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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The Relationship between Support-Infrastructure and Athletic Competence Development

By

Robert J. Schinke 

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

in

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Dedication

I wish to dedicate my entire doctoral process to the woman I love, my wife Erin Olesen - Schinke. She has been an inspiration to me, and undoubtedly, was a prime reason why I succeeded in completing this doctorate with heightened optimism and resilience. My doctorate indicated that both optimistic and pessimistic people could pursue their life dreams until they eventually succeed. My wife has taken this conception one step further. She has taught me that pessimistic performers can reverse their world-views with loving support, and eventually become optimists. It is from this life lesson that I am now ready to go forward and commence the next stage of my life with only positive energy. I love you Erin, now and forever.

Abstract

This dissertation reports the findings of a study that explores how support-infrastructure affected the development of Major Games athletes. The respondent group was comprised of eight purposefully selected athletes from four Canadian national teams. These respondents were identified based on sufficient Games experience, suitable articulation skills, and the willingness to share their experiences. Using the principles of grounded theory, the interview data were analyzed to form the basis of a conceptual model. Based on the athletes' personal explanations of their experiences, a stage-based competence model emerged.

The emergent model had four discrete stages of competence progression. The first stage was termed "Naïve Optimism versus Guarded Naïve Optimism." Within this stage, the respondents were provided with efficacy enhancing and detracting information from personal support mechanisms. Such information served as a reference point and perceptual screen for later experiences. The second stage was termed "Awareness versus Skepticism." The duration of this segment of Major Games development varied depending on whether the athletes explained Stage Two performance barriers to controllable or uncontrollable factors. The challenge within Stage Two was to establish personal and operative pathways regardless of explanatory style. During Stage Three, termed "Open Resourcefulness versus Closed Reliance," some of the respondents employed personal and operative pathways. The result was a confirmatory Major Games experience. The means of achieving and sustaining Major Games competence during Stage Three varied from optimists to pessimists. Stage Four was termed

"Post-Competence Anger versus Satisfaction." The two respondents progressing to this final stage began to decline in competence due to the diminishment of personal capabilities. The optimist acknowledged personal inadequacies and explained recent declines in performance to personal attributes. The pessimistic athlete's explanation reflected a self-serving bias and resultant previously established resilient coping tendencies.

This study has implications for researchers, practitioners and administrators interested in working with Major Games athletes. For researchers, this study provides a contextual stage-based understanding of how sources of efficacy information contribute to explanatory patterns and athletic development. For clinicians, this study alludes to intervention strategies for high-performance athletes based on stage of development, where they reside within a specific stage, as well as their explanatory pattern.

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Chapter 1

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND ATHLETIC COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

Background to the Problem

Every high–performance athlete's competitive performance is affected by a combination of internally and externally controlled factors (Schinke, 1999, Schinke, Draper & Salmela, 1997). This premise is based on Rotter's (1966, 1975, 1989) well–tested theory of locus of control. Many sport psychologists have focussed on what is internally controllable to the athlete. Many practitioners including Lynch (1992), Martens (1990), and Orlick and Partington (1986), have emphasized teaching their athletes how to relax, how to focus, how to image, how to plan, and in essence, how to think. Coaches have been inundated with literature that has spoken of little else than these skills as "the psychological anecdote" to enhanced sport performance (e.g., Martens, 1990; Orlick, 1986). To confess, I initially also adopted these tools in order to ensure that my athletes performed to their ability (e.g., Schinke & Schinke, 1997). The first Olympic team that I ever worked with, in fact, was taught mostly the very skills that I have since found incomplete.

My dissatisfaction with the traditional mental training skills upon which sport psychology practice is founded, grew out of my working at the 1995 Pan–American and 1996 Olympic Games. There, I witnessed a number of athletes who had adequate internal skills in order to perform to their ability. These athletes, despite their personal attributes, did not meet their objectives. Many

questioned their ability to control their environments, performed with less than adequate confidence, and subsequently were unable to produce satisfactory routines. This left some of the athletes I encountered with lowered perceptions of competence toward their sport. By perceived competence, I, like Skinner (1995), mean the performer's perception regarding how control and efficacy experiences in combination contribute to the beliefs that promote or undermine the use of effective skills during adverse situations.

Many of the athletes' attributions focused on their relationship with an extended support–infrastructure (SI), those who were supposed to assist the athletes as they attempted to perform in a high–stress and complex sport environment. The SI they spoke of as playing a role on performance, who already have been identified in Durand–Bush's (1996) work, included coaches, medical staff, administrative personnel, mental training consultants, executive staff, and family members. In many cases, explanations were provided regarding how SI affected athletic competence based on whether SI were accessible, competent, respectful and sensitive to the athletes' needs. So, competent athletes were those who had experienced a functional SI prior to and during their performances. Competent athletes, in essence, were competent and remained competent for reasons that extended above and beyond their own self–perceived abilities. Incompetent athletes, on the other hand, were often helpless and subsequently incompetent for reasons that extended beyond their own self–perceived physical and mental abilities. For instance, as already noted by Schinke and colleagues (e.g., Bloom, Schinke & Salmela, 1998; Marshall and Schinke, 1998), personally

capable athletes can be impeded by over–involved, under–involved or poorly trained SI. These athletes walk away from their experiences with decreased expectation of future competence resulting from a perception of lack of control over their environment. This lack of expected competence, according to the athletes as reflected by their attributions, is often caused by a dysfunctional SI.

Having listened to athletes explain how their SI supported or failed them during performance, I wondered about the process through which high–performance athletes' perceptions of competence were affected by others within their environment. On a deeper level, I also wondered how attributed experiences were perceived to affect future competence. It is along these veins that the present work is situated.

Purpose

To the present, there has been little or no direct research addressing how SI is perceived by high–performance athletes to influence their athletic competence. Further, there is a lack of theoretical literature outlining the chronology through which high–performance athletes develop varied perceptions of competence. The feedback provided by the athletes in this study serves several purposes. First, the information gleaned provides social, sport, educational and administrative literature with a comprehensive understanding of the reasons for relationship that exists between SI and athlete competence. In so doing, the present work also delineates how SI influences athletes' evolving perceptions of competence. To understand this process, the immediate study developed a tentative stage theory by drawing on literature from the theories of self–efficacy

(Bandura, 1986a) and attribution (Weiner, 1986), as well as the constructs of learned helplessness (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasedale, 1978) and learned resourcefulness (Skinner, 1996). SI behavior is discussed in light of its contingency on athletic competence. The insights gleaned from this study also serve a second, more applied, purpose. Results from the study will be employed in order to better understand high–performance athletes, thereby providing SI and coaching education systems with suggestions regarding how to work with them during international tournaments during the various stages of their competence development.

Research Questions

This study focused on high–performance athletes' perceptions of what is needed from SI based on their cumulative sport – related experiences. From the assumed relationship between SI and athletic competence, three specific theory–driven questions emerged:

1. How are athletes' past experiences with SI described as affecting athletic (Major Games) competence at the high-performance level?
2. How do the athletes' explanations of past national-team competence link with their subsequent behavioral approaches to performance?
3. How and why does the relationship between high-performance athletes and their SI affect athletic competence at Major Games competitions?

Significance

Until recently, literature in social psychology examined peoples' motivational tendencies through a number of different theories. These theories have included but not been limited to locus of control (Rotter, 1966), attribution (Weiner, 1985) and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986a). Recently, Skinner (1995) started to link these theories together into a human competence system to explain how we regulate and interpret goal directed interactions in relation to our environment. With Skinner's (1995) conceptualization in mind, this study contributes to the literature by providing a more coherent theoretical understanding of how the environmental aspect of SI affects high-performance athletes' sport - related competence over time. For the sport psychology or mental training practitioner interested in athlete functioning, this study also has something to offer. The emergent findings provide suggestions regarding "how to" improve SI functioning and related educational programs targeting this area such as the National Coaching Certification Program and the Canadian Professional Coaches Association. For practitioners interested in contexts other than sport, the present work provides insight into how people within performers' environments might affect their competence to perform.

The Key Points

To the present there seems to be a divergence between sport psychology's applied practice and theory-based research. The clinical aspect of sport psychology has emphasized the importance of mental training components such as relaxation, focusing, imagery, and competition planning. These concepts have

been discussed at length by applied practitioners including Orlick and Partington (1986), Martens (1990), and Lynch (1990). Sport psychology researchers have moved away from an emphasis on mental training aspects, perhaps in an attempt to increase the credibility of the domain. Instead, they have considered athletic performance in light of motivational theories including Bandura's (1986) self–efficacy, Weiner's (1985) attribution theory, Abramson, Seligman and Teasedale's (1978) learned helplessness, and Skinner's (1996) learned resourcefulness.

The present work is in keeping with the latter theory–based orientation, and is an exploration of how athletes' explanations of tournament competence can shed light on reasons for their functioning in high–stress performance settings. This study emphasizes the residual importance of SI functioning on athletic competence in the most difficult of tournament environments – Major Games. It is believed that athletic competence transcends the athlete's ability to feel personally efficacious within a performance environment. Though the athlete's belief in self is important, due to the complexity of Major Games environments, so too is the athlete's confidence in the abilities and efforts of supportive others. This confidence in "supportive others" is believed to affect the athlete's ability to compete in both the short and long–term via past experiences and subsequent expectations. In an attempt to understand the reasons for athletic competence in Major Games, the athletes' cumulative experiences will be considered. In terms of theory, this study will consider how early Games experiences relate to general athletic efficacy via expectations of support staff – related helplessness or

resourcefulness. Therefore, reasons for variations in athletic competence will be explored via the athletes' cumulative Games experiences from their initiation to their current level of competence.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation has been organized into six chapters as Creswell (1994) has proposed for conventional doctoral research. The first chapter provides an overview of the study, the problems to be addressed, as well as the significance of the research to theory and application. As well, Chapter 1 outlines the limitations and delimitations of the study. Finally, definitions relevant to the study are described at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 2 is a review of literature relevant to this study. The literature review is divided into five main theoretical sections outlining the evolution of motivational literature leading to the formulation of the present study. The theories that are considered include: (a) locus of control, (b) attribution theory, (c) self–efficacy theory, and (d) helplessness and resourcefulness. Finally, the last section (e) attempts to reconcile how the aforementioned meld together to explain how SI affect athletic competence from one Games experience to the next over athletic careers.

My research assumptions and the resulting research design underpinning the study are presented in Chapter 3. In addition, Chapter 3 also touches on ethical considerations and demographic information related to the participants. Finally, Chapter 3 delineates the protocol for data analysis and data management.

Chapter 4 provides a description of the results based on the explanations of repeated interviews with 8 Major Games athletes from individual sports. The results are organized into discrete stages of athletic competence development based on the chronological experiences of the respondents.

Chapter 5 provides the links between the emergent results and literature discussed in Chapter 2. Findings are discussed in terms of where and when they confirm, disconfirm, and extend previous motivational research.

The final chapter, Chapter 6, targets the conclusions and recommendations of the dissertation to research and clinical contexts in sport. How the findings may inform educational practices is also speculated upon. In addition, this final chapter will suggest pathways to future exploration for those interested in motivational settings and theory–based motivational research.

Operational Definitions

Attributions. Attributions are the causes that people give for occurrences related to themselves or others. These explanations are seen as an attempt to make sense of experiences. According to Weiner (1979) attributions can be divided into causes such as levels of effort, ability, task difficulty, luck, and powerful others.

Formal Support Infrastructure (FSI). A subset of the athletes' support networks that include members who are professionally affiliated with national teams. This subset of support is regarded by the athletes as their "outer circle of friends." The classification is based on the support members' balanced interest

for athletes as individuals while prioritizing the best interests of the national teams as a whole.

High-performance. A level of sport achievement that is limited to internationally successful senior national team competitors such as Olympic, World Championship, Pan-American, and Commonwealth Games performers. These athletes are differentiated from elite level athletes such as successful university and national level performers.

Learned helpless (LH). The perceived inability to achieve success or avoid failure regardless of the available responses in one's own or other peoples' repertoires or both. This form of discontinuance is adopted when results are attributed to uncontrollable circumstances such as lack of personal or SI ability or inadequate control over environmental resources.

Learned resourceful (LR). When a corresponding set of objective or subjective conditions are perceived by the performer to be connected with successful behavioral responses and results (Skinner, 1996). Learned resourceful has also been referred to in the literature as proximal control (e.g., Bandura, 1997).

Major Games competence. A temporal process based on Skinner's (1995) competence model where beliefs, experiences, and subsequent behaviors combine to provide aspects of understanding regarding why and how people evolve into the performers they evolve into. Major Games competence is assessed retrospectively, and occurs when performers have the correct operative functioning and self-assuredness at a Major Games tournament.

Operative efficacy. Refers to the multiple subskills required in order to manage ever-changing environmental circumstances. Operative efficacy is judged by the abilities of the athletes and their SI to execute the necessary actions that lead to successful outcomes (Bandura, 1986).

Optimists. Optimists are Major Games athletes with a belief in the likely contingency between appropriately coordinated personal and SI efforts and abilities and eventual Major Games competence. Optimists view both formal and personal support-infrastructure (PSI), on a general level, as facilitators of Major Games competence.

Personal Support Infrastructure (PSI). PSI refers to the subset of support network that is regarded as solely having the athletes' personal interests and developments in mind. The people typically included in this "inner circle" of support include personal coaches, family, personal friends, and other resources that are regularly accessed throughout the year.

Pessimists. Pessimists are Major Games athletes who lack belief in their formal support-infrastructure's (FSI) likelihood of providing appropriate ability and efforts prior to and during Major Games settings. It is believed that such formal mechanisms detract from the likelihood of Major Games competence.

Self-efficacy. The athletes' personal beliefs regarding their capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over task demands (see Bandura, 1997). Efficacy beliefs are applicable in specific and general situations, and can vary as a result of, or despite, the level of task difficulty.

Support-infrastructure (SI). A broad range of people who prepare or accompany the athlete to a competition. These people can be described as affecting the athlete's competence and subsequent performance in a tournament context. At the high-performance level, athlete resources include a head coach, assistant coaches, administrators, medical and physiological staff, a mental training consultant, travelling board members, mission staff, sponsors, as well as the athletes' family members. These groups of support can be divided into FSI and PSI.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As Skinner (1995) has stated, there is much to consider when attempting to understand the human competence system. To understand perceptions of competence, one must attempt to reconcile human functioning with environmental constraints. When considering this tenuous relationship, theorists in motivation including Bandura (1986), and Seligman (1990) have considered how peoples' distal and proximal experiences with their environments combine to influence perceptions of confidence and competence. When considering the factors that clarify athletes' perceptions of their performances in relation to their environments, numerous theories and constructs can be used. In this literature review, the theoretical underpinnings of attribution (Weiner, 1986) and efficacy (Bandura, 1986) are discussed. Also considered here are the constructs of learned helplessness (Abramson, Alloy & Metalsky, 1995) and learned resourcefulness (Skinner, 1996). These theories and constructs are presented as inter-related parts of a chronological process that helps explain how athlete competence and resulting explanations of performance are affected by the environmental factor of SI.

Theories Contributing to Human Competence

Skinner (1995) published a controversial book called "Perceived Control, Motivation, and Coping." Within it, Skinner spent much time fleshing out how locus of control (Rotter, 1966), attribution (Weiner, 1986), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) and learned helplessness (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasedale,

1978) could be viewed as theories of perceived control. Within the same work, Skinner provided a model of human competence tying these theories together. Because the emphasis in this targeted how human competence is affected, and this process included experience, reflection, efficacy expectations and motivational response, all of the aforementioned theories are reviewed. These theories will be presented in combination to help explain how perceptions of competence are partly explained by cumulative experiences with SI.

Locus of Control

The review of locus of control is brief as it provides segue into a more complete theory of perceived control termed "attribution." When establishing locus of control, Rotter (1966) was interested with how reinforcements of an experience over time, whether through one's own actions or through the assistance of another, would instill or maintain an expectancy of reinforcement in the future. When the expectancy was confirmed by ongoing stable experience, the person's predictability of the outcome was maintained. According to Rotter, this expectancy of control over situations increased when the outcome was perceived as related to the individual's own actions–termed an internal locus of control. When the reinforcement was seen as contingent on another person's behavior, luck, chance or fate, termed an external locus of control, the expectancy of control over the situation became more tenuous. The predictability of external factors not directly within the performer's control was not expected with the same confidence as personally controllable behaviors. From this perspective, Rotter (1975) described people's expectancies of control as varying along an internal and

external continuum with perceived externally controlled items as more tenuous and unpredictable than internally controlled items.

Rotter's work contributed significantly to the inception of a competence system. The construct locus of control (LC) clarified stability of expectation as influencing peoples' predictions of future competence. When people expect their environments to be stable in the future, this affects their level of perceived control over their environment and therefore their level of competence to perform within it. Rotter (1989) also acknowledged that the performers' expectations of control are more tenuous when based on the actions of others. As emphasized in this study, the tenuous facet of perceived external control must be understood in order to improve the performance environment. Based on the work of Rotter, the dimensions of locus of control and stability have been recognized as two important dimensions that help explain peoples' perceptions of control. Because perceptions of control are inevitably tied to past experiences with one's environment, expectations of control prior to performance did not clarify where decrements in human competence occurred. Eventually, Weiner (1979, 1985) and Seligman and his colleagues (Peterson, Maier, & Seligman, 1993) formulated versions of attribution to account for past experiences on present and future expectations of competence.

Attribution Theory

According to Reber (1995), attribution theory in its most general sense can be defined as a "perspective in social psychology concerned with how a person ascribes or imputes a characteristic to oneself or to another person" (p. 69).

Understanding how people attribute has provided a window into reasons for their perceptions of competence (Skinner, 1995). Research that formally examines the attribution process is plentiful in the fields of social psychology (e.g., Peterson, Buchanan, & Seligman, 1995; Peterson, Maier, & Seligman, 1993; Weiner, 1992) and sport psychology (e.g., Biddle, 1993; Brawley, 1984; Brawley & Rejeski, 1984; Roberts & Pascuzzi, 1979; Santamaria & Furst, 1994). The development of its literature has spanned six decades (e.g., Heider, 1944) and continues to surface as people search for causal links and determine reasons for performance.

The conceptualizations that fall under the rubric of Attribution are the result of on–going attempts by researchers to address how people make sense of themselves and others in relation to their environments. Research along this vein has developed a detailed theoretical framework and a few classification schemes (e.g., Seligman, 1990; Weiner, 1992). Much of the development within the theory is due to two researchers: Martin Seligman and his colleagues (e.g., Abramson, Seligman, & Teasedale, 1978; Peterson, Schwartz, & Seligman, 1981; Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1989) and Bernard Weiner (e.g., Weiner, 1992, 1986, 1985, 1983, 1979, 1971). For the purpose of this study, their contributions to the conceptualization of attribution theory will be discussed. Also discussed will be attribution's contribution to a model of athletic competence.

Attribution dimensions. Weiner's work on attribution began in 1971, and was revised in 1979 and 1985. In the 1979 version, Weiner provided three dimensions that affect the human competence system: control, locus of causality and stability. Control has been defined as the extent to which situations are

controllable–either by the attributer, someone else, if at all. Locus of causality (the location of the cause) has been used to clarify whether the attribution is assigned to the performer or a less reliable (external) source such as someone else situated within the environment. This dimension is derived from Rotter's (1966) previously discussed locus of control. Stability relates to whether a cause is constant over time or changing from minute to minute (Weiner, 1979). Weiner (1986, 1985), based on the work of Abramson, Seligman and Teasedale (1978), has also acknowledged the possibility of two additional dimensions: (a) globality –whether the case is situation specific or generalized across contexts, and (b) intention –whether the cause occurred by chance or by deliberate action, as two additional dimensions. Because intention has been highly correlated with control (Weiner, 1985) and globality is not related to any discussion that is domain specific, these additional dimensions will not be explored here.

Main attributions. Weiner also adopted four main attributions from Rotter (1966); these were ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty. Ability, typically regarded as stable, has most recently been considered by Weiner (1986) as either stable or unstable depending whether it is equated with personal aptitude or the environmental factors that might affect it. In sport, researchers have proposed that an athlete's skill in the situation might vary depending on whether those around have correctly assisted whenever needed (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Marshall & Schinke, 1998; Schinke, 1999). Effort, initially viewed as unstable and rectifiable (e.g., Weiner, 1971), has also been noted to vary based on perceptions of competence. As noted by Weiner (1979) when he examined the

behavior of classroom students, effort can vary depending on whether it is "typical" or "atypical." In relation to sport, the exertion of effort would be inextricably linked to one's perception of efficacy and competence within the environment and how such perceptions relate to outcome expectancy (Bandura, 1990). People, including athletes, will not exert typical effort when such expectations have little or no role on an externally controlled or uncontrollable outcome. Little research has been conducted on task difficulty, other than to note it as externally controllable and stable. Though it is not the purpose in this review, the classification of task difficulty is placed under question. It can be argued that perception of task difficulty is related to one's management of the environment. Because perception is unstable, as is one's control over the environment, task difficulty might as easily be regarded as varying in stability depending on whether SI assistance is "typical" or "atypical." Luck has generally been regarded as unstable, within Western culture anyway. For the sake of brevity, little will be said of this attribution other than that it has typically been attributed when there is no perceived relationship between internal and external control and performance outcome (Weiner, 1986). As related to the present discussion, perceptions of luck are related to peoples' past experiences of control and a perception of their varied behaviors be they optimistic or pessimistic (Seligman, 1990).

Attribution theory plays an important role in a more complete model of competence. Based on the work of Bandura (1990), Skinner (1995) and Seligman and his colleagues (e.g., Peterson, Buchanan, & Seligman, 1995; Peterson, Maier

& Seligman, 1993; Seligman, 1990), it can be argued that attributions regarding the past are inextricably linked to expectations of future control and efficacy. The extent that people interpret their past experiences as controllable and predictable will inevitably link with their expectation of future control and subsequent competence (Skinner, 1995). In sport, when athlete competence has been attributed as contingent on the assistance of a functional or dysfunctional other, the inevitable result is a tenuous relationship between the athletes and the people who are perceived as affecting their ability to perform within the context (Bandura, 1997; Schinke, 1999). The high–performance athlete's tournament environment is comprised of a wide number of support members who can either help or impede performance depending on whether they are well–trained and well meaning. Because SI is unavoidably present, and even necessary to carry out administrative, medical and logistical functions, their roles are inextricably linked to the athlete's perception and subsequent functioning within the environment. The assessment of the relationship between athletes and their SI is inevitably considered through a process of attributing. Resulting perceptions of the environment will affect perceptions of competence prior to subsequent performances.

Efficacy

The athlete's perception of efficacy provides additional insight into how SI might be viewed by athletes as having influence over their athletic competence (Bandura, 1997). Self–efficacy focuses on performers' "...beliefs in their capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action

needed to exercise control over task demands" (Bandura, 1990, p. 316). These courses of action, which already have been alluded to, are not always within the athlete's direct control. There are instances when an athlete's efficacy is tied to others' abilities to manage associated parts of the performance environment (Bandura, 1997; Gould, Hodge, Peterson & Giannini, 1989). This more holistic conception of efficacy has been termed "operative efficacy" by Bandura (1986) and "general teaching efficacy" in terms of educational contexts by Dembo and Gibson (1985). It is along this vein that efficacy will be discussed.

Sources of efficacy expectation. There are four sources of efficacy that are believed to affect human performance; these are past accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (see Bandura, 1977). Past accomplishments such as previous competition experiences have the strongest influence on the performer's operative efficacy. When previous performances in the form of attributions are depicted as positive and controllable, people, including athletes, gain a heightened and sustainable belief in their own capability to perform the particular skill (Bandura, 1986, 1990). Conversely, continued negative performances viewed as unalterable or positive experiences attributed to luck detract from perceived efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Försterling, 1985). The difference between efficacious and inefficacious high-performance athletes according to Bandura (1997) is their difference in self-assurance, otherwise regarded as their self-perceived confidence within the situation. At the national team level, the athlete's self-assurance is also in part facilitated by an assurance that others' contributions will be as expected (Schinke, 1999). Previous

stable positive experiences with support staff doing the correct things at the correct times help facilitate the athlete's perception of control via a sense of confidence in oneself and others. It is this joint confidence that is believed to facilitate athletic competence. Previous experiences where support staff have continuously hindered performance result in a perception of uncontrollability and a subsequent lack of competence regardless of self–confidence (Bandura, 1990).

Vicarious experience is the second strongest source of efficacy according to Bandura (1977). It is the confidence one derives from modeling others with similar capabilities. When one athlete sees another of similar ability perform a task, the resulting performance provides a wide source of information (Bandura, 1986). Vicarious experience is useful to the high–performance athlete when assessing confidence in an unfamiliar tournament environment (Bandura, 1997). Vicarious experience is tied to SI when an athlete's perception of confidence is affected by watching teammates master or cope with environmental adversity. Part of this observation of others might include an observation regarding how others are assisted by SI prior to or during performance. When observed operative assistance contributes to another athlete's efficacy, the vicarious process, and the subsequent cognitive interpretation will also add to personal athletic competence (Schinke, 1999). Conversely, as noted by Weinberg (1985), when the attempts of equivalent other athletes indicate a non–contingent relationship between personal effort and favorable performance, the observing athlete's expectation of competence can, and will, eventually lessen. So, much can be learned by the astute athlete, and the information gleaned will definitely

provide food for thought regarding personal confidence and outcome expectations, and how both are tied to the operative functioning of SI.

Verbal persuasion such as encouragement prior to the athlete executing a difficult performance routine also plays an important role in the perception of Major–Games efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Due to the inherent physical challenge and pressure associated with high–performance sport, even the most efficacious of athletes need some positive verbal support such as encouragement and technical assistance at specific times. This finding has been backed by the work of Jackson (1995) when examining factors that facilitated flow in high–performance athletes. According to Bandura (1997), in high–performance sport "the ability appraisals conveyed by coaches through words and actions affect the course of the players' efficacy development" (p. 398) as well as their eventual competence. At the national team level, the influence of verbal persuasion extends beyond coaches as sources of efficacy information to other support staff who also influence the athlete's confidence providing they are regarded as having diagnostic credibility. Equipment technicians are one group of peripheral people with such diagnostic competence.

Finally, emotional arousal can be used as a source of information regarding efficacy to perform (Bandura, 1977). Positive or negative arousal prior to or during a sport performance can provide useful information concerning personal competence. Indicators such as an upset stomach, fear, anger, and lethargy have been used as signs regarding personal confidence and vulnerability in forthcoming tasks. Because aversive arousal is typically paired with sub–par

performance, Bandura (1986) has noted that people including athletes will usually expect negative symptoms to lead to negative performance. Conversely, as explained by Orlick (1986), positive levels of arousal will typically be paired with subsequent functional performances. The relationship between arousal and efficacy will have something to do with the extent that the aforementioned "other" sources of efficacy information provide congruent adaptive or maladaptive efficacy information. Along the same vein, the information gained from these "other" sources of efficacy information, and their influence on arousal, can be tied to the relationship between athletes and the operative behaviors of their SI. As noted by Bandura (1997), because people within organizational settings do not function as "social isolates," the high–performance athlete's arousal level will be linked to the behaviors of supportive or non–supportive SI and the extent that these people affect perceived control and subsequent athletic competence.

Dimensions of efficacy. Performers' experiences and subsequent explanations of competence are also tied to efficacy's dimensions: magnitude, strength, and generality (Bandura, 1997). For the sake of brevity, only magnitude and strength, the two most relevant dimensions to this study will be discussed. Magnitude refers to the extent that "...self–judged efficacy of different persons may be limited to simple tasks, extend to moderately difficult ones, or include the most taxing performances within a specific domain" (Bandura, 1986, p. 396). These differences in a task's difficulty affect the athlete's perception of confidence within a given tournament context depending whether the tournament is unchallenging or a physical stretch. Though some of this variance in efficacy

might be explained by personal ability, Bandura (1997) and Schinke (submitted for publication) believe that additional variance in difficulty is probably accounted for by the sport organization's managerial–operational skills. With increases in environmental complexity such as increases in security, media, social events, and sponsorship, the sport organization's responsibility will extend to a wider web of demands. National team athletes will be expected to attend many functions, and juggle these with their training and subsequent performances while at Major Games competitions. Coaches will be expected to prepare their athletes and ensure each athlete's sustained focus while supporting administration's ever increasing social events schedule. In such cases, environmental demands across levels can become environmental constraints if handled incorrectly. The ability to reach consensus and a shared understanding across levels of a SI influences the extent that difficult tasks become overly difficult tasks, and potentially competent members become incompetent within highly challenging environments.

