that they used *acceptance* as a strategy. The two black players mentioned that if they get injured "it would be unfortunate" and that they will "deal with them as they come". One player of colour mentioned that "I accept injury and I know that there is not much I can do about it". The white player mentioned that he has "learned not to rush injuries but to give them time".

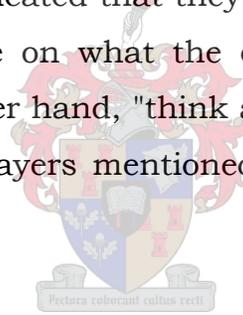
*Emotional expression* was also recorded as a strategy that was used by white players and those of colour. Three coloured players and one white player indicated that they use this strategy to deal with injuries. Coloured players mentioned that they "get nervous" and "feel sad to know that one is not going to play all the games". For the white player, injuries "can be irritating".

One black player also mentioned that "I always pray that I must not get injured" and the other player indicated that "I do not have a plan for my injuries". Two white players indicated that they avoid injuries "by avoiding hard tackles and not hanging on the ball". The other two players deal with the matter by *mentally disengaging* themselves.

The majority of black players and those of colour used *active coping* as a strategy to deal with the stress caused by sport injuries. Many white players on the other hand, used *emotional support*, *avoidance* and *active coping*.

### **COPING WITH UNRULY SUPPORTERS**

In dealing with unruly supporters the results indicated that the three ethnic groups used *focusing*, *ignoring* and *emotional expression* as coping strategies. It seems that when confronted with the situation of unruly supporters, six groups of players try to focus and concentrate more on the game. Black players indicated that they "focus and don't think about supporters and concentrate on what the coach instructed" them. The players of colour on the other hand, "think about the game and not what others say or do". White players mentioned that they "concentrate and carry on with the game".



**Table 5.9: Sport-related strategies used when coping with unruly supporters**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Focusing and concentration	2	2	2
Ignoring	3	3	-
Emotional expression	-	1	1
Mental disengagement	-	-	3
Behavioural disengagement	-	-	1
Relaxation	-	-	1

*Ignoring* was another strategy used by the participants to deal with unruly supporters. Mainly black and coloured football players used this strategy. Three black players and 3 coloured players were reported using this strategy. These participants mentioned that they "simply ignore supporters and don't allow the situation to affect the game". *Emotional expression, mental and behavioural disengagement, and relaxation* were recorded as strategies used by white players. *Ignoring* was the strategy commonly used by black players and players of colour to deal with unruly supporters, whilst white players preferred to use *mental disengagement*.

### **COPING WITH REFEREES**

*Emotional expression* and *ignoring* were the two coping strategies used by the three ethnic groups of players to deal with referees. It seemed that 9 players react to referees' decisions and actions by being emotional or not attending to them. Black players were recorded as being more emotional despite not reacting this way in many other stressful situations. Three black players reported using *emotional expression* as a strategy. These three players indicated that they "lose control or become angry" when referees make dubious decisions. Similar sentiments were shared by the two players of colour and mentioned that they "get angry and shout and scream at players". One white player mentioned that "I find myself arguing" when irritated by the referee.

One player from each group also indicated that they ignore the referee when making unpopular decisions. All three players mentioned that they "ignore the referee or not pay attention to what he is doing" during a match situation. Active coping was another strategy that was used by white and players of colour. Three players of colour and one white player

reported having used this strategy as a coping mechanism. These players indicated that if the referee rules against them they "put a lot of effort to try and win the game" or "confront him, depending on the situation".

**Table 5.10: Sport-related strategies used when coping with the referee**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Emotional expression	3	2	2
Ignoring	1	1	1
Active coping	-	3	1
Focusing and concentration	1	-	-
Motivating others	-	2	-
Avoidance	-	-	1

The other strategy that was used by players of colour was *motivation*. Two coloured players reported using this strategy to deal with the pressure caused by poor refereeing. They reported that whenever they were confronted with the challenge, they would "encourage one another". One white player also cited *avoidance* as a strategy he used. According to him when he is faced with the situation he would "count to ten and walk away" before he loses control.

The results revealed that many black and white players reacted emotionally to the pressure caused by the referees. Many players of colour on the other hand, deal with the similar situation by being actively involved.

## COPING WITH THE ISSUE OF THE STARTING LINE-UP

Eight players from different ethnic groups responded by expressing emotions when dealing with exclusion from starting line-up. Three white players, three players of colour and two black players responded that way. Black players mentioned that they “get worried and frustrated” and “feel terrible inside” when not included in the team. Players of colour displayed disappointment and frustration. White players on the other hand indicated that they “become anxious and feel like walking away and leave football”.

**Table 5.11: Sport-related strategies used when coping with the exclusion from a starting line-up**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Emotional expression	2	3	3
Active coping	4	5	-
Adopting positive approach	-	3	2
Planning	2	-	-
Focusing and concentration	2	-	-
Passive coping	-	5	-
Relaxation	-	2	-
Self-blame	-	1	-
Suppression	-	-	1
Avoidance	-	-	1

*Active coping* was another strategy shared by the diverse group of players. Four black players and 5 coloured players indicated using the strategy. The 4 black players reported that when they are excluded from a starting line-up they "work on the problem areas" and "train very hard to do better". For the same situation, the players of colour mentioned

that they “give their best to be in the starting line-up”, they "identify problems and work on them" and try to prove they can play.

The rest of the coping strategies were recorded at each ethnic group. There seemed to be a distinction in terms of how each group responded to this stress. *Planning* and *focusing* were strategies used by black players. Two black players each mentioned that they “prepare themselves and plan their strategies”. The other player indicated that “I keep my mind on the game”.

*Acceptance*, *relaxation* and *self-blame* were strategies applicable to the players of colour only. Five players mentioned using *acceptance* as a coping strategy. These players explained that for them to cope with the inclusion in a starting line-up by “trying not to think about why not included” and “not worrying about inclusion” or “force situations”. Two other players indicated that they used *relaxation* to cope with similar situation. They mentioned that “I relax or take a walk” when confronted with the stress caused by exclusion from the starting line-up.

Another player also cited *self-blame* as a strategy he used to cope with the stress caused by team de-selection. This player indicated that "I would be hard on myself" and that would be a way of coping with the challenge. Two players from the white group also indicated using *suppression* and *avoidance* as a coping strategy. One player mentioned that “I suppress negative vibes and try to enjoy the game" and another indicated he would resort in "joining another team" if he is not included in a starting line-up.

The results reflect that many black and players of colour used *active coping* as a strategy to deal the stress caused by exclusion from a

starting line-up. Players of colour also recorded passive coping as a dominant strategy used. To respond to the same situation, many white players used emotional expression as a strategy.

### **COPING WITH INTOLERANT AND JEALOUS TEAMMATES**

Distinct strategies were identified for two group of players those cited intolerant players as a cause of stress in their football. Black players indicated that they use *avoidance*, *social support* and *a positive approach* to deal with intolerant players. Two black players mentioned that they "avoid intolerant players" and they "spent little time with them". One player mentioned that "I would talk to my coach" whenever the challenge arises. The other player indicated that "I will smile instead of becoming angry".

**Table 5.12: Sport-related strategies used when coping with intolerant players**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>
Avoidance	2	-
Social support	1	-
Adopting positive approach	1	-
Emotional expression	-	3
Active coping	-	2
Focusing and concentration	-	1
Mental disengagement	-	1
Behavioural disengagement	-	1
Ignoring	-	1

On the other hand, players of colour indicated that they would prefer to use *emotional expression*, *active coping* and *focusing and concentration* as their coping strategies when dealing with intolerant players. Three

players mentioned that they "feel stressed when scolded" and that it is "frustrating" for them. One player indicated that "I would take note of what the player is saying and work on my game". The other player mentioned that he will "talk to players and make them realise that everybody makes a mistake". *Focusing, ignoring, mental and behavioural disengagement* were strategies used by individual players.

The results suggested that many black players in this category used avoidance as a preferred strategy to deal with intolerant players. Coloured players used *emotional expression* for similar situations.

*Seeking social support* and *avoidance* were the two strategies that were used by black and coloured players to deal with the pressure caused by player jealousy. Two black players and 2 players of colour indicated that they use *social support* as a coping strategy under these circumstances. Black players maintained that they "talk to the coach to speak to the team" when problems appear. One coloured player recorded similar observations. This player stated that he also "talks to the coach". Another player maintained that "I speak to my mother" when confronted by the challenge.

**Table 5.13: Sport-related strategies used when coping with player jealousy**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>
Social support	2	2
Avoidance	1	1
Ignoring	1	-
Mental disengagement	-	2
Turning to religion	-	1

One black player indicated that he used *ignoring* as a strategy to deal with player jealousy. Two players of colour cited *mental disengagement* and 1 another player cited *adopting a positive approach* as strategies they use. Results showed that many players of colour in this category preferred to use social support and mental disengagement as strategies. Many black players on the other hand, preferred to use *social support*.

### **COPING WITH THE STRESS CAUSED BY THE COACH**

In response to the stress caused by the coaching staff, black and white players cited *avoidance* and *ignoring* as strategies used by both ethnic groups. Three black players and one white player were recorded using *ignoring* as a strategy. These players, including the white player, indicated that they just "ignore the coach or ignore the bad things the coach says". One black player and one white player also indicated that they sometimes used *avoidance* as a strategy. These players maintained that they "try not to become involved" and "avoid anything that will cause tension between players and the coach".

**Table 5.14: Sport-related strategies used in coping with the coach**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Ignoring	3	1
Avoidance	1	1
Active coping	4	-
Social support	1	-
Adopting a positive approach	-	1

Four black players also reported active coping as the strategy they used to deal with the matter. One player maintained that he will "talk to him

and clear issues". The other player suggested that he will "listen to what he says and do something" and two other players maintained that they will attempt to give their best. One white player also suggested positive approach as a way out in these situations.

Results indicated that many black players would prefer to use active coping to deal with the stress caused by the coaches, whilst white players preferred to use *avoidance* and *ignoring*.

### **COPING WITH CONCEDED EARLY GOALS**

The strategies used by white players and players of colour in response to the pressure caused by conceding early goals differed in terms of ethnic and racial groups. The results showed that coloured players use *emotional expression* and *constructive talk* in dealing with the challenge. White players on the other hand, use *focusing, relaxation, suppression, motivation, a positive approach and active coping* as strategies. The strategies that were used by many players of colour in this category were *emotional expression* whereas *focusing and concentration* was the strategy that was used by many white players.

**Table 5.15: Sport-related strategies used when coping with pressure caused by conceding early goals.**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Emotional expression	2	-
Constructive talk	1	-
Focusing and concentration	-	3
Relaxation	-	2
Suppression	-	1
Motivating others	-	1
Adopting positive approach	-	1
Active coping	-	1

## **COPING WITH DESTRUCTIVE THOUGHTS**

In dealing with destructive thoughts white players and players of colour use distinctive strategies. Two players of colour mentioned that they used *relaxation* as a strategy to deal with thoughts that interfere with their performance. These players maintained that they "relax or do breathing exercises" when confronted by this challenge. White players on the other hand, cited *mental disengagement*, *passive thinking* and *focusing* as strategies they used. One player maintained that "I think of something else" when dealing with destructive thoughts. Another player states, "thoughts just stay in my mind and I do nothing about them". These results indicated that many players of colour in this category use relaxation as a strategy and the white players used mental disengagement, focusing and passive thinking as their strategies.

**Table 5.16: Sport-related strategies used when coping with destructive thoughts**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Relaxation	2	-
Mental disengagement	-	1
Passive thinking	-	1
Focusing and concentration	-	1

## **COPING WITH FEAR OF MAKING MISTAKES**

Coloured players were the only ethnic group that suggested fear of making mistakes as a cause of stress in their football. Players cited *focusing*, *relaxation*, *emotional expression*, *suppression* and *social support* as coping strategies. Four players indicated that they used *focusing* and *concentration* in dealing with their fears. They mentioned that they "get focused", or "focus on thoughts and concentrate" when put under such pressure. They sometimes get worried and shout at their players. Two

other players mentioned that they “try to relax” under similar circumstances. One player mentioned that he used other players and listen to their advice. Another player stated that “I put it aside and try to forget about it”. These results indicated that many coloured players used focusing and concentration in dealing with the fear of making mistakes.

**Table 5.17: Sport-related strategies used when coping with the fear of making mistakes**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PLAYERS OF COLOUR</b>
Focusing and concentration	4
Relaxation	2
Emotional expression	2
Social support	1
Suppression	1

### **COPING WITH LOSING GAMES**

*Emotional expression* and *social support* were the two coping strategies used by white players to deal with the stress of losing games. Two players reported using the strategies.

**Table 5.18: Sport-related strategies used when coping with the pressure caused by losing games**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Emotional expression	2
Social support	2
Reflection	1

These players mentioned that they “lose cool or shout” when losing their games. Others “talk to the players about what can be done” in similar situations. These results revealed that emotional expression and social support were the strategies mostly used by the white group.

### **COPING WITH CONDITIONS OF POOR PLAYING FACILITIES**

*Suppression* and *emotional expression* were the two coping strategies used by white players to cope with poor playing facilities. Two of the white players indicated that they used *suppression* strategy and one player cited that *emotional expression* as a preferred strategy for him. *Suppression* was the most used strategy by the white players.

**Table 5.19: Sport-related strategies used when coping with conditions of poor playing facilities**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Suppression	2
Emotional expression	1

### **COPING WITH EARLY PROMOTION**

Only one white player perceived early promotion as a stress-causing factor. This player cited *active coping* as a strategy he uses to deal with the stress.

**Table 5.20: Sport-related strategies used when coping with early promotion**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYER</b>
Active coping	1

To cope with the stress caused by loneliness through promotion, the player stated, “I look for someone close to my age to identify with”.

### **COPING WITH THE BIG GAME EFFECT**

Only one player mentioned the big game as a stressor. This player cited *emotional expression* as a strategy he preferred to use. He mentioned that “I stress out whenever I am put in that situation”.

**Table 5.21: Sport-related strategies used when coping with the big game effect**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYER</b>
Emotional expression	1



### **COPING WITH THE PRESSURE OF BEING A CAPTAIN**

Three players of colour have reported using *focusing*, *relaxation* and *social support* as coping strategies to deal with the stress of being a captain. These players mentioned that when they are under pressure they "focus" or "try to relax or talk to the coach".

**Table 5.22: Sport-related strategies used when coping with the pressure of being a captain**

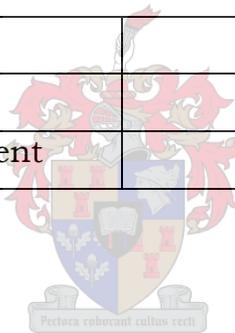
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>
Focusing and concentration	1
Relaxation	1
Social support	1

### **COPING WITH THE PRESSURE OF PLAYING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS**

Playing at different levels was another stressor experienced by players of colour. The findings showed that *emotional expression* and *behavioural disengagement* were the strategies used by this ethnic group. The study revealed that three players of colour were "confused and scared" when demanded to go to the senior level. One player indicated to use *disengagement*. He mentioned that to him "it becomes difficult to mix". He is discouraged from going out and talking to others. For this situation, the most commonly used strategy was emotional expression.

**Table 5.23: Sport-related strategies used when coping with the pressure caused by playing at different levels**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>
Emotional expression	3
Behavioural disengagement	1



### **COPING WITH NEGATIVE EVALUATION OF THE TEAM**

*Mental disengagement* and *adopting a positive approach* were the strategies used by the players of colour to deal with the pressure of negative evaluation of their team by others.

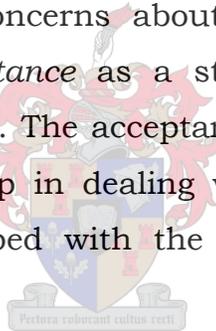
**Table 5.24: Sport-related strategies used when coping with the stress caused by negative evaluation of the team by others**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>
Mental disengagement	2
Adopt positive approach	1

The research findings revealed that two players used *mental disengagement* as the strategy to cope with pressure and mentioned that they "don't take comments seriously" or "allow bad stuff to affect one". One player indicated that "I remain positive even though other players think bad of me". *Mental disengagement* seemed to be the most frequently used strategy by this ethnic group to deal with this kind of pressure.

### **COPING WITH CONCERNS ABOUT RESULTS**

*Acceptance* and *self-motivation* were the two strategies used by players of colour to deal with their concerns about results. Two players were recorded having used *acceptance* as a strategy and one player was recorded using *self-motivation*. The acceptance strategy was the strategy preferred by the ethnic group in dealing with this pressure. It would seem that these players coped with the situation by admitting and accepting their situation.



**Table 5.25: Sport-related strategies used when coping with the stress caused by thinking about the results.**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>
Acceptance	2
Self-motivation	1

## COPING WITH LOSING FOCUS

For losing focus, one coloured player used focusing and concentration as a strategy. To manage the situation the player mentioned that "I concentrate and focus".

**Table 5.26: Sport-related strategies used when coping with losing focus**

STRATEGY	COLOURED PLAYER
Focusing and concentration	1

## COPING WITH SCHOOL AND WORK LOAD

Schoolwork and workload is the only non-sport related strategy used by all three ethnic groups. The results showed that these groups used *planning* as a strategy to deal with the stress caused by schoolwork and workload. This strategy appeared six times in the black group, five times in the Coloured group and three times in the white group.



**Table 5.27: Non-sport related coping strategies used when coping with school and workload**

STRATEGY	BLACK PLAYERS	COLOURED PLAYERS	WHITE PLAYERS
Planning	6	5	3
Social support	3	2	-
Active coping	-	2	2
Goal setting	2	-	-
Emotional expression	-	-	2
Reflection	-	-	2
Relaxation	-	-	1

*Social support* as a strategy appeared in both black and coloured group. This strategy was recorded three times in the black group and two times in the coloured group. It would seem that these two groups prefer to use social support for similar situations. Another strategy that was utilised by the two groups was *active coping*. The strategy appeared two times for both coloured and white players. This indicated that some players were prepared to deal to do something about the stress caused by school and workload.

*Goal setting* was cited twice by the black group. *Relaxation* and *emotional expression* were mentioned by the white group only. *Emotional expression* featured two times in the group and *relaxation* once. This suggests that white player either prefer to respond emotionally or relax when confronted with stress caused by school and workload. Transport problems, language and cultural issues, financial matters, being way from home, and home circumstances have been recorded as the other causes of stress in black and coloured players.

### **COPING WITH TRANSPORT PROBLEMS**

*Social support* was the strategy used by some members of the two groups of ethnically diverse players to cope with the challenges caused by transport.

**Table 5.28: Non-sport related coping strategies used when coping with transport problems**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>
Social support	3	2

Three black players and 2 players of colour cited social support as the strategy they use in dealing with this stress. It seems that for both ethnic groups seeking the support of others was a way of resolving transport problems.

### **COPING WITH LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL PROBLEMS**

The results revealed that *active coping* was the only strategy used by black and players of colour to deal with the pressure caused by factors related to language and culture. Seven black players and one player of colour reported using this strategy. The results indicated that both these groups preferred to engage actively and work towards resolving any problem that is related to language and culture. One player mentioned that "I try to mix with players from the other language groups". Another player cited that "we come together and speak about our cultural differences". It was also important to note that for the white group this aspect was not reported as the cause of stress.

**Table 5.29: Non-sport related coping strategies used when coping with language and cultural problems**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>
Active coping	7	1

### **COPING WITH FINANCIAL MATTERS**

To deal with the stress caused by finances the two ethnic groups used *active coping* and *social support* strategies. For both black and players of colour active coping was cited once as the coping strategy. This suggests that when the group is confronted with such a problem, it prefers to act and deal with the matter. For the black group, it would also appear that

it uses social support strategy to cope with such eventualities and more of the black participants preferred social support. These participants indicated that they "speak to friends, talk to other players and seek family support" when confronted by financial matters. Results showed that many black players were using social support to deal with financial matters.

**Table 5.30: Non-sport related coping strategies used when coping with financial matters**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>
Active coping	1	1
Social support	3	-

### **COPING WITH BEING AWAY FROM HOME**

To cope with the stress of being away from home, black players and coloured players identified three coping strategies. These strategies were *active coping*, *seeking social support* and *self-support*. Four black players and 2 coloured players reported using the strategy. For example, when some players were confronted with the situation they "try to contact families on a regular basis", "visit friends" or "be responsibility by doing something about the situation".

**Table 5.31: Non-sport related coping strategies used in coping with being away from home**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>
Active coping	4	2
Planning	1	-
Self-support	-	1

Similar observations were made by coloured players. For this ethnic group one player resolved the matter by discussing it with a significant other. The player mentioned that "I phone and talk to my mother". Another player stated that, "I save money by working at the garage to make ends meet". It would appear that both groups preferred to do something about being away from home. They either keep contact with their families or make a responsible decision about the challenges presented to them by the circumstances of being away from home.

