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### *Athletes' self- and interpersonal emotion regulation and their effects on anxiety and goal achievement during competition*

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Athletes' engagement in effective emotion regulation is important for their functioning and performance (Uphill & Jones, 2011). In addition to *emotional self-regulation* (ESR) to regulate their own emotions, athletes also engage in *interpersonal emotion regulation* (IER), which refers to their attempts to regulate others' emotions (Niven et al., 2011). Sport research has found that IER (1) commonly occurs among teammates, (2) involves various strategies such as humour, distraction, and positive feedback, and (3) is related to key outcomes such as athletes' enjoyment, commitment, and team performance (Campo et al., 2017; Friesen et al., 2015; Tamminen et al., 2016, 2019).

**Purpose:** This study sought to extend the previous literature in several directions. First, given that previous research explored distant outcomes of IER such as performance and enjoyment, we examined how IER relates to specific emotions, such as anxiety, felt during competition. Second, based on the previous research that demonstrated a link between IER and team performance, we explored whether IER impacts individual athletes' goal achievement during competition. Third, given that ESR and IER have been shown to co-occur, we examined them concurrently in relation to the aforementioned outcomes.

**Method:** 509 athletes from 50 sport teams in Canada and the United Kingdom filled out a survey following a competitive match. The survey included measures of anxiety felt before and during their competition, their engagement in affect-improving and affect-worsening ESR, their teammates' provision of affect-improving and affect-worsening IER, and their sense of mastery goal achievement.

**Result:** Goal achievement was positively related to affect-improving ESR ( $p < .001$ ) and negatively related to affect-worsening ESR ( $p = .005$ ). Anxiety during competition, after pre-competition anxiety was controlled for, was positively related to affect-worsening ESR ( $p = .009$ ). IER was not related to anxiety or goal achievement ( $ps = .186-.824$ ). Post-hoc analyses revealed that when the effects of ESR were set to zero, anxiety was positively related to affect-improving ( $p = .010$ ) and affect-worsening IER ( $p = .017$ ), and goal achievement was positively related to affect-improving IER ( $p < .001$ ).

**Conclusion:** Though IER from teammates may be important for anxiety and goal achievement, IER seemed to be less important if athletes' own emotional self-regulation was accounted for. Further research is required to understand the contexts under which ESR and IER contribute to

positive outcomes, and to continue to explore optimal emotion regulation strategies for and among athletes.

**Project status:** SSHRC and Sport Canada funding for this research was awarded in 2018. The above abstract describes Study 1, which is complete (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2021.102034>). Study 2 aims to examine patterns of conversations between two teammates regarding stressors. Data collection has concluded and analysis is underway (46 dyads).

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