Strength refers to the extent that peoples' precepts of efficacy within a specific situation are influenced by confirming and disconfirming experiences (Bandura, 1986). According to Bandura (1997) and Seligman (1990), people including athletes who have strong beliefs in their own efficacy will exert effort during greater challenges as opposed to people with weaker self–precepts. Such behavior is the result of previous confirming experiences where persistence was rewarded by an improvement in result. In terms of the immediate discussion, the athlete's persistent effort can also be fostered by SI who are able, aware and willing to provide the correct resources whether they be behaviors or material

items (Schinke, submitted for publication). It is inconceivable that the national team athlete can arrange all of the administrative plans and logistical workings necessary to have a strong sense of efficacy and competence prior to and during a high–stress international tournament. When support staff do not assist athletes prior to and during tournaments, the likelihood of adaptive efficacy beliefs will decrease. This is based on the non–contingent relationship between the national team athletes' effort and some of the required necessities in order to remain competent within a Major Games context. The peripheral assistance of support staff, then, serves as supplemental assurance beyond the athletes' beliefs in their own personal efforts and abilities. It is through this assurance that both the optimistic and pessimistic athlete's strength of efficacy and subsequent competence can be affected at different times prior to and during crucial international tournaments (Schinke, submitted for publication). So, despite the constancy in task difficulty for all athletes within tournament settings, some will have stronger efficacy beliefs than others resulting from a belief in SI operative competence.

Learned Helplessness and Learned Resourcefulness

To the present, there has been much discussion about the contingent relationship between SI functioning and athlete competence. The extent that athletes perceive themselves, in lieu of past experiences with their SI, to be competent performers will influence the adaptiveness of expectations prior to forthcoming tournaments (Bandura, 1990). This sub–section will review the constructs of helplessness (Alloy, Abramson, Metalsky, & Hartlage, 1988) and

resourcefulness (Skinner, 1996). These two constructs are the aftermath of previous performance experiences and are manifested in terms of resultant behavioral response. This section will discuss the adaptiveness of behavioral response in terms of athletic competence at the high–performance level.

There are instances when people including athletes perceive themselves or others as "helpless." When aversive experiences continue to be unsolvable over prolonged periods of time, a maladaptive behavior termed "learned helplessness" (LH) can result. LH is defined as the belief "... that highly desired outcomes will not occur and / or that highly aversive outcomes will occur and that no response in one's repertoire will change the likelihood of these outcomes" (p. 114). Based on stable and uncontrollable attributions from past experiences, and subsequent negative perceptions of efficacy, as Seligman (1990), and Retew and Reivich (1995) have already noted, even the most motivated of high–performance athletes can develop apathetic behavior. According to Alloy, Abramson, Metalsky, and Hartlage (1988), causal pathways such as the behaviors of social support will contribute to this diminishment of competence associated behaviors regardless of the performance context. For some high–performance athletes, it might be of little use to exert personal effort in developing a systematic warm–up routine when coaches or administrators disallow or fail to plan for such efforts during tournament contexts. Such situations, then, seems personally helpless, and thus can debilitate the athlete's motivation to perform in the future (Abramson, Alloy & Metalsky, 1995). Therefore, it can be argued that SI caused operational

constraint can leave high–performance athletes personally helpless and subsequently incompetent as performers.

In such instances, the athlete's perception of operationally derived inefficacy (termed learned helplessness), can be resolved by having someone else assist, at least in the short–term, when LH is experienced. In essence, presupposed from Skinner's (1996) work, when there is a connection between the agent and the production of behavioral responses, the athlete will re–establish a sense of perceived control and subsequent competence within the situation. Such situations can be regarded as "learned resourceful" (LR) instead of being regarded as universally helpless. Based on a review of control – related constructs provided by Skinner (1996), LR was defined as the connection between an external agent and the production of expected and adaptive behavioral responses. When athletes believe that there is no relationship between personal effort and/or ability and the successful achievement of a specific task, they can call on others within the membership to help facilitate the task. In Bandura's (1986) explanation of proxy control, which is similar if not identical to LR, it is argued that the belief in someone else can augment a perception of control and therefore competence. Some might question whether this reliance on another might detract from the long–term autonomy of individual members (e.g., Bandura, 1986). However, as Bandura (1997) conceded in his later work, in most complex organizations including high–performance sport teams, the abilities of members across levels of the organization are intermingled. Athletes might not feel efficacious to perform a few moments before the competition unless they can

draw on coaches for support or equipment technicians for last minute adjustments. As noted by Schinke (submitted for publication), such is the nature of the high–performance sport organization. There is no telling whether the tapping into other people is truly functional or dysfunctional over the long–term. Regardless, the interdependence of people within the sport organization will happen, and providing these human resource transactions are perceived as efficacy or outcome enhancing, or as efficacy and outcome enhancing, they will become facilitative cues to athletic competence.

The Theoretical Framework

Researchers such as Marshall and Rossman (1995) and Lancy (1993) have suggested that a preliminary theoretical framework from the literature can provide qualitative researchers with empirical basis as well as suggestion regarding participant selection, data collection, and subsequent analyses (e.g., MacDonald, 1998). The use of theory is to provide a coherent starting point in order to understand respondents' lived experiences. The relationships among components of the theory, or among numerous theories for that matter, are not to be confirmed by collection and analyses techniques (MacDonald, 1998). Instead, the context under examination provides the researcher with an opportunity to compare previous theoretical propositions with information from the respondent group(s).

The conceptual map that provided a preliminary guide for this study used a number of motivational theories and constructs. Based on literature from Bandura (1986, 1990), Stanley and Maddux, (1986), and Skinner (1995), the theories of attribution and self–efficacy were linked with athletes' behavioral

responses. This linking process has recently been considered by Skinner (1995) as part of an explanation of how competence is affected over time and subsequently depicted to the listener. Though some researchers, including Edwards and Potter (1992), argued that attributions are socially constructed, and therefore have nothing to do with actual experience, many including Bandura (1997), and Robins and Hayes (1995), believe that attributions provide some insight into human cognition and therefore the human experience of competence. It is argued here, based on past social psychology research (e.g., Bandura, 1990; Skinner, 1995; Stanley & Maddux, 1986), that there are links among attribution, efficacy, behavioral response, and subsequent competence in important performance milieus such as high–performance sport settings. As this literature indicates, based on proximal and distal attributions occurring in relation to others, athletes are believed to have varying beliefs of resourcefulness or helplessness (Skinner, 1995). These beliefs are influenced by factors that transcend personal efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1989; Maddux & Stanley, 1986; Stanley & Maddux, 1986). An athlete can be personally efficacious, and still be rendered incompetent due to environmental constraint. So, the athlete's competence system must consider personal efficacy and operative efficacy from distal and proximal experiences as reflected through their explanations. It is based on this process of interpreting that people including high–performance athletes experience control, construct beliefs of that control, and subsequently develop adaptive or maladaptive approaches when attempting to function within their competition environments (Figure 1).

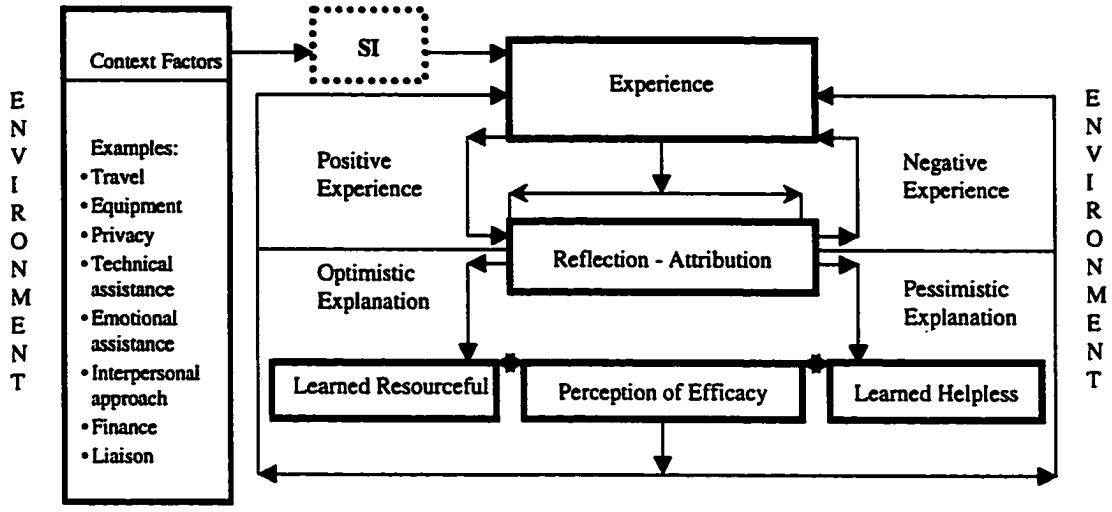

Figure 1: A Tentative Conceptualizing of Relatedness Among Theories

The tentative model proposed here was developed from the previously discussed theoretical linkages.

Summary

Many, including Biddle (1993) and Brawley (1984), argued that externally delegated attributions provide insight into peoples' including athletes' explanatory patterns. The literature also portrayed attribution theory as a useful tool to understand human motivation across contexts. As related to this study, attributions provide insight into athletes' perceived experiences with their SI. Exploring attributions delineates the athlete's perceptual understanding of reasons for performance along Weiner's (1979) dimensions of stability, control and locus of causality. When good performance is attributed by the athlete to unstable and uncontrollable factors or bad performance is attributed to stable and uncontrollable factors, the result will inevitably be pessimism, a lack of efficacy, a possible decrease in outcome expectancy, and a subsequent belief of incompetence (Bandura, 1990; Stanley & Maddux, 1986). When a good athletic

performance is attributed to stable internal and external factors such as controllable effort and/or typical ability, the result will inevitably be an increase in efficacy, and the subsequent development of athletic competence. This crucial interpretation of performance over time will leave the high–performance athlete as resourceful or helpless within the Major Games tournament context.

Also, the literature to this point either linked attribution to self–efficacy (e.g., Bandura, 1990) or attribution to learned helplessness and resourcefulness (e.g., Rettew & Reivich, 1995; Seligman, 1990; Stanley & Maddux, 1986). In two instances, Skinner (1995) and Stanley and Maddux (1986) attempted to link attributions with self–efficacy and learned–helplessness. The resulting conceptual model in Skinner's case was depicted as a chronological schematic of human competence. Research to the present has not fully explained how the lived experience of human competence, as presented through theories and constructs, proceeds to affect human performance. Further, there has yet to be any explicit information regarding how such a model might work in a high–performance sport context. Finally, there is no explanation of how SI situated within the tournament environment can and do play a role on the high–performance athlete's competence development.

According to Durand–Bush (1996) and Jackson (1995), high–performance sport is a setting where competence is tied to the assistance of an extensive number of people. An understanding of how SI members link to athletic competence provides valuable information regarding how to work in the best interest of athletes to improve their competence and performance. An exploration

of influences on athletic competence also provides some insight into how and why the human competence system functions as it does in other transferable high–performance contexts such as graduate programs or corporate business.

Following the review of literature, it has become clear that there are established linkages between athletes' attributions, perceptions of efficacy, and their subsequent behavioral responses of learned–resourcefulness and learned helplessness. Using the tentative theoretical framework proposed in this chapter, data were gathered to explore the research questions posed at the beginning of this dissertation. The method used for this exploration is elaborated upon in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHOD

The review of literature indicated that there is a lack of understanding regarding why people including high–performance athletes execute their skills with varying levels of competence. Further, there is little if any explanation regarding how SI within the performers' environments affect their perceptions of competence and subsequent performances. These gaps in the literature have provided the opportunity to examine the topics of high–performance athlete competence, SI functioning, and develop a conceptual model to explain their interdependence. In this chapter, emphasis will be placed on (a) the research tradition underlying the proposed method, (b) the method of data collection, (c) methods of data analyses, and (d) methods to ensure trustworthiness.

Research Orientation

According to Rudestan and Newton (1992), the method of inquiry should be the direct result of research discipline and the nature of the problem. Theirs is a defensible position based on the traditional approach to research. Other social scientists including Denzin and Lincoln (1998) and Evers and Lakomski (1996) have recognized that research methods are often selected based on researchers' ontologies. It is premised here that each researcher, including myself, approaches the research context with preconceived ideas based on a combination of subjective values, past experiences, and preconceived theoretical links. Based on past experiences and subsequent ontological assumptions, researchers typically select compatible ways of knowing, epistemologies. These ways of knowing the

world, as already noted by Schinke and da Costa (in press), lead to specific methods of inquiry and analyses as well as their underlying research traditions.

Personal Ontology

As already stated, researchers approach their respective studies with unique personal realities (Reason, 1998). Some, including Parker (1992) and Sampson (1993), believe that truth is socially constructed in relation to one or more others. The views of such people have been classified by philosophers of science, including Slife and Williams (1995), as relativistic. Others, such as Cook and Campbell (1979), believe that they can gain access to objective fact through the use of "pure science" methods. Researchers with these "single reality" based assumptions are regarded as realists. My view of reality is situated between these dichotomies. Similar to Strauss (1978), I believe that the earth is a place "marked with tremendous fluidity... where nothing is strictly determined" (p. 123). Despite the indeterminate nature of the universe, every now and again I do believe that I understand that which is going on around me. Often times, I listen carefully to the views of others in order to ensure that my perception equates with theirs. When I draw a conclusion, and it is shared, I believe that I have obtained reasonable understanding. So, I, like Kvale (1988), reach understanding and glimpse truth with the assistance of others through social confirmation. It is through this moderate approach situated between realism and relativism that I attempt to explore truth and understanding.

Epistemological Assumptions

As previously acknowledged, there are a number of epistemologies that can drive the research question and its subsequent analysis. Among these are positivism, post–positivism, and postmodernism. Depending on which world–view is selected, Kluczny (1998) has noted that the researcher is directed toward certain constructions of meaning, certain perceptions of reality, and certain considerations regarding what constitutes knowledge. The epistemology used for this study was post–positivist. This approach, as noted by Denzin and Lincoln (1998), has specific assumptions. Post–positivist work has been the attempt by modern qualitative researchers to fit many of Campbell and Stanley's (1963) criteria of internal and external validity into constructivist research. To achieve its purpose, post–positivist approaches, including Corbin and Strauss' (1990) grounded theory (GT), have provided a rigorous method within qualitative research. Through well–developed steps of data collection and analyses, and canons that are closely aligned with traditional definitions of "good science," post–positivist approaches provide a level of methodological detail typically not found in qualitative research. In combination with these orthodox assumptions, post–positivist approaches also consider the subjective role of the researcher as research instrument much like Strauss and Corbin (1998) do. So, the emphasis with post–positivism is to paint as accurate or "truthful" a picture as possible within the specific context while attempting to note where I, the researcher, inform the findings.

Research Tradition

For this study, I selected a qualitative method guided by an interpretivist approach. The assumptions that guided the present naturalistic inquiry are founded on the traditions of cognitive anthropology and symbolic interactionism. Each of these components will be discussed as to their contributions.

Cognitive Anthropology

As previously alluded to, the emphasis in this study was to capture as "accurate" a reflection of the respondents' perceptions as possible. Cognitive anthropology, also known as ethno–science, is a qualitative research tradition that attempts to reconcile respondents' cultural categories and then identify the organizing principles that underlie these categories (Jacobs, 1987). Each cultural group, whether athletes or teachers, has a unique system of perceiving and organizing their world. By developing an understanding of a specific respondent group, or by being an accepted member of the context, researchers can provide detailed and relatively trustworthy descriptions of their experiences. Therefore, the emphasis when using a cognitive anthropology perspective is to develop a continual and deepened understanding of the phenomena that are significant to a specific group of people. As noted by Côté (1993), cognitive anthropology is compatible with the immediate GT method where the objective was to formulate hypothesis regarding specific respondent groups and reconcile their explanations.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism originated in the field of sociology by researchers including Herbert Mead (1962). Sociology based research depicts

meaning as a social product that occurs as a result of people interacting with people. Symbolic interactionism assumes that the researcher must develop an understanding of how people confer meaning regarding their experiences. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), the meanings that people assign to their experiences are intentional and deliberate. As already acknowledged by Schinke and da Costa (in press), to understand a group of people, or in this case a respondent group, the researcher must be aware of the use of language through which their experiences are being manufactured. Taken to the extreme, as in Edwards' (1997) work, this method posits that explanations are constructed by one person in relation to another.

The present work, much like that of Schinke and da Costa (in press), endorsed a moderate form of symbolic interactionism where researchers develop personal reflexivity regarding their influence on respondents' explanations. The assumption during this study was that researchers gain some insight into respondents' thoughts via the respondents' explanations. The respondents' words and therefore my understanding were not regarded as entirely accurate. However, it was suggested that even distorted explanations provide some indication regarding the views of the respondent group.

Interpretivism

In combination, cognitive anthropology and symbolic interactionism suggest how to conceptualize knowledge while also considering the social influences that underlie the conceptualizations. Interpretivism melds well with a research study that uses a combination of the aforementioned research traditions.

With interpretivism, MacDonald (1998) acknowledged that the researcher consider factors that are not observable and measurable such as perceptions or values. As noted by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) and Bruner (1990), in studies where emphasis is placed on direct communication, the researcher must develop an improved understanding of the meaning of language used to describe interpretations of other people, contexts, and circumstances.

Interpretivism was suited to this study where the relationship between athletes' perceptions of competence and SI influence were elicited. First, my intention was to better understand the perceived relationship between high–performance athlete competence and SI functioning. This endeavor was useful given a lack of theoretical and applied understanding regarding the interdependence of these two groups. Second, interpretivism acknowledges that there is a relationship between the responding athletes and the researcher. As already noted by Parker (1992), by overtly acknowledging the situated element of the methodology, and suggesting a number of steps to ensure research credibility (which are forthcoming), interpretivism enhances the trustworthiness of the data. It is with this approach in mind that the present work has been developed.

Grounded Theory

According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), the purpose of GT is to "develop a well integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study" (p. 5). Also, the intention with GT is to uncover how the respondent group acts in relation to stable and changing conditions through their actions. Based on these premises, questions and a preliminary

theory derived from the data are constantly evolving. This process of situation specific theory building, according to MacDonald (1998), is achieved by considering the meanings, values, and perspectives that respondents attach to their experiences. The similarities or patterns across respondents provide an understanding, or tentative theory, regarding how one group of people perceive themselves in relation to their context.

In keeping with this study, GT adopts a post–positivist perspective. This method acknowledges that the researcher is the instrument for data collection and analyses. However, the subjectivity or interpretive component of the research is tempered by the emergent relationships among components of the model. In essence, it is conceivable that the GT can prove or disprove the *a priori* hypotheses of past research and the researcher. In this study, a preliminary competence model was provided. The merits of GT to the present work is its ability to question linkages within the preliminary model in an attempt to refine and elaborate on its relationships.

Researcher Beliefs

SI was believed to play a key role in the high–performance athlete's perception of competence. There was some theoretical support for this proposition. The relationship between SI and athletic competence, however, was also based on my personal experience as a high–performance athlete, administrator, and consultant (Appendix C). I experienced and heard stories about how personal competence was affected by SI functioning. I witnessed athletes waiting for coaches to brief them the night before an important

performance. These athletes sometimes waited to no avail. I saw administrators forget to pick up athletes and their coaches to drive them to the venue on competition day. Sport psychologists have forgotten what their role is when at a venue and have sought their athletes' attention during inopportune moments. The athletes were then placed in a predicament of whether to set boundaries or listen to unnecessary advice. I also previously experienced and heard of other instances in which SI fostered success and subsequent future expectations of competence in their athletes. Coaches traveled the globe on their own funds in order to support their athletes. Administrators rented taxis at their own expense in order to ensure that athletes made it to the venue on time. Parents, including my own, rushed by security on their way to the front row of auditorium stands to cheer on their children during opening ceremonies at Major Games competitions. These experiences have left many athletes including myself, with feelings of competence that would not have otherwise been possible.

In this study it was assumed that the environmental factor of SI does make a difference to athlete competence. My previous experiences, coupled with theoretically tested arguments linking environmental factors to competence, led me to believe that many athletes are only as competent as the assistance they receive from people within their SI. As for the athletes who performed despite malfunctioning support, these athletes typically relied on coping strategies instead of focusing solely on the task of mastering their performance (see Maddux, 1995 for a review of coping efficacy). Imagine what might happen if coping skills were less necessary, and athletes were to perceive themselves as in control of

themselves and their environment more often. It is along this vein that SI were viewed as being contributory sources to athletic competence.

Procedures

The data collection and analysis procedures employed to glean an understanding of SI influences on athletes' explanations of performance will now be addressed. First, the steps taken to select a suitable respondent group and gain entry will be provided. Second, an explanation of interview techniques will be delineated. Third, the methods of data preparation and analysis will be explained in detail.

Gaining Entry and Establishing Rapport

There are several suggestions that researchers have provided regarding how to gain entry to conduct research with high-performance athletic teams. One step that Ecklund (1993) and Ravizza (1988) have already written of is to seek the support of the coaching staff by explaining the potential impact of the research on the athletes and their performances. Equally important according to Strean and Roberts (1992) is the researcher's perceived credibility at understanding the athletes and the context under study. Taylor (1995) suggests that this second component is cultivated by understanding the psychological, physical, technical, logistical, emotional, and mental demands of the sport level and context. Athletes' decisions to disclose information, according to Schinke and da Costa (in press), are also determined by the extent of their relationship with the researcher – practitioner. The researcher's role within the context can vary from complete participant to participant as observer, observer as participant, or complete

observer (Merriam, 1988). It is with these considerations in mind that trust and rapport were established and maintained in this study.

In this study, the aforementioned criteria outlined by Ravizza (1988), Ecklund (1993) and Taylor (1995) were employed to establish trust and rapport. First, I am a former Major Games athlete who has consulted to a number of national teams in every Major Games since the autumn of 1995. Further, I have also worked on–site with every Canadian national team which attended the 1995 Pan–American Games, and 1996 Olympic Games in the capacity of Athlete Service Officer. These combined experiences provided a basic understanding of the needs and experiences of high–performance athletes in international tournament contexts. It is from these experiences that, acting in the role of observer as participant, that I approached a varied respondent group of national team athletes from individual sports.

The Respondent Group

The respondent group comprised 8 Canadian Major Games Athletes, 6 male and 2 female, from individual sports. Two respondents were members of the Canadian Shooting Team, three respondents were members of the Canadian Boxing Team, two respondents were members of the Canadian Badminton Team, and one respondent was a member of the Canadian Equestrian Team. The respondents were selected from across Canada and ranged from Nova Scotia to British Colombia. The mean age of the respondents was close to 34 years of age, and each member interviewed had attended a minimum of 2 Major Games. Most

athletes attended considerably more Games than was deemed necessary for eligibility (Table 1).

Table 1: Athletic Background of Respondents

Athlete	Age	Quantity of Games	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Robert	21	2	3	-	-	3
Chantal	46	9	2	-	1	3
James	54	27	4	4	2	10
Donald	30	9	-	-	3	3
Mark	30	11	2	-	1	3
Sam	26	4	-	3	-	3
Sarah	37	9	-	-	1	1
Darren	26	5	1	-	1	2
Total		76	12	7	9	28
Mean	33.75	9.5	---	---	---	3.5

There were numerous criteria taken into account when selecting the respondent group. First, accessibility was considered. As a result of Canada's geography, eligible respondents were scattered within a wide physical radius from Nova Scotia to British Colombia. Due to financial constraint, the athletes for this study were selected based on easy accessibility. Athletes located in the Edmonton area, and athletes that I was able to gain access to as a result of short-term professional opportunities were invited to participate. Second, all but one of the athletes selected was at arm's length from me. All but one of the respondents were athletes that I had never met, or athletes that I did not work with on more than a bi-yearly basis. Third, from the available respondents, I selected athletes who were willing to explain their perceptions and experiences. These athletes were identified based on the suggestion of national team coaches, national team administrators, as well as my own personal knowledge. Fourth, I selected athletes who had more than one international experience, with at least one recent (1994 onward) Major Games experience to recall from. This way, the study was used to

delineate the relationship between past experiences and more recent experiences as cumulative influences on athletic competence.

Interviewing

In this study, each athlete was interviewed using a semi-structured approach based on emerging topic matter (see Appendix A for the preliminary interview guide). During one interview, once the athletes signed their consent forms (Appendix B), and were reassured that their names would be replaced by fictional names, they were asked to explain the influence of SI on their expectations of competence while at past international tournaments. During the same interview, the athletes were asked to explain how SI affected their competence prior to, during, and after their series of Major Games tournaments (Table 1).

Table 1: Athletic Background of Respondents

Athlete	Age	# of Games	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Robert	21	2	3	-	-	3
Chantal	46	9	2	-	1	3
James	54	27	4	4	2	10
Donald	30	9	-	-	3	3
Mark	30	11	2	-	1	3
Sam	26	4	-	3	-	3
Sarah	37	9	-	-	1	1
Darren	26	5	1	-	1	2
Total	76	12	7	7	9	28
Mean	33.75	9.5	----	----	----	3.5

Table 2: Basic Flow Structure for Main Interview

Section I: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY
Phase 1: Introductory comments
Phase 2: Interview and recording explanations
Section II: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT
Phase 3: Past history at Major Games
Section III: FACILITATORS OF COMPETENCE
Phase 4: Attributions: Explaining a positive past experience(s)
Phase 5: Factors facilitating resourcefulness or reliance
Phase 6: The influence of experiences on personal efficacy
Phase 7: Recalling the subsequent tournament experience(s)
Section IV: DETRACTORS FROM COMPETENCE
Phase 8: Attributions: Explaining a negative past experience
Phase 9: Factors leading to helplessness
Phase 10: The influence of experiences on personal efficacy
Phase 11: Recalling the subsequent tournament experience
Section V: PRESENT EXPECTATIONS OF PERFORMANCE
Phase 12: Considering how accumulated experiences will affect future Games
Section VI: DEBRIEFING
Phase 13: Additional athlete reflections
The specific format of the interview evolved over time

Throughout this process, the athletes were probed on the basic questions of who, what, where, when, and how (Patton, 1987). The resulting explanations, based on the views of Harré (1997), provided an understanding of when the smooth flow of coordinated action was described as facilitative or disruptive of competence and subsequent performance. The athletes' explanations of personal competence were based on whether past experiences were positive or negative, controllable or uncontrollable, stable or unstable over time, and subsequently, how these factors related to SI behavior. Responses were considered in light of whether and how SI facilitated athletes' tournament – related behaviors of helplessness or resourcefulness.

Based on the premises of GT (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), responses from earlier athletes provided ongoing direction for more specific topics of discussion

in later interviews with other respondents and during follow–up interviews in the case of five respondents. I also took notes during each interview, and this informed subsequent interviews. Due to a lack of time in between some of the interviews, an ongoing analysis of successive transcripts was sometimes impossible. To compensate for such instances, I listened to each recorded discussion at least twice and took additional notes prior to the forthcoming interviews. These notes became part of a research log.

Data Analyses

The objective of the analysis was to delineate the relationship between SI behavior and athletic competence prior to and during Major Games. To meet this objective, a specific form of content analyses Bogden and Biklen (1998) termed "thematic analyses" was employed. Thematic analysis is used when the intention is to uncover the qualitative themes within the data. Themes which include generic and more specific categories take on the form of trends and eventual conceptual models. The present work used a specific type of thematic analyses termed "grounded theory" (GT) to uncover SI associated reasons for athletic competency. To meet the objectives of thematic analyses, the data analyses techniques outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Corbin and Strauss (1990) were used. In keeping with GT, the data analysis included memoing, the constant comparative method and an eventual coding process which happened in stages.

The research log. To broaden the subject matter within the interviews, I maintained the aforementioned research log in a format similar to Strauss and Corbin's (1990) "memoing." The research log served four purposes. First, as

suggested by Merriam (1988) and Yin (1994), the log contained themes derived from discussions with the athletes during their interviews. Strauss and Corbin (1998) note that this precaution helps inform discussion later in the interviews and during later interviews with the same and other respondents. Second, as suggested by Plummer (1995), the log contained my personal concerns regarding when the athletes might have been situating their responses in relation to me. This process encouraged a stronger sense of self–awareness, or what Parker (1992) termed reflexivity. And so, the log encouraged me to remain as receptive to the athletes' stories as possible. Third, as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990), the research log also contained thoughts derived from the emerging data throughout the analysis. These thoughts included the inter–relatedness of emerging themes and how these nestled within the respondents' stages of competence development. Insights were later verified with and across respondents. Finally, my personal thoughts regarding how the study's findings related to the theories utilized in the preliminary conceptual model were considered. This process added a reflexive element to the data analysis by ensuring that I continued to hold my own preliminary model in question by comparing it with emergent results. These reflections served as information that I was able to draw on and integrate in the discussion section and the resulting refined conceptual model.