One black and one coloured player respectively, *planning* and *self-support* as the other strategies each group used in coping with the stress of being away from home. The black player indicated that he plans and does something about the situation. He stated that "I plan and do my household chores" and the player of colour emphasised the importance of "self-support or inner strength" under such situations.

### **COPING WITH HOME CIRCUMSTANCES**

Quite a number of strategies were used to cope with the pressure caused by home circumstances and the strategies differ from ethnic group to ethnic group. For black players, *turning to religion*, *relaxation*, *mental engagement*, *suppression* and *self-support* were recorded as strategies the group used. Three of the black players mentioned that they "pray over difficult situations", "faith helps overcome problems" and "take everything to God in prayer". The three other players cited that "they try to rest", "relax the mind" and "do some reading when confronted with challenges of home circumstances". The other two players mentioned that they "always think about what happened and the problems stay in the mind". For the other two, they try to keep themselves busy in order to forget about their problems and for the remaining two players they try to support themselves.

**Table 5.32: Non-sport related coping strategies used when coping with home circumstances**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>
Turning to religion	3	-
Relaxation	3	-
Mental engagement	2	-
Suppression	2	-
Self-support	2	-
Mental disengagement	-	2
Social support	-	1
Active coping	-	1

Coloured players used *mental disengagement*, *social support* and *active coping* to deal with similar problems. Two of these players cited *mental disengagement* as a strategy they preferred to use when confronted with the situation. One of the two players mentioned that "I block my mind and try not to put those things in my mind". Another mentioned that "I would speak to someone like the principal at school and get advice". The other one stated that "we will try to get together to solve the problem". It would appear that for both groups when circumstances are beyond their control they would turn to religion, try to relax and suppress what is affecting them.

### **COPING WITH LOSING FRIENDS**

Losing friends is one stressful situation experienced by a player of colour. To deal with such condition, the player uses *active coping* as a strategy. He cited that in order to cope with the situation he works to address the

problem by "trying to mix with other team members and making new friends".

**Table 5.33: Non-sport related strategies used when coping with the stress caused by losing friends**

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYER</b>
Active coping	1

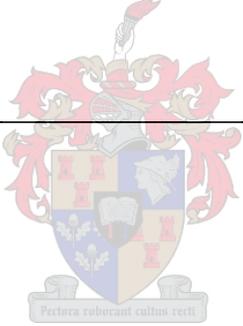
A general conclusion that can be drawn from these observations is that ethnically diverse football players are using multiple strategies to cope with the demands of their sport challenges. The selection of these strategies is in fact determined by the sources of stress that players' experience, ethnic differences and differences in terms of match stages. This matching hypothesis is also identified in other research (e.g., Gould *et al.*, 1993; Madden *et al.*, 1989; Park, 2000).

### **FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SELECTION OF CERTAIN COPING STRATEGIES**

Players' motivation to their choice of coping strategies was categorised into intrinsic and extrinsic factors as indicated in Table 5.34. The following were the responses of participants when asked to indicate what influenced them in choosing certain coping strategies.

**Table 5.34: Motivating factors in the selection of coping strategies**

<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
<b><i>INTRINSIC FACTORS</i></b>	<b><i>INTRINSIC FACTORS</i></b>	<b><i>INTRINSIC FACTORS</i></b>
<b>Personal Safety and protection</b> Avoid being shouted at.	<b>Personal Safety and protection</b> To lessened stress. To protect me from being blamed as a captain.	<b>Personal Safety and protection</b> It's for my health and own benefit.
<b>Achievement motivation</b> Want to win badly.	<b>Achievement motivation</b> To improve my game. To prove the point and what I am capable of.	<b>Achievement motivation</b> Inspired by the desire to perform well.
<b>Concerns about performance</b> Don't want to sit on the bench. I don't want to make my job difficult.		
		<b>Exercise self-control</b> To stay in control.
		<b>Personal experience</b> My own experience and years in the team.
<b><i>EXTRINSIC FACTORS</i></b>	<b><i>EXTRINSIC FACTORS</i></b>	<b><i>EXTRINSIC FACTORS</i></b>
<b>Stress motivation</b> In my case, stress serves as a motivating factor.	<b>Stress motivation</b> Situations make you to work harder.	<b>Stress motivation</b> Depends on the level and severity of stressful incidents.
<b>Influence from others</b> Look at the way others do things. My father helps me. Learnt from others experience. Parents (and upbringing). Listen to instructions.	<b>Influence from others</b> Influenced mostly by my parents. Coach taught me how to deal with such circumstances. Influenced by big people like my school principal and agents. Listen to old wise people. Use tips from others.	<b>Influence from others</b> Learn from other players especially, senior players. My father was a professional player and has taught me some few things. Generally from parents, they taught me a lot of stuff.
<b>Institutional influence</b> Exposure in school debates. Learnt from societies and clubs. Church built me up. Learn from my family.	<b>Institutional influence</b> Family and schooling. Family supports me. Learn from home.	

<p><b>Social background or environment</b> Environment where I grew up. The way I was brought up has helped me. (Parents) and upbringing</p>	<p><b>Social background or environment</b> Elsies (township) taught me the survival skills. I was brought up in an area where there was gangsterism and I know how to deal with that stuff.</p>	
<p><b>Pleasing others</b> Do it for my father.</p>	<p><b>Pleasing others</b> You feel you let people down if you are not coping and strong enough.</p>	
<p><b>Family obligations</b> I have to take care of my sister and her child. Therefore I have to make sure I do good in my sport. My father passed away in 2003 and there is no one to look after me.</p>		
		<p><b>Opponents</b> Your opponents will influence your reaction or responses. If they are strong you will respond in a certain way and if they are weak your response will be different.</p>
		<p><b>Researching</b> I read books on anything that can help me.</p>

Football players identified more extrinsic factors than intrinsic factors as motivating factors for the selection of coping strategies. For black players five extrinsic factors were identified, 4 for coloured players and 4 for white players. Concerning intrinsic factors, three were identified by black players, 2 by coloured players and 4 by white players. It appeared that white players opted for both factors at equally the same way. Black

players and players of colour on the other hand, used fewer intrinsic factors than extrinsic factors.

The intrinsic factors included *personal safety and protection, achievement motivation, concerns about performance, self-control, and personal experience*. Extrinsic factors included motivating stress, influence by others, institutional influences, social background or environment, pleasing others, family obligations, opponents and research. Black players associated more with extrinsic factors than white players did. Six black players, 5 coloured players and 4 white players identified extrinsic factors as motivating reasons for their selection of coping strategies.

*Personal safety* and *achievement* motivation were the 2 motivating factors that featured in all three groups. When participants were asked what motivated them in choosing the strategies they have identified, one of the players mentioned that "it was for my health and own benefit". Two other players cited that they would choose the strategies because they wanted to "be able to cope and lessen the stress" they experience as football players. For the other player he decided so because he wanted "to avoid being shouted at".

It appeared that *achievement motivation* was another contributing factor in players' selection and use of coping strategies. Three players from the three ethnic groups cited achievement motivation as the reason for choosing their strategies and 2 of these players had little experience with the team. These players mentioned that they were "inspired by the desire to perform well" and the motivation "to want to win". When selecting strategies, one coloured player mentioned that for him stressful situations provided an opportunity "to prove a point and what I am capable of doing". Because many of the players who cited achievement

motivation were new in the team, it would appear that motivation was associated with players' experience in a team. New players were more inclined to cite achievement motivation because they have to establish themselves in the team.

Other intrinsic factors that were identified by the participants were located within a particular ethnic group. For example, white players identified *self-control* and *personal experience*, whereas concerns about performance came out from the black group. It was also important to note that white players located the reasons for choosing their strategies within themselves. The emphasis was on *self-control* and own *personal experience*. One player mentioned that he uses the coping strategies in order "to stay in control". The other player was motivated by his "own experience" in selecting and using the coping strategies he identified.

Two of the black players that identified "concerns about performance" as reasons for choosing certain strategies stated that they do so because they "don't want to make job difficult or sit on the bench". Further, these two players were regular starters and senior players. For these players, performance and desire to retain their playing status were factors that motivated them to reach their decisions about specific strategies.

*Stress motivation* and *influence from others* were the other motivating factors identified by the three groups of ethnically diverse players. These players mentioned that in some instances stress was influential and operative in helping develop and using certain strategies as football players. One black player stated that "in many cases stress serves as a motivating factor" for him. Another player of colour cited that "situations in sport make you to work harder". The responses of these players suggested that stress was not serving as a negative factor only but also helped players to cope better.

Some football players have also identified *significant others* as being influential in their selection and choice of coping strategies. In this context, significant others refer to parents, principals, agents, the coach and other players. Players mentioned that their parents or other people influenced them. One player stated that "I look at the way others do things" or "use tips from other players" in order to cope. Another black player mentioned that he "learned from others' experiences". For a player of colour, "the coach taught me how deal with such circumstance". One white player mentioned that "my senior players assist me". For another player it was his father as it was stated in the earlier section.

*Institutional influences* were the motivating factors that were identified by black and players of colour. In this context the concept referred to the influences of institutions such as the church, clubs and societies, families and homes on individual players. Exposure to school debates and societies, families, schools and church were cited as having contributed in helping some players to gain experience in using coping strategies.

*Social background or environment* was also another motivating factor identified by some players of colour and black players. One of these players mentioned that as it was cited earlier as well "the way I was brought up, helped and enabled me to possess the strategies I have". It appeared that the environment in which black and players of colour grew up contributed positively in the development of their coping strategies.

*Pleasing others* was another motivating factor shared by black and players of colour. It became clear that a desire to please others was a motivating factor in these groups. One player from the two different ethnic groups mentioned that "I do it for my father". His desire to please

his father was a motivating factor for him to survive or cope with the challenges posed by football. Another player stated that if he was not coping and strong enough he will feel like he betrayed others. For instance he mentioned that "I feel like I am letting people down when I don't cope". This showed that some players were under a tremendous pressure to please others.

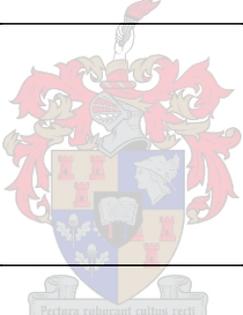
*Family obligation* was a motivating factor that was identified by a black player only. This player mentioned that "the reason I try very hard to be successful in sport was I had to take care of my sister and her child" and had to make sure that he does well in sport to support them. This observation was important because unlike in other ethnic groups some black players have other responsibilities to carry, which their colleagues do not experience. White players on the other hand, also cited *research* and *opponents* as motivating factors. These players stated that "reading books or doing something that helps" was the reason for them to have better coping strategies. For another white player, opponents were sometimes influencing him in responding and acting the way he did. According to him the strength and plan of his opponents determine how he responds.

### **CONSTRAINTS IN COPING WITH FOOTBALL STRESS**

The responses contained in Table 5.35 were observed and recorded when participants were asked to identify factors that were restrictive to coping. The research findings revealed that there were a number of factors that contributed to football players' restriction to coping. Some of the factors appeared across all three ethnically diverse groups. Others emerged between the two groups and some featured in specific groups only.

**Table 5.35: Constraints in coping with football stress**

<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
<b>Exhaustion/tiredness</b> Get tired you don't want to work. Not getting rest.	<b>Exhaustion/tiredness</b> You are tired but you have to perform. Training too hard.	<b>Exhaustion/tiredness</b> I don't get enough sleep.
<b>Cultural differences</b> Not understanding each others culture.	<b>Cultural differences</b> Sometimes I feel we are in different worlds.	<b>Cultural differences</b> Difficult to cater for every individual especially coming from different cultural backgrounds.
	<b>Time constraints</b> Don't have time.	<b>Time constraints</b> Time is very tight. Study takes much of my time.
<b>Language</b> Difficult because of the style of talking.	<b>Language</b> Players speak mostly Afrikaans.	
<b>Absence of family support structures</b> Father never been part of my life.	<b>Absence of family support structures</b> I am alone in Cape Town. Players are not supporting each other.	
<b>Friends/peer pressure</b> Put me in trouble.	<b>Friends/peer pressure</b> Wanting to please friends by being defiant and attending parties.	
<b>Home circumstances</b> When things go wrong at home, they will affect you as well.	<b>Home circumstances</b> When something is not okay at home. Home circumstances are a definite contributor.	
	<b>Communication</b> When the coach screams instructions or raises his voice.	<b>Communication</b> People not listening when you give instructions.
	<b>High expectations</b> It becomes difficult because coach expects a lot from me since I am from Johannesburg.	<b>High expectations</b> You are young but you are expected to behave like an adult.
	<b>New in a team/environment</b> When you are new in the team, other members don't believe in you.	

	<p><b>Absence of compliments or affirmations</b> When things go wrong you are criticised but when the team wins, the goalkeeper gets no complement.</p>	
	<p><b>Substance use/abuse</b> Drugs might as well affect how you cope.</p>	
<p><b>Diet</b> My parents could not afford the diet I have to eat in order to stay in shape.</p>		
<p><b>Non-tolerance of mistakes</b> Players don't accept easy when you make mistakes.</p>		
		<p><b>Personalities</b> We have different personalities and we behave differently. Soccer is a team sport and is difficult to cater for everyone.</p>

Similarities and differences were observed between and amongst ethnic groups. For example, *exhaustion or tiredness* and *cultural differences* were themes that were identified as restricting the usage of coping strategies that appeared across the three different groups. It was reported that some players were not coping or using effective strategies because they were tired. These players indicated that they were expected to perform their duties whilst they were exhausted. One of the players mentioned that "I train too hard and get tired and expected to perform". Other players cited that they "do not get rest" and "do not sleep enough" and this contributed to them not being able to cope.

*Cultural differences* was another theme that was identified by the three groups of football players as a constraint to coping and barrier to performance. One coloured player stated that he could not progress because he sometimes feels that they are "in different worlds". A black player shared the same sentiments when he indicated that players seemed "not to understand one another's culture". As a confirmation to this statement as well, a white player stated that, "it is difficult for everyone because we are different". From these players' perspective, it appeared that differences caused by ethnic and environmental backgrounds limit the coping abilities of football players.

*Language, absence of family support structure, and peer pressure* were the other coping constraints that were identified by black players and players of colour. Two players cited that it was difficult for them to cope because "players speak mostly Afrikaans" and used a "different talking style". These two players came from KwaZuluNatal and Gauteng. The player of KwaZuluNatal had no experience of Afrikaans and the one from Gauteng was struggling with pronunciations.

*Absence of a family support structure* was another theme identified by the two ethnic groups as a restrictive factor to coping. One black player stated that surviving football life was difficult for him because "his father was never part of his life" and is not supporting him. Two players of colour cited loneliness and absence of a support structure as conditions that restrict their coping. *Peer pressure* was another condition that prevented them from coping and making things difficult. Players mentioned that in many instances they "wanted to please friends" by being defiant and attending parties. Since the two players were only 17 years old, the findings suggest that this situation was mainly applicable to younger players.

*Home circumstances* were also recorded as situations that prevented the fully functioning of football players. One of the 3 players from the non-white groups indicated that "when things go wrong at home they affect you". Results suggested that players' performance and interest in their sport is affected when things are not in order at home and players that are mostly affected by this situation were black and coloured players.

*Communication* was identified by players of colour and white players as a hindrance to coping. Players and the coach were considered as agents that contribute to communication breakdown. Players felt that "when the coach screams instructions or raises his voice" they become nervous and lose concentration. This in turn affected them on how they respond to game challenges. For another player, it was "people who do not listen to instructions" that irritates me and complicates issues" by making it difficult for him to cope.

Age and location were two other factors under *high expectations* that were identified as contributing to players' loss of focus. Responses that were elicited from these players suggested that players were put under pressure by high expectations. One of the two players that responded at this level mentioned that for them "it is difficult because the coach expects a lot from me who come from Johannesburg". Another players also mentioned that "I am young but I am expected to behave like an adult". This particular player mentioned that he is "under pressure to behave and act as a matured player".

Three other factors that were identified by players of colour were *substance use, absence of compliments* and *being in a new environment*. These factors were applicable to players of colour only. One player stated that "when you are new in the team, other members don't believe in you". Because other players do not put trust in him, he found it difficult to

adapt and cope in his new environment. The constraint in coping for the goalkeeper was the fact that he does "not get compliments when the team wins" but is "criticised when things go wrong". For the other player drugs were also contributing to him not being able to manage his sporting responsibilities.

*Diet and non-tolerance of mistakes* were coping constraints that were identified by two black players. One player cited that he sometimes finds it difficult to survive because his parents could not provide him with a proper diet. As he stated "my parents could not afford the diet I have to eat in order to stay in shape". The other player emphasised intolerance as a restrictive factor in their coping. The study revealed that for some players "players do not accept easy when one make mistakes" and this results in them losing confidence and not coping as it would be expected.

A white player considered *personality differences* as a factor hindering unity, support and optimal performance. This player viewed the fact that football is a team-sport as a somehow deterrent factor to coping. The player mentioned that players "have different personalities that make it difficult to cater for everyone". This player appeared to be sensitive to personality issues.

The overview of the results is a reflection of the difficulties football players encounter when selecting coping strategies. The restrictive factors, which football players identified were strongly associated with experience and circumstances that have negative bearings on their lives. Therefore because of this association, constraints became specific to specific ethnic groups. For example, black players cited *diet, home circumstances and absence of family support structures* as restrictive factors because these conditions were applicable to their situation.

Coloured players for example, cited *new environment*, *absence of compliments* and *substance use* or *abuse* as restrictive factors because these conditions were relevant and related to the group's experience and background. For instance, the mentioning of *absence of compliments* was relevant to players of colour because the goalkeeper happened to come from this ethnic group. The same applied to *new environment*, the player that received early promotion was a player of colour and hence this concern was raised from this group.

White players for instance could not *cite absence of family support structure* because all of them originally came from the Western Cape and have no problems of living away from their families. The family support structure was therefore not a relevant problem for them. There were, however, areas where players from different groups shared common constraints because of shared experience or background. These include *exhaustion*, *cultural differences*, *language*, *time constraints*, *communication* and *high expectations from others*. These were conditions that most players shared.



## **CONCLUSION**

A number of conclusions can be drawn from these research findings. The study revealed that all three groups of ethnically diverse players were exposed to stress and there were both differences and similarities concerning players' experience of stress. Similarities were recorded on matters related to stress caused by match situations e.g., *pressure to perform*, *inclusion in a starting line-up*, and *unruly behaviour of supporters*. Differences were cited on issues related to *language and culture*, *financial matters*, *poor playing conditions*, *negative evaluation of*

*the team, losing competitions, being away at home and referees' decisions* and these differences were both between ethnic groups and within groups.

Regarding players' report of their experience of stress, results showed that the characteristics of the selected sample did not play a significant role in the players' experience of stress. Ethnic differences were however recorded. The results revealed that black players were experiencing more stress than the other two ethnic groups. Findings suggested that the coloured players' experience of stress was not affecting them that much and white players were experiencing stress at a far lesser degree than the other two ethnic groups.

Concerning coping strategies, the study showed that players used four coping functions i.e. *Problem-focused coping, Emotion-focused coping, Passive-coping function and Avoidance-coping function*. The example of *Problem-focused coping* strategies included *active coping, focusing and concentration, adopting of a positive approach, planning, suppression of competitive activities, relaxation, goal setting, self-motivation, self-support, constructive talk and motivating others*. The *Emotion-focused coping* strategies were *seeking of social support, emotional expression, mental engagement, mental and behavioural disengagement, self-blame, blaming others, not blaming others and adopting of a negative approach*. *Passive coping* included *acceptance, turning to religion, no planning and passive thinking*. *Avoidance coping* included *avoidance, ignoring, substance use/abuse and losing focus*. The results suggested there are differences and similarities in the use of these strategies. The main mechanisms used by the three ethnic groups were *problem-focused* and *emotion-focused coping*. The lesser-used mechanisms were *passive coping* and *avoidance coping*. Most black players preferred to use more of the

*problem-focused mechanism* and most white players used *emotion-focused coping*. Coloured players used the *problem-focused* and *emotion-focused coping* at more or less with similar frequency. All three ethnic groups in situations that players could not control used *avoidance coping* and *passive coping*. The strategies for example, were used to deal with *playing conditions, match results, referees' decisions* or *an angry coach*. Participants used a set of similar strategies but applied differently according to specific situations. There were, however, strategies used by one group only. For instance, *self-criticism, not blaming others, adopting a negative approach, substance use/abuse* and *turning to religion*, were limited to specific groups.