Constant Comparative Method

According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), constant comparison increases the trustworthiness of the data in several ways. First, by comparing preliminary

categories and sub–categories with more recent data, the researcher is assisted in guarding against personal bias throughout the analysis. Second, when preliminary categories are sub–divided into newer categories during the analysis, the GT increases in precision. Thus, there is more likelihood that the emergent theory is representing the experiences of the respondent group. Third, by comparing the data, the researcher is able to delimit the theory to what is representative of the respondent group as a whole.

For this study, constant comparison was used in each of the aforementioned capacities. Further, I also compared the athletes' explanations with the tentative conceptual model, which was based on theoretical linkages. This step was done in order to reframe or rebuild a representative portrayal of the athletes' experiences. Revisions to the model were considered tentative until an analysis of the entire sample was completed.

Coding of Data

There are three levels of coding used within GT, these are open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Based on the criteria proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), these types of coding were used within this study.

Open coding. Open coding was used to delineate factors that influenced athletic competence. Emerging factors were given conceptual labels, and this ensured that "like" categories and sub–categories were grouped together. Throughout this step of the coding process, terms from *a priori* theories and constructs were used, though only when explanations mirrored their processes. So, similar to MacDonald (1998), I integrated substantive codes for each stage

with theoretical terminology in order to develop a more detailed contextual explanation of theoretical linkages. To ensure that this atypical coding process was trustworthy, I analyzed and collected the data concurrently. This way, the analysis of how theories applied to the context informed later data collections. The end result of a circular pattern between data collection, data analysis, and more data collection was intended as an informative representation of the athletes' explanations.

Axial coding. Once interviews were open–coded, they were examined again in relation to other emergent themes from the data. During the axial coding stage, the emergent categories and sub–categories were related to each other using the coding paradigm provided by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The data were examined while considering the facets of tournament – related conditions, contextual information, action and interactional strategies, and consequences. The process of axial coding followed three distinct steps. First, the emergent sub–categories were related to more general categories, and thus denoted the nature between these two levels of categorizing. Second, the relational nature of the data was verified against data from later interviews. During instances in which similar findings emerged in later interviews, the relations among the categories were strengthened. Conversely, when the emergent categories and sub–categories lacked precision, the categories were refined until they were representative. Third, throughout each interview, and also across interviews, there was a continued search for new categories. Unfortunately, due to the breadth and scope

of the subject matter, as well as the time constraints placed on doctoral pursuits, saturation was not reached.

Selective coding. Selective coding was done toward the end of the analysis. During this process, sub–categories that emerged during open coding were relationally organized around core categories in the form of a diagram. The purposes of selective coding in this study were (a) to delineate the relationship among the categories, (b) to provide thick description regarding how the categories interrelated, and (c) to delineate the consequences of their relatedness. There were several instances where the description of a category was weak due to a lack of conceptual density. The ongoing analysis in this study provided me with the opportunity to return to respondents to add depth to weaker categories and sub–categories. This process ensured that many gaps within the emerging model were filled prior to completing the study.

Trustworthiness

With qualitative methods, there are a number of criteria to assess the trustworthiness of the data. Based on the work of Guba (1980), the criteria for trustworthiness including credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were considered. During this section, each of these criteria will be addressed in relation to the present work.

Credibility

Credibility, according to Guba (1980), addresses issues relating to researcher interpretation. The assessment of credibility is typically conducted through "member checks." Though issues related to researcher and data

credibility cannot always be removed during the analysis, they can be taken into account. The issues reconciled in this study included how my influence over the respondents' explanations could be reconciled during data collection and analyses, and how I could glean a reasonable representation of my respondents' explanations?

During and after the interview. I addressed concerns related to credibility in several ways. During the data collection, the respondents were provided latitude with the semi-structured interview. So long as the respondents remained focused on issues relating to athletic competence, I encouraged them to share their experiences. I anticipated that there would be a wide number of instances where the athletes would alter or add depth to the proposed conceptual model. In such instances, as suggested by Hanson and Newburg (1992), each person was probed so that a detailed understanding of their experiences was gleaned. At the end of each interview, each respondent was asked to provide and subsequently expand on salient information that had not been addressed throughout the discussion. Through this procedure, the respondents were given additional latitude to share their experiences in an open and welcoming way. Finally, once the data transcription was completed, and data analysis was underway, I approached respondents by telephone or in person to clarify and add depth to superficial and ambiguous information.

After the analysis. Once the manuscripts were transcribed and coded, I conducted a member check with the respondents (Appendix D). During this process, I provided the respondents with a 3 to 5 page description of their

competence development process as I saw it. Each respondent's explanation, termed an athletic competence profile, explained developments and difficulties during each stage of his or her competence development as well as the catalysts causing their evolution from one stage to the next (Appendix E). In addition, the respondents were provided with the conceptual diagrams depicting his or her personal competence process. Within their diagrams, the athletes' paths to competence (or incompetence) were highlighted with a colored marker. The respondents were also provided with concise descriptions of their development on their respective conceptual models. All of the respondents were sent their respective athletic competence profiles via registered mail along with a postmarked special delivery return envelope. The respondents were then provided with 30 days to verify whether their experiences were being understood as they were intended. Afterwards, all of the athletes received a follow-up phone call where verification was attempted by telephone. Based on the feedback from each respondent, I revised or reworked the interpretation of his or her competence developments and the emergent stage theory. The refined description of events was then used to explain relationally how SI affected athletic competence from the beginning of Major Games experiences to the time of the interview.

While awaiting feedback from the athletes, I presented the revised preliminary conceptual model of athletic competence development to an experienced sport researcher and professional technical director of a successful national team. To this end, the expert was asked to enter into a discussion with me and consider the athletic development of recent members of his national team.

Throughout the 60–minute discussion, I referred to emergent conceptual diagrams depicting the athletic competence system as a developmental process. The end result of this process was numerous refinements to the conceptual model.

During the same day, I was provided the opportunity to present the refined preliminary athletic competence development model to a larger group of 12 international Level Four boxing coaches during a national coaching seminar. As part of the coaches' certification – related tasks, they were presented with a detailed 45–minute explanation of the preliminary model and diagrams. The coaches were then asked to provide verbal feedback regarding the clarity of the competence model. In addition, the coaches were asked to provide feedback regarding athletes they knew who did not follow any of the proposed paths to athletic competence development. Their feedback also helped fine–tune the model into its final stage. In addition, suggested deviations from the model provided suggestions that were integrated to add other possible pathways to athletic competence development (see Chapter Six). Their recommendations were integrated in order to enhance the transferability of the present study to other athletes.

Confirmability

Confirmability according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) refers to the researcher's effort at confronting personal assumptions and biases regarding the research process. As noted by Guba (1980), there is little chance of developing value–free findings. So, in terms of confirmability, the intention is to explain overtly how the researcher influences the study's development, analysis, and final

results. In the present work, my personal assumptions were stated overtly throughout the proposal, and also can be found in Appendix C. To summarize, my assumptions: (a) there is a theoretical means of explaining the relationship between athletic competence and SI functioning, (b) I am able to develop a reasonable understanding of SI – related factors affecting athletic competence as a result of discussion, (c) the identification of relatedness between athletic competence and SI functioning will improve athletic functioning in the future, and (d) the human competence system is situation specific, and so, must be questioned in relation to each context.

These assumptions were influenced by my multifaceted experiences which included the following: (a) experiences as a high–performance athlete, (b) experiences as an elite coach, (c) experience as a consultant to a number of Olympic athletes, and (d) experience as a Canadian Olympic Association mission staff member at a number of Major Games (see Appendix F). Through my personal sport experiences, I have lived, witnessed, and heard of athletic competence being affected by SI functioning. Though these experiences indicated sufficient grounds to formulate hypotheses and develop personal biases, I remained as reflexive as possible. I hoped that the information of my respondents would alter, refine, and complete a conceptual model to explain the athletic competence – SI relationship.

Dependability

Dependability according to Guba (1980) refers to whether a study will yield consistent results within the same situation, though at another time. As

noted by Ravizza (1988), it is very difficult to gain access to high–performance sport settings in order to glean athletes' experiences. When entry is permitted, many researchers including Martens (1987) question the trustworthiness of their own findings due to their lack of affiliation and background understanding. As a result, most sport psychology research has been conducted with elite university populations. Due to my involvement with high–performance sport, the ability to elicit and glean a trustworthy representation of the athlete – SI - competence relationship was more likely than with a neophyte researcher. Further, the use of *a priori* theory to guide the development of the conceptual model supported its dependability as a trustworthy representation. Notes, memos, and records framed an elaborate coding procedure, and increased the chance that the revised model was highly credible.

The audit trail. In addition, having an auditor follow the audit trail enhanced the confirmability and dependability of the study. The auditor was a doctoral student with a background in qualitative methods from another specialization in the education faculty. The auditor and I met twice, the first meeting for 30 minutes, and the second meeting for 120 minutes. In the first meeting, I provided the auditor with the introductory chapter of my proposal, 2 verbatim interviews, a copy of the results section as it was at that time, and the study's research log. I asked that the auditor start her investigation with the introductory chapter, move to the interviews, and then follow with the preliminary results and research log. We then scheduled a second meeting 10 days after the initial meeting.

During the second meeting, the auditor and I entered into a detailed discussion on where our interpretations were similar and different. There were several instances where the auditor's interpretation added depth to my own interpretation. In one such example, the auditor pointed out that there were two types of pessimists among the respondent group where I only had noticed one. Once our views were discussed, the auditor and I sought to reach consensus on the study's findings. All changes were noted in the research log, and then they were subsequently integrated into the results section of the study.

Transferability

In qualitative research, emphasis is placed on internal validity. The generalizability of data is typically not mandated. According to LeCompte and Goetz (1982), even the most precise of procedures, especially in qualitative methods, does not ensure identical findings across studies. However, there are means of increasing the chances that the results can be repeated. A thorough explanation of data collection and analysis procedures was possibly the most meaningful way of enhancing the likelihood that findings will be repeated across researchers and contexts. In addition, an explanation of the research context will help researchers select "like contexts" where the research is more likely to be replicated. These considerations were integrated into the methodology section. Transferability was addressed in this study by providing the reader with "thick" description of the respondents and the contexts within which they perform.

Limitations

There are five notable limitations in this study. First, the present work did not consider individual differences in attribution style. Though there has been considerable research in the areas of locus of control (e.g., Rotter, 1966) and attribution (e.g., Retew & Reivich, 1995; Seligman, 1990) differentiating optimists from pessimists, the present work focussed on patterns of explanation across a select group of high–performance athletes. Second, because the present work was delimited to a small group of athletes, the results only provide a preliminary indication regarding the relationship that exists among the aforementioned theories and constructs in high–performance sport settings. In addition, the limited respondent group only provides suggestion regarding the SI – related needs of high–performance athletes, and only in individual sports. Third, the present work examined the views of high–performance athletes. As a result, this study was limited to the athletes' subjective beliefs regarding the effects of SI operative functioning instead of any definitive objective reality regarding exactly how SI affect athletic competence. Fourth, the views and beliefs of the respondents were in some instances drawn from long-term memory. Due to possible memory distortion occurring over time, it is possible that with a few respondents, the most distal of explanations might not have been entirely trustworthy. Fifth, due to the nature of the immediate study, it was probable that there was a situated component to each athlete's explanation. The findings that were gleaned from this study depended on what the athletes were willing to share

with me, a researcher and practitioner, and whether they were willing to disclose such information openly.

Delimitations

The scope of this research was narrowed in three ways. First, this study focussed on individual sports. There is undeniably a difference in the dynamics of individual as opposed to team sports. During this study, emphasis was placed on individual sports and portrayed the needs of individual athletes in a number of different sports. Second, this study was delimited to explanations of a specific group of SI who supported national team athletes during tournaments. Arguably the high–performance athlete's SI is comprised of many people including equipment manufacturers, equipment sponsors, the media, officials, fan support, other athletes, audience support, friends, family, and hired professional staff. In this study emphasis was placed on hired professional support members, teammates, personal coaches, family and other people identified by the athletes as the most centrally situated within the tournament context. Third, the influences of SI competence did not consider any developmental issues that might have affected each athlete's competence development prior to the time they became high–performance athletes. Instead, this examination of athletic competence and SI functioning was confined to issues that occurred from the athletes' first national team appointments, through their Major Games experiences, onward to the present.

Summary

A wide number of topics were discussed within the method section. The development of a method resulted from my own ontological assumptions and a compatible epistemological position. From the combination of these assumptions, GT was chosen as the method of elicitation and analyses.

When designing a more specific method for this study, instrumentation and analyses included inductive and deductive elements. The inductive component was used to inform the social psychology theories and constructs that served as catalysts to this study. So, qualitative elicitation and analyses was used to add depth and breadth to the previously discussed research on human competence. The deductive component provided a preliminary framework regarding how the human competence system has been presented to this point in the literature.

In terms of analyses, the constant comparative method was used. Categories were grounded in the data so that a reasonable representation of the athletic competence system is presented. The analyses was also informed by memoing and a constant reformulation of categories and sub-categories. In conjunction with the aforementioned, measures were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. An emphasis was placed on improving the credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability of the data.

Finally, based on the steps taken throughout the analysis, the emphasis within this study was placed on delineating and explaining, in a refined preliminary version, the development of athletic competence for high-

performance athletes. Nestled within this more general question, the formulated method is an attempt at delineating the relationship between athletic competence and SI functioning. Ultimately, the objective of this study was to provide suggestion regarding how to improve athlete competence via SI functioning in Major Games contexts.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to develop a preliminary understanding of the relationship between athletic competence development and SI actions. An investigation with 8 Major Games athletes was undertaken to address three research questions posed at the end of Chapter 1. These were (a) the short-term relationship between sport experiences and athletic competence, (b) the relationship between athletic competence and resulting sport behavior over the long-term, and (c) how and why do SI affect the development of athletic competence at Major Games. During the analysis, these preliminary questions evolved to best suit the respondents' feedback regarding the relationship between athletic competence development and SI influence.

In this chapter, findings are presented within the framework of the emergent GT. The relevant sub-problems that this study addressed are integrated into a four stage competence model from national team selection to national team de-selection. This chapter commences with general overview of the theory, and carries through with an elaborate explanation of how and why the athletes matured into competent or incompetent Major Games athletes.

Four stages of competence development emerged from the respondents' explanations. These stages were not pronounced until interviews four, five, and six were collected. However, the initial respondents shared similar patterns of athletic competence development with latter respondents. The stages that did emerge from the data were labeled chronologically (a) "naïve versus guarded

naive optimism," (b) "awareness versus skepticism," (c) "open resourcefulness versus closed reliance," and (d) "post–competence satisfaction versus anger."

Stage 1–Naive Optimism versus Guarded Naive Optimism

Stage One followed a chronological sequence from selection onwards to the athletes' first adversarial experiences (Figure 2).

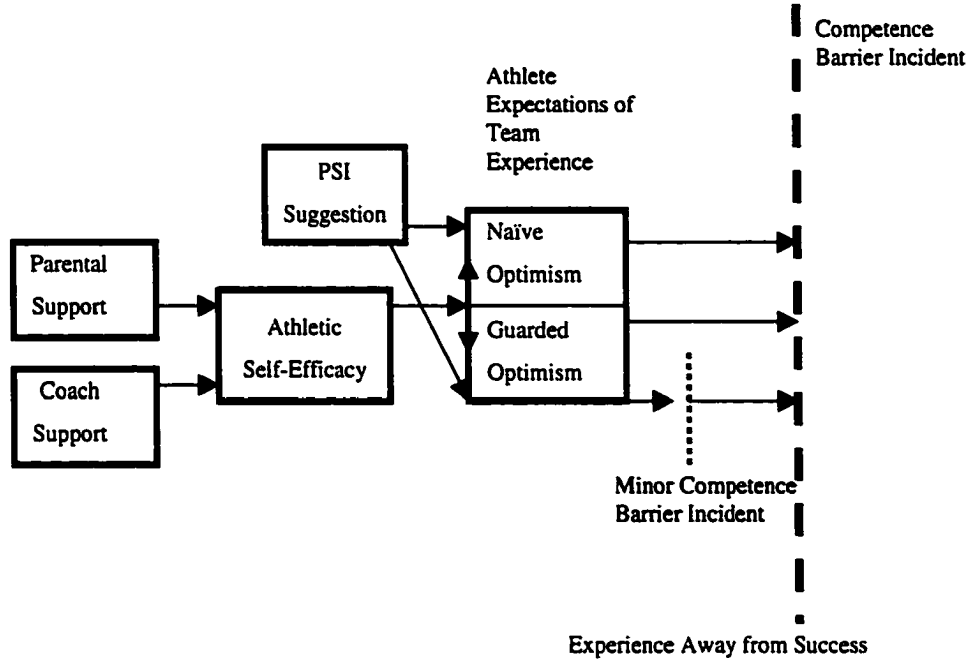

Figure 2: Athletic Competence Development - Stage One

Stage One began with the unconditional support from family and a variety of feedback from personal coaches and friends. Some athletes came into contact with pessimistic PSI where others were supported by optimists. These pockets of information became anchors that the athletes used as reference points to understand subsequent experiences. Afterwards, the athletes approached their national teams with naïve or guarded naïve optimism, and this divergence stemmed from the behaviors that PSI exhibited. The end of the first team experience became a point for reflection and interpretation upon which the

athletes began to formulate a more solidified opinion of their team experience, themselves in relation to such experiences, and what to expect in terms of themselves and significant others.

Support at the Outset

Prior to joining up with their new team, all of the athletes were reassured in various ways that their families were an unconditional supportive influence. The resource of family provided emotional, tactical, and financial support to both subsets of athletes. Based on the provision of these three resources, the athletes were ready to go forward, approach their teams with confidence, and subsequently compete with optimism and intensity. To this end, Donald and Sam, echoing the sentiments of many of the other athletes stated:

Financially, whatever I needed to get, they said "there is no problem there, just go have a good time, concentrate on whatever you need to do, and don't think of anything else." That helped me because I knew that I had nothing to worry about. I had the support of my family and friends at home, and that was it. I just wanted to show them that I could do this. It was awesome. I was just fresh in college in (year). I didn't have the business like I have now. I worked for my dad all my life pumping gas or cleaning hotel rooms, or waiting in our family businesses, so it wasn't like I had anything to fall back on. They gave me the money to go, they gave me this credit card. They said "if you need anything, if you get in trouble, here is the credit card. There is $10,000.00 on there if you need." I wouldn't have given my twenty year old kid $10,000.00. They just said "if you are in trouble, use that card. You also have our phone number, so call collect." Financially, I was set. I didn't have anything to worry about (Donald-4-37-6).

My family is pretty much a big supporter of mine. They are on the outside looking in more than being with me like they used to be. My dad was my coach for the first 15-20 fights. My dad doesn't have a lot of experience coaching but he does have a lot of experience in the ring. He fought as a professional boxer. He is in the Canadian Sport Hall of Fame. He won the Canadian Title as a middle-weight and that was his biggest result. As for my mother, she was a big time athlete. Her and her family are very sports oriented and they are very big supporters of mine (Sam-2-39-3).

Personal coaches. Personal coaches also played a key role in all of the athletes' initial aspirations as novice team members. Some coaches formulated team – related goals for their athletes, and the athletes subsequently followed the vision. Others went as far as ensuring their athletes' inclusion on teams through political maneuvering. On both counts, the athletes believed that they were properly prepared for the challenges that were to come.

(Personal coaches named) were very good at a young age because they instilled in me excellent technical advice, and they also had seen the best in the world play, and they were internationally associated people. And so, I was always thinking in terms of the international scene as a result. The very good thing about them is that they would say that "you have got to look beyond Canada. That is not the goal. The ultimate goal is to be World Champion, all England Champion. So I had a much larger picture of Badminton itself (Robert-12-29-35).

I went there (new personal coach) two months before the National Championships to get ready for them, and I had not ever won the National Championships. I trained with him for two months, got ready, did what he told me to do in the ring, and we won the Nationals. It was my first Canadian title. I trusted him through that tournament and now I continue to trust him (Sam-2-15-19).

The support of personal coaches was not always an adaptive source of efficacy information. In fact, every athlete who had a skeptical–pessimistic coach eventually became a pessimistic athlete. These coaches questioned the professionalism of their colleagues and cautioned their internationally inexperienced athletes on how to be selective of the information that the formal coaches might attempt to transfer. In essence, the personal coaches, sometimes with the help of their other athletes planted seeds in the respondents' minds that national team experiences are not necessarily adaptive experiences. Because verbal persuasion from creditable personal support–staff was an important source of efficacy information for novice national team athletes, the persuasory lessons

transferred through messages were to resurface at the first sight of organizational trouble.

I think they (my personal coaches) were a bit skeptical, and they informed me that I would have to be there for me and take care of myself. I wasn't to rely too much on the administration because basically I would know more about badminton and what to do than they would. Maybe not specifically, but they would say "well, make sure that you get your sleep, and you arrange your match time. If there is transportation, you try to do it yourself." Really, because that was my first team, I thought "ok, ok" (Robert-13-3-9).

My coach never said "don't listen to them" or anything like that. My coach told me to listen to what they say, be polite, be nice. He said they are going to have some animosity for you, but be polite, listen to them. That is what my dad always told me too, listen to whoever is in charge, and you have no problems. My coach told me that too. It was just the people who knew the team from before who said "they are going to try and change this." So I was going in there with all these wacky ideas. I was flying twenty hours to Hawaii to meet these guys who are going to treat me like shit. I got there and it was totally opposite. They didn't care where I came from. They cared about me. It was for me. I'm (athlete's name) and we just started fresh. So, I got to trust them as the camp went on. At the (year) Commonwealth Games I got to trust them as well (Donald-2-46-9).

Resulting Expectations

Prior to meeting their FSI, the athletes had some expectations regarding what was to come. Based on no information to the contrary from PSI sources, the naïve optimists believed that everyone on the team from athletes to support staff could and was intent on facilitating each athlete's competence. With this belief, the naïve athletes were highly motivated to perform and affirm their worth. They were also honored to become part of their elite sport groups. The results were successful–confirmatory results. Guarded naïve optimists typically had some suggestions from personal support staff or some maladaptive past sport experiences, and these suggestions would leave them hoping for the best, but expecting a less than optimal future sport experience.

I think they were a bit skeptical, and they informed me that I would have to be there for me and take care of myself (while competing as part of the Canadian Team). I wasn't to rely too much on the administration because basically I would know more about badminton and what to do than they would (Robert-13-3-6).

I was comfortable with my coach. There, I got to know them, I got to trust them. I didn't trust them at first because I heard other things about the coaching staff that were there at the time like "watch your back. Don't let them try to do any politics with you." Between my coach and there coaches it was I guess with (Olympic Gold medallist) and (Olympic Silver medallist) there was a lot of controversy and stuff within the organization. I was coming from the "other side." They were all part of that Olympic Team in (year) that did well. It was divided. There were two teams there. So, I was coming from that atmosphere where I was from the (past athletes') side. I was told that "they're not going to like you because you are from here" (Donald-2-30-43).

These negative expectations would eventually be confirmed. The result was an eroding of optimistic attitudes, and over the long–term, a detraction from competence and subsequent performance during Stage Two of development. Interestingly, this beginning of rumination was unique to the naïve–guarded optimists, and the pattern would remain with them indefinitely.

The First Experience with FSI

Despite a difference in their expectations regarding forthcoming experiences, both subsets of athletes were relatively cooperative, open–minded and hopeful when approaching their new positions as team members. Interestingly, among the guarded athletes, Chantal and Donald began perceiving themselves as experiencing team – related setbacks prior to ever representing their national teams. Though these setbacks did not harm them in the immediate, these incidents were cited as the catalysts to their eventual radical pessimistic behaviors.

When I went in (year) I rode a horse that was owned by Mrs.---. She sent the horse down to be used, and so I got on the team with her, and so I was taken off the team because I was too young according to them. ---was the chairman of the team at the time, and a jumper got sick so he got my horse put on the plane because he thought I deserved a spot – plus (personal coach) and he were an item at that time and I was her protégé, plus I worked for her (Chantal-4-12-17).

The support staff at that time were brand new to me. They were fresh. I didn't know these people. I only had experienced one coach before, or a couple of coaches before. I think at that time if I had my personal coach, just to be honest with you, I would have done a lot better then what I did because training was different for me. I came from a (location) gym where it took me two hours to finish a workout. We worked on more specific things. It seemed like when I went to the training camp, everything was rushed. We were done in an hour–bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, we were done. This was before (a Major Game). I was done in an hour, and I always felt that I could have been in better shape because I was training hard in my home gym for two hours working on specific things with my coach (Donald-2-21-30).

Despite slight differences in initial experiences, all of the respondents approached their first tournaments with a high level of enthusiasm. It was this enthusiasm that helped facilitate an initial successful performance experience. One can surmise that the reason for initial athletic success was an elevated level of acceptance and tolerance toward their national teams and tournament contexts.

(other athlete's name) got sick, she was vomiting and everything, and I took her place. I was told the night before that I would ride the next day. And so, we landed up competing. And so, I went in the ring and did my test. It was a really good test. I was fourth individually and ignorance is bliss (Chantal-5-21-1).

I didn't know what to expect partly because it was my first world championship. I was naïve. We didn't have a lot of support outside of a manager, but the people that I was with were not all that happy with me being on the team. I was so much younger that they always felt that they would have to baby–sit me. But once I made it they were sort of giving me advice about this and that which I took because they were a lot more experienced than I was. I shot quite well. I finished up 38th out of 100 or more competitors. So I was in the top third (James-20-13-35).

Then we went to (location), and I was really naïve then as far as what a good international shoot would be like. I think because I was naïve, I was optimistic. I had no idea how good I was, or where I would place. I didn't have a lot of expectations. I don't think a medal was on my mind, but a good performance definitely was (Sarah-3-1-7).

The respondents believed their results, as well as those of others, were at least in part attributed to the fact that athletes initially expected things to go right and subsequently approached their team environments with tolerance. Further, there were no tangible negative team experiences upon which to become pessimistic. With their optimistic approaches to performance, there was less thinking and noticing the negatives. Instead, the optimists were immersed in fine–tuning their performances. The result of a complete focus was high quality performance and confirmatory results.

Well, in the third round of singles (at the World Junior Championships), I beat the twelfth seed, and me and my brother in doubles won by one point in the longest match of the whole tournament to the seventh seed team. So many things could have happened that just took us away a little bit. One point is nothing. One point is so close. It all came down to one shot that my brother hit that and rolled the tape. I believe that shots like that only happen when you're in a positive frame of mind. It's kind of an extraordinary – almost loose performance. I strongly believe that if you're in a negative frame of mind, you're not going to be "fluking out" that day. So many things could have happened to set it up at that very moment so that he would have missed that shot, and that would have cost us the match. Instead, it went the other way, and that shot was made, and as a result, that result happened – our winning by one point in the third set. It all came down to that one point, and it was a very good win. That was the reason why we ended up on the right side ---- (Robert-14-19-8).

I was stupid back then (early year) to be honest with you. I had like fourteen fights, I was on the national team. All I knew was to go in there and throw punches. When I was in the ring, I didn't really think. I was just throwing punches. It is not the way you have got to fight now. It was a totally different scoring system back then. Back then, I was just in there throwing punches. The judges at the time liked my aggressiveness. They liked the way I was straight punching, I think. I knew nothing else. I wasn't thinking in there, I was just in there going. I was young, I was fresh, I had all this energy. I was only twenty at

the time, and it seemed that the only thing I knew how to do at the time is throw punches. So, the only thing I did was throw punches (Donald-2-5-13).

National team coaches. National team coaches were initially perceived by all of the athletes as adaptive resources. Because the athletes lacked Major Games experience, they turned to their head coaches for information and support prior to and throughout tournaments. Facilitative actions on the part of head coaches included the dissemination of venue related information and tactical strategies. Both of these categories of information were used as adaptive sources of efficacy. On all counts, head coaches were important figures during Stage One, and this was unique, considering that in most cases, the athletes had limited interactions with this resource until a few weeks if not immediately prior to their Major Games tournament.

Well, first of all it was very organized. The coach always knew exactly what the times were. He had it all written down. Our schedule was planned several days in advance. He was able to strike a balance between giving us our space and maintaining a disciplined code on the team and myself. He made sure that we were eating breakfast before a certain time, and that we were going to go play at a certain time (Robert-4-2-6).

He (the national coach) provided everything that we asked him for. If we need that calming down, he was capable of doing that. If we needed some reassurance, and I needed reassurance because I was nervous as hell, he was there. He just talked rationally and brought me back to basics. He reminded me of some of the things that you should know as an athlete, but at that time, I wasn't really good at understanding the mental needs. He reminded me about how to maintain focus. It was just key points that probably are very basic, but as your head is going 100 miles per hour, it helps you to grab on to those things that you know how to do. He brought me back to the familiar. He also made sure that we had the information of when we shot, and what events we shot. He made sure that if things changed in technical meetings, we were aware of those things. There were things like our name-tags and those sort of things were all dealt with during technical meetings. So those things went well. I was really pleased with him (Sarah-3-33-1).

Team administration. Team administration was initially perceived by all of the athletes as providing logistical support above and beyond the call of duty. The athletes experienced their administrators arranging transportation to the venue, arranging hotels, setting up meals, and formulating daily schedules. Above and beyond these tasks, many of the administrators were acknowledged as taking a personal interest in their athletes' experiences. Some ensured that rooming arrangements with other athletes were well matched. Others ensured that each athlete's every need was provided. With these sorts of unexpected positive experiences, many of the athletes initially felt that they were supported unconditionally, and subsequently landed up competing to or above expectation.

What the coaching and the support staff did there for me was I was scared about who I was going to room with. I was panicking because there were a couple of bad guys on the team. There were guys from another province whom I heard a lot of bad stuff about. I didn't know these guys and the coaching staff placed me with another athlete). He was brand new on the team and he was from (province). It turns out that he is still one of my best friends. I still keep in touch with him. So, going there and not having to room with a guy I didn't know, and then starting to room with a guy who is as great as (another athlete) was great. The coaching staff knew that a guy like (another athlete) could relate to a young guy. I was older than him, but we were both new on the team. They sort of knew that "yeah these are the guys who should be together." So it wasn't that I was placed with any unfamiliar or troubled boxer, which would have been uncomfortable for me. I think I didn't get lucky rooming with (another athlete). I think that was calculated by the support staff, and I really appreciated that (Donald-3-40-7).

I was on the national swimming team in (year) at the Pan-American Games. This year was my second Pan-Am Games (quantity of) years apart in two different sports. I attended the Pan-Am Games, the World University Games, and the (Games), and then international competitions such as World Cups. I was also on the Junior National (sport) Team also. There is such a difference between when you are a young person and when you are an adult athlete. I think there is a difference in the support needed. As a swimmer, you are a teenager, you are younger, and there are a lot of other things going on in your life. And so, the presence of your own coach, or coaching support staff and chaperones – team managers provided some stability for you. In fact, you didn't have to worry about anything. You were told to go to A, to B, to C, and back to A. You went with the

team. This was warm-up time, this was structured. I think you need structure as a young athlete. I don't know what I would have done without it (structure), but I probably would have been panicked (Sarah-1-13-32).

Experience and FSI coaches-administrators. Some of the guarded naïve Stage One athletes noted a discrepancy in the services provided by coaches and administrators depending on their team staff's level of experience. Because the guarded naive novice athletes were inexperienced, they looked to these support members to guide them through their initial national team experiences. The athletes who initially experienced novice FSI were delighted with the caring bestowed on them. This seemed to add to their competence as well as their outlook regarding national team contexts.

Well, it really happened by chance, I think. The coach was more focused than usual and it just happened that a mother (the administrator) who wasn't picked, she just came and assumed that role. She just happened to be that person who fit in that particular time. So, it really was lucky that it happened (Robert-12-15-18).

Our coach (a relatively inexperienced national team assistant coach) looked after us on the range really well. He is a (profession), he was organized, calm, and controlled. That to me is major. If the coach stays calm, everything can be lived with. If the coach starts to lose it, you don't want to be there. That part was good. The whole facility, I guess, was not a world-class facility to shoot at. Because I hadn't been to anything but (location) before that, it was good enough for me. In some ways, not having anyone telling me how bad it was, was a positive thing. Canada did really well at that shoot. I tied for 6th (Sarah-3-19-25).

There was another guarded naïve athlete who received initial assistance from an experienced coach and manager. The athlete receiving support from experienced FSI was left to figure out and do much more on his own. The unspoken message transmitted from such experiences was that he was just a number, and this led to concern and insecurity.

The support staff at that time (Games) were brand new to me. They were fresh. I didn't know these people. I only had experienced one coach before, or a couple of coaches before. I think at that time if I had my personal coach, just to be honest with you, I would have done a lot better then what I did because training was different for me. I came from a (training location) gym where it took me two hours to finish a workout. We worked on more specific things. It seemed like when I went to the training camp, everything was rushed. We were done in an hour–bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, we were done. This was before (Games). I was done in an hour, and I always felt that I could have been in better shape because I was training hard in my home gym for two hours working on specific things with my coach (Donald-2-21-30).

For the athletes who received more direction at the beginning, the movement toward pessimism was delayed to a later time when support staff was less doting. For the athlete with initially more experienced SI, the movement toward pessimism was quicker. What this basically suggested is that the development of a pessimistic behavior was not stopped in any of the pessimistic respondents. Pessimism was only delayed for the few who received support from inexperienced – more doting FSI.

Team athletes. Experienced team athletes were only described as playing an important role on the competence development of Stage One guarded naive respondents. The team athletes who served as friends for such respondents were sometimes described as a source of vicarious information leading to inefficacy. It seems that the guarded naive athletes affiliated with other more experienced pessimistic athletes. It also seems that the information exchange between these novice and more experienced athletes contributed to the pessimistic rumination of respondents during Stage One.

I remember half the time in (location) sitting with (another athlete) thinking 'why is he (the coach) doing that? Boy is he dumb? Why isn't he doing it this way?' Every other athlete was probably having the same thought. Those sorts of things just do not contribute. They do not create a healthy environment – for me anyway (Robert-5-2-6).

I used to be very concerned about when people were being kicked off the team for misbehavior. I would always go and have discussions with the coach and try to get them not cut or kicked off of the team. I tended to be a team leader that way (Sarah-1-32-35).

The maladaptive athletic support received during Stage One would eventually be passed on to other developing athletes when Stage One athletes reached Stages Three and Four of their development. This process served as part of an ongoing cycle perpetuating the development of pessimistic athletes from one rotation of athletes to the next.

Expectations after first Tournament

Coming off of their initial success, all of the athletes regardless of being guarded naive or naïve, expected great things for their future. These heightened expectations were in terms of personal performance results, and how support staff could help facilitate these objectives. Though there might have been differences among guarded naive and naïve optimists in terms of the resilience of their optimism, this was not tested, at least for the short–term until any adversity was met.

I was pleasantly surprised. I knew at that time that I had an opportunity in the future to either make an Olympic team or really go somewhere with the sport. My expectations were quite high. I saw the other athletes, and I knew that with my young age, that I could do very well in the future. I also met people from other countries that were encouraging me. They said "boy, for somebody your age and your experience, this a really good performance. Keep it up. We will see you in a couple of years" (James-22-24-29).

I came off that Games (year) pretty optimistic. I thought "hey, I got a bronze medal here." The coaching staff was saying "hey, we have had guys on the team for six years and they didn't come home with a medal, and (athlete's name) with fourteen fights got a medal." So I was thinking "you know what, this is great. If this is the beginning, things are only going to get better, and better, and better (Donald-6-43-1).

Forgiveness

A final part of the equation that most athletes identified was that as young athletes, they were more forgiving of their PSI and FSI than later on when they matured into well–established athletes. This made novice team members relatively easy to work with and please throughout their first year on the team. The impact of forgiveness, however, differed for guarded naive and naïve optimists.

Guarded naïve optimists. Despite a commonality among both types of optimists when it came to forgiving others, guarded naive athletes, who later matured into pessimists, looked back with regret and disbelief regarding their earlier trusting approaches. It was believed that the former behavior of externally relinquished control was foolish.

I just took the services that they gave me (early in his boxing career). I was just happy to be part of that team and I was living the high life. Everybody at home thought I was the greatest, and I just thought I was the greatest whatever was happening. I don't think you learn those things, what you want and what you need, until later on. And even then, you are scared to ask for them, but sometimes you have got to step up and say that it is my body, it's what I need to do, and I have got to do it (Donald-6-26-35).

I didn't really know any better. It was my first time, and whatever the coaches said, I did. That was basically it. I had nothing to compare it with. I was very trusting. I listened to them and did whatever they said. So basically, they were my tour guides. I had to listen, it was my first experience (Darren-4-1-4).

Naïve optimists. Naïve optimists, on the other hand, viewed their earlier open–mindedness as a more natural response to SI. There was no hostility toward PSI and FSI members. SI was described as having done nothing requiring forgiveness. Instead, SI were viewed as having the naïve athletes' best interests in mind.

You will also be dealing with the people that you are living with, that you may or may not enjoy being around. Your whole life is sort of on a bubble in a different set of circumstances. Especially if you are younger, you accept these better. As you get older, it gets a little bit more difficult (James-4-4-8).

If I have confidence in the corner man, than I have confidence in the ring. (national team coach) last year, I liked him as a corner man. I thought that he was a good coach. I respected his opinions at the nationals, the (Games), and the Box Offs. I knew he was rooting for me to win. I knew he genuinely wanted me to win and felt that I could. He was national coach for the last eight years (Sam-4-10-14).

With initial tournament experiences completed, the athletes began to feel like regular members of their respective teams.

Stage 2–Awareness or Skepticism

Part way through the first year, or early on in the second year of national team experiences, the athletes acknowledged that there were some problems with how they, or their national teams, or both functioned. The shift in experiences contributed to a clearer distinction between FSI and PSI (Figure 3).

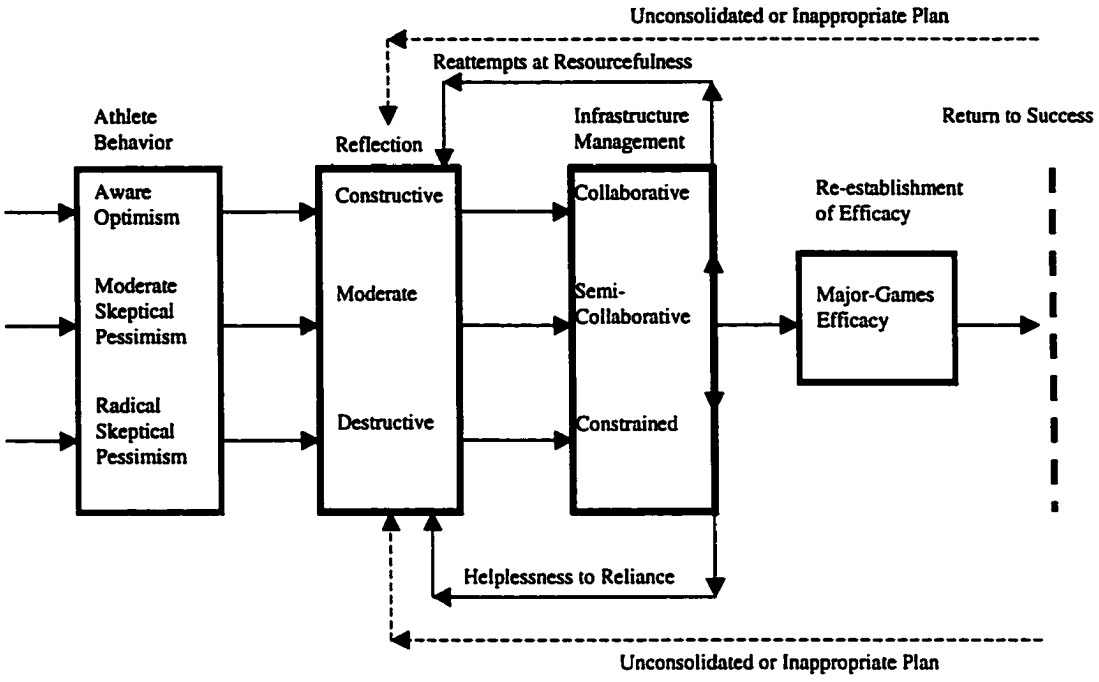

Figure 3: Athletic Competence Development - Stage Two

FSI were often seen to represent national federation interests, and such actions sometimes did not fully consider individual athletes. PSI was in most cases regarded as competence facilitators, and in some cases, restorative sources of personal efficacy information. With a preliminary assessment of SI functioning, some athletes continued to accept FSI as contributory, where others became highly skeptical of their FSI. The athletes previously classified as naïve optimists evolved into aware optimists with an improved understanding that organizational malfunction did occur within their team organizations, and that it was often unintentional. With an optimistic view, it was easy for the aware athletes to acknowledge that FSI had something to offer. The main objective, then, was to figure out how best to resource and work in collaboration with both subsets of SI members. Optimistic athletes did not become angry with their FSI, nor did they

ruminate about SI malfunction, they just assessed mistakes, assimilated whatever lessons could be learned from mistakes, and re–attempted their skills until they moved forward. As for the guarded naïve optimists, they became increasingly skeptical of FSI when expectations of malfunction were confirmed. Hence the fragile resiliency of their optimism was diminished. The skeptical athletes perceived FSI malfunction as intentional, and there was much rumination regarding externally controlled wrong doing until the athletes attempted to move forward. For the most radical of pessimists, the miring down process was lengthy, and this impeded their performances until they finally were prepared to solve their performance – related problems through solution–based thinking. Stage Two athletic experiences, therefore determined whether and how the respondents worked through adversity, and how support was accessed to assist with the process.

Skeptical Athletes versus Aware Athletes

Five of the respondents were classified as pessimistic–skeptical athletes. The reason for this classification was an emphasized rumination on SI malfunction during Stage Two of their development. Respondents Robert, Chantal, Donald, Sarah, and Darren emphasized FSI malfunction when sharing their experiences. The pessimistic attitude regarding their FSI was confirmed early in Stage Two of competence development, and perhaps, it was this emphasis and a resultant negative explanatory pattern that prolonged Stage Two for longer than was necessary. Perhaps their prolonged maintenance of Stage Two also accounted for having more to say on this stage of development. Finally, it is also

conceivable that the three "aware" athletes had a smoother passage through Stage Two of development because they chose to focus on their performances in a more productive manner. Energy was invested in learning from performance - related mistakes in order to achieve success. In both cases, optimistic and pessimistic attitudes carried forward as behavioral tendencies from Stage One.

The Transition to Stage 2

All of the respondents experienced a performance barrier within one year of national team affiliation. The catalyst causing the transition to Stage Two varied across respondents. The severity of errors and how these were interpreted, as intentional or unintentional on the part of FSI, contributed to awareness, the behavior for optimists, or two types of skepticism, the behaviors for pessimists. The culmination of this transitional component to Stage Two was almost, if not, immediate for the optimists and slower for pessimists. The move away from Stage Two transition was denoted by a shifting away from problem based behaviors, and a movement toward solution based behaviors.

The stage two transition for pessimists. The athletes quickly noticed that FSI were not solely interested in their development and preparation from one tournament to the next. They had been warned in advance by their personal coaches and former team athletes that FSI does not act in the best interest of national team athletes. With this warning as a frame of reference, all that was required was some tangible confirmatory evidence. It was inevitable that confirmation would happen be it on a small or large scale. For Stage Two pessimists, the catalyst to Stage Two was the acknowledgement that FSI were not

acting in their best interests as individuals. Along with a sense of betrayal, the skeptical athletes viewed their FSI as support who were at very least partly committed to team politics.

I was very positive first of all. I was expecting the team to be just so gung–ho. I was expecting the manager to be far superior to the manager who just assumed the position (in the Junior Worlds). I was expecting the coach to perform at a high competence level. You know, taking care of any problem that was going on as well as being a strong strategist. It turns out that I was disappointed. The coach was not a strong strategist. On top of that, I just found in his attitude that he didn't really care if you weren't even there (Robert-15-15-20).

There were setbacks later, but initially, it was that he (the national coach) couldn't make a decision. He had so many problems making decisions. He could not say no or yes. He was just so wishy washy about everything. Something that hurt me a lot was the fact that I felt like I should have been playing with someone else other than the partner that I was playing with. The national coach should have had enough vision to see that I was progressing a little faster. I was winning the mixed all of the time, and maybe I should be slated with somebody else. There was another athlete that I got slated with later on, but that should have happened earlier. It is just that the coach couldn't do it. He couldn't say to somebody (a weaker athlete) that "we are funding you guys, so that I am going to split you up. I am going to put you and you together." He just couldn't do it, so I felt like that hurt me a lot for those years. This was from 1994 to 1996. I was always having problems with that partner, and I told the national coach that I was always having problems. The coach would talk to my partner and say that I wanted to play, and then he would talk to me and say "you should be playing with someone else" (Darren-5-6-21).

The honeymoon period was now over for the pessimistic athletes. Though they still aspired to be national team athletes, they also knew that their progression would not be as smooth and well coordinated as they had hoped. It was no longer clear which SI members the athletes could rely upon. This insight left the Stage Two athletes questioning whether they could ever achieve the performances they initially dreamed of. Hence the athletes became skeptical of their own abilities to perform given efforts and abilities of FSI who were initially expected to be facilitative human resources.

Transitional variations across pessimists. Though there was a common transitional pattern across pessimistic athletes, the severity of initial setbacks influenced whether the respondents eventually became moderate of radical pessimists as they attempted to develop a consolidated plan. Radical pessimists were athletes who eventually detached almost completely from their FSI. Chantal and Donald for instance, were the least trusting of the athletes, and one reason for their FSI – related distrust was the perceived severity of FSI mismanagement. Another reason for their radical distrust was a previously alluded to preliminary maladaptive incident prior to experiencing the positive benefits of international competition. These earliest negative national team memories served as the anchor points that the athletes returned to once the initial excitement of national team affiliation was over.

Other athletes such as Robert, Sarah, and Darren indicated that their initial setbacks were not that detrimental to them. This was because their setbacks happened after some adaptive initial tournament experiences. Moderate skeptics continued to converse with FSI, though later collaboration would mostly be attempted when it was politically expedient. The moderates' examples of FSI mismanagement included a lack of coach belief, an incorrect pairing with teammates, and an observation of inappropriate FSI behavior.

Transitional Similarities for Pessimists

Despite slight differences in the perceived severity of FSI mismanagement, moderate and radical skeptics mostly shared their pattern of struggle throughout the various parts of Stage Two. For both subsets of respondents, confirmatory evidence was provided in a number of different contexts. These included the impingement of athlete preparation by FSI, the favoritism of some athletes over others, the external complacency of FSI, team friction, poor selection of supplemental mission staff, and the prioritizing of FSI political agendas over athlete performance. It was the search for these numerous sources of confirmatory evidence that differentiated radical skeptics from moderate skeptics, from aware athletes. Further the extent that one was a pessimist, as opposed to an optimist, determined the amount of time ruminating on organizational malfunction as opposed to solution based thinking.

The impingement on athlete preparation. Radical and moderate skeptics alike felt that their preparatory time was impinged upon by FSI. The athletes spoke of inadequate personal control during their pre-competition training, and during their on-site pre-competition preparation. Typical examples of impingement included FSI instigated attempts at changing performance throughout tournaments, and the over monitoring of athlete progression. On both counts, the message relayed to the athletes was that they were not to be regulating their own preparation as FSI were the most qualified to make these judgements. Though FSI might not have meant to detract from athletic competence, the fact was that formal coaches and managers only knew the respondents for a limited

time. The lack of FSI understanding of the respondents' tendencies led to performance decrements and the beginnings of an acknowledgement that FSI were not always the best people to structure tournament plans.

What often happened, though I didn't really agree with it, was they made me go. They would say 'ok, well, you have got to play your team match so we'll get there at six. You're on at 8:00. So, you have got to come with us at 5:30 because the first match is on at 6:00. So, that definitely had an affect on my performance. I don't like to hang around in a hall for 2 – 2.5 hours. Even if we are in a team, if I have to play, it's in my best interest – it's in the team's best interest that I do whatever it takes to get me ready. If that means showing up five minutes before, I think that's what I should be able to do because it's all up to me when I play. It's not up to the team. If I win or lose, that's still going to affect the team. So, if you want me coming, I'll have to get there an hour before, warm-up, and then go on to the court (Robert-19-14-3).

I had a really bad Games experience when I went over to The World Championships in (year). I went over to (national team coach), he was the team trainer. I was asked to train with the team, and I went. I mean, in (year), it was the first time I got along with the team on an administrative level. So, I didn't want to rock that boat. I was there and within 24 hours I knew that I screwed up because he was trying to change my style of riding. I was too set in my style because I had trained too long with (personal coach). If I was more mature and had more guts, I would have turned to him and said "you know what, I can't work with you, you are great," and I would have gone the hour and a half down the road to (personal coach). If I hadn't have been afraid of rocking the boat or being the black sheep, or getting the team against me again. Those negative things. So, I stayed with him and it got worse and worse (Chantal-15-6-15).

The athletes knew or started realizing that there were other alternatives that had to be implemented in order to circumvent their difficulties. The athletes' skeptical beliefs had been reinforced because of inflexibility on the part of their FSI. These experiences indicated a lack of "athlete centeredness" and an incongruency regarding FSI truly wanting what was best for each athlete by adopting generic approaches for larger groups of athletes. Based on these insights, the skeptical athletes would eventually look elsewhere to receive at least some of their necessary proximal support mechanisms.

Athlete favoritism. Complicating matters further, the skeptical athletes, especially the radical skeptical athletes, spoke of themselves as less accepted among their FSI than other "in" team athletes. The reasons for their not being favored included being less experienced versus established athletes or being viewed by FSI as less successful performers, or both. One cannot be certain whether skeptical approaches to team contexts served as catalysts to disfavor, or whether the skeptical athletes were arbitrarily slotted as less popular by their FSI and this helped confirm their skepticism. Because the athletes were accustomed to being treated well prior to joining their respective teams, and during their initial experiences with FSI, the change in treatment proved to be a sore issue. Subsequently, the skeptical athletes chose to focus on the inequity within their teams, and this provided yet another negative topic to ruminate on. The external emphasis during this point of Stage Two not only prolonged competence development, it also consumed the lengthy time that was needed to develop an internal focus.

Before every draw, you are nervous. You are saying "Jesus, I hope I don't draw this guy." I knew that the tough guy there was (country). I knew that was the toughest guy in the whole division. So, we went in for the draw and (team manager) and (one of the coaches who is also the manager's son) were excited. They said "ooh, we have got a great draw. We have got a great draw. Yeah. Great draw." I was thinking right on. Yeah. His boxers got byes. Right on. Then he was going "Trevor, you are fighting this guy, no bye. The only guys who got byes were his guys, were the guys he was working with. Well, for a great draw, three out of the twelve getting byes isn't a great draw. For me personally, hearing that we got a great draw and then finding out that I am fighting (country) first fight with no bye, and I am the only guy to get picked out of the hat to fight first with (country), I thought that it wasn't so great for me (Donald-11-5-18). (year) was the year that (another athlete) came in and shot at the World Championships and she had never shot at the National Championships before. So, she didn't really deserve to be on the National Team because she never tried out for out though we did have an open spot that no one was in. So she just

walked in, bought a uniform, and came to the World Championships. I felt very negatively towards the Head (National Team) Coach because I was certain that he thought that I didn't have the potential to shoot well. It just fed into that whole mentality that I had, and he was basically being bought by the other shooter's parents in thinking that she was this big athlete capable of out shooting the rest of us. I remember that being a very negative thing, and I tried to be as nice to the other shooter as possible, but it was tough. I was more upset with the system than I was with her individually (Sarah-7-37-3).

Formal (FSI) complacency. All of the skeptical athletes spoke equally of FSI complacency as an additional reason prolonging their stay in Stage Two. It appeared to the skeptical athletes that when more experienced FSI traveled with them, there was less focus placed on their individual needs. It was believed that experienced FSI became over-familiar or bored with their roles, and as a result exerted lowered levels of effort for team athletes.

He (team manager) came to visit me at (location) and he said 'you know, you could have gone to (national team coach) – he's just 10 minutes from here, and you are not a team player.' It was the first time in my life that I defied authority. I said '(national team coach) has the fastest (make of car) here, I have a rusty old bicycle, he can come and see me. He's supposed to be a leader, I am not supposed to be running after him. If he is interested in my horses, he can come here and watch my horses go. And by the way, I am the successful one, not them (meaning the other team riders) (Chantal-9-14-4).

I was confident going into those Games. Everybody on the support-staff was very experienced. They had all been to Major Games before. I think that once we were relying on the support-staff to feed us information on when we were going to fight, when was our draw, when is the weigh-in. It wasn't available to us. We had to go looking for it ourselves. We had guys going up to the mission staff themselves saying "when is the weigh-in, when is this guy going to fight?" That shouldn't have been at all part of the athletes' job to find out for themselves. Coming from all those other Games, to see this kind of presentation once I got there, it was tough on me. I have been with the same guys before and everything ran smoothly. It was like all of a sudden, stuff wasn't getting done, it was too lackadaisical. It wasn't interesting anymore for them, maybe they had been there so many times (Donald-12-17-27).

The need for hyper-vigilant FSI was something spoken of solely by the skeptical Stage Two athletes. It is believed that the neediness of skeptics

differentiated them from the optimistic respondents who were more resilient and self–focused from the beginning.

Team friction. All of the skeptics spent considerable amounts of their interviews discussing team - related issues. When asked to elaborate on the topic, the skeptical athletes believed that team friction either began with their formal coaches or managers or was at very least supported by them. Hence, it seemed rational to the skeptical respondents that they continue to distrust their team and its agenda. This view sustained their pessimistic rumination.

There was one guy on the team and his major concern was that he be popular on the team. What he would do is take the socially weakest person on the team and just make fun of him. He would pick on that person. It was not usually me because I could defend myself, but it is other people. And, what happened is the coach encouraged this guy rather than what most coaches would do ideally which is say that 'this is bullshit' as opposed to letting the athlete do something that is destructive to the team. But no, our coach was supporting the athlete who was mouthing off to half the team members to get a rise out of the team members. When a coach is supporting it because he wants to be the cool guy, the last thing on his mind is doing his job (Robert-15-21-6).

There was a lot of tension there. It was rightly so. It wasn't just coach versus coach. The athletes really got involved in this one in the end. The team was divided. It was just a bad dynamics. It was more of a veteran manager (who was a former coach) being involved with the team wanting to run the show. He wanted to be the boss. He did not really respect the other people involved. It was tough. It wasn't just him, he had a partner. The other coach also had a partner. The team was just split right down the middle. They (one side) were looking after their guys (personal athletes), and the other coaches couldn't have anything to do with those athletes. The athletes didn't have a say of which coach is supposed to work with which athlete. It was like the coach that you didn't pick wouldn't even say hello to you. Just because you feel more comfortable with this guy and this guy, the one who is left out was kind of mad at you or might not have even cared that you were there. I didn't like that. I don't think that affected the athletes. The athletes still had great performances. I think it could have done better. We had one guy who could have won there (and finished in silver). Another athlete could have won there (and finished in bronze). I think that it could have been better but it also could have been worse. Whatever they did (formal SI) at that time was helpful. So I am not saying that one would be better than the other. It is hard to

say. We have had teams that worked really well together before and that didn't have that kind of achievement (Donald-10-27-2).

An emphasis on team friction was a unique characteristic to pessimistic athletes during Stage Two of development. The topic proved to be one more that they could ruminate on either alone or with other pessimists. The optimistic athletes were vaguely aware of team issues, however they were channeling most if not all of their energy into understanding and then implementing whatever needed to be done in order to move to the next stage.

Miring down in team politics. Perhaps the most prominent topic for both subsets of skeptical athletes was team politics, meaning how support was selected, and in whose best interest were they acting. Many of the skeptics were quick to point out that FSI had been appointed by politics, and subsequently acted in the interest of politics. This perception also contributed to the prolonging of Stage Two for skeptics because they ruminated heavily upon the inadequacy of coaches and administrative staff appointed for Games. This externally imposed ineptness led to a sense of incompetence because there was a lack of creditable assistance to access within Games contexts.

This is the thing about this coach, he wants to keep his job by being the political guy. He doesn't want to do it through competence, he wants to do it by being nice to the appropriate people so long as it will help. So, he's not focused on doing anything for the athletes. Instead, he's focused on doing everything for himself at the expense of the athlete. I think probably this exists in other support structures where you get people being rude to the athletes. I am sure they are being nice to all the right people (Robert-16-6-12).