The study revealed that there are four processes involved in the selection of coping strategies i.e. *thought-out processes, automatic processes, influence of experience* and *combination of processes*. Thinking and processing of information was a preferred option used by all three groups when selecting coping strategies. Most players preferred to process their reactions before selecting strategies. Only a few players used automatic processes. For these players the selection of strategies was also influenced by their environmental background and previous experiences. For black players and coloured players this environmental influence came mostly from the outside home environment. For white players it came from within their families. Most white players also used a combination of processes instead of a single mechanism.

Group differences were recorded in how players experience themselves when selecting coping strategies. The majority of black and white players reported to feel in control and many of these players were regular starters, others were married and one had a responsibility of being a captain. Many players of colour reported to experience some control and

the majority of them were non-starters. Perceptions of little control were applicable only to black and coloured players. All these players were non-starters and young.

The research findings revealed that football players were using multiple strategies to cope with sport challenges and respond differently to stressful situations depending on the different stages of the match. A pattern was observed in terms of how players respond to pressure at different stages of the match.. The dominant strategies that black players used at the *pre-match* phase were *planning and preparation, relaxation, praying, focusing and concentration*. White players used *focusing and concentration and planning*. Coloured players used similar strategies in addition to *goal setting and self-motivation*. There were similarities amongst the three groups in the use of these strategies.

During a *match phase* all three groups used multiple strategies. Many black players used *active coping, a positive approach, ignoring, suppression of competitive activities and focusing and concentration*. The strategies were the same for black and players of colour except for *self-talk* and *relaxation* which, was used mainly by coloured players. White players used similar strategies in addition to *emotional expression and mental disengagement*.

For the *post-match phase*, the majority of players from the three ethnic groups used very few *less-dominant* strategies and there were little variations amongst groups. Strategies were the same but different as per individual group. The *match phase* demanded a different set of strategies and most of them were *problem-focused strategies*. The *post-match phase* was dominated by *less-dominant coping* strategies. Some of these strategies were shared and others appeared in specific groups e.g.,

*substance use/abuse* for coloured players and *passive thinking* for white players.

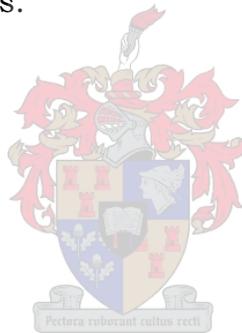
The research findings revealed that the coping strategies that football players used could be further classified according to *sport* and *non sport-related situations*. The strategies that were directly linked to sport varied and were found mostly during the *pre-match* and *match phases*. The strategies that were indirectly linked to sport appeared mostly during the *post-match stage* and were identified mostly by black players and coloured players. Generally, the groups of strategies were the same for sport and non-sport situations.

The study also showed that there were motivating factors that contributed to players' selection of coping strategies and two main factors were identified as operating to achieve this goal. These factors were *intrinsic* and *extrinsic factors*. *Intrinsic factors* included *personal safety and protection, performance, self-control* and *personal experiences*. *Extrinsic factors* included *stress, influence of others, institutional influences, social background, pleasing others, family obligations, opponents* and *research*. It appeared that most white players used *intrinsic* and *extrinsic factors* with equal frequency. Black players and coloured players on the other hand, used fewer *intrinsic factors* than *extrinsic factors*. The results also showed that new players were more inclined to use *achievement motivation* as a strategy. Black players were also motivated by one other factor that did not feature in other two ethnic groups e.g., *family obligations*.

Finally, *exhaustion, cultural differences, language, absence of a family support structure, peer pressure, home circumstances, communication, diet, substance use/abuse, being in a new environment, personality*

*differences* and *high expectations* were identified as restrictive to the usage of coping strategies. *Exhaustion* and *cultural differences* appeared across all three ethnic groups.

Group differences were also observed. For instance, *language*, *absence of a family support structure*, *peer pressure*, *home circumstances*, *high expectations* and *absence of compliments* were experienced differently by the different ethnic groups or individuals. *Substance use/abuse* and *new environment* were applicable only to coloured players. *Diet* and *non-tolerance of mistakes* were cited by black players only. *Personality differences* were reported by white players only. It seemed that under these circumstances, coping constraints were related specifically to the unique experiences of players.



## CHAPTER SIX

# DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, the findings of the study are discussed followed by recommendations. The main themes that emerged in the study are discussed in relation to the available literature on the topic of coping strategies and the role of ethnicity in sport. The chapter also presents the relevance of the study and proposals regarding future research. Evidence from the reviewed studies on the transactional model and indigenous framework as presented in the previous chapters is also included and this is followed by the conclusion to the study.

### DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicated both differences and similarities in the way in which ethnically diverse football players conduct themselves. There were aspects that players shared and others that were different because of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. These results were consistent with those of the current study. This observation is supported by the findings of Holt and Hogg (2002) in their study of field communication and competence amongst football players. They discovered that many of the coping strategies soccer players used were related to the social interaction and environment in which players are exposed. Ethnicity played a significant role in the development and selection of coping strategies. According to Aldwin (1994) and Scanlan *et al.* (1991), the sources of stress and coping strategies are contextual, they differ according to circumstances. It appeared that coping strategies were related to the specific conditions in which they were manifested.

They differed according to context and varied from one ethnic group to another. These differences existed because of social identity and acculturation processes. In each cultural group there are certain procedures and ways in which people behave and do things. As individuals developed they become exposed to situations and develop behaviour patterns that normative and distinctive from each group.

Players' perceptions of their experience of stress also suggested inter-group differences. The study revealed that non-white players were experiencing more stress than white players. This was also in agreement with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) work. These theorists defined stress as acute and chronic demands posed by the physical, psychological and contextual factors on the individual. The differences in the way white players and non-white players experience stress could be attributed to differences in their ethnic groups, environment and social context. It is logical for non-white players to experience the situation this way because of their history of economic disadvantages and social problems. It would appear that the distribution of resources and other problems associated with unemployment and home situations were interplaying in creating stress amongst non-white players. Findings revealed that there was a relationship between stress and the socio-economic environment and these findings were identified in other research as well (Mattlin *et al.*, 1990; Parkes, 1986; Smallman *et al.*, 1991; Williams *et al.*, 1997).

Discrepancies were recorded in players' experience of control. Football players from advanced backgrounds were expected to display better coping strategies than players from an impoverished background. Instead, the findings revealed that the majority of black and white players were in control during their stressful times. The fact that these players were regular starters and occupied leadership positions (e.g., captains) in their team might have worked as confidence booster for

them and elevator of their social status or responsibility. Hence, they reported experience of control. It appeared that exposure from such experience equipped non-white players by building on their coping strategies and making them believe in their abilities and adaptive functioning. Historically blacks were disadvantaged in South Africa. They were exposed to unfair conditions and discriminatory treatment. There were limited opportunities for them and employment was reserved for white and coloured groups only. Whilst that took place, black people had to continue with their lives, act as provider of their families and living with the uncertainty of not knowing what will come next. These conditions were a test to their mental capabilities and posed as a threat in their functioning. They made them susceptible or vulnerable to stress.

Another important discovery was made in the same context. Even though black players reported being in control, the perception of little control was recorded only among non-white players. This perception did not appear in the white group and it supported the hypothesis that the experience of stressful events has greater consequences for non-white than for white players. Non-white players' self-evaluation of their coping experiences at this level suggested that they were not positive and confident about their coping abilities. The study suggested that how these players evaluated and experienced themselves was affecting them. It seemed that ethnic factors and societal influences were contributing to these differences. The environment in which many non-white players lived, exposed them to adverse conditions that have negative impact on the development of their self-concepts which is a key factor in coping processes. Not able to carry out and do some of their responsibilities affected how non-white players evaluated themselves and destroyed their confidence in their abilities. The experience was generalized to other contexts and influenced players' perceptions of those situations. Madden *et al.* (1990), in their evaluation of the perceived stress on coping with

competitive basketball players found, that players who reported low levels of perceived competitive stress reported less use of coping strategies than players reporting high levels of perceived stress. There is a strong correlation between individuals' self-evaluation and coping.

The study also revealed that *problem-focused coping* and *emotion-focused coping* were the main strategies used by all three ethnic groups in coping with stress. It appeared that ethnically diverse football players responded in almost the same way to the challenges presented to them by football. There were no clear cut differences amongst ethnic groups in how they responded. Players preferred to concentrate on tasks, behaviour and emotional control when dealing with stressful situations. This was caused by the fact that in many occasions especially during match stages, football players were required to engage in tasks that demanded the immediate application of decisions and hence their focus was on problem solving. This finding supported the conclusions of other studies. Researchers attribute the tendency towards problem solving strategies to individual expectations and the contexts in which sports is played. According to researchers, players react this way because team athletes rely more on the group than individual athletes and there is a tendency to focus on solutions and support of others. (Anshel *et al.*, 2001; Endler & Parker, 1990; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Crocker (1992) made similar observations in his study of competitive athletes in various team sports. He found that athletes used active coping and *problem-focused strategies* to manage the environment that contributes to their stressful situations. Even though it was not clearly displayed, in the examination of the coping strategies used by national champion figures skaters Gould and others (1993) also found that athletes who participated in team sport required different coping

strategies than athletes in individual sport and *problem-focused coping* was a preferred set of strategies.

The current study showed that *passive coping* and *avoidance coping* were the lesser-used strategies by all three ethnic groups. Research evidence showed that the two coping strategies were used mostly in situations where players had no control e.g., *playing conditions, results* and *dubious referees' decisions*. It appeared that football players from all three ethnic groups reserved their energy and learned to accept their conditions when dealing with circumstances they cannot control. This was an important finding because it was not adequately addressed in the literature surveyed. Although some studies agreed that the two mechanisms were used mostly by players to cope with situations they could not control, they were not highlighted as the lesser-used coping strategies by players. In a study of coping amongst elite football players Park (2000) found that avoidance coping was a prevalent response to stressors that were beyond players' control. Players who used avoidance coping exhibited more state anxiety than players who used other coping strategies.

Krohne and Hindel (1988) made similar observations in their study of coping strategies amongst German table tennis players. They found that the coping strategies that players used were selected based on players' levels of skill. Less skilled tennis players tended to use more avoidance coping than elite players. Avoidance coping seems to protect players against distracting actions, especially those that have a negative influence on them. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) explained the same situation as the individual's desire to maintain hope. These theorists argued that individuals use existential beliefs (faith in God or the natural order of the universe) to create meaning out of life and damaging experiences in order to maintain hope.

It is also worth noting that there were strategies that appeared in specific ethnic groups only and not cited in literature. These strategies included *self-criticism, adopting a negative approach, not blaming others, substance use/abuse* and *turning to religion*. This indicated that strategies are context-specific and varied according to ethnic groups. It appeared that ethnic differences influenced coping patterns or behaviours in these groups. There was a relationship between coping and the environmental characteristics in which players were raised. Strategies were different as a result of societal and ethnic variations. For example, *turning to religion* was a strategy used mainly by the non-white group. This aspect indicated the importance of religion as a major institution in shaping human behavior and maintaining group existence. For the group, church provided a focus of ethnic life and was used to give meaning to the group's hopeless situations.

*Substance abuse* on the other hand was a strategy used only by the coloured players. This revealed the impact of societal conditions or environment in the development and selection of coping strategies by this group. The nature of the environment in which coloured players found themselves was a potential source that influenced the types of coping strategies some of the group members used. In historically disadvantaged communities alcohol abuse is prominent and is the order of the day. It is a social pattern of adaptation and used by community members to deal with problems and sometimes as a way of “medicating” individual members. Young people were exposed to those ways of dealing with life challenges and they internalized and adopted them as part of their coping skills. In the study of the coping profiles of Korean competitive athletes, Yoo (2001) made similar observations. He found that human behavior is subjected to the societal differences and the styles of coping that athletes employ and vary according to societal coping structures.

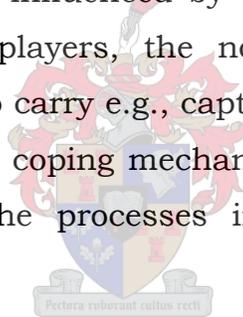
Korean athletes were found to have different coping styles that were not found in the west. These athletes preferred transcendence coping which is central to their culture and influenced by Confucianism and Buddhism.

*Not blaming others* and *self-criticism* were strategies identified by white players and were central to their culture. The results suggested that white players externalized problems lesser than non-white players. That reflected the importance of values and upbringing in the development and manifestation of coping strategies. Whites, for example, grew up in the environment in which the expression of negative feelings is discouraged and the disowning of the feelings is prohibited. Players are not expected to express anger towards others but to direct it towards themselves and hence *not blaming others* and *self-criticism* were strategies recorded in this group.

The current research also found that players across all three ethnic groups were using thought-out processes to identify and select appropriate coping strategies. It seemed that there were similarities in the way many football players processed information before embarking on the selection of strategies. The players were not passive agents that are influenced by their circumstances. This observation was consistent with the transactional model's understanding of coping. According to this model, coping depends on how the person appraises or cognitively evaluates his/her situation (Anshel *et al.*, 2001; Carver *et al.*, 1989; Crocker *et al.*, 1998; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping is the result of the person's active interaction with his/her environment. This view was further supported by Stone and Neale (1984). They defined coping as a conscious effort made by individuals to deal with stressful demands. The

current study confirmed the transactionalists' definition of coping in which it is described as a conscious individual effort to manage stress.

Ethnic differences were observed regarding two other processes. Findings revealed that non-white players (black and coloured players) were influenced by experience when choosing coping strategies. They cited *up-bringing, environment, parents* and *significant others* as being influential in their selection of coping strategies. It appeared that the different ethnic conditions in which players were exposed were influential in determining the process involved in football players' identification of coping strategies. What players learnt from their ethnic environments and how they were brought up contributed in their decisions over coping processes. This was further influenced by their own experiences within their team. Unlike white players, the non-white players had other leadership responsibilities to carry e.g., captaincy roles. These conditions acted as building blocks for coping mechanisms and deciding how they reached decisions about the processes involved in selecting coping strategies.



For white players, this condition was not well-recorded. Only one player cited the influence of experience as an influential process in the manifestation and selection of coping strategies. The influence from the group came from within the family. The player was influenced by his father and not the life struggle or other external factors. It appeared that this white player was not exposed in environments in which he had to survive on his own. He had his immediate family to protect and support him as he grew and hence his influence came mainly from his family member.

Furthermore, the current study revealed that football players in all three ethnic groups used *multiple strategies* to cope with sport challenges and these strategies were different depending on match stages. No ethnic differences were observed concerning the use of dominant coping strategies at pre-match stage. The strategies used by all three ethnic groups were *planning, preparation, relaxation, focusing* and *concentration*. *Praying* was the only strategy used by the non-white group only. At this stage it would appear that all three ethnic groups focused and concentrated on readying themselves for the tasks at hand and the emphasis was on doing something about the situation. The only variation recorded was on the use of *praying* by the non-white players as a coping strategy. This suggested (as discussed earlier) that spirituality was central in non-whites' understanding and dealing with their world.

Use of multiple strategies is also consistent with the trait and transactional model's conception of coping but differs on the dimension of coping. The trait theory views coping as a set of coping strategies that remain fixed across time and circumstances (Crocker & Isaak, 1997; Giacobbi & Weinberg, 2000; McCrae, 1989). Transactional theory views it as dynamic multi-dimensional process (Anshel *et al.*, 2001; Antonovsky, 1979; Carver *et al.*, 1989; Gould *et al.*, 1993b; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The current study supports the transactional view that considers coping as a flexible process that varies from situation to situation.

This view is also supported by many other studies even though at instances the coping strategies were not the same. For example, Holt and Hogg (2002) found that communication and visualization were strategies used more frequently by athletes before the game. In another study examining the acquisition of cognitive skills and coping strategies by elite male swimmers, Hanton and Jones (1999) found that Welsh swimmers

were using four dimensions of coping strategies, namely: dissociation, thought control, self-talk and positive thinking. They found that prior to the race, swimmers dissociate by talking to friends and family and trying to forget about the upcoming performance. At the competition site, the swimmers used thought control and positive thinking. They used these strategies to control thoughts and feelings during the actual races.

Even though the players were not using similar strategies in the current investigation, the important aspect is the use of a different set of strategies by players at different stages of their games. This shows that strategies are not consistent across stages. There were, however, few studies that have cited contrary findings. Contradicting evidence was recorded in the literature in this regard. For instance, Crocker and Isaak (1997) investigated the consistency of coping strategies amongst elite swimmers across three distinctive races and training sessions. The study revealed that the coping strategies of elite swimmers were consistent across the three training sessions. Giacobbi and Weinberg (2000) also found evidence of stability in people's coping responses. Some researchers attribute this cross-situational consistency to personality traits (Patterson *et al.*, 1990).

The current study revealed that during the match stage the majority of participants used *problem-focused strategies*. There were strong similarities in the types of strategies players used and differences were recorded by the white group when it comes to emotional expression and mental disengagement. At this stage, the research revealed that players used dominant coping strategies. These were the strategies that appeared more frequently in the classification list. It appeared that *problem-focused strategies* were the preferred set of strategies because a different set of strategies was required during the match phase. The conditions were different and players had to deal directly with sport challenges and

there was no time for them to consult and talk to one another. *Problem-focused strategies* became appropriate responses.

For the post-match stage, different players used a variety of less-dominant strategies and many differed from ethnic group to ethnic group. The majority of strategies were *emotion focused*. This included *talking to others, seeking advice, emotional expression, reflection, mental engagement* and *acceptance*. The results indicated that at this stage of the game players preferred to talk and reflect on what happened. The reason players do so was the fact that they could successfully employ these strategies. Time allowed them to do so as it was at the end of the match. There was time to talk, reflect and work on their problems.

The two dominant strategies that black players used at this stage were *seeking advice* and *acceptance*. It appeared that these players dealt with stress by either accepting their situation or seeking advice from others. This was indicative of links that exist between culture and human behaviour. Their practice was relative to what their culture offered. Because black people are exposed to a culture that allows sharing and talking to others about their concerns, they found it appropriate to use these strategies when confronted with similar conditions warranting their responses.

Coloured and white players used a variety of strategies which included *emotional expression, mental engagement* and *reflection*. The findings revealed that unlike black players, the two other groups used *emotional expression* and *reflection* as their dominant strategies. These players were comfortable about expressing their feelings and emotions during the post-match stage. Ethnic differences were perceived as viable explanations for these variations. A conflict of two cultures, a culture

that says boys do not cry and a culture that understands that males are human beings who possess emotions. It appeared that the responses of black players could be understood in terms of the culture of boys do not cry principle, and the coloured and white players' responses could be explained in terms of the "accommodative" nature of culture on emotions.

Another interesting finding was the classification of coping strategies according to *sport* and *non-sport related* situations. The strategies that were directly linked to sport were found mostly during the pre-match and match stages. The *non-sport related* strategies appeared during the post-match stage and were identified mostly by non-white players. These findings were expected because at the pre-match stage players will be preparing themselves for the match and most of the things they will be doing will focus on the match. During the match stage as well, their attention will be drawn to the game. This implies that whatever players will be doing will be related to the match situation. The use of *non-sport related* strategies during the post-match stage supports the hypothesis and confirms the earlier findings about the sources of stress in which non-white players were reported experiencing more stress than white players.

The findings revealed in this study confirmed the matching hypothesis identified in other studies (e.g., Gould *et al.*, 1903; Madden *et al.*, 1989) in which specific strategies were matched with specific stressors. Non-white players displayed a tendency to identify more with non-sport related strategies because these strategies reflected their own life experiences and what players bring to football situations. Those were everyday life experiences that non-white football players encountered in their contexts in dealings with harsh realities of life. This displayed the

influence of ethnic identity and confirmation of the existing relationship between coping and societal factors. It also reflected the impact as well as the effects of structural adjustments and the previous discriminating methods of the allocation of resources in South Africa. *Transport problems, being away from home, and debilitating home circumstances* for example, were all conditions experienced by non-white group as a result of ethno-historical differences. The different historical backgrounds of football players and their belonging to a particular ethnic group contributed in the identification and selection of coping strategies by ethnically diverse football players. Their diverse experiences influenced their diverse choice of strategies and more important, it was not their own making but a political decision.

The study also identified *intrinsic and extrinsic factors* as conditions contributing to players' selection of coping strategies. Ethnic differences were recorded in this area. The results showed that white players cited *intrinsic and extrinsic factors* as motivating factors for their selection of coping strategies. Non-white players on the other hand used more *extrinsic* than *intrinsic factors* for their selection of coping strategies. White players depended on their *personal experiences, safety and protection, self-control, institutional influences and research*. Non-white players were influenced by their *social background, family obligations, influence of others, institutional influences, and desire to perform*. The greater part of influence in the non-white players came from external factors whilst white players had a balanced approach. This might have been caused by the differences in social backgrounds and upbringing.