There was a Chef de Mission there who had no clue of what shotgun shooting was. He was a pistol guy, and except for spending money, I have no clue what he did as far as organization or helping us get organized (Sarah-2-39-42).

I think that he (the former national coach) was basically in here with those previous players (current executives) from Canada. He was brought in, and basically, he was used as their tool. All these ex-badminton players were all sort of buddies together, and they just made sure that they got paid. It was just a matter of going through the motions the whole time. There really wasn't any push to make a better (national team) (Darren-2-6-10).

The appointment of FSI due to politics provided the skeptics with an additional factor to ruminate. The initial response for the athletes was one of helplessness because staff appointments via national federations was yet another factor that the respondents could not regulate.

Poor selection of supplemental mission staff. The final and most peripheral form of malfunction was that of Games Mission Staff. Interestingly, this furthest removed assignment of accountability was noted solely by radical skeptical athletes. The overriding Games committees, whether they were Olympic, Pan-American, Commonwealth, or World Championship organizations all had administrative and medical staff that these athletes intended to rely upon. Perhaps due to the large number of athletes requiring assistance, these FSI were only meant as infrequent and unreliable last resort forms of assistance. For the radical skeptics, when medical and administrative staff were unavailable, or disinterested in helping, such staff became one of a wide group of incongruent-uncontrollable external factors residing within the formal SI.

I think that does exist, and you are almost treated rudely as if they are thinking 'quit pestering us, we have important things to do.' That is definitely the impression that I got in certain cases where I was there just to give them the trip. Just to exist for their purpose. The Commonwealth Games is actually for the people who set it up, not for the athletes who compete in them (Robert-9-18-23).

The day of the fight, they (medical staff) were going to come in and freeze it for me. I thought "great, that's going to help me even more." They froze it for my warm-up because the doctor who was there had to be somewhere else. He couldn't be there for my fight, he could only be there one hour before and then he had to go and be at another venue for the time my fight was starting. So they froze it too early, and by the time I was in the fight, the thawing had already come out. I wasn't guaranteed that it would last. He said even before we went over to the venue that "we are doing it too early. I still want to do it but I have a feeling that it's going to come out. It only lasts half an hour. You get in there, you come out, and you will be alright." They did it while I was doing my warm-up, so I started doing pads with (a national coach). It hurt like hell for about 30 seconds, but then the freezing started taking in. I couldn't zip up my bag, I couldn't zip up my fly (zipper) before. I did this, it worked. I wiggled my hand and there was no pain. I punched very lightly and there was no pain. I punched harder, harder, and then I said "we are ready to go." It was like a miracle come true. There was nothing stopping me now. I have got a hand. I just wanted to punch a whole through the wall to see if I could do it because I felt like Superman. During my warm-up I had two hands, and I was thinking "this is great, this is great." I went to the ring and gave Gordie (head coach) a couple more, wanted to do a little more pad work, and boom, I felt it again. I thought "ah, it is coming out." By the time I got up the steps into the ring it was out. It was like there was even more pain to be honest with you. I probably broke something else other than what was already broken because I had no pain. I just felt great. The life got sucked out of me again (Donald-8-23-2).

All of the skeptical athletes ruminated heavily on the numerous organizational flaws around them. What differentiated radical skeptics from moderate skeptics was the extent that they assigned accountability to ever-increasing peripheral sources. For the moderate skeptics, malfunction permeated most of their organization, whereas for skeptics, malfunction permeated all SI-related sources of support.

Initial Retreat for Skeptics

With the aforementioned wide number of uncontrollable factors, four of five skeptics landed up taking a short-term hiatus from their sport. The hiatus was caused by an initial loss of confidence in the respondents' general Games related abilities, partially due to the lack of SI – related effort, awareness, or

inability. It seemed to these athletes that their performance environments were just too complex. There were too many extraneous factors detracting from the already challenging task of performance. Ultimately, the only solution for these athletes was to avoid the complex tournament environments where extraneous factors detracted from their competence. The behavior of avoidance served as an opportunity for reflection. Over the long–term, these reflections also provided sufficient time to arrive at the necessary answer regarding how to assert one's autonomy, regain lost athletic efficacy, and then assign personally uncontrollable tasks to the appropriate people.

(one of athlete's horses) was taken from me, and then there was a big fruh frah at those Olympics. Because I wasn't in the loop and (another team athlete) was totally in control of the selection committee, she made sure that I didn't make the team. I had no support from the (national team), nothing but put down, put down, put down. Then, I quit for six months. I thought 'this is bullshit, I don't want to do this for the rest of my life' (Chantal-6-23-6).

I guess that I took a very long break after that. I had my confidence shook up pretty bad. There weren't a lot of quota spots for the Olympics (year). I started to understand the quota system a bit better and where I needed to spend my money and not spend my money. There was only the woman's double trap event at that time, and my professional career started to take off a bit. So, shooting just became less of a priority for a while. The goal wasn't clear that I wanted to make (a specific Olympic Game). I wasn't sure how to improve. I was one of those people who worked hard and got to a point, but didn't know what I needed to do to get beyond where I was. I didn't have a good grasp on the mental side of shooting at all. I went out and if I shot well, I shot well (Sarah-5-20-28).

As for the fifth athlete, Darren, the response to tournament complexity and FSI malfunction was an immediate withdrawing from his national training center and therefore the system of training that his national team provided. Immediately, the athlete asserted his autonomy by enlisting members from his PSI, and beginning to develop a revised battle plan. The other skeptical athletes eventually arrived at the same process, though after more ruminating.

Asserting Autonomy: The Pathway to Efficacy

Part of the forward movement toward the culmination of Stage Two required an assertion of autonomy. Autonomy was asserted by all of the skeptical respondents as a result of reaching the saturation point regarding thoughts and feelings of personal stagnation. It was believed that specified FSI actions were part of the cause for personal stagnation, and therefore had to be ameliorated. Autonomy for these athletes required the passage through three different steps, the last two of which occurred concurrently. The progress through these steps illustrated how the respondents re–established their varying extents of Major Games efficacy. First, the skeptical athletes began to avoid their FSI. There was the understanding that FSI actions did and would continue to detract from their performance until they were avoided. Second, the athletes had to verbalize these boundaries regarding what was no longer wanted from FSI members to the FSI themselves. Third, the athletes needed to select the "right" SI members so as to replace dysfunctional formal support with more functional assistance.

Avoidance. In terms of avoidance, the athletes developed an improved awareness or the willingness to acknowledge which SI detracted from their efficacy and their performance. It was decided that these human resources would be avoided at all costs. Avoidance also served as an opportunity to test one's autonomy and see whether there would be any consequences, either favorable of unfavorable.

Honestly, I find myself avoiding that coach most of the time that I am away. I try to stay out of his way because I know that I don't have confidence in him, basically because there is a lack of competence. And when you don't have confidence in someone, I personally avoid them, and know that I am often avoiding them with other people (athletes) (Robert-8-1-5).

I left the High Performance Training Center that year – the 1996 year. I wasn't happy at High Performance because the coach was never there at practice – he was always doing paper work and other stuff. I'll tell you one incident with the national team coach that also made me feel that he was totally incompetent. We have seventeen athletes at the High Performance Training Center, and there were a lot during that Olympic year that were overseas. He, myself, and some young junior athletes that were allowed into the Center, were present. The National Team Coach came into the Center and cancelled practice for the whole month, and so I went home. I went back to (home) and said this is ridiculous. It was really poor on his part. I decided to go (home) and work with my own coaches (Darren-9-1-20).

The decision of asserting autonomy was an adaptive step where the skeptical athletes began shifting their focus to more of an internal emphasis. It was this shift that provided the necessary pathway in order to restructure the respondents' personal actions as well as the actions of their FSI.

Verbalizing autonomy. The expectations regarding what was no longer required from FSI was then verbalized. Where the skeptical athletes were either tolerant or non–vocal during Stage One, and most of the way through Stage–Two, they became more open and overt regarding their needs as Stage Two culminated. The possible reason for this shift in behavior might have been that they had nothing to lose. There was a personal acknowledgement by the skeptics that they had not achieved their goals by following FSI prescribed actions. Therefore, to re–establish athletic efficacy, the respondents had to explore pathways to performance other than what was being proposed. For efficacy to occur, the respondents had to verbalize that they were going to take control over a wider

group of tasks. At the time of data collection, all of the skeptical athletes had at very least reached this point in their development.

Instead of yapping at me, why don't you come to (another higher profile international tournament) because I am leaving tomorrow.' And so, anyway, he came. (horse's name) was 3rd in the Grand Prix, and then all of a sudden there was a big change. He came up to me and apologized and said 'I never realized how much brainwashing was done. You are a good rider, you present yourself well.' It took a pretty big person to apologize. I was pretty impressed with that. (Chantal-9-14-4).

I just want to do better. That's it. I know what worked for me. I know what didn't work for me. I know how to shut that part of it out, the stuff that isn't working for me. I know how to forget about things. I know how to work on my own. I know when to say no. I am like someone who has been pushed around, sent away to school, to learn how to say "no, I want to do it this way" (Donald-15-25-29).

Selecting resources. The enlisting of adaptive SI was concurrent to an assertion of autonomy. This was the third restorative step regarding how the respondents returned to athletic efficacy. Unlike the "aware" athletes, the skeptical athletes created a clear demarcation between PSI and FSI members, and this provided indication regarding which they were going to enlist as support. Most of the SI members used by skeptical athletes (with a few exceptions) were selected from people they regarded as part of their PSI.

It kind of rids of any kind of illusion that I may have had that they are in it (administration) even for themselves. I don't even think that they do what is in there own best interest. At least, I don't think that they know what is in their own best interest. Knowing that, I can see how they could possible know what is in my best interest, and so, I don't plan on allowing them to control my schedule, or my pre-tournament, or my pre-match. Like I said, if they don't even know what they are doing with themselves, I am not going to let them start dealing with me. Ultimately I want to qualify for the Olympics. Last year I talked to several people from national administration, and having talked to (one of them) for about twenty minutes, I realized that he was convincing me to play all of the six or so domestic tournaments as well as all of the Olympic qualifying tournaments. I decided to consult only you and an (international sport federation) guy who is a director of development and also a personal friend of mine. He was very objective and he said "yes, barring money, these are the correct tournaments to go to." Those are

the tournaments that I have now picked, and I don't plan on playing any domestic tournaments unless for some reason they became absolutely necessary – which they haven't become as of yet (Robert-13-44-21).

I realized that I had followed all these rules for these guys who really didn't care. Now, I say "they still don't care, but I still care about me, so I have got to do what is best for me." That is the attitude I am taking now. I don't know if that is bad or wrong, but that is what I am going to try. I haven't been rebellious. I haven't been inconsiderate or anything along those lines. I still like them and all that, but I just know that they might say they are helping me, but they really don't care. Now, I'll just look for help from another source. Someone that I feel comfortable with (Donald-11-33-46).

Eventually, the skeptical respondents broadened their selection of SI to include a few creditable FSI members as well. This drastic step of trying to re–establish a working relationship with FSI members would only begin during Stage Three. There needed to be a recognition that world–class athletes required SI with sources of support at the formal and personal level. At the culmination of Stage Two, however, emphasis was on taking personal control prior to deciding how to allocate it.

There might be a national coach right who might be good, but as of yet, I can't tell because I can't tell what he believes. If this new guy is competent, I would resource him. I heard that he is competent, but you never know. When you deal with a bunch of incompetence and you become skeptical (Robert-15-3-8).

The national coach was there. He organized some things, but at that point I knew. I had been travelling from several years by then, and I knew what to expect from the national coach. He couldn't organize everything for me. I would just utilize him (the national coach) for what he could do. He could tell you positive things like "you are playing well." He says the real basic pep talk stuff, and it makes you feel good (Darren-8-26-30).

The Stage Two Transition for Optimists

The optimistic athletes had one prominent characteristic that differentiated them from the pessimistic athletes. They were immediately persistent after mental and physical barriers were experienced. Initial setbacks, which

represented a very short transitional period, were seen as temporary and controllable as opposed to insurmountable. Instead of ruminating for prolonged periods on the negative aspects of their performances and their organizations, these respondents viewed their difficulties much like any other conceptual problem. Most of their reflections were solution based, and the response to setbacks was strategy refinements and re–attempts until the athletes eventually succeeded. For James, the setback was being passed over by his Olympic team due to sub–par selection trial results. Where the pessimistic athletes might have seen the experience of exclusion as permanent, James did not regard this major setback as the end of his athletic career. Instead, he perceived his short break from the national team as an opportunity to gather the requisite skills necessary to become a better world class performer. With this approach, the athlete became increasingly persistent and refined, and it was only a matter of time before he returned to his sport with a vengeance.

(year) was the Olympic trials. I expected that I would either make the team or be very close. As it turned out, I placed fourth or fifth, but there were only two that went where there were four that would go to the Worlds. I just accepted it. I knew that I was still young. I was disappointed, but I knew that the guys ahead of me were in the peak of their careers. I knew that I would beat them the next year or two. So, I didn't take it as a huge setback. It was a learning experience "and I'll be back next year" kind of thing. I just needed more practice. I needed more tournament experience. Those were the two big things. I just generally kept practicing, and I knew that I was getting better. I was learning more technical aspects of the sport. It was just kind of a natural progression (James-22-33-44).

Sam, another team athlete, experienced his initial setback due to personal injury. The injury was attributed to improper FSI judgement. For a pessimistic–skeptical athlete, the consequence of such organizational mishaps might have been the end of a national team career, or at very least, a long–term unforgiving

attitude regarding the national team structure. This particular respondent, however, was generally optimistic in nature, and therefore a little more constructive of internal and external mishaps. In the immediate, the athlete appeared disheartened by the experience.

I also got injured in the training camp (prior to a Worlds) right off the bat. I tore my muscle through my neck. I literally couldn't put my head down. I couldn't turn my head side to side, or anything. My head stuck up like a rabbit. I had physiotherapy for the whole two weeks of training camp. I also rolled my ankle. I had to put it in a brace for the first week. I couldn't train or anything. Right in the first day of sparring I twisted my neck and rolled my ankle. I am a (lighter weight class) and they put me in as a sparring partner with a (significantly heavier boxer) who wasn't nearly as good a boxer as I am, but he was huge. So, when I jumped in to spar, and I hit him a couple of times, he went wild. When he hit me in the arms, he knocked me over because he was so big and strong. I thought "guys, I am going to get killed in here. If he ever hits me with anything I am out of here." They (coaching staff) said "you have got to be tough," that tough guy attitude. I said "listen, that is not how it is. I get in there I want a sparring partner. I don't want to fight a light heavy weight." It was a technical sparring and my sparring partner was trying to kill me (Sam-13-11-29).

Though the athlete's national coach seemed to have made a blatant mistake, and further, seem to have discounted the athlete's concerns in the process, there was no grudge held because the oversight was viewed as unintentional. The athlete was able to move forward in his progression, though with an improved awareness that FSI judgement will sometimes have its limitations. Despite these limitations, the athlete still recognized that his national coach had something to offer.

The (head) coach who was there (at the World Championships) is someone I respect a lot. I know that he genuinely respects me. I was in the corner and he said "all I want you to do is fight with the same intensity that you had at (previous tournament)" because I was still a rookie at that time. He said "you fought so hard down there." I know him. He voices his opinion. When guys got out of the ring at the (previous tournament) and said "ah, I got ripped off," I saw him walk over in front of the whole team and say "shut-up. Don't say you got ripped off. You didn't fight. I watched the fight. You didn't fight. Don't try to make excuses for yourself. You didn't fight." All that he wanted us to do was go in there and

give it our best. If you do that and don't win then he is happy. I knew that, and I was going in there and doing my best. I did. Like he said, it was a close fight, and I fought a really experienced guy. I didn't get hurt at all (Sam-14-14-31).

Stage Two transitions provided the optimistic athletes with an opportunity to better understand the limitations within their FSI. During the remaining part of Stage Two, the optimistic athletes moved forward with their new found awareness and sought out ways to address their national teams' structural weaknesses. This point in their development was a time where the optimists reworked their human resources and began melding them into a facilitative SI.

The Stage Two Transition of One Possible Outlier

Seven of eight athletes identified clear instances that marked their Stage Two transition. The other athlete (Mark) chose to limit his discussion regarding whether he even experienced this stage of development, perhaps due to the political nature of the topic and his precarious position on the national team during the time of the interview. When probed, the athlete was mostly optimistic about both FSI and PSI sources of assistance. One might discern that he never experienced this stage of development, however, there were minute indications that he did develop at very least a sense of awareness regarding what can go wrong in one's performance. One of these indications was the athlete's parting suggestions at the culmination of the interview.

Just tell them (other national team athletes) to make sure that they know what they want. Maybe they are inexperienced and afraid to ask the coach "I want this and I want that." Sometimes I was reluctant to ask. Sometimes you are so inexperienced that you don't even know what you want. So make sure that you tell them to make sure what they want before they go in the ring. That is great what you did, like "the day of what do I do?" What do you do right before your match. Make sure that each athlete knows that because some people don't realize what they are doing so that the resources are there to help (Mark-13-19-27).

Another indication that the athlete did undergo a Stage Two learning process came via another athlete's interview. Donald explained that Mark educated him regarding how to avoid FSI during inappropriate times as opposed to relinquishing too much control to them. It is assumed that this mentoring of Donald reflects some previous experience(s) where FSI did commit some logistical errors, and at very least, unintentionally taught Mark that he must remain aware of their actions regardless of how well–meaning they might be.

I have learned from mark that if they want me to weigh in right now, they can't find me. I don't want to get discouraged with them thinking that I am heavy, and me in return thinking that I am heavy. I know how my body is and what I have got to do. Just leave me alone and let me do my thing. There are some coaches standing there while I am on the scale just praying that I am heavy. They just sort of root that you are a little heavier than you are supposed to be so that it looks better for them. (a travelling national coach) has been checking our weight at this training camp. That is fine, no problem. We know that everybody is checking weight at a certain time (Donald-14-43-6).

There was clear indication that Mark, much like the other respondents, did undergo the second stage of development. In his case, similar to the other optimists, the achievement of Stage Three competence development was rapid. Within one year the athlete was world ranked among the top ten in his sport, and Mark reached this position numerous times over the course of almost one decade.

Preparing for Stage Three as an Optimist

The progression through Stage Two for optimistic athletes was rapid. Because the athletes developed an awareness of personal and organizational pitfalls, they had to learn whom to resource as facilitative sources. There was a time and place for various members of the FSI and PSI, the key lesson was to

learn which was the most suitable for each unique problem and then test and re–test their method of functioning until it worked.

Then the pre Pan–Am's I drew (nation) and I wasn't worried about that because it isn't a strong country, but I knew that (another nation) was next and he was the World Champion. For that fight, you talked to me and I was terrified. I didn't want to talk to anybody about fighting him. I let it get the better of me. I was terrified. So, when I talked to you, I thought there was nothing you could say that could have made me feel better about getting in the ring with what I thought was this animal. So I told you what I thought you would like to hear. That I was confident and what not. There was nothing you could do when I said that. You know that when I got in the ring, that wasn't the case because I didn't fight nearly to the ability that I have. That was when I realized I had to rethink my preparation and my circle (Sam-8-6-14).

The athletes knew that sooner or later they would experience the big break through, it was just a matter of persistence and refinement. Perhaps it was this strong sense of self–efficacy, as well as a positive belief in the intentions of others that expedited the progress of the optimistic athletes so that they were able to reach Stage Three. The final key component necessary for upward progression was an insight that they were ready to take their place among the world's best athletes.

I just generally kept practicing, and I knew that I was getting better. I was learning more technical aspects of the sport. It was just kind of a natural progression. Being around top competitors, you learn (James-22-1-3).

I remember in the (year) Commonwealth Games, I was so nervous beyond belief and I didn't have a mental coach or anyone to work with. The team didn't have anything like that. I was pretty inexperienced. I think you gain a lot from experience alone. It gets easier and easier. Just in Barcelona, I was happy to be there. I wasn't there to win the gold. In a lot of the tournaments, I used to go away for frequent flyer points more than anything. In (year) I won this big tournament in Sweden, and from there I just got more confident and more experienced. I realized "I could so this. I don't care who I draw. If I draw the Cuban, I have got to beat him to win the gold (Mark-6-33-42).

All eight respondents did start the second stage of competence development. The three aware–optimistic athletes journeyed through this stage of

development, and onto the next. It is assumed that they spent little time in negative rumination regarding their inability and how this related to uncontrollable factors such as the inability of FSI. All of their energy was spent looking "forward" regarding what needed to be achieved in terms of personal development and the enlisting of others. The support staff enlisted by aware athletes included the most suitable staff from FSI and PSI, as both were contributory sources to athletic competence. With this positive and collaborative approach, the aware athletes completed Stage Two with minimal difficulty.

The positive approach to competence development depicted by the aware athletes was contrasted with the development of the skeptical–pessimistic athletes. The Stage Two development for skeptical–pessimistic athletes took longer and its completion was much more difficult to achieve. Due to an emphasis on the roadblocks that occurred, the skeptical athletes spent significantly more time looking for and subsequently reflecting on organizational malfunction than did optimists. With much of their focus misplaced on the negative and uncontrollable components of team functioning, and how these factors rendered them incompetent, these athletes went through a stage of sport – related helplessness prior to implementing solution based problem solving. All five skeptical athletes eventually moved beyond this stumbling block and started to assert their autonomy and search for solutions to their performance – related problems. At the time of interviewing, three of the five skeptical athletes, Robert, Donald, and Sarah were still working through the assertion process at the culmination of Stage Two. A fourth athlete, Darren had chosen to deselect himself from his national

team prior to achieving Stage Three status. Therefore, only four of the eight respondents reached the next stage of their development and achieved a return to international Major Games competence and success. Of the remaining athletes, only one was deemed a pessimist.

Stage 3-Open Resourcefulness versus Closed Reliance

Four respondents reached Stage–Three of athletic competence. This stage of development was denoted by a return to Major Games success (Figure 4).

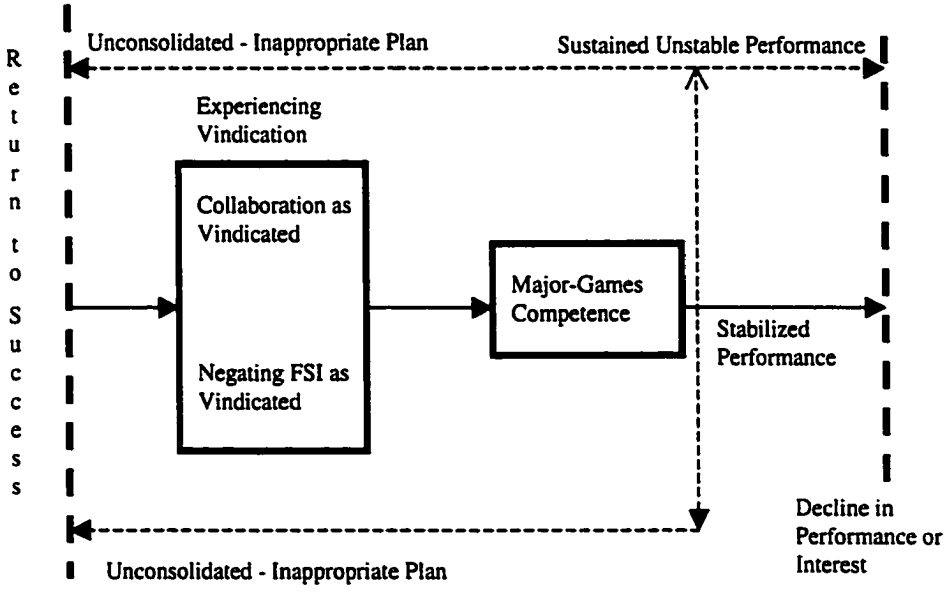

Figure 4: Athletic Competence Development - Stage Three

Some athletes took longer to reach this point than others, and one respondent moved between Stages Two and Three for the remaining portions of his athletic career in an attempt to develop a facilitative organizational structure. The development for Stage Three athletes was tangible proof that they were capable of returning to international success regardless of whether they could stabilize such performances from one Games to the next. A contributory factor to performance stabilization was the extent that adaptive SI functioning was consolidated into a

protocol or left as unstable. Optimists and pessimists did persist and subsequently matured into successful athletes. Their results included such notable accolades as world rankings, World Championship and Olympic Games Medals.

Open Athletes versus Closed Athletes

Three out of four athletes who reached Stage Three were optimists, and in terms of their approach to team settings, they were open to a wide variety of assistance from PSI and FSI. The optimistic–open athletes attempted to resource the best out of everyone, and tapped into peoples' assistance when it was personally beneficial. Though FSI were not always described as being best friends, even acquaintances were sometimes seen as having something to offer. SI having a more intense interest in athletes' developments were placed closer to the core of their support systems.

Chantal was a radical pessimist who achieved Stage Three of competence development, and she differed in behavior from the optimistic athletes. Instead of resourcing support from a wide network of SI, she elicited help from a smaller–more restricted core of resources. Unlike the optimistic athletes, the pessimist remained skeptical of FSI and usually sought help from people within her PSI. FSI members were almost always regarded as impediments to performance. Even in times of political necessity, it was difficult for the pessimist to relinquish any form of logistical control to FSI.

The Transition to Stage Three

The transition to Stage Three was marked with the return to success at Major Games competitions. It must be noted that some athletes won medals in

Stage Two of their development, though their medals were more a reflection of the simplicity of the Games and the lack of world-class competition than athletic competence. Stage Three was the time where the athletes experienced breakthroughs in their performance and results at more difficult tournaments. The struggle in Stage Three, then, was to stabilize athletic performance by maintaining a structure that worked despite the magnitude of tournament - related challenge. This was not always easy, and so the three athletes who stabilized their performances eventually had one or a few more glitches before they consolidated their performance protocols. These reminders helped sharpen the athletes, and for some, provided a pathway to an eventual ongoing attention to details. One athlete, Mark, never did consolidate his tournament - related protocol, and so, he moved between Stages Two and Three for the remaining portions of his athletic career. At the moment, he has started declining in his athletic competence due to age.

The Stage Three Transition of a Pessimist

The transition to Stage Three for the pessimistic athlete was monumental. Having experienced numerous organizational setbacks as a result of her FSI actions, Chantal restructured her support at the culmination of Stage Two. The revised SI was built to stand separate from FSI and ameliorate all SI – related problems. The transitional experiences provided by the pessimist delineated a radical transitional process.

The radical breakthrough. Chantal was provided with the opportunity to compete at a Major Games competition where no other FSI were present.

National teams typically send full contingents to Major Games. A usual Major Games infrastructure includes formal coaches, team managers, and a complete group of team athletes. Because Chantal was the only entry for her country during the time of her breakthrough, she managed to formulate a SI comprised solely of PSI. Chantal only needed financial support at that moment, and did not have to deal with the typical complexity surrounding a Major Games context. Therefore, Chantal was able to truly assess whether her past setbacks were warranted, and the role that FSI played in them.

So then I qualified to go to the World Championships (year). I was going over for four months before to train and we got a call from the Chair of the team twelve hours before I was to fly out to (place in Europe) saying that the team had no money to send me. I qualified as an individual. I was the only one (Canadian). So, (daughter of sponsor) phoned her father, and he had seen how hard I worked, they had seen me wake up at 5:00 on the morning doing my work, and they saw what I did with their kids and the race horses. So, (one of the sponsors) said "I will pay for (athlete's name) to go but every single newspaper in Canada will know about it." Suddenly the team had money. It was just for the flight of the horse anyway. So, I went over, I trained, it was an incredible experience. I went to (a place in Europe) and it was fabulous. I was 5th at (notable competition), and I went to the World Championships, was 12th in the Grand Prix, and 8th in the individual finals. No one had ever done that before – jumped four places in the individual and that was the beginning of my career. That was the best thing. I had nobody from the team over there. The only people that were over there were the (sponsors). It couldn't have been a better experience (Chantal-8-7-22).

When the athlete achieved a better result than other Canadians in her discipline ever had prior to that time, she regarded herself as vindicated. There was no longer any question in the athlete's mind that she was a world class performer. Concurrently, there was also some acknowledgement from isolated FSI that the athlete was a legitimate contender. Such supportive FSI were viewed, and subsequently would always be viewed as outliers emerging from a more general unsupportive FSI.

Slips in Autonomy

Just as the development through Stage Two was slow for pessimistic athletes, the move through Stage Three to consolidation was disproportionately quick. In the case of Chantal, there was one short-term relinquishment of autonomy. This relinquishment caused a temporary return to Stage Two athletic incompetence. Having placed at both the World Championships and Olympics, the athlete attempted to broaden or "open" the base of her FSI beyond what was comfortable and best suited to the athlete. This action was an attempt on the athlete's part to reconcile with her FSI. The result was a sharp reminder of what needed to be done in order to remain s successful world-class athlete. The resulting behavior was a return to the "closing" of SI. The long-term consequence of the temporary return to Stage Two was an entrenched lack of receptivity toward FSI sources of assistance for the remaining portion of the athlete's career.

In the warm-up, I just felt the whole thing falling apart. At that point my horse was so long because (the national team coach) wants them long and low, and we had totally different styles. (personal coach) was a little angry with me for training with (national team coach), which is understandable. After the Grand Prix, which was awful, it was my worst international experience ever, (national team coach) came up to me and said 'you're the last person I expected to fold.' I turned to him and said 'you should take a good hard look at your coaching ability because this is the worst that I have ever done. So, it can't be me.' It actually was because I didn't have the guts to change it. I mean I don't blame him for what happened (Chantal-16-7-15).

Though the immediate experience was a lesson in what not to do, it was also a reminder of what the athlete needed to return to in the future. With the help of her personal coach, it took Chantal no longer than 20 minutes to regroup and re-establish distance from her FSI. The athlete never let go of the lesson gleaned

from her relapse, and the lesson remained with her to the end of her athletic career.

I ran into (personal coach) when I was walking back to the barn and he said 'what did you think was going to happen? What did you think (athlete's name)? You know better.' I said 'yeah, you're right.' I was almost in tears because I had put so much effort into competing. I was almost in tears because I was angry with myself. So he said to me – 'what did you think would happen?' Then he smacked me on the back and said 'now you know how to fix it.' I said 'yeah, you're right.' Then I knew that I would go back to him. All within a twenty minute span, I had been to the bottom, and knew how to fix it. It is never a problem if you know how to fix it. It is when you don't know how to fix it. That you get into a problem. Then you get into the muck and mire and the politics of the team. That is a problem when you let that get to you. (Chantal-17-7-18).

The Stabilized Plan

The relapse to Stage Two served as a learning process for Chantal. There was a clear understanding of what she needed control either personally or via her PSI in order to remain athletically competent. From this point onward, there were no deviations from the athlete's tournament protocol. The athlete had such a strong conviction to carry out her structure that she did not deviate from it despite any form of FSI consequence. First, she redefined her SI into a small group of trustworthy people who had proved to be supportive in the past. This tight group of people became her "circle of friends." People within the immediate circle included personal coaches and sponsors. There was also an "inner periphery" that the athlete called on within the sport context. The inner periphery was confined to whichever Chef de Mission traveled with the team at the moment. In addition to a consolidated SI, Chantal also had a formalized protocol that she used when interacting with other athletes both adaptive and maladaptive. With these skills firmly in place, Chantal maintained her place as one of Canada's premier athletes.

The inner circle of friends. The pessimistic athlete developed an "immediate circle of friends." Her immediate circle was comprised of personal coaches, a groom, and a sponsor which was mentioned throughout as a steady force in the athlete's life from Stage One to present day.

He (personal trainer) was there–he was very supportive of me, and he took time to train me. He was the coach of (another nation's) team. He would train me every morning at 6:00 because the (athletes from the nation he was training) wouldn't get up that early. He could then train me privately – no one was there (Chantal-8-23-3).

I had good grooms. I always had good grooms. (a recent team member) groomed for me in (Olympic location). She was fabulous. You know, she is always very business like. She missed the first month or six weeks of school, and she still was on the dean's list. She is pretty special (Chantal-14-7-12).

Because the athlete knew that she was a competent world–class performer by this point in her development, her relationship with inner circle support changed to one of equal partnership. This was best exemplified in her evolving relationship with her coaching staff. The athlete felt comfortable enough to express her opinions with her personal coaches so that they best fulfilled their roles as technical experts and personal friends.

The things I remember about (the ---Olympics) – sure there were hardships. (coach) is an intense person and (horse's name) was just a little sensitive for him. So, he kept pushing, pushing, pushing, pushing. When you have trained with someone since you were twenty, it is very hard to tell him to back off because there is all this respect thing. So anyway, I drove home on the bus with him and I said 'you know what, the horse is kind of unrideable. Yes, it is going like crap. Yes he could be higher. Yes he could always be better. But, there is only four days before I canter down the center–line and I can't take the heat.' So, I said 'you are pushing me too hard.' He didn't say anything. The next day, I trained and he backed right off and he became a ground person. He said coming home on the bus, because I trained twice a day 'you know what, you're right. It was much better today.' And so, it was a great experience (Chantal-11-4-14).

As a result of her increased openness and subsequent collaborative efforts with personal coaches, Chantal received exactly what she needed at the right time

and in the right way. The result was the highest Olympic placing ever achieved by a North American equestrian to this day.

A cool thing that happened to me was that I was warming up for the special, and my horse was wired. We were going from ring to ring to ring where eventually nobody can touch you. It was amazing, but the horse was really spooky. And so I tried to warm up in a very small figure eight. So, while I was doing that (personal coach) said '(athlete's name), yesterday was for Canada, to day is for (athlete's daughter). I had done my thing for the team (the team won a bronze medal in the Olympics the day before). It just makes you smile where you go 'yeah, yeah, I'm already there.' I went yeah, you're right. The interesting thing was that everybody was upset but me (Chantal-12-5-11).

The inner periphery. It is believed that the selection of the one discrete FSI member served the purpose of smoothing a Games protocol that otherwise would be impossible to execute. Despite past difficulties with team appointed support (FSI), the athlete managed to forge a strong bond with these people as they came in and out of the team's fold. And so, she looked on most of them with positive reflections. Their purpose would be in term of managerial support, and hopefully, allegiance.

After (one manager), we had (another manager) as Chair (team manager). She was great. She was a straight shooter, she told it like it was. A lot of people didn't like her because she told it like it was. Then (another manager) took over as Chair. She is a feisty person. But you know what, she was great. She would always fight for the riders. Once you were on the team, she would always fight for you. She couldn't be bought. So, you couldn't wine and dine her to get her on your side. It was the same rules for everybody (Chantal-10-5-10).

The team managers, having reached the athlete's inner periphery, were able to confirm to the athlete that they were rightly placed as part of her SI. The means by which inner periphery validated Chantal included acting on the best interest of the athlete prior to and during Games contexts regardless of how this appeared to others.

He bucked in the first trails and finished second–it was the only time that he had ever lost a Grand Prix in North America. All of a sudden (team athlete) and all of the powers that be, said that my horse wasn't as good as everybody said. But I knew that I was on a plan. You can't stay in one spot (when preparing for a Major Games). You have to go down, up, up, up, down, and Seoul. That is how you train. (Team Chair) stood right behind me because nothing I said was repeated to anybody. And besides, the goal is not to peak at the trials, the goal is to peak when it counts. So that was a really wonderful time for dressage. The Chair of the time was very forthright. She wasn't a schmoozer. She takes care of your needs but she was not a den mother. She was just there for you. She fights for you in adverse conditions when you have problems, and I always knew that. I always knew that I had a really good support system in there (Chantal-10-16-3).

Inner periphery support also owned their mistakes to Chantal because they knew that she was hypersensitive to being betrayed by her FSI. This endeared inner periphery that much more as far as Chantal was concerned.

I think that (Team Chair) said to me after the Grand Prix 'that was about 25% less than your normal performance.' When we later did the tribute to the team at the Royal Winter Fair, she said to me 'I owe you a big apology, do you remember that after you rode I said that your ride was about 25% lower that your typical performance? I had no idea how much pressure I put on you, how much pressure Canada put on you, how much pressure you put on yourself. I had no idea, and I guess that I just wanted you to be amazing. I didn't understand the pressure you had to go through and now I do. So, just as I took the comment when it was initially said, I knew that it was not meant in a malicious way. She just wanted it to be so good (Chantal-12-13-21).

The Athlete Protocol

Chantal also developed an athlete protocol that she used from consolidation onward when interacting with other national team athletes. Her approach varied depending on whether the athletes she was paired with were experienced and confident or inexperienced and vulnerable. Athlete protocol included the role of mentor as well as the role of pragmatist.

Mentoring other athletes. Once Chantal consolidated her sport protocol and stabilized her performances, she began to mentor other aspiring international level athletes. It cannot be sure whether the role of mentor was the result of sport

– related self-security or another cause. Nonetheless, Chantal was ready to give back to others and did so especially when she noticed that teammates were vulnerable.

You could see that (younger national team athlete) was upset because she was the first Canadian to go. I sat down with (athlete) on the bus and said '(athlete), you can't change that. That's how you drew. So, how are you going to get out there and be the best that you can be?' I said 'do you think that I want to ride the first day? It doesn't matter. That's what we've got so don't waste one more second on that. How are you going to do the best job that you can?' So then she kind of lightened up and it was better (Chantal-11-19-2).

The catalyst that facilitated the role of mentor in Chantal reflected her own past experience within national team contexts. When another athlete was viewed as experiencing mistreatment or a lack of sensitivity from FSI within the national team structure, Chantal shared her support and sympathy. Though the intentions behind her actions were well–meaning, her pessimistic support might have served as a vicarious source of potential inefficacy for the athletes that she attempted to mentor. This negative transfer of information completed a cycle of negative mentoring that was provided to other athletes during their first two stages of competence development.

I remember that when they drew the numbers like they always do in dressage, it was a bad draw for Canada because (the mentored team rider) and I went the first day. What would have been good was if (the mentored team rider) went, (another team rider) went (another team rider) went, and I went. If you could have a choice and do it that way. But, we didn't have a choice. (The other two teammates) were hugging each other because none of these people are my friends (Chantal-11-14-19).

The pragmatic view of team infrastructure. Having learned which SI to avoid earlier in Stage Three, part of Chantal's consolidation of competence included revising her expectations regarding the levels of friendship that could be achieved with others. On one level, Chantal became a pragmatic competitor and

understood that she could not always expect to find friends among other team athletes and formal coaching staff. Team contexts were no longer considered anything more than situations where Chantal traveled with other irrelevant Canadian team members.

The thing that you have to understand about dressage (a form of equestrian) is that it is not a team sport. Your job as a team member is to do the best test that you can do. That is the best thing for the team. (team athlete) and I are friends. (team athlete) and I are friends. But our friendships are superficial. I am talking superficial friends. These are people that I don't talk to other than about horses. But I think that in a team situation, they would probably help you out if they were among the team (Chantal-13-14-19).

I don't need people to pat me on the back and tell me I'm a good girl. I don't need that. You know what, if you make the Pan-American Games and you do need that, you're not going to cut it anyway, and that is the bottom line. I don't like people being a den mother to me. I don't like being a den mother to people (Chantal-20-2-6).

Moving Toward Distancing as a Pessimist

With a strong sense of self–awareness, Chantal maintained her position as a premier world–class athlete. The accolades she received included medals at World Championships, World Cup Finals, and even Olympic Games. All of the athletic ambitions that Chantal set out for herself prior to and during the beginning of Stage One were achieved. This left Chantal with no higher athletic results to pursue. With the accomplishment of all of her result–oriented goals, it was inevitable that Chantal would not be able to sustain her athletic competence indefinitely. The growing awareness of the looming future eventually detracted from athletic competence and a resulting return to negative rumination.

The Stage Three Transition for Optimists

The optimistic athletes developed an understanding of how much autonomy was required prior to Stage Three. The athletes already recognized that they knew their own business and no longer needed to be mentored through international tournaments. With a consolidated system in mind, the athletes implemented a plan where they retained their distance from all unnecessary support, through a tangible assertion of autonomy at the next tournament.

The non-confrontational breakthrough. Their assertion was significantly more peaceful than for the pessimistic athlete. There was no maliciousness behind actions, distancing was just a matter of pragmatism. The non-confrontational approach underlying the assertion of autonomy made for smoother interpersonal relations with SI during the next Major Games experience. With a self-created harmonious performance environment, the athletes were able to focus fully on what was necessary in order to perform at potential and experience a return to notable achievements.

In (location), I won the World Championships by four targets. I shot a 197 of 200, and that was the highest differential. The next score was a (nation) who was four targets behind at 193. Everything was just functioning perfectly. I attribute the results partly to wonderful organization. The (support staff) were wonderful at organizing, the food was good, and everything seemed to be kind of like home. The efficiency, the organization at the shooting range, transportation back and forth. There just didn't seem to be any hitches. You felt that you didn't have to worry about "am I going to get to the range on time" or "is this bus going to go" or "is this cab going to get us there." The food was good. Everything seemed to be well organized, well planned. It was kind of like living at home in terms of quiet, good food, the guns were there, the ammunition was there. It was just a good atmosphere (James-20-8-1).

Training camps like this with people like (FSI), which is pretty much new to me since (year). I have always done the mental aspect pretty much myself which isn't necessarily the best way to do it because it sometimes gets the better of me. It is better to talk things out. It has worked better for me as far as the Commonwealth Games and tournaments previous, and hopefully in the future like this one (Sam-2-7-11).

Because they worked collaboratively with members of FSI and PSI, the assertion of autonomy by Stage Three optimists was well received by both subsets of their support. The return to world–class performance was a form of vindication for the optimistic athletes. Not only were they vindicated regarding their own personal athletic abilities. They were also vindicated in maintaining their collaborative approach with SI members.

Slips in Autonomy

There was indication from all three respondents that optimists experienced setbacks, at very least during the beginning of Stage Three. These setbacks occurred in terms of which FSI to resource and how to make the best of weak FSI appointments. In these instances the athletes sometimes spoke of FSI coaches, managers, or athletes as playing havoc with consolidated plans. These experiences impeded on performance, at very least in the short–term.

He (the manager) was the type of individual where he thought you would sort of take first room, and if you didn't like it, well that was too bad. He was the type who just didn't want any problems. He really didn't go out of his way to try and facilitate living conditions or try to work on the transportation (James-31-22-2).

He (the national head coach) was there and he was really pissed off after the match (2nd bout at a World Championships). I was also really upset, I was crying and punching the walls. He was upset. He was going nuts. I remember that (two national team athletes) they were telling me the scores after the fourth round. After the fourth round I was up by one. They said "1–0." (national team coach was really pissed off about that because he didn't want me knowing the score because he knew that I would just shut down and happily win 1–0. So (national team coach) was really pissed off with them (Mark-9-39-45).

I was with two coaches that I didn't know at all. The coach that was there was from another country and he thinks he knows everything about boxing. I didn't feel that he did. He was a very military style coach. He said "this is how it is. This is what I want you to do. I want you to do this, and this, and this. Go do it." I am so not used to that. (my coach) is not like that at all. He is "how do you feel about this? Let's try this." I am used to more say. I am not an idiot. I can tell you what I think. It is ridiculous when people think that their opinion is the only one that counts. When I go in there I am going to voice my opinion, that person is going to voice theirs, and we will find a happy medium. If someone says "it is like this" and I don't agree, I am not going to do what they want. That is just not how it is. Then there is tension, and I don't respect who is in my corner (Sam-11-41-11).

From their return to Stage Two, the athletes noted that the avoidance of dysfunctional FSI actions would become increasingly crucial as the level of competitive challenge heightened. It was reaffirmed that in circumstances of high competitive challenges there was little room for struggle and inefficiency between the athlete and his SI. There would be ample struggles originating from external sources alone. The solution was to re–attempt the sport strategies that were implemented in recent breakthroughs, or vow to in the future depending on where the athletes were at in their development during data collection.

My support staff is going to be much better. I am pretty well going to make sure that my brother will be flying down there. This is my last World Championships before I retire. My goal is to win a medal at the world championships. My career is going to end after the Olympics in (year) so I am going to give it my all. I will go in there and not cover up. I am going to box to my ability and go in there in (year) (Mark-12-28-33).

What I have done is closed in on my circle of who I let talk, whose opinions I respect. If it's someone's opinion who I respect, than I would take it personal and I will listen. But, for the average person who comes up to talk to me, I don't take things personally. I don't care. My circle is much smaller now. The same people that are in my circle now were in my circle then (in 1997) but I used to have more outside distractions that I let influence me because I was such a rookie. I was trying to take in all of the information that I could. Members of the team. People that weren't on the team. Coaches that I didn't know. Just the whole Team Canada atmosphere has so many people involved and I was trying to listen to all of them. I thought that they knew much more than me when they didn't. I mean some of them had more experience, but that didn't mean anything. Once you

make the team, there were guys on the team who I initially thought were world–beaters because they were on the team for so long. Then I got on to the team and found out that they weren't. I found out that they weren't leaders either. Experience has shown me who is, who I should look to, who my friends are, and what helps me win. I wish everyone the best of luck on this team, but when I go to compete, I now go to win (Sam-6-11-30).

The adjustment for the athletes was to ensure that their personal coaches made as many trips as possible that they were on. This, in the athletes' eyes, would ensure that they received the necessary help to increase their chances of remaining competitive among the world's best over the long–term. When a personal coach was not possible, the athletes decided that they would be very selective of the information provided by FSI. That way, the athletes knew that they alone would be accountable for their performances.

At the world championships, I am going to make sure that I have a chiropractor. Hopefully my brother is there. If something happens where he can't be there, I am going to make sure that (the designated coach) knows how my warm–up is going to be. I am also going to make sure that any kind of medical staff – message, etc, that I am going to have it even if I have to pay for it myself. I don't care. I don't want to come out and say "I didn't have this and I didn't have that." If I lose at the world championships, I am going to lose fairly or get ripped off by a bad decision. I am not going to lose because of any excuses. It is not going to be because of my performance. My performance is going to be good. I want to make sure of that (Mark-12-35-42).

I have to respect who is there. If some Jo Blow walks in and he is our coach, I will be thinking "who are you? Where have you ever been? What do you know?" They try to enforce their knowledge on you instead of working with you and finding out your likes and dislikes. They will say "look, this is how it is. I am going to run it like this because I am the coach." I don't want to name names, but there were guys at that tournament last year in the Commonwealth. That is why I like my coach being there. He was great, and one of the coaches there was difficult (Sam-9-34-40).

The quantity of time it took to learn from mistakes varied among optimistic athletes. Athletes such as James and Sam experienced one setback at some point in Stage Three, spent a few months acknowledging logistical

mistakes, and finally moved on. Mark, the other optimist, moved between Stages Two and Three for more than eight years of his athletic career. At this moment, with one year remaining, the athlete is finally attempting to stabilize his inconsistent athletic career by trying to piece together personal and logistical do's and don'ts from past athletic experiences.

Mentally, we (the athlete and sport psychologist) worked together. We worked great together and everything came together. (sport psychologist) helped a lot – especially for the Commonwealth Games. I remember what (sport psychologist) said that one time and he asked whether there was anything missing. I said that I really liked my brother in my corner (because the athlete always won with his brother in his corner) and the next day he got called. I remember that afterwards he said "see, now everything is coming together" (Mark-13-5-10).

Adjusting athlete interactions. The selectivity of SI extended beyond coaches and management. The optimistic athletes also became increasingly selective of the athletes they chose to spend time with, and in some instances, resource. Athletes who detracted from the optimists' performance objectives found themselves barred from affiliation. Over time the optimistic athletes became pragmatic regarding which athletes to avoid and why.

In terms of specifics, it was more just in the attitudes of people (other team athletes). You could tell in their voice or tell in their attitudes. If you asked them to look after your equipment, for instance, because you had to the washroom, you might go and do your things. Then, you would come back and they might be there or they might not be there. They were not overly trustworthy in terms of being supportive. So, you don't want to leave your equipment sit where somebody might walk off with it. I guess you find that with all teams – some people are more supportive than others and less supportive. This can be placed on a continuum (James-14-17-1).

This sport is a very cut-throat business where people are out for themselves. Everybody is nice to everybody else straight on, but everybody talks about everybody else. I think that the biggest thing is hearsay. People don't trust other people because what someone said to someone else will get back. Everything gets around. It doesn't matter what you say. It takes a while, but is going to make a full circle. Everyone here is so intertwined. I think at the Commonwealth games there was a lot of that. For example with our team there was a separation

(during the Commonwealth Games) calling one team "Team Canada" and "Team Nova Scotia." That was just ridiculous. I felt like grabbing one athlete and letting him have it. I felt that it all came down to just jealousy. I just tried to put that out of my mind and say "you know, forget about that, and I am here to fight and do my job." That is where you get away from that team aspect and it becomes an individual sport. You are there to do your job and forget about that team camaraderie. That is the time when this becomes an individual sport and you look after yourself. You are going to find out that a lot of the time, you are the only one looking out for you (Sam-4-27-42).

The ability to avoid negative athletes reflected a more general resistance toward negative sources of information. Resistance was reflected through the behaviors of ignoring or acknowledgement and a subsequent down playing of team malfunction. In either form, team malfunction did not detract from competence. The respondents knew that they had to maintain thick skin and focus on what was most important, performing.

I think that everyone worked together there great. I know that two of the coaches had their little arguments, but I know that my brother worked his butt off at the training camp and at Commonwealth Games. Overall, my brother worked with both coaches really well. In the report afterwards, supposedly two of the coaches had a tiff and they were each favoring their own boxers. I didn't see any of that but supposedly that was an issue (Mark-3-32-40).

I had who I wanted in the corner with me so I wasn't worried about the little problems that went on. I mean sure it pissed me off at the time, but there was nothing I could do about it. So, I didn't involve myself with it. I had opinions of those people who did, and those opinions are still strong. I take those people for what they are worth. Now, there are guys on the team that I say "hey, how is it going" and then keep going. They will never be my buddies, but I am sure they don't want to be (Sam-11-26-31).

With an understanding of what they needed to do in order to remain competent from one tournament to the next, two of the respondents were prepared to stabilize their performances to where they would remain for several years. The requisite skills of autonomy and selectivity of resources reflected their increase in

internal focus and self–awareness. The result was the consolidation of a performance protocol and the stabilizing of world–class performance and results.

The Stabilized Plan

James and Sam already knew the necessary solutions regarding how to refine their SI and sustain their performances. Perhaps the most crucial element that the athletes spoke of was the consolidation of a "circle of friends." People within the circle were categorized into three subsets based on whether they were affiliated with athletic performance during Games contexts or not, and depending on whether such support was ongoing or momentary. Second, there was an emphasis on sticking to a previously formulated elaborate plan in order to increase the likelihood of athletic competence in complex Major Games tournaments. With the consolidation of their competition plans, the athletes were no longer flexible and lenient toward SI malfunction. As a result, the respondents exerted as much say and control as was necessary to meet their performance – related objectives. What these combined characteristics reflected was the stabilization of control over internal and external factors.

The Circle of Friends

The consolidated Stage Three athletes knew exactly who to resource within their sport and non–sport environments. The adaptive sources of support that the respondents described were sub–divided into an "immediate sport circle," people who were contributory within isolated moments termed "inner periphery resources," and non–sport support termed "outer periphery" resources. The

combined support of these three groups helped guard against a relapse to athletic incompetence.

The immediate sport circle. In terms of SI, the athletes categorized their supporters into three subsets. The athletes maintained an immediate circle of resources over and above personal coaches and national team athletes, and all of these resources were regarded as personal friends. This mixed subset of PSI and FSI were affiliated with the athletes via their sport. The composition of "the immediate sport circle" for optimists was developed from significantly wider group of domains, and hence it was defined more clearly than for the pessimistic athlete. Beyond including personal coaches, and national team athletes, it also included national team coaches, team managers, family, sport psychologists, and health care practitioners. These members remained with the athletes to present day and helped provide the constancy that the athletes needed.

When you are all travelling around the world, you don't have a whole lot of support in some cases other than if you are injured or something goes seriously wrong. It is good if you have got supportive people around whether it be family or a personal coach. I think that having your parents there or somebody who is supportive brings you closer to a sense of homeostasis in terms of your every day living – both your psychology and your physiology. It is a feeling of being reassured that you have got a basic back-up in support. You could get that from a "good team" management in terms of a good coach, a good manager, good medical and physiotherapy, and so on (James-24-19-5).

I have a couple of close friends on the team. We are best friends out of the ring as well. Even though we live thousands of miles apart, we travel together and make trips together. We are really close friends. They also happen to be the other best athletes on this team. They are genuine and I respect them as fighters because they get in the ring and do their job. I know that there is no bluffing involved. What they say is how it is. They are not saying anything to impress me. That is just how it is. I respect them and they respect me. I know they go to fight and I watch them do it. I get in behind them, and I know they are going to do the same thing. That brings us even closer (Sam-5-1-8).

Training camps like this with people like (the sport psychologist), which is pretty much new to me since last year. I have always done the mental aspect pretty much myself which isn't necessarily the best way to do it because it sometimes gets the better of me. It is better to talk things out. It has worked better for me as far as the Commonwealth Games and tournaments previous, and hopefully in the future like this one (Sam-2-7-11).

People on the inner periphery. There were also people on the inner periphery providing momentary emotional and physical support to the athletes at crucial times during Games competitions. The impact of such people was noticed and appreciated. It was understood, however, that inner periphery support was only there to assist in the immediate Major Games setting for the short-term. However, there would always be peripheral FSI filling these roles at Major Games competitions. This provided the athletes with some comfort and a sense of constancy regarding sport resources they could count on.

If you have got a good team manager, they should work their way up through the Canadian team management and make sure that something is done to get to the other team and ensure that something is done to settle things, quit the partying at night, and ensure that there is some restraint (James-8-8-12).

Usually mission staff are pretty supportive though it depends on their relationship or liaison with team management – which sort of feeds down to the athlete. If you have got good team managers who will look out for the athletes, usually they can get the mission staff to agree with athlete needs (James-11-10-14).

People on the outer periphery. There was also mention of a "non–sport" supportive subset that seemed to be unique to one of the optimistic athletes. The overt purpose of such people was to make certain that personal businesses were still functioning as they should or ensuring that the athletes still had a social life. The underlying importance of "non–sport" support was to ensure that the athletes maintained healthy perspectives via a balanced lifestyle. With their influences, the athletes were able to approach their sport, and therefore their tournaments

with a clear mind. This subset of support also remains with the athlete to present day.

Most of my friends at home know that I do well in boxing, and it is kind of something that they cannot relate to because they are so out of sports now. They support me from afar. They know that I am going to the Olympics and that is all they are waiting for is the Olympics. They are not too much involved with the sport itself. They are just there to party when I get home. As soon as I get home, the phone will be ringing "ok, we are going out you are home." That is pretty much the extent of their involvement. They want to be involved in the other side of me because they cannot really relate to the sports end of it (Sam-3-7-14).

The other optimistic athlete did not mention people within his outer periphery providing support. This uniqueness was more the result of the athlete's single marital status as well as his lack of extended family and friends. In his case, James believed that his competence would have been enhanced by outer periphery support.

If you are at peace with your home situation. Whether you are married or not, or your financial situation, your job, you have got to walk away and leave home knowing that everything is going to be there when you get back. Like that your wife isn't going to leave you. If you are going to be able to take a 2–3 week trip with one of these competitions, you have got to be able to have that confidence that everything is going to be alright when you are gone and when you come home. That allows you to focus at the time in your competition, on the trip itself (James-36-11-18).

Tolerating Plan Deviations

When it came to tolerating Major Games complexities, the optimistic athletes varied in their responses. One of the optimistic athletes spoke intolerantly of plan infringements and attempted to impose complete mastery over his tournament environment. This was how he tried to remain competent in performance settings. The other athlete was more flexible and accepting in his interpretation and approach to environmental complexity. The more tolerant athlete was able to retain his competence more easily in the face of environmental

complexity. The two subsets were labeled "intolerant" and "tolerant" optimists respectively. There was no sport specific reason for the difference in their tolerance as both athletes were initially highly flexible athletes with few subsequent maladaptive tournament experiences during their development. It might however be hypothesized that levels of intolerance were symptomatic of other life experiences that were not elicited as part of the study.

Intolerant optimists. The behavior of the "intolerant optimist" was likened to a strong desire for task efficacy. The athlete increased his intolerance of outside infringements from FSI and environmental constraints after having established his consolidated plan. Due to a strong awareness of which formal procedures facilitated high levels of athletic competence, James performed best whenever his protocol was maintained. On a mechanistic level, James' protocol required well–organized tournaments with clear starting times, efficient transportation, familiar food, suitable accommodations, and the proper use of SI.