In black communities there are few infrastructures, institutions and recreational facilities that support, build and develop community members. Community members rely on others for support and

assistance. They use their families, significant others and friends as their social systems to develop and equip themselves for life challenges. In such contexts, the role of adults is significant. Adults act as conduits of community values and are responsible for guidance, discipline and support of children in the absence of their biological parents. Whereas in white communities bringing up a child is a sole responsibility of their parents and there are enough institutions to support young people, hence *personal experience*, *research* and *institutional influences* were recorded as factors that influenced this group's selection of coping strategies. These findings reflected on the influence of societal factors in the development of coping strategies. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) explained the same phenomenon as a process of development and acculturation. They argued that an individual is a product of his/her unique development and function of culture.

The players' motivation for the selection of coping strategies was also influenced by the internal and external locus of control. Non-white players focused on external locus of control because of their culture and its emphasis on sharing and talking about life experiences. White players on the other hand, focused more on internal locus of control because of the group's belief in one's ability to control self and his/her environment. Non-white players come from big families in which a member's problem is considered a problem of the whole family and in that context it is difficult for a member to hide what is bothering him or her or is impossible for others not to know what is affecting another member and disclosing is considered appropriate. Whereas white players grew up in small families where one fend for himself. For them coping stemmed from self efficacy or a belief in self hence, *self-control*, *personal safety* and *personal experience* were recorded in the group.

Finally, the results suggested the presence of group differences on *restrictive factors* to coping. *Peer pressure, substance use/abuse, absence of complements or affirmations* and *new environment* were restrictive factors applicable to coloured players only. Black players cited *language, absence of family support, and home circumstances* and White players reported *time constraints, personality differences* as constraining factors. These factors were related to players' background and experiences, and were part of the challenges that different football players encountered.

The findings showed that there was a strong relationship between the constraining factors and ethnic differences. Constraining factors varied and were distributed according to the different environment and ethnic groups. For example, factors that restricted black players were *language, absence of family support* and *home circumstances*. *Language* was a matter of concern for blacks because for the majority of them English and Afrikaans were not their mother tongue but second languages. At club level the languages that were used by officials were English and Afrikaans and some of their players struggled with these languages. Moreover, the commonly used language when players communicate with other players was Afrikaans. For this group language was a barrier to its coping.

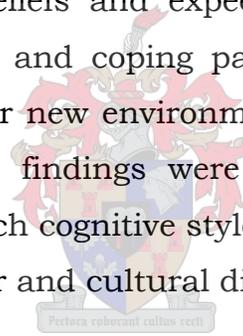
*Family support* was also identified as a contributing factor to coping constraints. This could be explained by the fact that a large number of black players were from other provinces other than the Western Cape and were staying in Cape Town with families whom they did not know. Some of these families were different from their main families (in terms of family values, cultural practices and ways of doing things) and these differences acted as hindrance to their coping.

*Peer pressure* and *substance abuse* were identified by coloured players as factors that restrict their coping. It appeared that because coloured players were the majority in the team and originally from the Western, their big numbers counted against them. The bigger their number, the bigger was their challenge and pressure. Most of them were staying with their families and residing in the areas where they grew up with the same circle of friends. They had team responsibilities and duties to perform whilst they have to live in their home environment as professional players. Friends put pressure on them to do things that were in contrast to their professional code which were done by people of their age group in their own communities e.g., drugs and alcohol. These were societal constraints that were specific to the coloured players that acted as hindrance for them.

For white players, *time constraints* and *personality differences* were the cause of coping constraint in their football lives. White players attribute this challenge to differences in ethnic identities. The reason that these players were struggling to cope was the fact that in their team there were different personalities from different ethnic backgrounds that behaved differently. Players were coming from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and expected to live and work together as a team. For white players that was a restricting factor to their coping. Once again, that showed that constraining factors in coping were group-specific and related to the experiences of the group and its individual members.

It also appeared that all three groups of ethnically diverse players were affected in a similar way by *exhaustion* and *cultural differences*. Both these factors were a hindrance to their coping. This was significant because it was hypothesized that white and non-white players will

respond differently to stressful situations. Differences in culture and ethnicity were viewed as contributing significantly to the coping process of football players. According to Aldwin (1994), culture is a process that affects coping in various ways. It affects the way in which stress is conceptualized, the way events are appraised and how strategies are selected. The findings suggested that the social life and cultural practices of individual ethnic groups are indicators of how football players reacted to stressful events. It would appear that culture and behaviour work together interchangeably to influence one another. The experiences players accumulated from being members of their own cultural groups were used to enhance the development of normative behaviours or coping patterns. Ethnically diverse football players' coping strategies matched with the norms, values, beliefs and expectations of their own ethnic groups. Players used skills and coping patterns developed from these experiences to adapt to their new environment and to build a repertoire of coping strategies. These findings were confirmed by the study of Williams *et al.* (1997) in which cognitive styles of adolescent athletes were found to be related to gender and cultural differences.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Stress management programme**

The study revealed that stress is part of football and is something that is experienced by many football players. In order to assist these players to produce the desired outcomes or function at their optimal levels, the implementation of a stress management programme is recommended. It appeared that many of the players lacked the skills to deal with the pressure presented to them by their sport circumstances. A stress management programme could act as tool in helping football players to acquire skills that will enable them to handle challenging situations. It

could offer practical suggestions as to how they can take action to protect their well-being. The programme could include players' understanding of stress, sources of stress and stress processes, coping, and building of support structures and resources. Such a programme could be implemented at minimal cost and could be used to support coaches, as well. It could be organised and become part of the players' development programme.

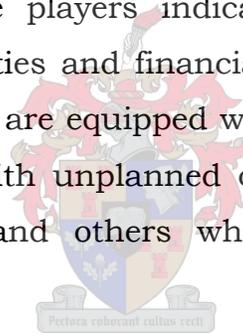
### **Life skills programme**

A Life-skills programme aims to develop football players by equipping them with the necessary life skills. The programme could include *personal skills course, social skills training, study skills, time management, sport management, communication skills, problem-solving skills, crisis-intervention skills, diversity training, teambuilding and coaching skills.*

All these areas have been identified based on the needs of the players. *Personal skills* will allow players to become more aware of themselves, the nature and causes of stress and how to handle stress. *Social skills* will empower football players with skills to become better social beings and to develop social support that will enable them to manage stressful situations. *Time management, sport management* and *study skills* are geared toward helping players to manage the stress associated with school and workload. The research findings had revealed that many football players are experiencing stress as a result of their work demands and other tasks. It appeared that they struggled to manage themselves, their time and other responsibilities. By introducing this programme players could be alleviated from such tensions and placed at better positions to focus on their primary goal and sport performance.

*Communication skills* and *problem-solving skills* could focus on making football players better professional players and minimizing interpersonal problems. It appeared that player intolerance, jealousy, early promotions and the attitude of the coach were some of the stressors football players identified as causing concern in their coping. The research revealed that players who lacked communication and problem-solving skills perform more poorly in sport than those who possess these skills. Providing them with such skills could address some of the challenges they experience before they become issues of concern.

A *crisis intervention programme* could be devised to help players deal with destructive or traumatic situations that come up in the course of their career. For example, some players indicated sudden death in their families, family responsibilities and financial crises, as matters of great concern for them. If players are equipped with such skills, they could be better positioned to deal with unplanned challenges and know how to intervene for themselves and others when such situations present themselves.



*Diversity training* and a *teambuilding programme* are essential for addressing diversity and cultural issues. Since the majority of players came from diverse backgrounds, different provinces, and exposed to different languages, there is a need for a programme that will address these issues. The diversity and teambuilding programme could be aimed at addressing language and cultural issues thereby creating cohesion and a sense of belonging for all players. The literature survey showed that players who know one another and are united could achieve more than those who do not possess these qualities or have not reached that level. By introducing such a programme, players could be assisted to come to terms with one another and perform at their optimal levels.

*Coaching skills* is a programme that could be directed towards coaches. In the same way that the study results pointed to the fact that players must be helped, coaches will also need some assistance and refinery in some of their skills. A few players cited the attitude of the coach as one of the factors that contributed to stress. The reason that players felt that way was because coaches shouted and raised their voices when players make mistakes. Moreover, a coach is one of the few people who experience first hand what players go through when feeling stressed. Therefore coaches could become important channels of helping players cope with their sport and life challenges. If coaches are provided with the necessary skills they could become assets to the organisation and its players. They could help resolve some of the problems before they develop into major issues. The programmes should be implemented at the beginning of the season, immediately after the customary induction programme.

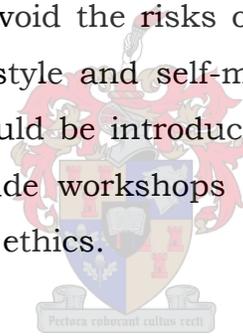
### **Mental skills training**

The research findings revealed that football players have limited skills to address mental challenges faced with and those players that possessed some skills do not always have a deeper understanding of these resources. They use them superficially and do not have the systematic training to develop and enhance these skills to maximize their performance. *Mental skills training* or *coaching* is a procedure for developing psychological skills for such players and teach them mental preparation for training and matches. Football is a thinking game and to be successful a player must be both physically and mentally fit. Such a programme could include teaching of coping strategies i.e. *goal setting, concentration and focusing, routines, self-confidence, progressive relaxation, readying techniques, and emotional control*. This training intervention could be adopted and incorporated into daily training and

should be held early in the training schedule. Players could be trained in these strategies and presented with opportunities to role play and practice them.

### **Health-care support programme**

Exhaustion, tiredness and over-training, substance abuse were cited by some players as conditions that cause stress in their football careers. It appeared that the players were "worn out" by high levels of physical and emotional stress and a *health and risk management programme* could help to treat this cause. A practical envisaged plan of a *health and risk management programme* could include an analysis of the players' training programme and their participation in matches. Players could be managed appropriately to avoid the risks of over-training and injury. A promotion of a healthy lifestyle and self-management could be part of this programme. Players could be introduced to how to live healthy life styles and this could include workshops on substance abuse, sexual health, HIV/AIDS and sport ethics.



### **Support programme for players and parents**

The majority of players cited being away at home, workload, losing friends through promotion, language and cultural barriers as conditions that contributed to their stressful experiences. A support programme could be aimed at helping athletes and other role players by equipping them with the necessary skills that will enable them to cope with sport challenges. The programme could include an induction or orientation programme for new players, a programme for distant players e.g., mentoring system, support with school and work load, e.g., catch-up programmes for school work, financial planning, touring skills, language and a cultural enrichment programme, e.g., elementary courses in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa, a peer support programme, parenting

skills and the initiation of *Individual Athlete Development Programmes/Plans* (IDP). All these programmes except IDP could be provided to the whole group and slotted into the year programme. The induction programme could be introduced at the beginning of the season. Academy camps and life experience and general knowledge sessions could be used for such purposes. An exclusive programme could be developed for "care-taker" parents to introduce and familiarize them with the difficulties the "away-from-home" players encounter. These parents could also be empowered with skills to help identify stressors and assist players to cope.

### **Individual and group therapy**

Finally, it was concluded from the study that there is a need for individual and group psychotherapy sessions. Research findings had revealed that ethnically diverse football players are exposed to stress and many a times do not know what to do with the conditions. Empirical evidence showed that players are struggling with issues such as finance, home circumstances, being away from home, and study related problems, and do not have a platform to talk about those problems. Individual players who experience difficulties could be helped through these sessions and be provided with forums to speak to the experts about their difficulties. Individual sessions will enhance players' coping skills, and provide opportunity for them to learn and practice new behaviors prior to application in their real life and sporting setting. Group sessions would be important for motivational interviewing, enhancing group cohesion, helping players to know one another and becoming aware how each member experience its group, help to establish a common goal and make players realize their common vision. Each player could be entitled to one session of therapy per season depending

on the severity and nature of his problem. A session could last for an hour and conducted by a trained sport counselor.

### **CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The results of the study provide empirical information about the coping strategies of football players from ethnically diverse backgrounds. More importantly, it revealed the relationship between cultural factors and social background in the development and use of coping strategies by ethnically diverse football players. The study was successful in identifying the causes of stress amongst ethnically diverse football players and to highlight the intricate processes involved in their coping processes. Not only that, the study also managed to show the role played by culture and ethnicity in the identification, selection and use of coping strategies by ethnically diverse group of football players. The study will also contribute in developing intervention programmes that will aim at preventing and addressing the problems experienced by football players and its findings will stimulate academic debates and lead to further research.



### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

A variety of new ideas emerged from this study and quite a number of new avenues could be explored for future research. First, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study in different ethnic groups or gendered population to establish if similar or different results will be observed and to evaluate the generalizability of its findings. To avoid participants talking to one another, it would be better if interviews are conducted on the same day. This could be achieved by training facilitators and employing them to conduct the interviews. In terms of self-report questions on players' experience of stress, it would be more

objective if an instrument could be developed to measure players' experience of stress. This will eliminate response effect.

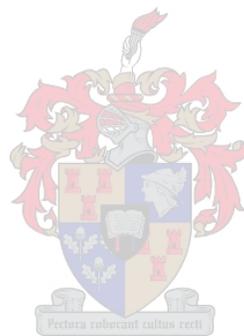
Another suggestion is the conduction of a longitudinal study that will compare the responses of participants over a longer period of time. By so doing the researcher will be able to focus on the same groups and measure the psychological structures and reactions over time. He or she will also be able to assess the strategies players use at each stage of the game e.g., pre-match, match and post-match stage. More time will be utilized to gather information and more information will be discovered. The closer the research will come to the real issues pertaining to coping and ethnicity and the more accurate it will be with intervention programmes. This approach will have its challenges as well and researcher(s) will probable lose players through transfers, lack of interest, apathy and discontinuation with the team. But these are problems they will be able to manage.



## **CONCLUSION**

Valuable information was gained from this project. The study has shown that football players from diverse ethnic backgrounds are experiencing stress as a result of match and post-match situations and that players responded differently to those experiences. Non-white players were recorded as experiencing more stress than white players. All three groups of players used multiple strategies and problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping were the main strategies employed. These strategies differed according to game stages. Players thought about their responses and processed information when identifying and selecting strategies. They were also motivated by different intrinsic and extrinsic factors to respond in the way they did. The study also revealed that there were factors that acted as constraints to coping and they were group

specific. Finally, these findings could be used as a foundation for future research as well as an avenue to explore the gaps that were identified in this study.



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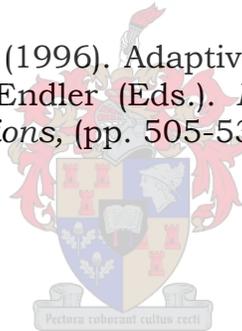
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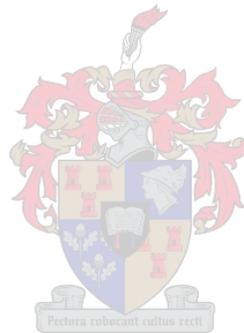
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## APPENDIX A

### BIOGRAPHICAL AND SPORT INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name	Age	Gender
Marital Status	Other Occupation	Ethnic Group/ Race
Educational Level	Health History/ Psychiatric Illnesses	Playing Position
Playing Experience / Years in the Team	Level of Participation	Starter/Non-starter



## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

1. Each interview session will begin by explanation of the purpose of the study.
2. Participants will be informed about voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity.
3. Expose participants to the interview ground rules.
4. Introduce topics by following a relatively structured guide.
5. Coordinate discussions in a progressive manner: beginning with a less threatening to the most sensitive topic.
6. Interviewees will be addressed in their most comfortable language.
7. Interviews will range in length from 30mins to 100mins, with average being 60mins.
8. Thank participants at the end of each session.



## **COPING STRATEGIES AMONGST FOOTBALL PLAYERS**

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Explore the selection and use of coping strategies by ethnically diverse football players.
2. Determine factors that are relevant in the choice of these strategies.
3. Investigate any variations in the use of coping strategies at different game levels.

### **INTRODUCTORY EXPLANATION**

1. Introduce researcher and research topic.
2. Explain research objectives and motivation for the conduction of the study.
3. Discuss confidentiality, recording of data, and use of information or material.

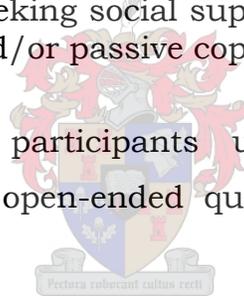


## QUESTIONING ROUTE

The questioning route began by reading the explanation of stress and coping strategies and this was followed by interviews.

"A coping strategy is any method one uses to deal with stress in order to lessen its negative impact". Stress refers to any condition in the sport arena that creates pressure on an athlete's normal functioning. The example of stressors in this study include **psychological demands** e.g., competitive stress and self-doubt, **physical demands** e.g., injuries and staying in shape, **environmental demands** e.g., financial strain and media, **pressure to perform and expectations** e.g., pressure from spectators and insults, **relationship issues** e.g., coach or other players, and **life concerns** e.g., travelling, worries about future and life. There are many different ways to cope with stress, for example, ignoring the stressful situation, engaging in positive self-talk, active coping, goal-setting, seeking social support, planning, use of relaxation exercises and/or passive coping."

After making sure that participants understand definitions and instructions, the following open-ended questions were asked to elicit their responses.



## **APPENDIX C**

### **TOPIC GUIDE**

#### **Primary Question 1: Input on biographical information**

See Appendix A or "*Biographical Questionnaire*" for details.

#### **Primary Question 2: Investigating team experience, life and football stress**

How do athletes experience their football life and the stress caused by it?

#### **Secondary questions**

How long have they been with the team?

What position they play?

Are they regular starters or non-starters?

How do they feel about their current position in the team?

Do they have any tasks or obligations in the team?

Any kind of worries they experience?

What causes stress in their career?

What causes stress before the match: during the match: after the match.

What is their experience of workload: school tasks: being away from home?

How do they experience life and the stress caused by football?

Which other factors outside football cause stress in their lives?

#### **Primary Question 3: Investigating coping, selection and use of coping strategies**

What coping strategies do ethnically diverse football players employ in dealing with the stressful situations?

#### **Secondary questions**

What strategies do players choose or use in stressful situations?

How do they cope with the stress they experience as football players?

Do they have any preferences in the choice of strategies?

How do ethnically diverse football players go about choosing coping strategies?

### **Secondary questions**

How do they go about choosing coping strategies?

What processes are involved when choosing coping strategies?

Are the steps in the selection of strategies the same or different? Why?

What influenced ethnically diverse football players to select or use specific coping strategies?

### **Secondary questions**

What motivated them in choosing the strategies they identified?

Which factors contributed to the selection of their coping strategies?

What factors restricted coping?

What factors promoted coping?

Why do they think the coping strategies they choose or use were different to those of other players?

Why do they think the coping strategies they choose or use were the same to those of other players?

At which time do ethnically diverse football players use specific coping strategies?

### **Secondary questions**

When do they use their coping strategies?

Does time play a role in the selection of coping strategies? Explain.

Is the selection of strategies the same across the different phases of the match?

How do players approach the different stages of the match?

What strategies do they use before the match?

What strategies do they use during the match?

What strategies do they use after the match?

Any differences in the use of these coping strategies?

How would they experience themselves when choosing coping strategies?

### **Secondary questions**

How did they feel when choosing coping strategies?

Was it difficult or easy for them to choose the strategies? Why?

Did they feel in control when selecting and using coping strategies?

The stressful situation they experience as football players, do they come and go? Or do they stay for a long time?

On a scale of 1-10, they were asked to put an X to indicate how stressful would they rate themselves?

## APPENDIX D

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

<b>P</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>PP</b>	<b>ST/NS</b>
<b>BLK</b>							
1	21	T	S	N/M	3	G	ST
2	23	N/A	N/A	N/M	5	D	ST
3	15	H/S	S	N/M	1	D	N/S
4	15	N/A	N/A	N/M	2	D	N/S
5	19	H/S	S	N/M	2	D	ST
6	32	W	W	N/M	4	MF	ST
7	25	T	S	N/M	2	MF	N/S
8	27	T	S	N/M	3	MF	N/S
9	19	N/A	N/A	N/M	2	SK	N/S
10	17	H/S	S	N/M	1	SK	ST
11	29	N/A	N/A	N/M	3	SK	ST
<b>COL</b>							
12	17	H/S	S	N/M	5	G	ST
13	16	H/S	S	N/M	3	D	ST
14	16	H/S	S	N/M	3	D	ST
15	17	H/S	S	N/M	6	D	ST
16	17	N/A	N/A	N/M	2	D	N/S
17	22	T	S	N/M	9	MF	ST
18	16	N/A	N/A	N/M	2	MF	N/S

19	17	H/S	S	N/M	4	MF	ST
20	17	N/A	N/A	N/M	6	SK	ST
21	17	H/S	S	N/M	2	SK	N/S
22	16	H/S	S	N/M	1	SK	N/S
<b>WHITE</b>							
23	16	H/S	S	N/M	2	G	N/S
24	28	W	W	M	2	D	N/S
25	23	T	S	N/M	3	D	N/S
26	27	W	W	M	2	D	N/S
27	18	H/S	S	N/M	5	D	ST
28	23	W	W	N/M	3	MF	N/S
29	20	T	S	N/M	2	MF	N/S
30	26	W	W	M	4	MF	ST
31	29	W	W	M	3	SK	N/S
32	27	T	S	N/M	3	SK	ST
33	25	T	S	N/M	5	SK	ST

### Codes

P = Participants; A = Age; E = Education; O = Occupation; M = Marital status; M = Married; N/M = Not married; Y = Years in the team; PP = Playing position; ST = Starter; N/S = Non-starter; BLK = Black; COL = Coloured; WHIT = White; T = Tertiary; H/S = High School; S = Student; W = Working; G = Goalkeeper; D = Defender; MF = Mid-fielder; SK = Striker; N/A = Not Applicable.

## **APPENDIX E**

### **ABBREVIATED AUDIT TRAIL**

#### **1. ACCESS-GAINING PHASE**

28 January 2005

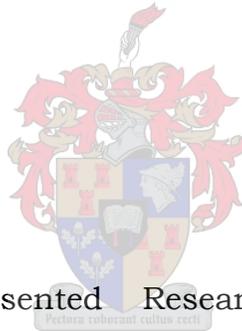
##### **AIM**

1. Initiate dialogue with the team.
2. Explain purpose of the study.
3. Permission to carry study.
4. Clarify issues and establish relationship with the team.

Note: Plans were discussed and decision made with the promoter.

##### **ATTENDED**

Researcher  
Head Coach  
Youth Development Officer  
Physiotherapist



##### **ISSUES ON THE TABLE:**

- Research Plan: Presented Research Proposal followed by discussions.
- Procedures and Timeframes: Outline research plan = Group Assessment and Individual interviews. Accommodation arranged at the club house. Group Assessment, 1 April 2005. Individual Interviews, 4 – 7 April 2005. Biographical Questionnaire completed a week before Interviews, 2HRS. Interviews between 60 and 120 minutes.
- Participants: Diverse group/ 33 players/ Black, Coloured and White. Name list finalized on the 18 of February 2005.
- Ethical Issues: Voluntary participation/ Anonymity/ Confidentiality/ Report back session/ Permission for recording of interviews and publication of results.

##### **MANAGEMENT CONCERNS:**

- How will the project contribute to the development of the team?
- Duration of the project: Programme was rearranged to accommodate the club.

## **RESEARCHER'S CONCERNS**

- Difficulties in finding white players: Had to mix with players at junior levels.
- Adapting his schedule to meet both the club and University requirements.

## **2. TOOLS-DEVELOPING PHASE**

Started on 20 November 2004 and completed on 18 December 2004

### **AIMS**

- Develop information gathering tools.
- Assess their relevance and suitability.

### **DECIDING ON THE TOOLS**

#### **PROCESS**

- Consultation with the promoter.
- Discussed with research experts (Both SA and Abroad).
- Arranged sessions with SA expert for guidance and advice.
- Communicated electronically with overseas experts for their input.

#### **TYPES OF TOOLS**

- Biographical - Sport Information Questionnaire (See *Appendix A*).
- Interview Guide (See *Appendix C*).

#### **HOW INTERVIEW GUIDE WAS DEVELOPED**

- Identified the objectives of the interview guide.
- Decided on how to introduce the research topic and explain research objectives.
- Outlined questioning route.
- Decided on the list of questions.
- Write questions as they come.
- Decided on the questions to be included.
- Identified primary or key questions. E.g., Investigation of experience, life and football stress. In this case there were five key questions (See *Appendix C*).
- Primary questions had a set of secondary questions attached to them.

- Secondary questions were developed in a way that allowed new questions to emerge and give insight to the primary question.

### **Example**

*Primary question:* What coping strategies do ethnically diverse football players employ in dealing with stressful situations?

*Secondary questions:*

How do ethnically diverse football players cope with stressful situations?

Is there any preference in the choice of strategies?

Why do they think the coping strategies they use were the same or different to those of other players?

### **PILOTING OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: GROUP**

15 Ethnically diverse players.

12 March 2005

### **AIM**

1. Assess completion time.
2. Check if instructions are clear and understandable to the intended sample.
3. Decide on the questions to be included and omitted in the questionnaires.
4. Remove items which do not yield usable data.
5. Evaluate whether data collected is suitable for the purpose.
6. Dry run data analysis.

### **CHANGES**

Participants struggled to conceptualize and put coping into context. Researcher decided to include definition of coping and coping strategies in the Interview Guide (See *Appendix C*). Irrelevant questions or questions that did not elicit the required information were eliminated e.g. questions that emphasize on educational level of players, their experience with the team and marital status were considered irrelevant and eliminated.

After thorough checking and discussions with the promoter and experts, the biographical questionnaire and question guide were finally adopted as being appropriate for the study.

# **1. DATA-COLLECTION PHASE**

1 April – 7 April 2005

## **DATA COLLECTION**

### **Two Phases**

#### **1. Group session (33 players)**

Administered the Biographical-Sport Information Questionnaire.  
Conducted a week before individual interviews.  
Pencil and paper activity.

#### **2. Face-to-face individual Interviews**

Conducted in a secluded area.  
By a researcher experienced in qualitative research.  
Use interview guide.  
Responses recorded using an audio-tape.

## **ORGANIZATION OF DATA**

Data was transcribed and organized into raw data themes. Researcher listened to the recorded information several times and transcribed it into texts. A laborious process of listening, writing, stopping, rewinding and rewriting was followed. Raw data themes were identified and placed according to ethnic groups (See *Appendix O*). Those were exact utterances of respondents. For example, one of the raw data theme that was identified by black players was poor performance and the responses that were recorded under this theme were: “I talk to my team-mates”, “I speak to the captain” and “I ask coach for assistance”. This process was followed in the same way for all other raw data themes in all groups. The root of how sections of data came together was further discussed with the promoter and other research analysts.

## **4. DATA-ANALYSIS PHASE**

1 June – 31 July 2005

### **STAGES OF DATA REDUCTION AND INTERPRETATION PROCESS**

#### **Transcription Phase**

Tapes were transcribed. Research listened to the tapes and graphically recorded the utterances and statements of each player. Tapes were played over and over to check any missing verbatim. They were then together with transcripts submitted to the promoter and other analysts to look for unclear passages, consistency and accuracy in the texts.

#### **Categorization Phase**

The researcher read through the notes, worked with the texts and tried to gain understanding of data. Information was categorized into meaningful labels or themes. Information was then cut and pasted. Similar items were placed under categories or codes. Codes were viewed by the researcher using the within and across comparison of scripts and looked for emerging patterns in the data. Themes were grouped into two sets of categories, the low-order themes and the high-order themes as illustrated in *Appendix O*.

#### **Interpretation Phase**

The researcher visited thematic categories and went through the process of interpretation. For example, in *Appendix K* the sources of stress were identified and put in a rank order. The researcher went through the transcripts to identify the causes of stress and organize them into clusters. They were coded using labels coming from the participants' responses. These sources were categorized according to different ethnic groups and rated in order of important to less important using frequency rate as a measuring rod. The first 12 categories in each group were considered falling in the higher category of sources of stress and the remaining 12 in the lower category. As it appeared in *Appendix K*, 30 sources of stress were identified. Nine of these sources appeared across the three ethnic groups, 11 appeared across two groups, and 10 in single groups.

## Example of how categories were arrived at

### Source of stress

#### Lower-order themes

#### Higher-order themes

##### Poor performance

<i>I speak to my players.</i>	Seeking Social Support.	Emotion Focused
<i>I feel angry to myself.</i>	Emotional Expression.	Emotion Focused
<i>I plan for the next game.</i>	Planning.	Problem Focused
<i>I try to live with it.</i>	Acceptance.	Passive Coping

*Appendix M:* After coping strategies were identified, they were categorized according to the three different match stages, the *pre-match*, *match*, and *post-match* stage. The responses of participants were captured from three sets of questions which are as follows:

How did they respond to stress and what strategies did they use in the *pre-match*, *match* and *post match* stage?

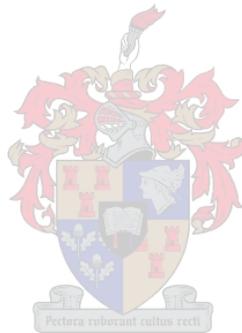
Responses were grouped together in terms of ethnic groups and related to the different match stages. See *Appendix M* for details.

Coping strategies were further categorized into sport and non-sport related situations as illustrated in *Appendix N*. The sport related coping strategies included those strategies that were evident under the following stressors: *poor performance, strong opponents, high expectations, injuries, pressure of being a professional football player, inclusion in a starting line-up, referees' decisions, intolerant players, player jealousy, coach, early goals, fear of making mistakes, unruly supporters, negative perceptions about the club, captaincy, destructive thoughts, playing at different levels, playing facilities and big game effect.*

The non-sport related coping strategies appeared under the following stressors: *home circumstances, school and work load, being away from home, language and cultural diversity, transport problems, financial problems, media, family problems, losing friends and peer pressure.* Both sport and non-sport related strategies were organized according to the different ethnic groups (See examples in *Appendix N*).

In conclusion, a summary of coping strategies was completed as illustrated in *Appendix L*. The researcher calculated the total number of *Problem Focused, Emotion Focused, Passive* and *Avoidance Coping* strategies. The frequency rate of these main or higher-order strategies were compared amongst ethnic groups to look if there were no

similarities or differences. The coping functions on each of the lower-order strategies were also identified and a similar process as above was followed. Lastly, the findings were cross-checked using multiple analysts. This was done to help improve or confirm the precision of research findings, and to demonstrate interpretation route and how the researcher came to the conclusions.



## APPENDIX F

### AGE INTERVALS OF PLAYERS

#### Black players

Age Interval	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Midpoint	FX Midpoint
15-19	11111	11	17	85
20-24	11	6	22	44
25-29	111	4	27	81
30-34	1	1	32	32
35-39				
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>			<b>242</b>

Mean = 22 years

#### Coloured players

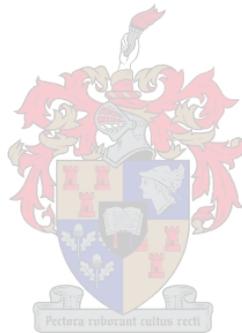
Age Interval	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Midpoint	FX Midpoint
15-19	11111 11111	11	17	170
20-24	1	1	22	22
25-29			27	0
30-34			32	0
35-39			37	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>			<b>192</b>

Mean = 17 years

### White players

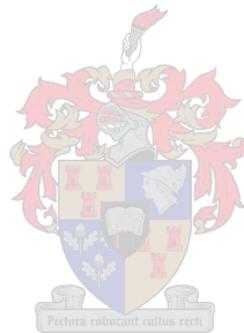
Age Interval	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Midpoint	FX Midpoint
15-19	11	11	17	34
20-24	111	9	22	66
25-29	11111 1	6	27	162
30-34			32	0
35-39				
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>			<b>262</b>

Mean = 24 years



**APPENDIX G**  
**PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATION OF PLAYERS**

<b>PROVINCES</b>	<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Western Cape	5	6	11
Northern Cape	0	0	0
North West	0	0	0
Mpumalanga	0	0	0
Limpopo	0	2	0
KwaZulu-Natal	4	0	0
Gauteng	1	3	0
Free State	0	0	0
Eastern Province	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>



## APPENDIX H

### PLAYERS' REPORT OF THE USE OF COPING STRATEGIES AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE GAME

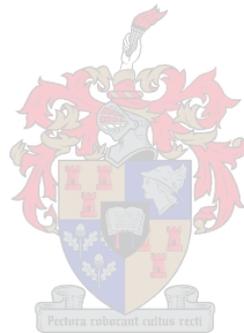
PLAYERS	SIMILAR	DIFFERENT	DEPENDING ON SITUATION
BLACK	3	8	0
COLOURED	5	4	2
WHITE	4	7	0
TOTAL	12	19	2
PERCENTAGE	36.4%	57.5%	6.1%



## APPENDIX I

### PLAYERS' REPORT OF THE DURATION OF THEIR EXPERIENCE OF STRESS

PLAYERS	SHORT TIME	LONG TIME	DEPENDING ON SITUATION
BLACK	6	4	1
COLOURED	8	2	1
WHITE	9	1	1
TOTAL	23	7	3
PERCENTAGE	69.7%	21.2%	9.1%



**APPENDIX J**  
**STRESS RATINGS ON A SCALE OF 1-10**

<b>PLAYER</b>	<b>BLACK</b> Score Value	<b>COLOURED</b> Score Value	<b>WHITE</b> Score Value
1	8	4	5
2	5	5	2
3	5	5	2
4	5	5	3
5	3	5	5
6	5	5	4
7	2	1	2
8	5	4	3
9	2	5	2
10	5	2	4
11	5	1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>MEAN</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.1</b>



## APPENDIX K

### SOURCES OF STRESS

<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b>	<b>WHITE PLAYERS</b>
Poor or under-performance (11)	Poor or under-performance (10)	Poor or under-performance (7)
Home circumstances (10)	Inclusion in starting line-up (9)	School and work-load (5)
Strong opponents (9)	School and work-load (8)	Injuries (5)
High Expectations (8)	Fear of committing mistakes (7)	Pressure of being a professional football player (4)
School and work-load (7)	Conceding early goal(s) (6)	Unruly supporters (4)
Pressure of being a professional football player (7)	Injuries (5)	Strong opponents (3)
Injuries (6)	Pressure of being a professional football player (5)	High Expectations (3)
Language and culture (6)	Strong opponents (5)	Inclusion in a starting line-up (3)
Inclusion in starting line-up (6)	Dubious referees' decisions (5)	Conceding early goal(s) (3)
Unruly supporters (5)	Home circumstances (4)	Poor playing facility (2)
Being away from home (5)	Intolerant players (4)	Early promotion (2)
Financial matters (4)	Being away from home (4)	Level of competition / Big Game Effect (2)
Media (3)	Unruly supporters (4)	Media (2)
Dubious referees' decisions (3)	High Expectations (4)	Losing competitions (1)
Intolerant players (3)	Ajax not well-received (4)	Destructive thoughts (1)
Transport problems (2)	Player jealousy (4)	Dubious referees' decisions (1)
Player jealousy (1)	Substance abuse (3)	Coach (1)
Coach (1)	Destructive thoughts (3)	
	Transport problems (2)	
	Playing at different age levels (1)	
	Losing friends through promotion (1)	
	Culture and language (1)	
	Financial matters (1)	
	Pressure of being a captain (1)	

Classification:

Sources 1-12: Upper Category

Sources 13-24: Lower Category

## APPENDIX L

### COMPARISON OF COPING STRATEGIES

STRATEGIES	BLACK	COLOURED	WHITE
<b>HIGHER-ORDER STRATEGIES</b>	<b>PFC: 17</b> <b>EFC: 13</b> <b>PC: 7</b> <b>AC: 5</b>	<b>PFC: 23</b> <b>EFC: 20</b> <b>PC: 6</b> <b>AC: 5</b>	<b>EFC: 14</b> <b>PFC: 13</b> <b>PC: 5</b> <b>AC: 4</b>
<b>LOWER-ORDER STRATEGIES</b>	<p><b>EFC</b></p> <p>Social Support (9)                      Emotional Expression (4)                      Mental Engagement (2)                      Not Blaming Others (1)</p> <p><b>PFC</b></p> <p>Active Coping (9)                      Planning (8)                      Suppression of Comp. Activities (4)                      Focusing (6)                      Relaxation (4)                      Adopt. Posit. Approach (3)                      Self-motivation (1)                      Self-support (1)                      Goal setting (1)                      Constructive Talk(1)</p> <p><b>PC</b></p> <p>Acceptance (5)                      Turning to Religion (4)                      No Planning (1)</p> <p><b>AC</b></p> <p>Avoidance (4)                      Ignoring (4)</p>	<p><b>EFC</b></p> <p>Social Support (8)                      Emotional Expression (7)                      Behavioral Disengagement (4)                      Mental Disengagement (3)                      Mental Engagement (3)                      Self-Blame (2)</p> <p><b>PFC</b></p> <p>Active coping (7)                      Focusing (6)                      Relaxation (6)                      Adopt Positive Appr. (6)                      Suppression (4)                      Goal-setting (3)                      Self-support (3)                      Motivating Others (3)                      Planning (1)</p> <p><b>PC</b></p> <p>Acceptance (4)                      Turning to Religion (3)</p> <p><b>AC</b></p> <p>Avoidance (3)                      Ignoring (3)                      Substance Abuse/Use (2)                      Losing Focus (1)</p>	<p><b>EFC</b></p> <p>Emotional Express. (8)                      Social Support (5)                      Mental Disengagement (4)                      Mental Engagement (3)                      Adopt. Neg. Approach. (1)                      Behavioural Disengagement (1)                      Blaming Others (1)</p> <p><b>PFC</b></p> <p>Active Coping (8)                      Focusing (7)                      Suppression of Comp. Activities (3)                      Adopt. Posit. Approach (3)                      Relaxation (3)                      Planning (1)                      Goal setting (1)                      Motivating Others (1)</p> <p><b>PC</b></p> <p>Acceptance (1)                      Passive Thinking (1)                      No Planning (1)</p> <p><b>AC</b></p> <p>Avoidance (3)                      Ignoring (1)</p>

## APPENDIX M

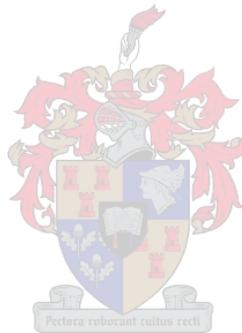
### PLAYERS' COPING RESPONSES AT DIFFERENT MATCH STAGES

**Table M (1): Black players' coping responses**

PLAYER	PRE-MATCH	MATCH	POST-MATCH
1	<p><b>RELAXATION</b> I try to rest.</p> <p><b>PLANNING/ PREPARATION</b> Prepare yourself. Plan for the next game.</p>	<p><b>GOAL-SETTING</b> Set goals.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> Work together as a team.</p> <p><b>SUPPRESSION</b> I try to suppress anything that interferes with my good performance.</p>	<p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> Work hard.</p> <p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> I often feel bad.</p>
2	<p><b>PREPARATION</b> Train very hard.</p> <p><b>PRAYING</b> I pray for my soccer</p> 	<p><b>TAKING ADVICE</b> Listen to coach.</p> <p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> I get angry.</p> <p><b>SUPPRESSION</b> I keep myself busy in order to forget about such stuff.</p>	<p><b>SEEKING ADVICE</b> Ask for advice.</p>
3	<p><b>RELAXATION</b> I try to relax before my games.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> Do best to improve the way I play.</p>	<p><b>IGNORING</b> I ignore especially spectators.</p> <p><b>ACCEPTANCE</b> I accept my situation.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> I work hard to improve my game.</p>	<p><b>MENTAL ENGAGEMENT</b> I think about what to do.</p> <p><b>ACCEPTANCE</b> I know you win some, you lose some.</p>
4	<p><b>RELAXATION</b> Maximum sleep.</p> <p><b>PREPARATION/ PLANNING</b> Make sure I am match fit.</p> <p><b>FOCUSING/ CONCENTRATION</b> Focus on the game.</p>	<p><b>ADOPT POSITIVE APPROACH</b> Focus on the positive.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> If pressure comes I deal with it.</p> <p><b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> I speak to my players.</p>	<p><b>ACCEPTANCE</b> It's bad luck if you don't perform.</p> <p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> Atmosphere becomes bad.</p>