In Munich, I won the World Championships by four targets. I shot a 197 of 200, and that was the highest differential. The next score was a Russian who was four targets behind at 193. Everything was just functioning perfectly. I attribute the results partly to wonderful organization. The Germans were wonderful at organizing, the food was good, and everything seemed to be kind of like home. The efficiency, the organization at the shooting range, transportation back and forth. There just didn't seem to be any hitches. You felt that you didn't have to worry about "am I going to get to the range on time" or "is this bus going to go" or "is this cab going to get us there." The food was good. You didn't have to worry about "should I eat that, or not eat that? Am I going to get diarrhea?" We have been through lots of sickness on some of these trips – especially when you hit South American and wonder what is safe to eat and what isn't. There seemed to be virtually no distraction there. Everything seemed to be well organized, well planned. It was kind of like living at home in terms of quiet, good food, the guns were there, the ammunition was there. It was just a good atmosphere (James-20-8-1).

It was believed that the highest likelihood of experiencing a smooth competition was by maintaining personal control over as many factors as possible. This exertion of personal control facilitated an increased level of comfort, and subsequently a higher level of athletic competence that resulted in the highest of performance results.

If you go to a World Championship (of which the athlete won two), essentially you have to get a plane ticket, you have got to get there, you have got to get your hotel, you have got to look after your own food, get out to the range, and perform. You don't have anybody telling you that you have got be on such and such as plane, that you have got to wear such and such a uniform, you have got to be in such and such a city to get your uniform, and you have got to be on such and such a flight to satisfy their needs, and that you have to be in such and such a village at such and such a time. This example goes on and on in terms of its complexity. You have got someone telling you where you have got to be and when you have to be there. If you do it yourself, which of course can create some extra work for you, it does create a different atmosphere (James-28-10-19).

Despite an assertion of autonomy similar to the pessimistic Stage Three athlete, James had the ability to resource SI whenever it was necessary. The requisite criteria for resourceing was having a high level of competence from ample sport specific knowledge.

Tolerant optimists. Sam was a more tolerant athlete than James. He preferred the equivalent sense of mastery over his environment as James. However, James was able to cope with environmental complexities whenever they occurred, and despite such infringements, still perform competently. His behavior represented a stronger sense of coping efficacy.

There are a few members of this team that compensate for what they don't in the ring by voicing their opinions and trying to show that they are the boss. They think "I want it like this, and I am not going to settle for less." People kind of think "yeah, yeah, ok. Whatever." I don't do it that way. I don't enforce my authority. I don't have authority. I walk up and say "I really need this. Is it a possibility?" I am always given what I need. Before when I needed something I wouldn't tell anybody, but that is what they are there for. They are your support

staff like you said. They will support me, and if I need something, I feel confident through experience. I know the coaches, I know who to talk to, and I am not worried about talking to anybody (Sam-16-44-11).

It was this tolerance of other peoples' behaviors that ensured stabilized performances from one competition to the next for Sam. The result in terms of performance was medals in three consecutive Major Games competitions.

Moving Toward the Final Stage as an Optimist

With an internal focus as the final step in Stage Three competence development, both of the optimists recognized that there was more to sport than winning. Both optimists also developed a sense of personal satisfaction with their quality and quantity of performances in keeping with their internal focus. At the time of data collection, one of these athletes spoke of his eventual shift in focus away from travel. James began to recognize that there had to be more to his identity than that of being an athlete. With these combined insights, James began preparing for the next stage in his development by making plans outside of national team endeavors. Though on some levels the change in identity was upsetting, James was also prepared for a change of life and wanted to take it prior to being deselected. As for Sam, he continues to prioritize the importance of national team births.

Stage 4-Post-Competence Anger versus Satisfaction

Two athletes, one optimist and one pessimist, reached the fourth and final stage of development, and it represented a move away from athletic competence. It no longer mattered to these athletes whether they competed in international Major Games tournaments. They had achieved their athletic objectives, and realized that they could not sustain the same level of physical ability and

motivational persistence as they had in the first three stages of development. During Stage Four, the focus of sport altered from athletic development to lower degrees of competitive participation (Figure 5).

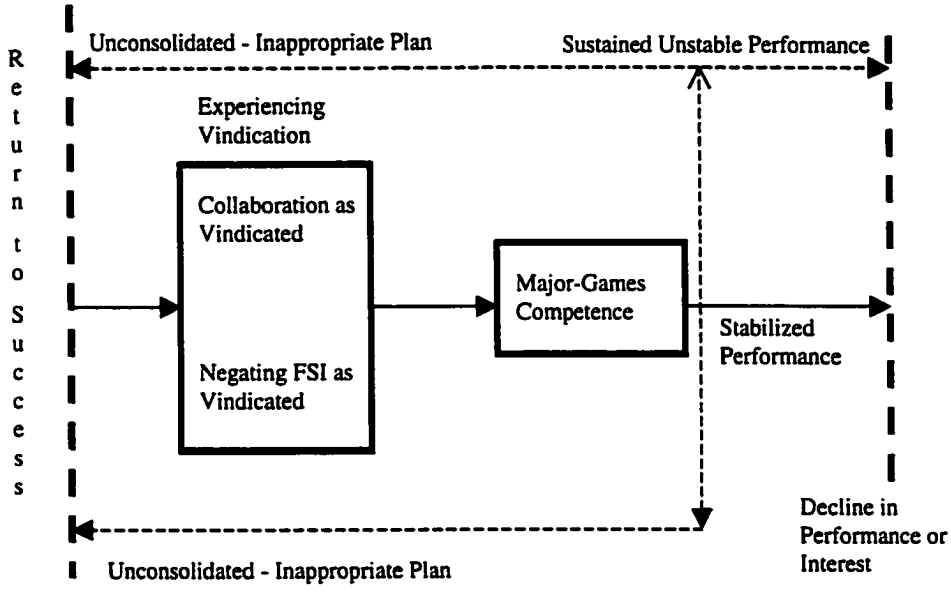

Figure 4: Athletic Competence Development - Stage Three

The pessimistic athlete continued to perform in competition, and was still hoping to represent her country in Major Games tournaments. Her disenchantment toward the national team structure continued and was reflected in a sustained distrust of national team contexts and an unwillingness to sign any form of national team contractual agreement.

You know what. This is a democratic country, they have no control over me, and if they don't want me on the team because I won't wear their cheezy outfit, or I won't use their vet, which is ridiculous anyway? You know what? I am indifferent because my life is going to go on because I have a family, I have top horses, and if worse comes to worse, I'll make a shit load of money selling my top horses. So, I'll be fine. I'll be just fine without the Olympics or the Pan–American Games. They won't be fine at all (Chantal-3-16-22).

Nonetheless, the pessimistic athlete maintained her interest in sport, and in fact, sport remained the respondent's principal interest and life's work, perhaps because sport business was unfinished.

The other Stage Four athlete, an optimist, was more satisfied with his past athletic accomplishments. There was no bitterness or anger harbored for SI members residing within his national team's FSI. Despite his current selection as a national team member, the optimist was disinterested in such pursuits. It was understood that his best performance years were behind him, and that it was time to move on to other interests.

I don't have the intense desire to win that I had years ago. I have already been to six Olympic Games. To put the time and effort for the next 6–7 months into trying to make the team would be difficult. I also have serious financial responsibilities. I have other things in life that are taking priority. Early on, shooting took first priority in my life, and because of that, I shot really well. To this day, I didn't accomplish some of the other things that I should have done (James-22-30-35).

In fact, the athlete indicated a willingness to become involved as a formal support staff member for his national team so that he could guide others. The most notable difference between the pessimist and optimist was a divergence in how they viewed their sport, their personal level of satisfaction with their own achievements, and subsequently to what level they were prepared to support either individual athletes as they began to work with their national team's formal sport structure.

The Altering of Philosophy

After numerous years at Stage Three, the athletes realized that they could no longer sustain themselves as world–class performers. Beyond experiencing a decline in ability, the athletes were no longer as ambitious in their sport – related

aspirations as they once were. One national team achievement more or less was seen as unimportant in the scheme of things.

I am not sure that I want all the pressure. I'll be really honest with you. I'm not sure. I will go down there and give it my best shot because I am a competitor. I am above all else a competitor. But, I am not sure – it doesn't matter to me. Can you believe that? Can you believe that I am saying that? It doesn't matter. It used to really matter if I made a team (Chantal-19-9-13).

That is probably because I have done everything pretty well that I could have done in my shooting career. I didn't win an Olympic medal, but I have won two world championships, which were actually over bigger fields. I have had my day in the sun and I am quite happy to retire with that (James-22-45-2).

Optimistic distancing. Though both athletes were less interested in team aspirations, their reasons for stepping back were different. For the optimist, the lowering of Games – related pursuits reflected a shift to other life priorities. These life changes did not reflect any form of sport or national team disenchantment.

I don't have the intense desire to win that I had years ago. I have already been to six Olympic Games. To put the time and effort for the next 6–7 months into trying to make the team would be difficult. I also have serious financial responsibilities. I have other things in life that are taking priority. Early on, shooting took first priority in my life, and because of that, I shot really well. To this day, I didn't accomplish some of the other things that I should have done. As I look at the Olympics for next year, unless something changes in the next few months with my financial situation, I am not going to stay on the national team (James-22-30-47).

This non–affective distancing for James was confirmed by his interest in mentoring other athletes and assisting with national team activities. The willingness to affiliate with former FSI was unique to the optimist and reflected his adaptive view of international competitive experiences and what they had to offer.

Pessimistic distancing. The pessimistic athlete, Chantal, developed an entirely different reason for national team distancing. As opposed to stepping

away from her team by acknowledging a decrease in personal ability, or a change in life priority, Chantal attributed her potential de–selection to externally controllable factors such as team politics and poor judging. With these maladaptive expectations, the athlete on a physical (athletic) level attempted to sustain herself in the sport despite inevitable de–selection.

What is happening now is that there is no respect. There is no respect. In the past they respected me as an intelligent human being, they respected me as a person who had morals. They respected me as somebody who was completely dedicated to the sport. I look at them (the support infrastructure) now and think I don't need it. I don't need it. I mean can you tell me what I have left to prove? Nothing (Chantal-17-23-4).

I think that if he was judged fairly (athlete's horse), and he had a good day, that he could easily win. But, I don't think that will happen from a political point of view because it is politics – all about politics. My horse's tools are not for those kinds of judges (Chantal-20-7-11).

Instead of being de–selected as a result of her diminishing athletic ability, Chantal tried to bait her national team to remove her as a result of disobeying team rules. It is believed that this rebellious action served as a way for the athlete to preserve her dignity as a performer. Either that, or there was a complete unwillingness to relinquish control in matters that were believed to fall under the athlete's jurisdiction.

I mean, if they insist that I sign it, I will scratch out almost everything. I'll leave a few things in it. So who cares if I sign it? Right? I'll go to the press this time. Don't you think that it's time the public knew what kind of shit we put up with as athletes? Don't you think that it's time now? Don't you think that it's time that the tax–payers, who are paying for this crap, know? How do these people (the team's SI) think that they are holding weight over us? They shouldn't be telling us what to do (Chantal-3-5-11).

Ultimately, the pessimistic athlete achieved the same ends as the optimistic athlete de–selection. The means through which she achieved it,

however, reflected a different level of self–esteem. The pessimistic athlete, Chantal, seemed concerned with what others might think of her culmination of an athletic career. This might have had something to do with her reliance on sport as a professional career. The concern of other peoples' views might have also reflected a prevailing external focus that seemed to be part of her developmental process and current self. Perhaps it was this preoccupation with what others thought that led to a higher level of anger than was visible from the optimistic Stage Four athlete.

General Summary

The sequential nature of the four stages indicated that athletic competence at the high–performance level followed a sequence, and that this sequence differed for optimists and pessimists.

Stage One

Stage One, known as naïve versus guarded naive optimism, reflected a high level of enthusiasm for all of the respondents. There was a level of satisfaction derived from making a national team for the first time. As a result of this satisfaction, the athletes focused on the positive aspects of their new achievements and experienced some initial international success. It is believed that these initial achievements had something to do with their naïve team – related outlooks where all aspects of the team, and the respondents' positions within them, were seen as positive. This highly optimistic view was maintained for a short time as a result of a high level of flexibility when it came to SI interaction. Flexibility was possible due to the respondents' unformed competition plans.

Because the respondents did not have consolidated plans and protocols to follow during tournaments, they did not mind following FSI directives to the letter.

When the respondents were compared with each other, two subsets of athletes emerged from the data. Naïve optimists were athletes who were extremely positive performers. These athletes saw nothing wrong with their team experiences, and did not expect anything other than positive experiences in the future. One of the reasons for this resilient optimistic outlook was the optimistic support provided by PSI. PSI was highly enthusiastic of their athletes' national teams, and they shared these views with the respondents. This initial sharing of information from creditable PSI helped frame the adaptive expectations of naïve optimists from Stage One onward.

Guarded naive optimists were also optimistic of their immediate appointments to their national teams. They, however, were fragile (or less resilient) in their optimistic views. Due to warnings from other athletes and personal coaches, these athletes became hypersensitive to organizational malfunction. The guarded naive optimists anticipated that it was only a matter of time until they were to experience some form of organizational malfunction, which would detract from their athletic competence. So, on a general level the marked difference between naïve and guarded naive optimists was the extent that they ruminated on forthcoming organizational malfunction in comparison to the extent that they focused entirely on tournament performance.

Stage Two

Having experienced their first international tournaments, the respondents spoke of a stage in their development where they experienced setbacks in the quality of their performances as well as their results. As part of their setback, the respondents spoke of Stage Two as a point where they began to question their own legitimacy as athletic performers while also questioning how others affected this legitimacy. The catalyst to Stage Two was the same for all of the respondents. There came a time where the novelty of being a national team athlete faded, and this is when the spark of performance and team affiliation also faded temporarily. The struggle for the athletes at that moment was to find another focus upon which to remain motivated. The time it would take to recapture a positive focus varied from optimists to pessimists and was linked to how they viewed the self – SI relationship.

The two subsets of athletes worked through the typical setbacks of Stage Two in different ways, and hence were labeled as either "aware" or "skeptical." For the optimistic respondents, Stage Two served as an opportunity to develop an awareness of how they and their SI needed to work in tandem in order to re–establish competent performance. From a naïve outlook derived in Stage One, the optimists did not hold other people accountable for their setbacks. Instead, they viewed Stage Two as a learning opportunity. The respondents knew that there was a lot to be learned, and it was the acquisition and integration of these lessons that became the optimists' focus. Lessons gleaned during Stage Two included how the athletes should consolidate their competition plans and how others from

their SI might fit in and contribute to athletic competence. The focus for skeptical pessimistic athletes was slightly different than for optimists. The skeptical respondents remained in Stage Two for a longer time than did their optimistic counterparts. The reason for a prolonged Stage Two was the considerable lag time between experiencing numerous setbacks and finally searching for solutions. The behavior of skeptics reflected a self-serving bias where the accountability for the decline in competence was attributed to others within their SI. Pessimists emphasized SI malfunction as opposed to internal accountability, and therefore means of rectifying their athletic incompetence. When they did figure out how they were to perform with competence, their solutions were different than for optimists and reflected a higher degree of reluctance to relinquish control to FSI.

Stage Three

The answer of how to perform with competence was learned during Stage-Two, but not implemented until Stage Three. The respondents shifted their focus in Stage Three from learning what to do in order to perform with competence to actually doing it. Changes for all of the respondents highlighted the implementation of competition plans. These plans entailed logistical components that the athletes were to exert themselves, and the logistical components that the athletes wanted their SI to carry out on their behalf. Initially, the respondents implemented their "improved" plans and experienced a return to international success at Major Games competitions. These favorable results were short-lived because the athletes began to feel comfortable with their return to success, and subsequently softened the implementation of their plans. Once plans were

softened there was an immediate decline in athletic competence and international results. For all but one of the athletes who reached this point, the decline in performance occurred for one or two additional tournaments. Then, the athletes noticed the revision of their plans. The result was a return to the correct plan, which highlighted a consolidated organizational structure including various personal and FSI. Beyond a consolidated plan regarding who did what task, all of the Stage Three athletes also developed a pragmatic view of how they would interact with other athletes. It was understood that not all teammates had the respondents' best interests at heart, and those who didn't were no longer interacted with.

The implementation of a structured plan was different for optimists and pessimists. The most unique difference when comparing the two subsets of respondents was how they called upon their SI for assistance. Hence, during Stage Three, the respondents were classified as "resourceful or reliant." Though both subsets of athletes experienced equal success once they achieved Stage Three status, their means of achieving it indicated a discrepancy. The optimists were the more receptive subset and resourced a wide range of SI to assist them whenever necessary. The relation between the respondents and their SI was not one of co-dependence. Instead, the optimistic athletes knew that they were highly capable performers in their own right. Despite a strong sense of self, the athletes also knew that they would need assistance from time to time, and that this assistance should come from as wide a variety of domains as necessary. Within their broad SI, the optimists classified assistance in terms of a "circle of friends," and within

the circle there were three layers of SI based on levels of contact and rapport. Despite a preference for some SI over others, the athletes resourced whoever could best help them in the moment.

In contrast to the openness of optimists, the pessimistic athletes were less trusting in terms of who they could call upon for assistance in times of need. As a result, the pessimists had a tighter circle of friends which was limited mostly to PSI. Their closed attitude toward FSI limited the accessibility to a wider number of experts who might have been able to help them with personal and sport – related weaknesses. However, their closed behavior left pessimists insecure of their own weaknesses, and thus unable to receive assistance. Interestingly, when the pessimists did open themselves up to SI and asked for assistance, their behavior was one of reliance, also known as co-dependence.

Stage Four

Due to the composition of the respondent group, most of the athletes resided in the first three stages of their competence development. The two athletes who achieved Stage Four status were no longer physically capable of performing the way they once had. Both respondents knew that their best years as competitors were over, and that they should start making other life plans. These plans emphasized coaching and business – related studies.

When the patterns of career distancing were compared, there were differences for the optimistic and pessimistic respondent. For the optimist, there was no ill feeling or regret toward his accomplishments and his national team. The optimist was satisfied with his athletic career, and during Stage Four he was

focusing on other career interests of his own volition. The athlete did not lose his motivation to perform. Instead, he focused his motivation elsewhere. Sport became a peripheral focus, and the athlete began displaying an interest in mentoring other athletes so that they too could benefit from the positive experiences that high level sport offered.

In contrast with his smooth distancing from national team status, the pessimistic athlete experienced far more difficulty during Stage Four. The pessimist did not seem equally prepared to alter her status and focus from national team athlete to coach and professional business person. In keeping with her overarching concern of FSI misused control, the athlete remained preoccupied by team politics and how these were going to be the reason for her eventual de–selection. Unfortunately, the sustained pessimistic rumination over uncontrollable factors left the pessimist unprepared for the next stage of her life outside of athletics.

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to describe how SI influences athlete competence from one Major Game to the next, and how this in turn affects amateur athletic careers. The 8 athletes interviewed shared their vast experiences, and in so doing, provided a multitude of possible reasons for their movement, or lack of movement, from one distinct stage of athletic competence to the next. When the explanations of respondents were compared and contrasted, their pathways suggested a stage–based model with specific reasons for athletic development and athletic stagnation. By offering reasons for their own athletic evolution, the respondents alluded to three key considerations: (a) how SI impacted on stages of competence development, and how these stages, in turn, related to (b) optimistic or pessimistic athletic pathways, and (c) a subsequent means of accessing personal and FSI.

The aforementioned considerations, which served as the key parts of athletic competence development, and therefore the emergent stage–based conceptual model, provide the basis of discussion for this chapter. The findings and emergent models will be discussed in relation to the theories that were considered in Chapter 2. Due to the emergent nature of this study, additional salient literature not considered in Chapter 2 will also be integrated throughout this chapter.

Stages of Competence Development

The data analysis suggested four distinct stages that denoted athletic competence development. These were (a) "naïve versus guarded naïve optimism," (b) "awareness versus skepticism," (c) "open resourcefulness versus closed reliance," and (d) "post–competence satisfaction versus anger." Previous literature from attribution, self–efficacy, and perceived control will be considered in lieu of the emergent stages of competence development as well as the general competence development process.

Stage One: Naïve versus Guarded Naïve Optimism

Stage One began with the respondents having experienced personal confirmatory information via a combination of earlier supportive experiences with PSI and numerous successful results. Both sources of information were received at the provincial and national levels. Once national team selection was determined, the respondents received adaptive information, maladaptive information, or both from their PSI regarding what to expect from their national teams. The respondents subsequently approached national team environments with varying amounts of optimism. The resilience of respondent optimism, in turn, related back to the initial efficacy information from PSI. This sequence of events will now be considered in lieu of existing motivational theory.

Initial Major Games efficacy. Stage One began before the respondents experienced any national team interaction. The respondents already had a sense of their own athletic capabilities as a result of positive experiences at the national level. As Bandura (1990, 1997) predicted, such favorable experiences supported

by adaptive coaching techniques from PSI, left athletes with high expectations regarding what was to come. Due to ample athletic abilities, the simplicity of initial tournament challenges, and ample coping techniques, the resilience of athletic efficaciousness for the respondents was relatively untested. There was a belief based on past less challenging tournament experiences that abilities and resources would always be sufficient to handle forthcoming challenges at international tournaments. Such expectations of efficacy, based on Dembo and Gibson's (1985) more general version of teaching efficacy, initially left the athletes somewhat resilient in their optimism. Optimism for all respondents remained present during the initial parts of Stage One regardless of differences in the adaptive nature of PSI transmitted expectations. These findings supported Bandura's (1977, 1986) prioritizing of personal experience over verbal persuasion as a stronger overriding source of efficacy information when both sources were drawn upon concurrently.

The influence of PSI on athletes' a priori expectations. Figure 2 of this study indicated, however, that parents and personal coaches did play a role in the respondents' initial expectations of what was to come in terms of athletic competence and subsequent Games success. Herein is where the respondents seemed to have inherited their eventual sport – related explanatory patterns. Seligman (1990), Retew and Reivich (1995), and Biddle (1993) have already noted that significant others such as coaches can help sustain or even improve the levels of optimism in the elite athletes that they interact with via attribution retraining (see Försterling, 1985). The present study supports this assertion and

also suggests that coaches as well as parents, due to their credibility in the eyes of their athletes, can foster latent pessimistic expectations resulting in eventual helplessness. Alloy, Abramson, Metalsky and Hartlage (1988) have noted that peoples' explanatory patterns and subsequent behaviors relate to the situational information that they confront within their performance environments. To this, one can add, as Bandura (1986) already has when considering sources affecting self–efficacy, that behaviors of optimism or pessimism can also be intertwined with the situations that people expect to confront via the information relayed by creditable others. When such information is a significant part of what athletes have to draw on for confidence, and optimism, such as in the case of inexperienced national team athletes, the importance of the information transferred by personal support eventually takes on heightened significance.

It seems that the information shared by PSI affected all of the respondents, even though such effects were not immediately apparent. Just as Bandura (1997) spoke of, though only in terms of coaches, optimistic PSI served as sources of positive assurance that the respondents were capable athletes, and that forthcoming FSI support mechanisms would attempt to serve as facilitative measures. Hence, for the optimists in this study, lead–up time prior to Major Games selection was devoted to athletic betterment much like the optimistic Berkley swimmers in Seligman's (1990) study. The result herein was a stable high level of self–efficacy and a sense of motivational resilience that remained steadfast throughout the remaining portions of athletic careers despite the inevitability of personal and support – related shortcomings. It was due to a

resilient belief in the possibility of self– and operative efficacy that the optimistic Stage One athletes remained what Skinner (1996) regarded as "learned resourceful."

The athletes with less adaptive sources of early PSI support were also initially resilient, however the strength of their efficacy expectations was fragile. The behavior of the eventual pessimists mirrored Seligman's (1990) pessimistic Berkley swimmers. Just as Seligman found in his own research, the developing pessimistic respondents in this study approached their national teams filled with optimism. They, too, remained as such until they were eventually pushed to a point where their personal athletic abilities were challenged. This is where the athletes' latent sources of PSI – related maladaptive information eventually came to the fore, and resulted in pessimistic rumination and an associated behavior described by Seligman and his colleagues (e.g., Abramson, Seligman & Teasedale, 1978; Peterson, Schwartz & Seligman, 1981; Seligman, 1990) as "learned helpless."

Differences in optimism during initial team experiences. As already stated, the effects of PSI information, and in some cases, subsequent pessimistic rumination happened within the first year. However, such responses were not immediate. Instead, it seemed that all of the respondents were optimistic in the short–term regardless of earlier PSI influence, and there was a reason for this trend. Bandura's (1977) primary source of efficacy information, personal successful tournament experiences, temporarily overrode differences in the adaptive nature of tertiary sources of PSI – related information. The respondents

herein seemed to have *a priori* expectations regarding the perceived relationship (termed contingency) between their own and other's efforts, abilities and results via the explanatory nature of PSI transmitted information. In essence, the respondents' choice among Weiner's (1971) main attributions tied to previous information from PSI sources. Despite resulting expectations, the resilience of performance – related hopes and fears were not challenged until part way through national team seasons, where the respondents experienced one or a few initial minor setbacks in SI functioning. This is where the respondents seemed to reach their "explanatory crossroads," which in turn delineated them overtly by their reflections as optimists and pessimists. Much like Seligman (1990) had predicted when considering the explanatory pattern of children, it seems that people adopt similar explanatory patterns to those of their "primary caregivers." Along the same vein, and in the same spirit, it also seems that adult neophytes in national team contexts inherit and eventually employ the explanatory and subsequent behavioral patterns of their primary caregivers, in this case their PSI coaches.

Among the developing pessimists, there were differences in the earliest of team – related experiences. Some encountered earlier signs of confirmatory FSI malfunction prior to experiencing their performance barriers. For these respondents, difficulties were encountered during team selection, training camps, and team travel, immediately prior to Major Games. Having experienced minor preliminary warnings, such pessimists approached their initial Major Games experiences with a heightened level of concern. Further, these pessimists began on a course of acute hypersensitivity toward FSI malfunction that fed into a high

degree of what Seligman (1990) termed "pessimistic rumination." This pattern of behavior remained with the more "radical" subset of pessimists from the end of Stage One to the point of data collection or athletic de–selection, whichever came first.

In contrast, developing pessimists who experienced nothing but preliminary adaptive experiences delayed their judgements regarding the credibility of earlier PSI information. This latter "moderate" subset of developing pessimists remained optimistic for a longer duration of Stage One, and subsequently, spent less time in rumination than the former. Interestingly, it was the discrepancy in functionality during the earliest of experiences within national teams that helped explain emergent slight differences in the explanatory patterns of the two subsets of pessimists. Hence, within this study, it seems that the explanatory pattern of initial PSI – related information did not fully account for the respondents' pessimistic explanatory tendencies. Unlike Seligman's (1990) findings regarding the explanatory pattern – related osmosis that occurs between parents and their children, it seems that the adult athletes undergoing competence development relied somewhat on primary sources of efficacy information even when there was preliminary contrary evidence from creditable others. In essence, it seems that the adult high–performance athletes temporarily held secondary and tertiary sources of information at bay until they garnered confirmatory evidence of their own, though only to assess the extent of its credibility. This seems to be how the respondents in this study utilized Bandura's (1977) various sources of efficacy information as they strove for athletic competence.

Insights from the competence barrier incident. When the athletes arrived at their respective crossroads, they realized that personal efforts and abilities would only take them so far, and that they required SI to help facilitate additional movement toward athletic competence. It was noted that in Games environments, athletic competence would only be possible when Weiner's (1979) dimensions of control and stability were ensured, and this in turn would be impossible without some form of SI collaboration, or operative efficacy. As Bandura (1997) already noted, the increased complexity in the performance environment at Major Games increases a sport task's level (or magnitude) of difficulty exponentially. As a result, these respondents' beliefs in their own capabilities to perform were challenged to the point where their efforts and abilities were acknowledged from part way through Stage One onward as linked to the operative efforts and abilities of personal and formal support mechanisms. For optimists, the key consideration was how best to resource SI in order to ensure forward progression. Pessimists, in contrast, varied in concern regarding whether SI could potentially be resourced as needed. The interpretation of the relationship between respondents and their SI, in turn, became a tell–tale sign regarding whether the athletes eventually felt learned helpless (Abramson, Seligman and Teasedale, 1978) or learned resourceful (Skinner, 1996) despite perceived self–efficacy. The respondents' beliefs in their own abilities became a necessary but insufficient contributory factor for eventual competence much as my colleagues and I (e.g., Marshall & Schinke, 1998; Schinke, 1999; Schinke, da Costa & Andrews, submitted for publication) have speculated elsewhere. Hence, for the respondents, differences

in efficacy transcended personal efficacy expectations to what Bandura (1986) termed operative efficacy expectations. Inevitably, as Stanley and Maddux (1986) previously noted, it was the latter form of efficacy that was required in order to achieve favorable outcome expectations and an "immediate" behavior of heightened persistence.