5	<p><b>PRAYING</b> I pray to God.</p>	<p><b>IGNORING</b> I ignore most players. <b>ACTIVE COPING</b> I try to be quick on the ball and not dribble. <b>SUPPRESSION</b> I put that behind me.</p>	<p><b>ENCOURAGING OTHERS</b> Encourage my Team-mates. <b>SEEKING ADVICE</b> I talk to my coach.</p>
6	<p><b>PREPARATION/ PLANNING</b> Make sure everything is in place. <b>TAKING ADVICE</b> Listen to instructions.</p>	<p><b>IGNORING</b> I just ignore. <b>FOCUS AND CONCENTRATION</b> It's concentration. <b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> I talk about it. <b>NO PLANNING</b> I don't have plans.</p>	<p><b>MENTAL ENGAGEMENT</b> I do introspection. <b>NOT BLAMING OTHERS</b> I try not to blame others.</p>
7	<p><b>PREPARATION</b> I prepare myself very well.</p> 	<p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> I feel terrible if things don't go well. <b>NO PLANNING</b> I deal with them as they come. <b>ACCEPTANCE</b> I had to settle with what is available.</p>	<p><b>SEEKING ADVICE</b> Always seek advice. <b>SUPPRESSION</b> I try not to put that in my mind.</p>
8	<p><b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> Keep focused. <b>PRAYING</b> I usually pray.</p>	<p><b>POSITIVE APPROACH</b> Think positively. <b>CONSTRUCTIVE TALK</b> I encourage others.</p>	<p><b>PRAYING</b> I pray as well. <b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> I speak to others. <b>SEEKING ADVICE</b> Ask for assistance.</p>
9	<p><b>PREPARATION</b> Prepare for the game.</p>	<p><b>FOCUS/CONCENTRATION</b> I concentrate and focus. <b>RELAXATION</b> I try to relax.</p>	<p><b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> I talk to them (players).</p>
10	<p><b>PREPARATION</b> Engage in a training programme. <b>RELAXATION</b> Try to relax.</p>	<p><b>POSITIVE APPROACH</b> I stay positive. <b>SELF-MOTIVATION</b> I motivate myself <b>MOTIVATING OTHERS</b> ...And others</p>	<p><b>ACCEPTANCE</b> I tell myself it is part of life. <b>AVOIDING</b> Avoid talking about painful experiences.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>11</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PLANNING</b> Organise myself. <b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> I concentrate and focus on my game. <b>ACTIVE COPING</b> I train hard and do my best.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MOTIVATING OTHERS</b> Motivate my players. <b>ACTIVE COPING</b> Continually work on my weaknesses. <b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> I talk to players.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AVOIDING</b> Avoid media. I will leave the team. <b>ACTIVE THINKING</b> I analyse the game <b>PREPARATION/PLANNING</b> ...and plan for the next one</p>
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**Table M (2): Coloured players' coping responses**

<b>PLAYER</b>	<b>PRE-MATCH</b>	<b>MATCH</b>	<b>POST-MATCH</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>PRAYING</b> I pray a lot.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> Try to be quick on the ball.</p>	<p><b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> I focus on the game.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> I avoid being slow on the ball.</p> <p><b>ACCEPTANCE</b> I accept the situation. You have to lose to learn to win.</p>	<p><b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> I talk to others.</p> <p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> You feel you can walk away and leave football.</p> <p><b>BEHAVIORAL DISENGAGEMENT</b> I try to be very silent and quiet.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>IGNORING</b> I ignore.</p> <p><b>RELAXATION</b> I relax.</p> <p><b>PLANNING/PREPARATION</b> I follow my plans.</p> 	<p><b>EXPRESSING EMOTIONS</b> I shout.</p> <p><b>SELF-TALK</b> I tell myself that they are not playing.</p> <p><b>SUPPRESSION</b> I try to forget about it.</p> <p><b>GOAL-SETTING</b> I divide my tasks into portions and work accordingly.</p>	<p><b>MENTAL ENGAGEMENT</b> I think about what I should do.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>PLANNING/PREPARATION</b> Work hard.</p> <p><b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> Keep my mind focused.</p>	<p><b>SELF-SUPPORT</b> Build your confidence.</p> <p><b>SOCIAL SUPPORT</b> Use team as my support.</p> <p><b>BEHAVIORAL DISENGAGEMENT</b> You become tired and don't feel like trying.</p>	<p><b>MENTAL ENGAGEMENT</b> Go think about the game where I made a mistake.</p> <p><b>SUBSTANCE ABUSE</b> I have a tendency to smoke a lot when I am under pressure.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> I talk to my mother or coach.</p> <p><b>PRAYING</b> Try to stay confident by praying.</p>	<p><b>IGNORING</b> I ignore them.</p> <p><b>FOCUS/CONCENTRATION</b> I have to focus.</p> <p><b>SELF-SUPPORT</b> Try to lift myself.</p>	<p><b>MENTAL ENGAGEMENT</b> I think about my sport and how to improve my performance.</p>

5	<p><b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> Focus my mind.</p> <p><b>ADOPTING POSITIVE APPROACH</b> I adopt a positive approach.</p>	<p><b>ACTIVE COPING SUPPRESSION</b> Put lot of effort. Don't allow pressure to affect my performance.</p> <p><b>RELAXATION</b> I try to relax and play my normal game.</p>	<p><b>MENTAL ENGAGEMENT</b> Assess the game or situation to see what you have done wrong.</p> <p><b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> Speak to other players.</p>
6	<p>Go for a walk and relax my mind.</p> <p><b>ADOPTING POSITIVE APPROACH</b> All I do is to stay positive.</p> <p><b>GOAL-SETTING</b> I set goals for myself.</p>	<p>I relax and do my breathing exercises.</p> <p><b>SELF-TALK EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> Speak to myself. I become frustrated at times.</p> <p><b>LOSING FOCUS</b> I lose focus.</p>	<p><b>BLAME</b> I would criticise myself. I would be hard on myself.</p> <p><b>BEHAVIORAL DISENGAGEMENT</b> Don't want to go out and talk.</p>
7	<p><b>PLANNING/PREPARATION</b> I plan.</p> <p><b>PRAYING</b> I pray.</p> 	<p><b>FOCUS/CONCENTRATION</b> I concentrate.</p> <p><b>IGNORING</b> I just ignore them.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> Assess and correct my mistakes.</p>	<p><b>REFLECTION</b> I sit in the bathroom and reflect on my mistakes.</p>
8	<p><b>SELF-MOTIVATION</b> I encourage myself and try to prove I can play.</p>	<p><b>MENTAL ENGAGEMENT</b> I think of better options.</p> <p><b>ADOPTING POSITIVE APPROACH</b> I stay positive.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> You give your best.</p>	<p><b>ACCEPTANCE</b> I accept the situation.</p> <p><b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> Speak to my friends and family.</p>
9	<p><b>RELAXATION</b> I sit and relax.</p> <p><b>ADOPTING POSITIVE APPROACH</b> Stay positive.</p> <p><b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> I talk to the coach.</p>	<p><b>SELF-TALK</b> I talk to myself.</p> <p><b>ADOPT POSITIVE APPROACH</b> Start to stay positive.</p> <p><b>RELAXATION</b> Relax as much as possible.</p>	<p><b>REFLECTION</b> Go back and look where we have done wrong.</p> <p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> I stress too much.</p>

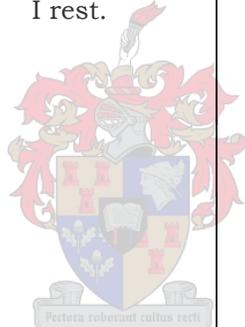
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>PLANNING/ PREPARATION</b> Train hard.</p> <p><b>FOCUSING/ CONCENTRATION</b> Put much focus on the game.</p> <p><b>GOAL SETTING</b> Have goals and a well-planned schedule.</p>	<p><b>FOCUS/CONCENTRATION</b> I concentrate during the game.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> I look what I do wrong and rectify that.</p> <p><b>SUPPRESSION</b> I try not to think about them leading all the time.</p> <p><b>ACCEPTANCE</b> I know you cannot perform well in all games.</p>	<p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> Try to improve and work on my game.</p> <p><b>SUBSTANCE-ABUSE</b> I sometimes use drugs to cope with pressure.</p> <p><b>SEEKING SOCIAL SUPPORT AND ADVICE</b> Get amongst people who can give advice.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>PLANNING/ PREPARATION</b> I train very hard.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> Work on my game and try to improve on it. You put a lot of effort in your game.</p>	<p><b>FOCUS/CONCENTRATION</b> I just think about the game.</p> <p><b>ADOPTING POSITIVE APPROACH</b> Stay positive.</p> <p><b>BEHAVIORAL DISENGAGEMENT</b> I become "ball-watching".</p>	<p><b>SUPPRESSION</b> I try to forget.</p> <p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> You get scolded, you feel stressed. I get angry with my players.</p> <p><b>SEEKING SOCIAL SUPPORT</b> I seek support from other players and family members.</p>

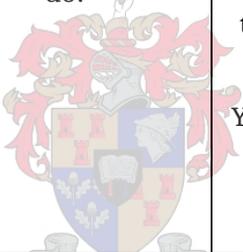


**Table M (3): White players' coping responses**

<b>PLAYER</b>	<b>PRE-MATCH</b>	<b>MATCH</b>	<b>POST-MATCH</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>PREPARATION</b> I do necessary preparations.</p> <p><b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> Get focused.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> When I am in a training session I try to correct what I did wrong.</p>	<p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> I strike a balance and work things out.</p> <p><b>RELAXATION</b> I relax and remain calm.</p> <p><b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> I try to focus.</p>	<p><b>REFLECTION</b> We reflect on our game.</p> <p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> You lose your cool.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> Work hard.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>PREPARATION</b> Do enough preparation.</p>	<p><b>IGNORING</b> I ignore and not process all the stuff.</p> <p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> I become anxious.</p> <p><b>ADOPTING NEGATIVE APPROACH</b> I don't take it nice especially if there is no foundation for what they do or say.</p> <p><b>BEHAVIORAL DISENGAGEMENT</b> Keep quiet.</p>	<p><b>REFLECTION</b> Talk and discuss.</p> <p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> Fight with my teammates.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>PREPARATION</b> Prepare yourself.</p> <p><b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> Get mentally focused.</p>	<p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> Fight with teammates.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> Put more effort. Confront the referee.</p>	<p><b>SELF-BLAME</b> Blame-self.</p> <p><b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> Speak to people with experience.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>RELAXATION</b> I watch TV and relax.</p> <p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> I try to work on my mistakes.</p> <p><b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> Keep focused.</p>	<p><b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> Concentrate on your game.</p> <p><b>MENTAL DISENGAGEMENT</b> I switch-off.</p> <p><b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> I feel restless and bad.</p>	<p><b>SEEKING SOCIAL-SUPPORT</b> Use support of others.</p> <p><b>ACCEPTANCE</b> Accept there are good and bad days.</p>

5	<b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> Try to stay focused.	<b>RELAXATION</b> I stay calm. <b>ACTIVE COPING</b> I try to do the right stuff. <b>SELF-CARE</b> Try not to put pressure on myself.	<b>ADOPT POSITIVE APPROACH</b> Take it in a positive spirit. <b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> You speak to your coach and captain.
6	<b>RELAXATION</b> Good sleep.	<b>ADOPT POSITIVE APPROACH</b> Not go with a negative attitude. <b>AVOIDANCE</b> I don't get involved. <b>SUPPRESSION</b> I don't allow pressure to affect me.	<b>ACCEPTING OTHERS ADVICE</b> Listen to what others say. <b>REFLECTION</b> Talk about workload.
7	<b>PREPARATION</b> Start preparing early. <b>RELAXATION</b> I rest.	<b>FOCUSING/CONCENTRATION</b> I concentrate on the game. <b>GIVING ADVICE</b> I give advice to others. <b>MENTAL DISENGAGEMENT</b> Take it out of my mind.	<b>MOTIVATING OTHERS</b> Encourage my team. <b>ACTIVE COPING</b> Use the situation and work hard.



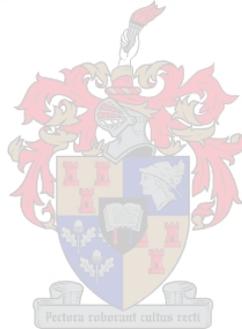
8	<p><b>ACTIVE THINKING</b> Start to think about what to do during the game.</p>	<p><b>RELAXATION</b> I stay calm and relax. <b>ACTIVE COPING</b> You give your best to help your side.</p>	<p><b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> Talking more to people. <b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> I get angry. You lose control.</p>
9	<p><b>PLANNING/ PREPARATION</b> Try to get in shape. <b>RELAXATION</b> Relax more.</p>	<p><b>ADOPT POSITIVE APPROACH</b> Use previous experiences as positive re-inforcers. <b>SUPPRESSION</b> Suppress negative vibes and try to enjoy the game.</p>	<p><b>MENTAL ENGAGEMENT</b> I think about why I play bad. <b>SELF-BLAME</b> I took everything upon myself.</p>
10	<p><b>PLANNING</b> I always have a plan in terms of what to do.</p> 	<p><b>MENTAL DISENGAGEMENT</b> I don't want to think of that stuff. <b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> You shout at times.</p>	<p><b>IGNORING</b> I ignore most of the stuff. <b>PASSIVE THINKING</b> It stays in my mind.</p>
11	<p><b>PLANNING</b> Set targets and work towards them.</p>	<p><b>ACTIVE COPING</b> I work harder. <b>EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION</b> It's frustrating when they don't want to correct their mistakes.</p>	<p><b>TALKING TO OTHERS</b> I speak to some senior players</p>

## APPENDIX N

### COPING STRATEGIES FOR SPORT AND NON-SPORT SITUATIONS

PARTICIPANTS	DIRECT/ SPORT-RELATED STRATEGIES	INDIRECT/ NON-SPORT RELATED STRATEGIES
<b>BLACK PLAYERS</b>	<p><b>POOR PERFORMANCE</b>            Seeking social support (7)            Acceptance (4)            Adopting positive approach (4)            Emotional expression (3)            Planning (3)            Suppression (2)            Self-support (2)            Turning to religion (1)</p> <p><b>STRONG OPPONENTS</b>            Planning (3)            Active coping (3)            Adopting positive approach (3)            Suppression (3)            Seeking social support (3)            Turning to religion (1)</p> <p><b>HIGH EXPECTATIONS</b>            Seeking social support (4)            Focusing and concentration (2)            Active coping (2)</p> <p><b>PRESSURE FOOTBALL PLAYER</b>            Acceptance (3)            Active coping (3)            Praying (2)            Seeking social support (1)</p> <p><b>INJURIES</b>            Active coping (6)            Acceptance (2)            Turning to religion (1)            No planning (1)</p> <p><b>INCLUSION IN STARTING LINE-UP</b>            Active coping (4)            Planning (2)            Focusing and concentration (2)            Emotional expression (2)</p> <p><b>UNRULY SUPPORTERS</b>            Ignoring (3)            Focusing and concentration (2)</p> <p><b>REFEREES</b>            Emotional expression (3)</p>	<p><b>HOME CIRCUMSTANCES</b>            Turning to religion (3)            Suppression (3)            Self-support (3)            Mental Engagement (2)            Relaxation (2)</p> <p><b>SCHOOLWORK/WORK LOAD</b>            Planning (7)            Goal-setting (3)</p> <p><b>FINANCIAL PROBLEMS</b>            Social support (3)            Acceptance (1)            Active coping (1)</p> <p><b>BEING AWAY FROM HOME</b>            Active coping (4)            Social support (2)</p> <p><b>LANGUAGE/ CULTURE</b>            Active coping (7)            Social support (4)</p> <p><b>TRANSPORT PROBLEMS</b>            Seeking social support (3)</p> <p><b>MEDIA</b>            Acceptance (3)            Avoidance (2)            Adopting positive approach (2)</p>

	<p>Ignoring (1) Focusing and concentration (1)</p> <p><b>INTOLERANT PLAYERS</b> Avoidance (2) Seeking social support (1) Adopting positive approach (1)</p> <p><b>PLAYER JEALOUSY</b> Social support (2) Ignoring (1) Avoidance (1)</p> <p><b>COACH</b> Active coping (4) Ignoring (3) Avoidance (1) Social support (1)</p>	
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<p><b>COLOURED PLAYERS</b></p>	<p><b>POOR PERFORMANCE</b>  Active coping (5)  Relaxation (5)  Self-support (4)  Mental engagement (4)  Social support (4)  Suppression (3)  Adopting positive approach (3)  Acceptance (3)  Turning to religion (2)  Goal-setting (2)  Avoidance (1)</p> <p><b>INCLUSION IN STARTING LINE-UP</b>  Active coping (5)  Passive coping (5)  Adopting positive approach (3)  Emotional expression (3)  Relaxation (2)  Social support (2)  Self-blame (1)</p> <p><b>ALLOWING EARLY GOALS</b>  Focusing and concentration (3)  Relaxation (2)  Adopting positive approach (1)  Suppression (1)  Active coping (1)  Motivating others (1)</p> <p><b>INJURIES</b>  Active coping (4)  Emotional expression (3)  Social support (2)  Acceptance (2)</p> <p><b>INTOLERANT PLAYERS</b>  Emotional expression (3)  Active coping (2)  Focusing and concentration (1)  Mental disengagement (1)  Behavioral disengagement (1)  Ignoring (1)</p> <p><b>FEAR OF MISTAKES</b>  Focusing and concentration (4)  Social support (2)  Relaxation (2)  Losing focus (2)  Suppression (1)</p> <p><b>STRONG OPPONENTS</b>  Active coping (2)  Focusing and concentration (2)  Emotional expression (2)</p> <p><b>REFEREE</b>  Active coping (3)  Emotional expression (2)  Motivating others (2)</p>	<p><b>SCHOOLWORK AND WORK LOAD</b>  Planning (5)  Active coping (2)  Social support (2)  Behavioral disengagement (2)</p> <p><b>FAMILY PROBLEMS</b>  Mental engagement (2)  Social support (1)  Active coping (1)</p> <p><b>BEING AWAY FROM HOME</b>  Active coping (2)  Self-support (1)</p> <p><b>TRANSPORT PROBLEMS</b>  Social support (2)</p> <p><b>LOSING FRIENDS</b>  Active coping (1)</p> <p><b>LANGUAGE/ CULTURE</b>  Active coping (1)</p> <p><b>FINANCIAL MATTERS</b>  Active coping (1)</p> <p><b>PEER PRESSURE</b>  Active coping (2)  Social support (2)</p>
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	<p>Ignoring (1)</p> <p><b>PRESSURE      PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL</b></p> <p>Social support (4)</p> <p>Using drugs (2)</p> <p>Goal setting (1)</p> <p>Avoidance (1)</p> <p><b>UNRULY SUPPORTERS</b></p> <p>Ignoring (3)</p> <p>Focusing and concentration (2)</p> <p>Emotional expression (1)</p> <p><b>HIGH EXPECTATIONS</b></p> <p>Active coping (3)</p> <p>Focusing and concentration (3)</p> <p>Suppression (2)</p> <p>Emotional expression (2)</p> <p>Goal setting (1)</p> <p><b>NEGATIVE      PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE CLUB</b></p> <p>Mental disengagement (2)</p> <p>Adopting positive approach (2)</p> <p><b>PLAYER JEALOUSY</b></p> <p>Mental disengagement (2)</p> <p>Social support (2)</p> <p>Turning to religion (1)</p> <p>Avoidance (1)</p> <p><b>RESULTS</b></p> <p>Acceptance (2)</p> <p>Self motivation (1)</p> <p><b>CAPTAINCY</b></p> <p>Focusing and concentration (1)</p> <p>Relaxation (1)</p> <p><b>PLAYING DIFFERENT LEVELS</b></p> <p>Emotional expression (3)</p> <p>Behavioral disengagement (1)</p> <p><b>DESTRUCTIVE THOUGHTS</b></p> <p>Relaxation (2)</p>	
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<p><b>WHITE PLAYERS</b></p>	<p><b>POOR PERFORMANCE</b>  Mental engagement (5)  Social support (3)  Active coping (3)  Emotional expression (2)  Focusing and concentration (2)  Acceptance (2)  Motivating others (1)  <b>INJURIES</b>  Avoidance (2)  Active coping (2)  Mental disengagement (2)  Acceptance (1)  Emotional expression (1)  <b>PRESSURE      PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL</b>  Social support (3)  Relaxation (3)  Active coping (1)  Suppression (1)  <b>UNRULY SPECTATORS</b>  Mental engagement (3)  Behavioral disengagement (2)  Focusing and concentration (2)  Relaxation (1)  <b>STRONG OPPONENTS</b>  Active coping (4)  Adopt positive approach (1)  Focusing and concentration (1)  Emotional expression (1)  Mental engagement (1)  <b>HIGH EXPECTATIONS</b>  Mental engagement (2)  Social support (2)  Goal setting (1)  Active coping (1)  Focusing and concentration (1)  <b>INCLUSION IN STARTING LINE-UP</b>  Suppression (3)  Adopting positive approach (2)  Emotional expression (1)  Avoidance (1)  <b>ALLOWING EARLY GOALS</b>  Emotional expression (2)  Constructive talk (1)  <b>DESTRUCTIVE THOUGHTS</b>  Mental disengagement (1)  Passive thinking (1)  Focusing and concentration (1)  <b>LOSING A GAME</b>  Emotional expression (2)  Seeking social support (2)</p>	<p><b>SCHOOLWORK AND WORK LOAD</b>  Planning (3)  Emotional expression (2)  Active coping (2)  Relaxation (1)  <b>MEDIA</b>  No planning (1)</p>
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	<p><b>REFEREE</b>  Avoidance (2)  Active coping (1)  Emotional expression (1)</p> <p><b>PLAYING FACILITIES</b>  Suppression (2)  Emotional expression (1)</p> <p><b>PROMOTION</b>  Active coping (1)</p> <p><b>BIG GAME EFFECT</b>  Emotional expression (1)</p> <p><b>COACH</b>  Ignoring (1)  Adopting negative approach (1)</p>	
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## APPENDIX O

### THEMES

#### BLACK PLAYERS

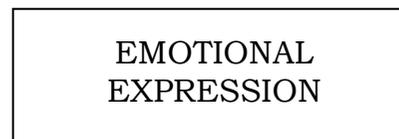
##### Raw Data Themes

###### Poor or under-performance

- I consult the coach to give advice as to how to improve on my game.
- I talk to my teammates about the game.
- I speak to my players.
- I speak to my captain.
- I get support from the coach.
- I go to my coach and ask for advice.
- I ask coach for assistance.

- I often feel bad.
- The atmosphere in the changing room becomes sad.

##### Lower-Order Themes



##### Higher-Order Themes

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

The image shows a box containing the text 'EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING'. A bracket on the left side of the box groups it with the two lower-order themes boxes, indicating that these two themes contribute to this higher-order theme.

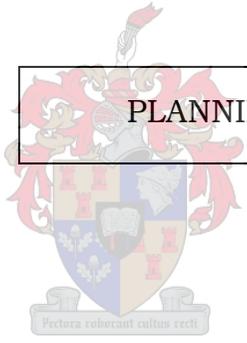
- I get angry.

- I try not to blame others.
- I don't undermine others.

- Plan for the next game.
- I think about what to do the next time
- Get early for practice.

- I do introspection to improve the situation.
- We work together as a team.

NOT BLAMING  
OTHERS



PLANNING

ACTIVE COPING

EFC Cont.

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I stay positive.
- Think positive.
- I put aside negative experiences.
- I avoid thinking about negative things.

ADOPTING A  
POSITIVE APPROACH

PFC Cont.

- I try to suppress anything that interferes with my good performance.
- Put that behind me.

SUPPRESSION OF  
COMPETITIVE  
ACTIVITIES

AVOIDANCE  
COPING

- Try to concentrate.

FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATION

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I motivate myself.
- I make sure I remain confident.

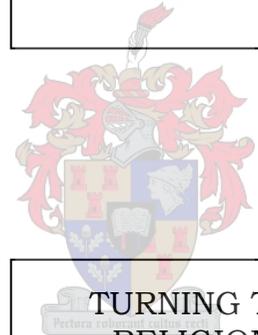
- I try to live with it.
- I tell myself that this is part of the game.
- If you play and lose, it's just bad luck.
- I don't put too much pressure on myself.

- I pray.

SELF-SUPPORT/  
MOTIVATION

ACCEPTANCE

TURNING TO  
RELIGION



PFC Cont.

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

**Home circumstances**

- I try to rest.
- I relax my mind.
- Do some reading.

- I try to be positive and not negative about the circumstances.

- I keep myself busy in order to forget about such stuff.
- I try not to put that in my mind.

- I support myself.
- I lift myself up.

RELAXATION

ADOPTING A  
POSITIVE  
APPROACH



SUPPRESSION OF  
COMPETITIVE  
ACTIVITIES

SELF-SUPPORT

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

AVOIDANCE  
COPING

- I always think about what happened.
- I think about the problems and they stay with me.

MENTAL  
ENGAGEMENT

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I pray over difficult situations.
- My faith and beliefs help me overcome some of the problems.
- I know God is in control and has reasons for what happens in my life. I take it to Him in prayer.



TURNING TO  
RELIGION

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

**Strong opponents**

- I prepare myself very well.
- I follow certain routines and patterns.
- You must be able to think and make appropriate decisions.

- I try to stay positive.
- I try not to think negatively.
- I maintain a positive focus

- I make sure I attend every training session and work on my weaknesses.
- Do little bit of bodywork, exercises, and ball-control.

PLANNING



ADOPTING A  
POSITIVE  
APPROACH

ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

• I do my best to improve the way I play.

• I relax and have enough sleep.

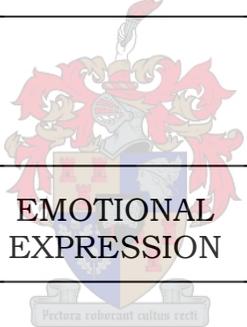
• I listen to my coach.  
• I take my coach's instructions and advice.  
• The coach helps and guides me.

• I become nervous.

• I usually pray.

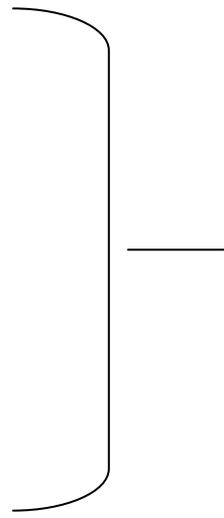
RELAXATION

SEEKING SOCIAL SUPPORT



EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

TURNING TO RELIGION



EMOTION - FOCUSED COPING



PASSIVE-COPING STRATEGY

**High expectations from others**

- I concentrate and focus on my game.
- I stay focused.

- I work hard to improve my game.
- If pressure comes I become strong and absorb it.

- I seek advice about what to do.
- I talk about it and ask for assistance.
- I build friendship and have friends to speak to.
- My coach supports me.

FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATION

ACTIVE COPING

SEEKING SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- It's about mental discipline.

MENTAL  
ENGAGEMENT

PFC Cont.

**Pressure of being a  
professional football player**

- I try to do the right things.
- I make sure I am a good model.
- I will not do things that will attract the media.



ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM -  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I just give up.
- I accept my situation.
- There is nothing I can do about it.

ACCEPTANCE

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

- I pray.
- I am a Muslim, I pray five times a day. I pray for my football as well.

TURNING TO  
RELIGION

PCS Cont.

- I talk to my parents about my experiences.

SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

### **Schoolwork and workload**

- I always make a plan.
- I plan what to do.
- I set aside my weekends for studies.
- There is time for everything.
- I use my lunchtime to finish my work.
- I eat my lunch while I am doing my schoolwork.
- I do my homework at lunchtime and weekends.
- I use Saturdays and Sundays to catch-up for schoolwork.
- I had to do my matric through correspondence to minimize and down scale my work.
- I utilize my time appropriately.

PLANNING

PROBLEM -  
FOCUSED  
COPING

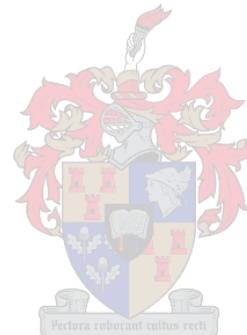
- I set goals for my studies.
- I divide my work into portions and work accordingly.

GOAL SETTING

PFC CONT.

**Language and culture**

- We come together and speak about our cultural differences.
- We try to accept one another.
- I know that our differences are there to complement us.
- I try to mix with other players from different language groups.
- I try to learn their culture.
- Show interest and learn each other's culture.
- If I don't understand, I talk to my colleagues to speak



ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

English.

## Injuries

- I try to be quick on the ball and not dribble too much.
- You protect yourself by not getting involved in hard tackles.
- I make sure that I am match fit.
- I look after my injury and be patient with myself.
- I may also use the experience of physiotherapist and medical staff.
- There is a physiotherapist and a medical team that helps.



ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

• I don't have a plan for injuries.

• I deal with them as they come.  
• If I get injured it would be unfortunate.

• I pray that I must play and be without injuries.

NO PLANNING

ACCEPTANCE

TURNING TO RELIGION



PASSIVE-COPING STRATEGY

**Inclusion in the starting line-up**

- I train hard and do my best.
- We work hard.
- I do what I am capable of doing.
- I work on my problem areas.

- You prepare yourself for the game.
- You plan your strategies.

- You keep your mind on the game.
- You keep focused and lift yourself for the game.



ACTIVE COPING

PLANNING

FOCUSING AND  
CONCETRATTION

PROBLEM -  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I get worried and frustrated.
- I feel terrible inside but don't show it.

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

EMOTION -  
FOCUSED  
COPING

**Unruly supporters**

- I focus and don't think about supporters.
- I concentrate in what my coach has instructed me to do.

FOCUS AND  
CONCENTRATIO  
N

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- Other players encourage me when they see I am down.

SOCIAL

EMOTION -  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I ignore them.
- I don't worry about what they say.
- I simply ignore them.

IGNORING

AVOIDANCE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

**Financial matters**

- I speak to my friends and ask for assistance.
- I talk to other players and seek for their advice.
- My family supports me.

SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I had to settle with what is available.

ACCEPTANCE

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

- I try to play better so that I can get better opportunities.

ACTIVE COPING

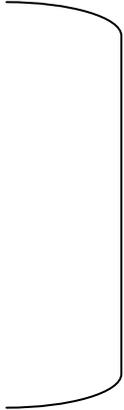
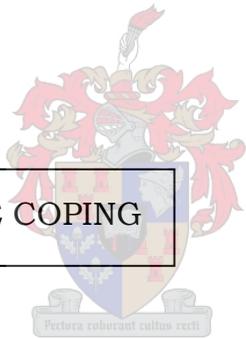
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PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

**Being away from home**

- I try to contact them on a regular basis.
- I phone and talk to them.
- I visit friends, watch TV and read newspapers.
- I have to take responsibility and look after myself.

ACTIVE COPING



—

PROBLEM -  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I had to plan and do my household chores.

PLANNING

**Dubious referees' decisions**

- I ignore it.

IGNORING

AVOIDANCE  
- COPING  
STRATEGY

- I focus on my game.

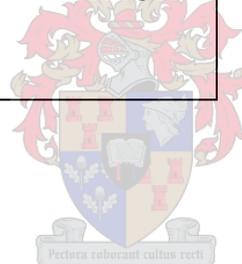
FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATION

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I become angry.
- It affects my game as a captain.
- I lose control at times.

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

EMOTION -  
FOCUSED  
COPING



**Intolerant players**

- I avoid those players.
- I spent little time with them.

AVOIDANCE

AVOIDANCE  
-COPING  
STRATEGY

- I talk to my coach.

SEEKING SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I smile instead of becoming angry.

ADOPTING  
POSITIVE  
APPROACH

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

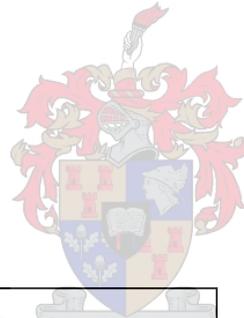
**Transport problem**

- I speak to my coach or transport coordinator.
- I share the problem with my driver.
- I go to people who can help me.

**Player jealousy**

- I ignore that.
- I try not to involve myself in conflict.

SOCIAL  
SUPPORT



IGNORING

AVOIDANCE

EMOTION -  
FOCUSED  
COPING

AVOIDANCE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

- I talk to my coach.
- Coach might speak to the team.

SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

—

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

**Coach**

- I will work harder to prove him wrong.
- I will attempt to give my best.
- I must prove him wrong by improving on my game.
- Listen to what he says and do something.
- I will talk and clear issues.



ACTIVE COPING

—

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- If coach does not understand, I will talk to our driver.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

—

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- Try not to become involved.

- I just ignore him.
- I ignore bad things.
- I ignore it.

**Media**

- I don't worry about it.
- I chop it off my feet.
- I don't argue with them.

- I try to avoid media.
- I avoid any media stuff.

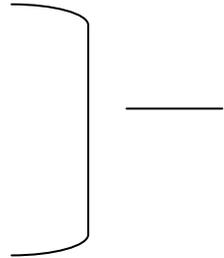
AVOIDANCE

IGNORING



ACCEPATANCE

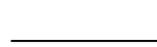
AVOIDANCE



AVOIDANCE-  
FOCUSED  
COPING



PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY



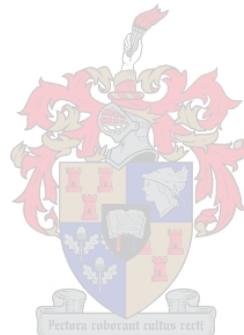
AVOIDANCE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

- I try to be a good model.
- I stay positive and do positive things.

ADOPTING  
POSITIVE  
APPROACH



PROBLEM -  
FOCUSED  
COPING



## COLOURED PLAYES

### Raw Data Themes

**Poor or under-performance**

- I train hard.
- I look were I have done something wrong and rectify it.
- Try to improve and work on my game.
- Assess the game and correct my mistakes.
- Analyze the game.

### Lower-Order Themes



ACTIVE COPING

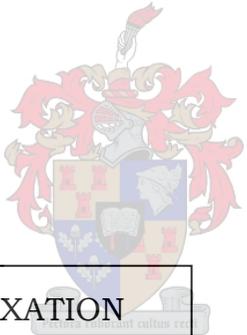
### Higher-Order Themes

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

Investigate were we went wrong and what position our opponents got their goal.

- I relax my mind.
- I try to relax and play my normal game.
- I do some breathing exercises.
- Relax as much as possible.
- I relax.
- I listen to music to take bad feelings.

- Try to forget about it.
- I block my mind.



RELAXATION

SUPPRESSION OF  
COMPETITIVE  
ACTIVITIES

—

PFC Cont.

AVOIDANCE  
COPING

- concentrate.
- I focus on the game.

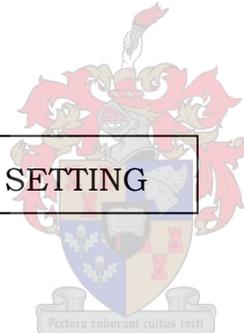
FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATION

- Stay positive.
- Ignore negative vibes.
- I stay positive.

ADOPTING  
POSITIVE  
APPROACH

- I set goals for myself.
- For me to cope, you have to set goals and work.

GOAL SETTING



SELF-SUPPORT

- I try to lift and motivate myself.
- I motivate myself.
- Try to build my confidence.
- I don't pressurize myself.



PFC Cont.

- I speak to myself.

- I play my normal game.
- Don't allow pressure to affect my performance.

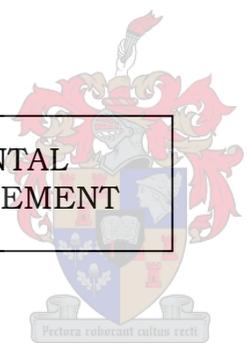
SELF-TALK

SUPPRESSION OF  
COMPETITIVE  
ACTIVITIES

AVOIDANCE  
COPING

- I sit at home and think about the game.
- I sit in the bathroom and reflect on my mistakes and performance.
- I think about my game.
- I don't sleep.

MENTAL  
ENGAGEMENT



PFC

- I seek support from other players and my family members about my experiences.
- I use my team for support.

SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

—

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I talk to the coach for advice.
- I get encouragement from other players.

- I would criticize myself.

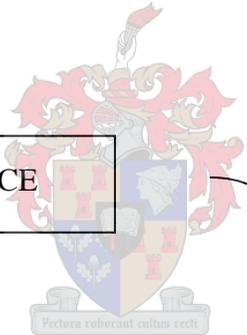
- I accept the situation. You have to lose to learn to win.
- I know you cannot perform well in all games.
- I take as if it another bad day.

- I pray.
- Try to stay confident by praying

SELF BLAME

EFC Cont.

ACCEPTANCE



TURNING TO RELIGION

PASSIVE-COPING STRATEGY

—

—

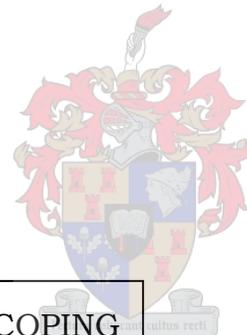
- I try to avoid the ball in order to gain my concentration..

**Inclusion in the starting line-up**

- I try to give my best and hang on.
- You give your best to be in the first line-up.
- Identify the problem and work on it.
- If chance comes I try to prove that I can play.
- It is the time to prove what I have.

AVOIDANCE

AVOIDANCE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY



ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I leave and go for a walk.
- I relax.

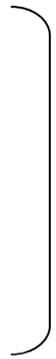
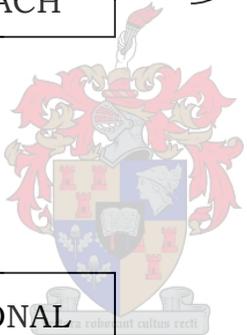
- I try to stay positive.
- I adopt a positive approach.
- I think of past achievements.

- I become disappointed.
- It's frustrating.
- I become frustrated at times.

RELAXATION

ADOPTING A  
POSITIVE  
APPROACH

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION



PFC Cont.

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I would be hard on myself.

SELF BLAME

- I try not to think a lot about why I am not included.

MENTAL  
DISENGAGE

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

- Go to people who can help.
- Get advice.

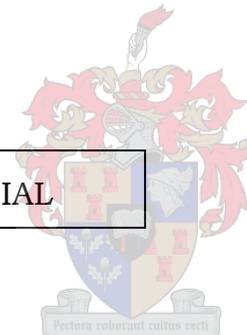
SOCIAL

EMOTION-  
FOCUS  
COPING

- I welcome it.
- I don't force situations I rather wait.
- It's comforting and easy for me.
- I am an easy-going person. There is always next time.

ACCEPTANCE

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY



- I don't worry about inclusion because I know there is always a second chance.

**Allowing early goals**

- I calm down.
- I relax.

- I remain positive.

- I try not to think about it all the time.

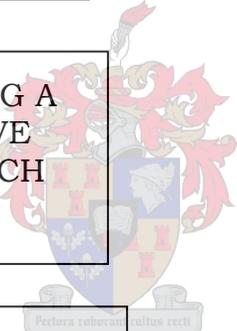
- I encourage my players and build team spirit.

RELAXATION

ADOPTING A POSITIVE APPROACH

SUPPRESSION

MOTIVATING OTHERS



—

PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING

AVOIDANCE COPING

PFC

- I communicate with my players and give advice where necessary.

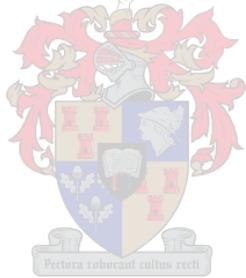
- I focus.
- I try to focus and concentrate.
- I try to bring back my confidence.
- I become ball-watching.

**Injuries**

- I speak to my coach about it.

ACTIVE COPIING

FOCUSING AND CONCENTRATION



SOCIAL SUPPORT

PFC CONT.

EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING

- You feel sad, you know you are not going to play all your games in the season.
- You get nervous about them.

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

- I avoid being slow on the ball.
- Keep myself free of injuries by being very careful when I am playing.
- I work on my injury.
- I go to my physiotherapist and get treated.

ACTIVE COPING



PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I accept it and know that there is not much I can do about it.
- You must learn to have patience with your injuries.

ACCEPTANCE

PASSIVE-COPING STRATEGY

**Intolerant players**

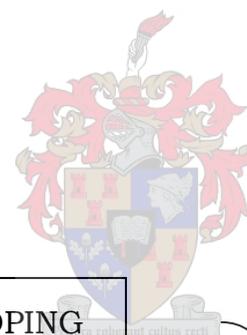
- I will talk to them and make them realize that everyone makes a mistake.
- I note what they say and work on my game and try to improve.

ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING

- I concentrate on my game.

FOCUSING AND CONCENTRATION



- You get scolded, you feel stressed.
- Its stressful.
- I get frustrated.

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION



EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I don't stay with that for a long time.

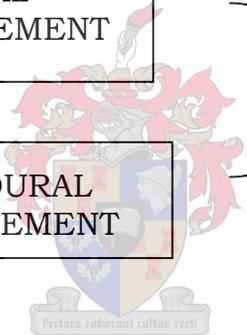
MENTAL  
DISENGAGEMENT



PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

- I try to be very silent and quiet.

BEHAVIOURAL  
DISENGAGEMENT



AVOIDANCE  
- COPING  
STRATEGY

I just ignore them

IGNORING



**Schoolwork and workload**

- I put up a plan. I sleep early and wake up early in the morning to do my work. I also use weekends when we are not playing.
- I plan my schedule for the week.
- I will get me a programme for my school work.
- Set aside time for the week to do my school work and sport activities.
- I try to manage my time.

- Study part-time and do lesser subjects to allow me enough time to do my work.

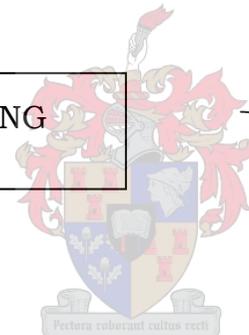
PLANNING

PLANNING

ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING

PFC Cont.



- I always communicate with my coach whenever I have a school project.

- Speak to coach Cavin about my difficulties.
- I phone my coach.

- My schoolwork suffers, I don't find time to complete it.
- You become tired, you don't want to work.

SOCIAL



EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

BEHAVIORAL  
DISENGAGEMENT



PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

**Fear of making mistakes**

- I listen to others' advice.

- I shout at my players.
- I get worried and concerned.

- I try to relax.
- I relax.

- I focus on my thoughts.
- I talk to myself.
- I concentrate.
- I get focused.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

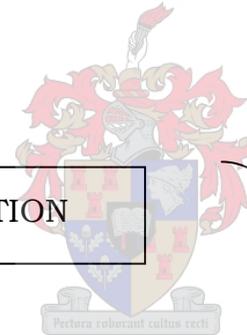
EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

RELAXATION

FOCUSING AND CONCENTRATION

EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING

PROBLEM FOCUSED COPING



- I put it aside and try to forget about it.

SUPPRESSION OF  
COMPETITIVE  
ACTIVITIES

AVOIDANCE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

- I don't concentrate.
- I lose focus.

LOSING  
FOCUS

**Strong opponents**

- I just have to focus.
- You concentrate and avoid making too many errors.

FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATION

- I try to be quick on the ball and in executing moves.
- I had to be sharp on the ball.

ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I encourage my players.

- I think about what I should do to prepare for the game.

- I stress too much.
- I get nervous.

- I pray before the game.

MOTIVATING OTHERS

EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

RELIGION



EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING

PASSIVE-COPING STRATEGY

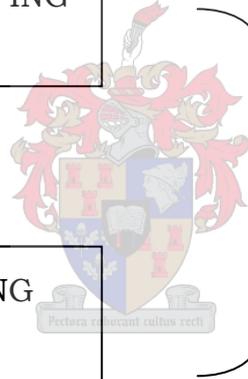
**Dubious referees' decisions**

- You try to win the game.
- You prove them wrong.
- You put a lot of effort in your game.

- You encourage one another.
- As a captain, you encourage your players.

ACTIVE COPING

MOTIVATING  
OTHERS



PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- You take it to the captain.

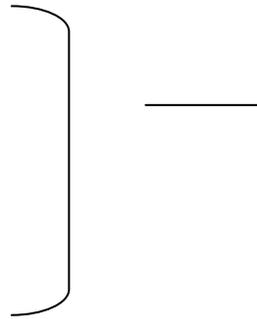
- I get angry.
- You shout and scream at your players.

- I ignore him.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

IGNORING



EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING



AVOIDANCE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

**Home circumstances**

- Try to get together and solve the problem.

- Try not to put these things in my mind.
- I block my mind.

- I speak to someone at school like the principal and he would give me advice.

ACTIVE COPING

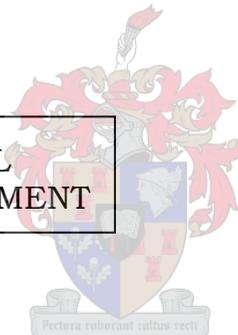
MENTAL  
DISENGAGEMENT

SOCIAL SUPPORT

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

PASSIVE-COPING  
STRATEGY

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING



**Pressure of being a professional football player**

- I set goals and have a well- planned schedule.

- Talk to senior players and friends.
- I go to people who can support me like my mother.
- I speak to coach.
- You must have someone you can talk to.

GOAL SETTING

SOCIAL SUPPORT

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING



- I have a tendency to smoke a lot when I am under pressure.
- You sometimes use stuff such as drugs to deal with such pressure.

USING DRUGS

AVOIDANCE  
COPING

- I stay away from negative people that will cause me to stumble.

AVOIDANCE



**Being away from home**

- I phone my mother everyday.
- I save salary and work at the garage to make ends meet.

ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM -  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- You must have inner strength.

SELF SUPPORT

PFC Cont.

- I try not to think about it.

MENTAL  
DISENGAGEMENT

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY



**Unruly supporters**

- I try to stay positive.

- I think about the game not what others say or do.
- I remain focused.

- I tell myself that they are not playing, I am playing.

- I ignore them.
- I ignore spectators.
- I don't allow them to affect my game.

ADOPTING  
POSITIVE  
APPROACH

FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATION

SELF-TALK

IGNORING

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

AVOIDANCE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

- It can cause stress.

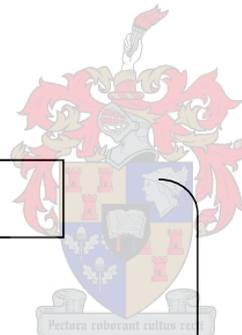
EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION



EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- High expectations from others**
- I make sure I am ready for the next game.
  - I improve my mistakes during the training session.
  - I work harder.

ACTIVE



GOAL SETTING



PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I develop own goals and work according to them.

- I suppress all negative things.
- I think about the game and nothing else. I don't worry about what others will say.

SUPPRESSION  
OF  
COMPETITIVE  
ACTIVITIES

AVOIDANCE  
COPING

- I concentrate on the game.
- You have to be strong mentally.
- I focus.

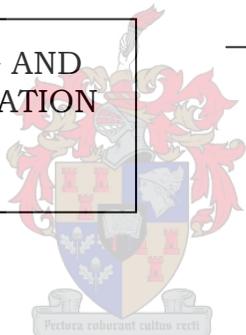
FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATION

PFC Cont.

- I panic.
- I become afraid, I might be sent home.

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING



**Negative evaluation of club by others**

- I don't take that seriously.
- I don't allow bad stuff to affect me.

- I remain positive even though they think bad of us.

- I use to get angry.

MENTAL  
DISENGAGEMENT

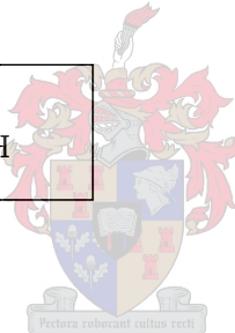
POSITIVE  
APPROACH

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

PFC

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING



**Player jealousy**

- I speak to my mother.
- I sometimes talk to the coach.

- I focus on my game and try to do my best.

- I don't worry about that.
- I block my mind.

- I am spiritual, I pray over everything.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATIO

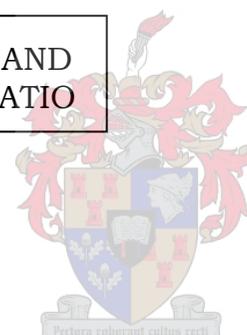
MENTAL  
DISENGAEMENT

RELIGION

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY



AVOIDANCE-COPING STRATEGY

- I avoid mixing with them.

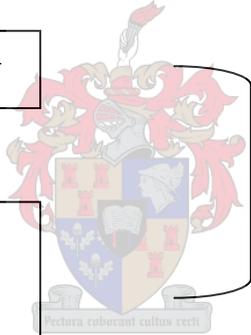
AVOIDANCE



**Destructive thoughts**

- I relax.
- I breath and do exercises.

RELAXATION



POSITIVE APPROACH



PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING

- I speak positively to myself.

MENTAL ENGAGEMENT



PROBLEM FOCUSED COPING

**Think about results**

- I try to lift and motivate myself.

- I use previous experiences to prepare and allow me to cope with that challenge.

- I don't become hard to myself.
- If I play bad, there is nothing I can do about it.

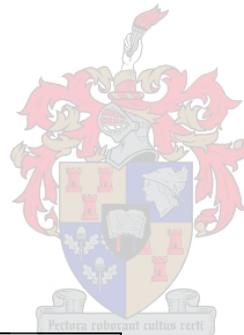
SELF-MOTIVATION

ACTIVE COPING

ACCEPTANCE /  
UNDERSTANDING

PROBLEM  
FOCUSED  
COPING

PASSIVE  
COPING



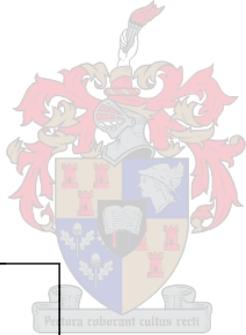
**Peer pressure and drugs**

- I thought seriously about it and decided to quit.
- I made up my mind to stay away from wrong friends before it is too late.

- My family supports me.
- Old people advise me not to do such things.

ACTIVE COPING

SOCIAL SUPPORT



PROBLEM FOCUSED COPING

EMOTION - FOCUSED COPING

**Problem with transport**

- Always go to coach and speak about my problems.
- I speak and arrange with our driver.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

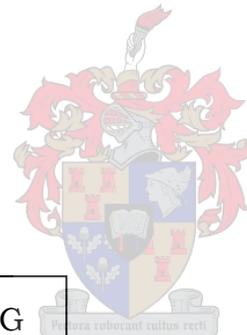
EMOTION -  
FOCUSED  
COPING

**Losing friends**

- I try to mix with other team members and make new friends.

ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING



**Culture and language**

- I learn more about different cultures and mix with other players.

ACTIVE COPING

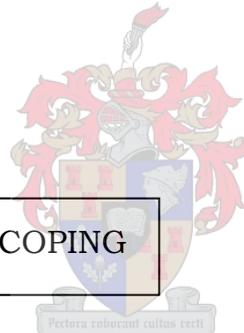
PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING

**Financial matters**

- Go and speak to people that can help.

ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING



**Pressure of being a captain**

- I focus

- I try to relax when there is pressure.

- I talk to my coach.

**Playing at different age levels**

- I am scared to go to the senior group/
- You become confused.
- You don't know what

FOCUSING AND CONCENTRATION

RELAXATION

SOCIAL SUPPORT



EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION



PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING



EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING



EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING

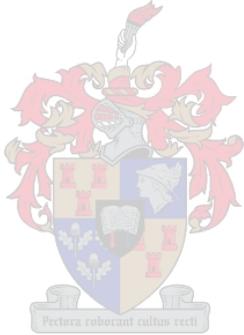
is expected of you.

- I don't mix nicely with other players in the team.
- Don't want to go out and talk.

BEHAVIOURAL  
DISENGAGEMENT

—

PASSIVE  
COPING  
STRATEGY



## WHITE PLAYERS

### Raw Data Themes

#### Poor or under-performance

- I encourage my teammates.
- I concentrate.
- I focus and do the basis.
- You give your best to help your side.
- When I am in a training session I try to correct what I did wrong.
- Talk about the game.
- I talk about the game.

### Lower-Order Themes

MOTIVATING OTHERS

FOCUSING AND CONCENTRATION

ACTIVE COPING

REFLECTION

### Higher-Order Themes

PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING

- It stays in mind.
- I go home and think about it.
- I do self-reflection.
- I think why I play badly.

- In such situation you start speaking to your coach and captain.
- Use other people for support.

- I feel restless and bad.
- It is frustrating when they don't want to correct their mistakes.

MENTAL  
ENGAGEMENT

SEEKING SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION



PROBLEM  
FOCUSED  
COPING

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I sometimes start blaming the referee.

BLAMING OTHERS

—

EFC Cont.

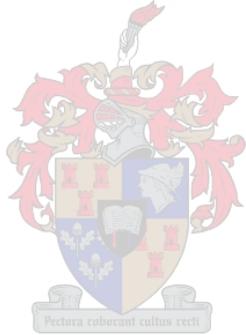
- I accept that there are good and bad days.
- If I don't do my best I don't get disappointed.

ACCEPTANCE

—

PASSIVE  
COPING  
STRATEGY

**Schoolwork and work load**



- I have a planned programme.
- I strike a balance and work things out.
- I have a plan. I get home at 14H30. I eat and get ready for soccer and come back at 18H30. I rest and start doing my

PLANNING

—

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

homework.

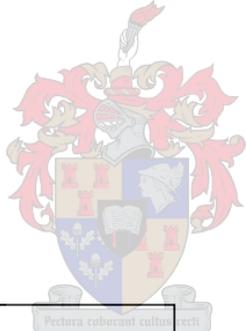
- I rest.

- I use my spare time to do my school work.
- You have to leave school and study through correspondence.

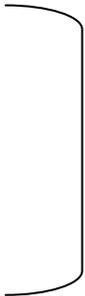
- Talk and discuss.
- Talk about the workload.

RELAXATION

ACTIVE



REFLECTION



PFC Cont.

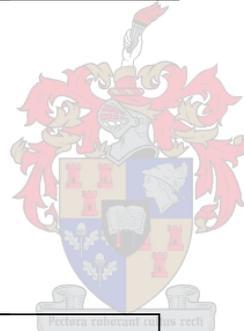
EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING

**Injuries**

- I avoid injuries by not “hanging” on the ball.
- I avoid hard tackles.

- I go for treatment.
- Get sorted out.

AVOIDANCE



ACTIVE COPING

AVOIDANCE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I learn not to rush injuries but give them time.

- Keep away the thoughts about getting injured.
- Take it out of my mind.

- Injuries can also be irritating.

ACCEPTANCE

MENTAL  
DISENGAGEMENT

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

**Pressure of being a professional football player**

- I don't allow pressure to affect me.

- I behave as a professional player to avoid problems.

- Try to relax.
- Don't think about football all the time.
- I watch TV.

SUPPRESSION OF COMPETITIVE ACTIVITIES

ACTIVE COPING

RELAXATION



AVOIDANCE COPING

PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING

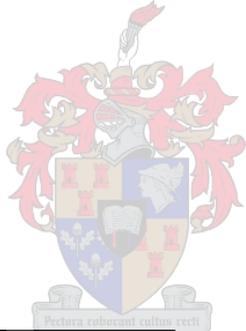
- I talk to senior players about their experiences when they were in my age and the pressure they experienced.
- Listen to other professional players.
- My dad was a professional player, he told me some few tricks.

SEEKING SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

**Unruly spectators**

- You switch off.
- I just forget about them.
- I leave what they are doing because it messes me up.



MENTAL  
DISENGAGEMENT

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

- I don't get involved with them.
- Keep quiet.

BEHAVIORAL  
DISENGAGEMENT

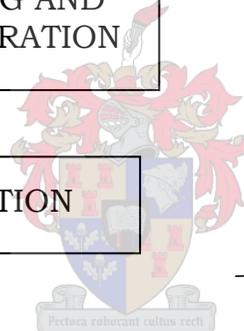
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PFC CONT.

- I concentrate on my game.
- I carry on with my game.

FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATION

RELAXATION



—

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- Stay calm.

**Strong opponents**

- Put more effort.
- Make sure I am physically fit.
- Use the situation and

ACTIVE COPING

—

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

work hard.

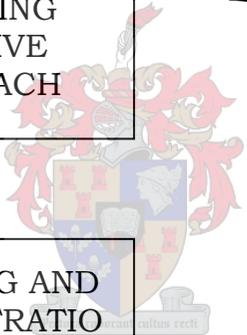
- If challenges get more physical, I take it to the referee.

- They must not intimidate you. You stay positive.

- I concentrate.

ADOPTING  
POSITIVE  
APPROACH

FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATIO



PFC Cont.

- I think about what to do and how to respond to them.

MENTAL  
ENGAGEMENT

PROBLEM  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- Scream at my players.

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION



EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I become hard on myself.
- I took everything upon myself.

SELF-BLAME

PFC

**High expectation from others**

- Get focused and sort out things.

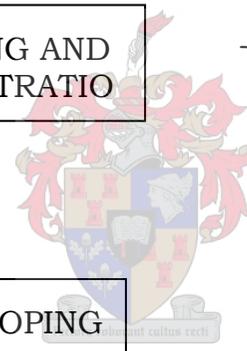
- I try to do the right things.

- I set targets and work on them.

FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATIO

ACTIVE COPING

GOAL-



PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- You must be psychological fit. Try to think and be level headed.

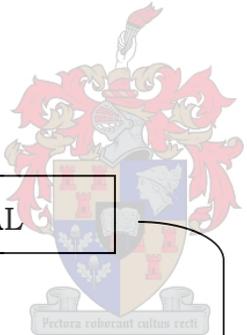
- I talk to others especially senior players.
- Take advice.

- become hard to myself.
- I took everything upon myself.

MENTAL  
ENGAGEMENT

SOCIAL

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION



PROBLEM  
FOCUSED  
COPING

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

**Inclusion in a starting line-up**

- Suppress negative vibes and try and enjoy your game.
- You don't put pressure on yourself.
- Try to get up there and play the game.
- Stay positive and focused.
- Don't go with negative attitude.

- I become anxious.
- I feel I could walk away and live football.

SUPPRESSION  
OF COMPETITIVE  
ACTIVITIES

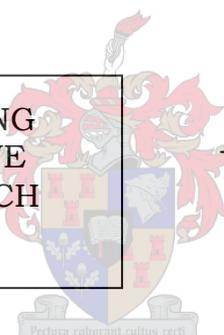
ADOPTING  
POSITIVE  
APPROACH

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

AVOIDANCE  
COPING

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING



- I will join another team.

AVOIDANCE

—

AVOIDANCE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

**Allowing early goals**

- Fight with teammates.
- I get angry.
- You lose control.

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

—

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING



- I talk to my players about their mistakes in a good spirit.

CONSTRUCTIVE  
TALK

—

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

**Destructive Thoughts**

- I think of something else not the game.

MENTAL  
DISENGAGEMENT

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- It stays in my mind.

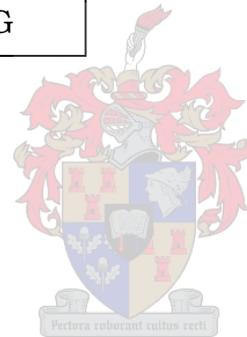
PASSIVE  
THINKING

PASSIVE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

- I try to focus.

FOCUSING AND  
CONCENTRATION

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING



**Losing games**

- You lose your cool.
- You shout at times.

- I talk to my players about what can be done.
- I give them advice.

- We reflect on our game.

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

SEEKING SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

REFLECTION



EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

**Referee**

- I count to ten.
- I walk away.

AVOIDANCE

AVOIDANCE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY

- I confront him depending on the situation.

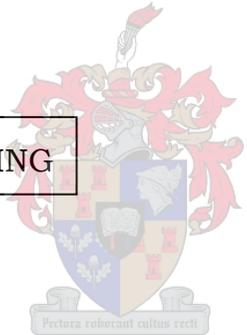
ACTIVE COPING

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

- I don't pay attention to what he does or says.

IGNORING

AVOIDANCE-  
COPING  
STRATEGY



- You find yourself arguing at times.

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

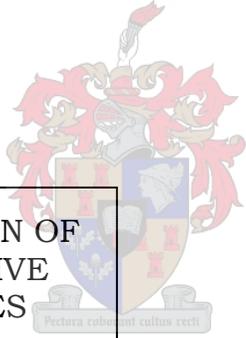
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EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

**Poor playing facilities**

- You have to take it and put it behind you.
- You cannot allow that to bother you.

SUPPRESSION OF  
COMPETITIVE  
ACTIVITIES



—

AVOIDANCE  
COPING

- It makes you feel uncomfortable.

EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

—

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

**Early promotion**

- I have to look for someone close to my age to identify with.

**Big game effect**

- I stress out.

**Away from home**

- I use my friends as shoulders to cry on.
- I have big brothers in the team that help

ACTIVE COPING

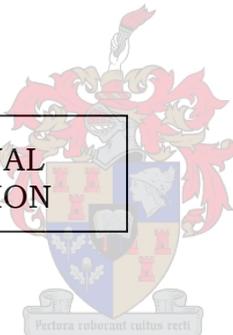
EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION

SOCIAL

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING



me to cope.

**Media**

- It's difficult to plan for media.

**Coach**

- I ignore him.

- Avoid anything that will cause tension between you and your coach,

NO PLANING

IGNORING

AVOIDANCE



—

PASSIVE-COPING STRATEGY

—

AVOIDANCE-COPING STRATEGY

• I don't take it nice, especially when there is no foundation for his criticism.

ADOPTING  
NEGATIVE  
APPROACH

—————

EMOTION-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

• Try not to put pressure on myself.

SELF-CARING

—————

PROBLEM-  
FOCUSED  
COPING