Stage Two: Awareness versus Skepticism

Stage Two began once the respondents assessed the contingency between their own capabilities and the likelihood of eventual athletic competence given SI resources. A decision on the contingency between personal and formal SI collaboration contributed to differences in the functionality of reflections. Reflection functionality, in turn, affected whether the respondents worked collaboratively with PSI and FSI, whether they prioritized PSI but remained receptive to FSI, or whether the respondents constrained themselves mostly to PSI. After spending anywhere from one year to an entire decade contemplating how best to affiliate with support mechanisms, the respondents began developing a consolidated means of managing their SI. Stage Two of athletic competence development will now be discussed in terms of existing research.

Post-athletic barrier reflection and behavior. The interpretation of barrier incidents influenced how the respondents approached Stage Two of athletic competence development. The optimistic respondents reflected over potential reasons for their momentary inefficacy and sought out factual understanding regarding why their setbacks happened. As stated previously, based on Weiner's (1985) and Seligman's (1990) criteria, the optimists attributed

performance barriers adaptively to a lack of personal effort, a lack of SI effort, a lack of Games experience, a lack of communication, or several of these factors in tandem. Therefore, the optimists accepted part of the accountability for performance mishaps, and explained the remaining reasons for their setbacks to potentially controllable factors such as the malleable operative actions of SI. This explanatory tendency for optimists was not in accordance with prototypical self–serving attribution tendencies (e.g., Brawley & Rejeski, 1983; Santamaria & Furst, 1994). In the immediate study, explanations were assigned mostly to what was controllable regardless of where accountability resided. This style of reflection indicated that the optimists searched for truth and factual information when explaining performances because these were the most efficient pathways to solving issues and eventually achieving Major Games competence.

The moderate pessimists reflected over their performance barrier incidents differently than the optimists. The "moderates" explained their setbacks to a combination of controllable and uncontrollable factors. Controllable factors were assigned to a lack of personal Games experience as well as unintentional FSI–operative malfunction. These effort related explanations, classified by Weiner (1985) and Seligman (1990) as reflecting potentially rectifiable causes, were similar to those of the optimistic respondents. The moderates, however, also assigned part of the reason for their barriers to uncontrollable factors including FSI intimidation and FSI instigated structural politics. These latter explanations seemed to stem back to earlier maladaptive efficacy information from PSI sources. The resulting contradictory balance between constructive contemplation

and pessimistic rumination tied to a one to three year stagnation period in keeping with Abramson, Seligman and Teasedale's (1978) universal helplessness. During this time the respondents struggled to reconcile initial favorable tournament experiences with juxtaposed detracting information from PSI and a recent barrier incident. The result of such behaviors based on the respondents' explanations seems to have been a moderate amount of rumination.

The final subset of athletes was termed "radical pessimists." It was noted from Stage One that the reasons for radical pessimism were the combined effects of maladaptive PSI information, an early confirmatory incident, and the eventual barrier incident. After the barrier incident was experienced, "radicals" devoted most of their extensive six to ten years of pessimistic rumination to thoughts and feelings surrounding the non–contingency between personal athletic efficacy and a broader inefficacy. In essence, the radicals explained their immobility to an external locus of control as opposed to personal factors (see Peterson, Maier & Seligman, 1993 for a review of locus of control). This explanation of difficulty reflected Brawley's (1984) ego–protective tendencies more typically than the explanatory pattern exhibited by optimists and moderates. It was these "protective" tendencies that sustained the respondents throughout their rumination, and eventually pushed them into a search for viable alternative sources of operative assistance.

Methods of infrastructure management. The three subsets of respondents differed in the amount of time it took them to begin testing various combinations and permeations of SI management. Eventually, however, all

respondents began searching for SI to help facilitate linkages between their own athletic self–efficacy and Major Games competence. However, the SI accessed as well as the way they were utilized varied with each respective subset. For the optimists, support was sought from a combination of formal and personal resources. The sole criteria used by optimists when selecting SI for their "circle of friends" was the willingness to serve as stable–trustworthy facilitative resources leading to heightened environmental control. The formulating of this broad criteria, which began early in Stage One, reflected a willingness to access all sources of facilitative operative support regardless of which subset of SI they originated from. Such behavior within the present study was likened to Skinner's (1996) learned resourcefulness and Bandura's (1997) more recent interpretation of adaptive proximal control. In keeping with Bandura's (1997) revised speculations, this study provided a context where proximal control exemplified an adaptive source of information leading to Major Games competence. The key to the adaptive nature of proximal control for the optimistic respondents herein was that it reflected intermittent resourcing from SI as opposed to a dependency based behavior that has been likened by Bandura (1986) and Skinner (1995) to the eventual development of personal inefficacy.

The moderate respondents accessed their SI differently than the optimists did. Due to previously delineated reasons for FSI targeted skepticism, the moderates were selective of whom they solicited for assistance and how they utilized them prior to and during Major Games. Though Weiner's (1979) stability and externally regulated control, in this case via FSI, remained as important

dimensions in selection criteria, Weiner's (1986) more recent consideration of SI behavioral intention (termed intentionality) was also considered. Moderates already knew that the intention of FSI to assist was defined by whether they (FSI) viewed such aid as advantageous for their national team organizations as a whole. This interpretation, in turn, suggested that FSI sources of assistance might not be as stable and controllable by athletes as is necessary to form heightened levels of efficacy. Hence, the selection by moderates reflected an attempted positioning of PSI in primary support positions, and a placement of FSI in secondary areas of necessity whenever possible. Such attempts at positioning signaled some concern regarding the relinquishment of control to FSI in instances where athletes felt they needed to be prioritized as individuals. This is how the moderates defined which SI members were the most creditable sources of efficacy information and assistance (see Bandura, 1977) in times of need. Herein is where the moderates' attempts at proximal control reflected many of the reliance – based concerns that Bandura (1986) raised in earlier discussions on the subject.

The radical pessimists selected and subsequently attempted to manage their SI differently than optimists and moderate pessimists did. Their attempted selection of SI was regarded as "constrained" in this study. Where optimists resourced assistance from both subsets of their SI, and moderates prioritized PSI but were willing to work with FSI, the radicals attempted to shrink their support system, and subsequently rely on this smaller group of PSI members. Such behaviors, caused by residual maladaptive interpretations of earlier team experiences, seemed to reflect a complete distrust of national teams and their

methods of organizational functioning. In keeping with Bandura's (1986) earliest views of proximal control, these limited sources of assistance, which included personal coaches, family, sponsors, and perhaps one FSI member, were relied upon in order to achieve a perception of operative efficacy. During instances where any of these limited operative sources of assistance became unavailable, radicals resigned themselves to a belief and behavior of non–contingency between athletic self–efficacy and favorable outcome expectations as Seligman (1990) and Stanley and Maddux (1986) would have predicted. Hence, when the radical respondents were unable to manage their Major Games environments due to limited access to their entire PSI circle, they suffered from what Maddux (1995) termed "weak coping mechanisms," and subsequently rendered themselves universally helpless as Major Games competitors.

The re-establishment of efficacy. Though there were discrepancies between the subsets of respondents in terms of how they managed their support mechanisms and attempted to re–establish efficacy, athletes from all subsets eventually learned their best–suited methods of SI management. For the optimists, the trial and error process was expedited by stabilized persistence from the beginning of Stage One onward to the re–establishment of efficacy. The moderates, unlike the optimists, were not as immediately persistent. Their setbacks lasted anywhere from one to three years as they attempted to move beyond pessimistic rumination in a search for operative mechanisms that would help facilitate efficacy. The eventual discomfort with their athletic station, however, served as a catalyst, and the moderates also eventually began to search

for operative pathways to efficacy. The radicals engaged in pessimistic rumination for periods lasting from six to ten years. They, similar to the moderates, also engaged in a search for operative pathways to efficacy part way through Stage Two. However, with each setback, the radicals re–engaged in pessimistic rumination, and it was this process that delayed their competence development the longest. Eventually, however, all of the athletes seemed to consolidate their plans as they pursued their Major Games – related goals via personal and operative resources.

Stage Three: Open Resourcefulness versus Closed Reliance

Based on the respondent group, all of the athletes who achieved Stage Three status spoke of the successful implementation of their consolidated plans. The result of confirmatory experiences was a sense of vindication that the correct SI members were selected and subsequently placed in the appropriate supportive roles. With a resultant strong sense of "knowing," the respondents immediately became sloppy in the implementation of their consolidated plans and regressed back to Stage Two of development. In all but one case, regression was a short–term experience that lasted one or a few Major Game tournament(s). Afterward, these respondents re–established their consolidated plans and experienced consistent success. The other respondent, an optimist, moved between Stage Two and Stage Three of development for the remaining part of his athletic career. Such movement reflected a level of sloppiness that was unique to the one athlete. Stage Three for all of the athletes culminated with an eventual decline in tournament – related athletic ability or interest.

The return to success. Athletes from each subset eventually experienced a return to Major Games success via competent Major Games functioning. Major Games success for Stage Three graduates seemed to be linked with a necessary high level of sustained persistence in order to move beyond Stage Two barriers. What this indicated, which was in juxtaposition with Retew and Reivich's (1993), Seligman's (1990), and Peterson's (1980) earlier research on high–performance and professional athletes, was the possibility that such athletes could establish themselves as successful performers in situations of the highest complexity and adversity regardless of their explanatory pattern. Hence, they key differences between the subsets of athletes were the amount of time it took them to progress onward to Major Games competence, and the SI – related pathways through which they achieved it, not the ability to progress onward in adverse environments.

Relating solely to the pessimistic respondents, it seems that both subsets actually had to be more resilient than optimists to reach Stage Three given their maladaptive assignments to operative adversity. Pessimistic athletes might not have had the equivalent initial anticipatory strong sense of efficacy as the optimists during Stage One and the beginnings of Stage Two. However, it seems plausible that the pessimists developed what Maddux (1995) regarded as strong efficacy beliefs in personal problem–solving abilities. It was due to the development of a belief in tournament related factors being personally controllable that the pessimists eventually developed suitable pathways leading to operative efficacy (see Bandura, 1986) and the resultant use of appropriate

selective support mechanisms. It was the development of these skill sets that seemed to gradually heighten the pessimistic respondents' efficacy expectations to the point where they were able to sustain themselves until they too achieved a return to success in Major Games tournaments.

Experiencing vindication. Successful outcomes for the respondents served as confirmatory evidence that they had a strong understanding of how to achieve competence in tournaments via the operative assistance of their respective SI related pathways. For the optimists, the earlier decision to collaborate with both subsets of support as reflected by a wide "circle of friends" was vindicated by the establishment of Major Games competence and resulting Major Games success. For the single pessimist, a more guarded selection of SI resources served as confirmatory evidence that she too was correct in her suspicions regarding how to manage herself and her support mechanisms in relation to one another. In keeping with Bandura's (1977) primary source of efficacy information, the upbeat anticipatory beliefs of all Stage Three respondents were confirmed by a crucial and long awaited personal tournament experience. However, as Bandura (1986) predicted, confirmatory experiences were as much the result of a process including reflection and a search for pathways as the personal experience itself. In essence, much like Försterling (1985) and Biddle (1993) prescribed, the return to efficacy and subsequent competence came via the process of attributing and re–attributing with an ongoing adaptive shift toward what was controllable via the respondents and their operative versions of SI. In all instances, then, it seems that it was the athletes' ongoing reflections of themselves and their significant others,

as well as a resilient effort to pursue such beliefs after setbacks, that eventually contributed to a Major Games competence experience.

Regressing away from Major Games competence. Having experienced their recent breakthroughs as competent Major Games competitors, the Stage Three respondents seemed to become more tolerant of national team organizational functioning. For the short–term, the respondents seemed to ignore the perceived operative weaknesses that previously led to awareness or skepticism depending on whether they were optimists or pessimists. Instead, all of the respondents noted that they had a strong sense of self–assurance, and this, with the assistance of personally untrained or unaware SI, were sufficient reason for repeated Major Games success. Such interpretations seemed to reflect Brawley's (1984) self–serving bias where attributions were assigned solely to personal efforts and abilities. It seems plausible that such reflections indicated an over–inflated sense of athletic self–efficacy. The respondents believed that they could overcome imbedded organizational – operative weaknesses while still maintaining their Major Games competence via Weiner's (1979) attributions of well–developed athletic skills (termed ability) and an increase in personal effort. The softening of operative structures, however, led to a short–term lowering of Major Games competence. When the respondents reflected over their misgivings, most recognized that they required a combination of athletic self–efficacy and the appropriate operative mechanisms in order to remain competent as Major Games competitors. Because performance decrements were attributed externally to weak and malfunctioning operative mechanisms, and operative inefficiency was already

deemed as rectifiable, the short–term lapses from competence were not internalized nor ruminated about. Instead, the respondents vowed to re–establish both forms of efficacy, and subsequently began re–establishing their pathways to competence.

Re-established Major Games competence. From their recent regression to Major Games incompetence, the respondents were reminded that they could not meet their athletic objectives by relying solely on their own attributes. Bandura (1997) has already noted that optimal athletic performance requires interdependence between athletes and their contributory sources of support. Via an acknowledgement of Major Games complexity, the respondents herein seemingly were able to maintain adaptive perceptions of their own abilities and efforts while still recognizing the importance of an appropriate circle of friends. It was this broadened re–established mix between personal qualities and SI support that enabled the respondents to achieve their eventual return to Major Games competence. The result for all of the respondents when they re–established Major Games competence was a world ranking among the top 10 athletes in their respective sport.

Among the Stage Three respondents, the single pessimist was the first to acknowledge and remedy the recent mismanagement of her operative resources. Having developed sufficient amounts of what Bandura (1986) termed "problem solving efficacy," the respondent vowed that she would not re–experience helplessness caused by the incorrect operative mechanisms. Her hyper–vigilance, which seemed to be the result of early disconfirming sources of efficacy

information, did not allow for such discrepancies. Hence, the pessimistic respondent immediately began retrieving her "best suited" operative mechanisms and re–establishing the components that previously led to a high level of Major Games competence. Heightened resilience and a re–establishment of contributory pathways replaced earlier pessimistic behaviors such as rumination and despondence (see Seligman, 1990). So, the respondent narrowed her SI to a few necessary individuals. It was only with a return to a simplistic circle of friends that the pessimist was willing to undertake the challenge of Major Games complexities with a positive outcome expectation.

The three optimistic respondents also reflected over the reasons for their regression in performance. Their search for solutions, however, appeared to be more affect laden and less solution based than the pessimist. The optimists assigned their attributions to uncontrollable external factors such as the abilities and efforts of unreceptive FSI resources (see Biddle, 1993). Such behaviors seemed to reflect Brawley's (1984) ego protective strategies and an unlikely reversal in explanatory pattern. The optimists adopted a pessimistic explanatory pattern just as the aforementioned pessimist became optimistic in her explanation of possible pathways during latter Stage Three experiences. One possible reason for this reversal traced back to explanatory patterns in earlier stages of athletic development. It seems that the resilient behaviors of the optimistic respondents prevented them from learning the appropriate problem solving pathways that might have helped facilitate immediate resourcefulness. As Maddux (1995) has already noted, when people are faced with complex decisions, those with

underdeveloped problem solving abilities are less likely to find the pathways leading to solutions. Instead, as seems applicable to the Stage Three optimists, when people doubt their problem solving abilities as a result of the underdevelopment of such skills, their behaviors become erratic, inefficient, and ineffective. Hence, the move toward stabilized Major Games competence took slightly longer for two of the three optimists when compared with the pessimist. They too, however, eventually learned well–suited problem solving techniques leading to re–established generativity. The third optimist, who seemed to be the most extreme in his maladaptive assignments, continues to move between re–established competence and Stage Two regressions to the present as he begins his final season of an eleven–year brilliant though inconsistent national team career.

Stage Four: Post-competence Anger versus Satisfaction

During the time of data collection, only two respondents reached Stage Four of athletic development, one optimist and one pessimist. Stage Four reflected a decline in athletic ability as well as tournament interest. The optimist acknowledged his pending decline in performance and deselected himself from his national team prior to being rendered incompetent as a Major Games competitor. Subsequently, the optimist remained involved in competition on a recreational level. The pessimist, on the other hand, assigned the reasons for her decline in Major Games competence to FSI – external sources. Her explanations seem to reflect ego–protective tendencies. She denied personal age – related physical limitations as the reason for her decline. To this day, she continues to pursue national team births despite having already been passed over for selection

numerous times. Stage Four developments will now be considered in lieu of existing literature.

Decline, reflection, and behavior. The two respondents who reached Stage Four status had in excess of 50 years of cumulative Major Games experience. Despite having achieved such accolades as Olympic and World–Championship Medals, the two handled their declines in competence differently. The optimist recognized his declining performance while he was still a national team member. Though he was still productive in terms of Major Games results, he acknowledged that an ongoing increase in personal effort was required as compensation for decreased athletic ability. Such assignments seemed to reflect an acceptance in the loss of athletic self–efficacy (Bandura, 1990, 1997) via an inevitable gradual diminishment in physical aptitude. In keeping with Biddle's (1993) and Schinke's (1999) speculations, such assignments of causality led to a decrease in Major Games – related motivation and persistence. In terms of the immediate study, this typically dysfunctional attribution was regarded as a useful source of information leading the respondent away from athletic endeavors that had become unrealistic. The result was a gradual readjustment period where the respondent was able to develop competence and an identity in another domain while he was detaching from national team activities. Hence, there was little reason for rumination and affect–laden explanations regarding his pending athletic retirement.

As for the pessimist, a decline in tournament performance was also described. The assignment for such diminishments, however, was solely to FSI

externally uncontrollable factors. Hence, the Stage Four pessimist revisited a belief indicative of Abramson, Seligman and Teasedale's (1978) universal helplessness. Explanations were assigned to causes where athletic self–efficacy was not considered, and thus not impeded. It seems that the pessimistic respondent attempted to maintain her athletic resilience by focusing solely on operative inefficacy caused by FSI politics and FSI ineptness. Due to the lack of personal accountability in assignment, as Weiner (1986) would have predicted, there was more negative affect paired with the pessimist's explanation than that of the Stage Four optimist. Because such ego–protective strategies as described by Brawley (1984) were part of the previous path to athletic competence, they were re–employed as coping mechanisms in the present. The result was a prototypically adaptive heightened level of athletic persistence as well as a sustainable belief in personal athletic capabilities (see Bandura, 1989). Though such resilience was beneficial during the initial three stages of athletic development, it served as a debilitating factor that supposedly led to unrealistic outcome expectations and resultant athletic stagnation during Stage Four. Herein is one possible reason why the immediate athlete, and possibly other more visible amateur and professional athletes, have had athletic careers outlive adequately suited capabilities.

It thus seems that previously learned pathways for the optimist and the pessimist contributed to their Stage Four beliefs of self and SI – related others. These beliefs, in turn, helped explain at least part of the reason why the two athletes opted for different types of confirmatory national team de–selection.

Such seems to be the entrenchment of explanatory patterns and behaviors that were learned from the earliest stages of Major Games competence development onward.

Comparing Theoretical Linkages, Speculated Linkages and Emergent Results

Until now, the present discussion has emphasized how Major Games competence developed for the respondents herein. Considerations have targeted SI – related explanations for competence progression and stagnation within and across stages of development (Figure 6).

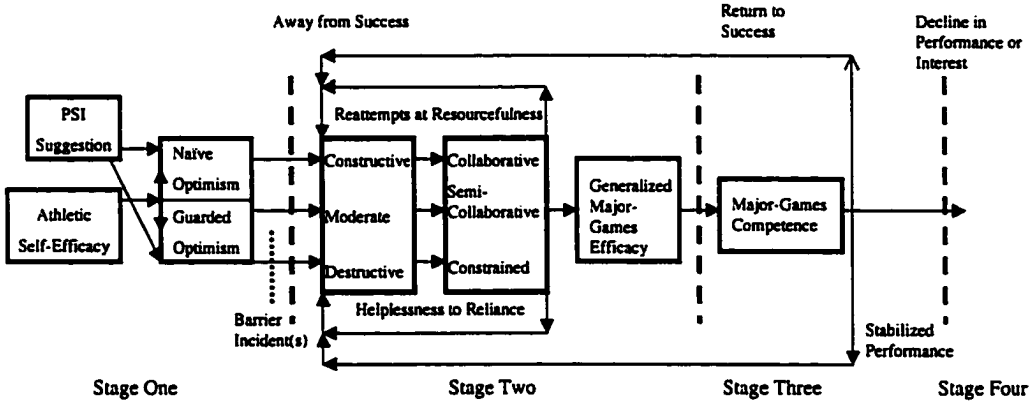

Figure 6: Athletic Competence Development - Synopsis

The final section of the discussion will consider how this study's emergent findings compared with speculated linkages from the Proposal as depicted in Figure 1. The linkages among the theories will be discussed in terms of four topics; the influence of SI on the competence system, the evolution of reflective patterns due to stage maturation, the relationship between explanations of efficacy and explanations of resultant behavior, and the clarification of explanatory patterns.

The influence of support-infrastructure. Within the framework expounded in the literature review, it was assumed that SI mediated on Major

Games competence via a cyclical and cumulative process where proximal reflections assimilated with distal reflections. This premise was supported herein, though the precise mechanisms of operative support became clearer. In this study, it seems that initially, only personal support mechanisms mediated on athletic experience, and they did so via Bandura's (1977) informative source of verbal persuasion. Once the respondents were selected to their respective Major Games teams, though prior to any team – related personal experiences, they received crucial operative – related efficacy information from their personal coaches. Though Bandura (1997), Gould, Hodge, Peterson and Giannini (1989) and Schinke and colleagues (e.g., Bloom, Schinke & Salmela, 1998; Marshall and Schinke, 1998) previously spoke of the importance of such sources of information on athletic functioning, one could not have predicted the magnitude of their impact during the first stage of Major Games development. It seems that the explanatory tendencies of PSI coaches during the respondents' formative developments in Stage One served as predictors of the respondents' eventual explanatory patterns. Such findings seemed similar to the inherited explanatory patterns of children from their parents as noted by Seligman (1990). As for the influence of FSI sources of information, these served mostly as confirmatory evidence of perceptual reference points provided by initially transmitted PSI information. Such was the long–term influence of personal coaches' explanations on the belief systems of their aspiring athletes during national team tenures.

Reflections due to stage maturation. The evolution of reflective behaviors for the respondents herein also seemed to define itself further by the

culmination of this study. In the proposed model, based on the work of Seligman and colleagues (e.g., Peterson, Luborsky & Seligman, 1983; Peterson, Maier & Seligman, 1993; Seligman, 1990) it was assumed that athletes with positive or negative experiences would explain their endeavors either in optimistic or pessimistic terms. The reason for any discrepancy between experience and subsequent explanatory pattern was clarified via a reciprocal relationship with earlier attributions and efficacy experiences, either one's own or someone else's, feeding off of each another in an accumulative process (see Bandura, 1986, 1990). Though such synergism reflected an ongoing solidification of explanatory tendencies through Stage One and most of Stage Two, there also came a point in each respondent's development where there was a move toward consolidated solution – based efficacious thinking. Such alterations in behavior, as discerned via explanatory patterns, seemed to happen regardless of the contingency between past informative sources of efficacy information and Major Games results. Hence, there were ever increasing instances where optimists and pessimists learned to explain performance – related factors as potentially controllable via the reformulation of unique operative pathways in keeping with Försterling's (1985) attribution retraining. The use of such pathways, especially for the pessimists, presented examples of how a relying or resourcing of assistance helped foster positive experiences leading to Major Games competence. Major Games experience, then, was not always the catalyst to competence development for the respondents. Instead, it seemed that a resilient belief of self, coupled with persistence, helped explain why solution – based reflection eventually became the

catalyst to the competence experience. As Bandura (1989) has noted, "foresightful conceptions of actions guide the production of appropriate behavior and provide the internal standards for the corrective adjustments in behavioral efficiency" (p. 1181). Such shifts were necessary in order to modify the respondents' entrenched Major Games – related behaviors, and thus ensure their progression as athletic performers.

Relating efficacy to behavior. Previous literature in social cognitive psychology including that of Stanley and Maddux (1986) and Bandura (1986, 1989) linked perceptions of efficacy with variances in performance – related behavior. In this study's preliminary conceptual model, adaptive beliefs in personal and operative Major Games efforts and abilities were likened to Skinner's (1996) learned resourcefulness (also termed adaptive proximal control by Bandura, 1997). It was believed that efficacious athletes would remain efficacious via an intermittent accessing of suitable operative mechanisms. Conversely, when a combination of personal attributes and operative pathways were insufficient to overcome Major Games task – related difficulties, the behavior herein was regarded as universal helplessness based on Abramson, Seligman and Teasedale's (1978) learned helpless. The relationship between efficacy and such adaptive or maladaptive athletic behaviors were speculated as being reciprocal. When this study's final results were compared with such presupposed linkages, there were slight clarifications to the preliminary model.

The immediate study added depth to the proposed linkages by providing a contextual understanding of how Major Games athletes can become resourceful or

helpless in high–stress tournament settings, or move from one such behavior to the other. Initial efficacy information came via a reflective process as was hypothesized in Figure 1. The PSI of the respondents herein suggested the likelihood of athletic efficacy given athletic capabilities and the extent of adaptive FSI in their athletes' respective national teams. It is believed now that such reflections initially served as efficacy information, which in turn led to early differences in Major Games efficacy expectations as well as long–term entrenched perceptual screens (see Baron & Bryne, 1984). However, as the respondents matured, it seems that in some cases with pessimists, there was a reassessment of the validity of earlier PSI transmitted efficacy information. The result was reconsideration and an establishment of contingent operative pathways moving pessimists away from inefficacy and despondence. The pessimist who eventually achieved Stage Three status developed a behavior that are likened to Bandura's (1986) maladaptive version of proximal control. The respondent began to rely on operative mechanisms in order to establish some contingent pathways leading to improved Major Games performance. Reliant behavior appeared to serve as an undermining source of personal efficacy information in the short–term as the athlete achieved her goal of success via codependence. However, a relying on others led to adaptive personal experiences, which in turn ensured the long–term persistence of the respondent herein. Based on a resulting heightened belief in her chance of competing at a world–class level when it counted, the respondent eventually began to experiment with her constrained SI until she achieved a level of autonomy that seemed to build on the "self" component of Major Games

efficacy. Hence, it seems possible that maladaptive proximal control can facilitate the gradual development of self–efficacy providing there is a gradual shift toward partial autonomy.

Explanatory patterns as predictors of performance. Based on the work of Seligman (1990), Retew and Reivich (1995) and Peterson (1980), levels of optimism have predicted successful performances in challenging sport tournaments. In terms of research considering high–performance swimmers and professional baseball players (see Seligman, 1990), when magnitude of difficulty was increased, optimists were the most likely to exert themselves and meet task challenges. Conversely, when pessimists from the aforementioned contexts encountered equivalent task challenges, they were more likely to respond with behaviors depicting inefficacy and helplessness at the personal and universal levels (see Stanley and Maddux, 1986 for a review). The present work developed its preliminary model based on these assumptions, and thus questioned them with a limited pool of respondents.

The results herein suggested that belief in the likelihood of successful outcomes only predicted accomplishments in the short–term. It seems that optimists are the most likely to reach competence within a limited span of time such as one performance season. However, this study suggests that pessimists also can become successful in high–stress tournaments when personal and operative mechanisms are challenged to the endth degree. However, as a caveat, it seems that the confidence to meet such task challenges for pessimists takes considerably more time to build than for optimists. Further, it is suggested here

that the meeting of objectives for pessimists has less to do with compensatory abilities, and more to do with heightened coping capabilities and resultant persistence. Hence, it seems plausible that assessments of optimism and pessimism for high level athletes might be less likely to predict long–term performance careers than short–term performance accomplishments.

Chapter Summary

Personal experience and research including that of Bandura (1997), Bloom (1985) Durand–Bush (1996) and Schinke (1999) have already suggested that SI invariably affects the functioning of performers including Major Games and professional athletes. So, on the most superficial level, the present study's supportive evidence serves as no surprise. However, given what has been elaborated on in the discussion section, it seems that the thick descriptive method used herein provides some insight into how and why competence can be affected via the people residing in a stressful competitive environment such as high–performance sport.

On one level, this chapter highlighted theoretical linkages during each of the four discrete stages of Major Games competence development. In the first stage termed "Naïve Optimism versus Guarded Naïve Optimism," the respondents received their first competence – related information at the international level. During this short period, which lasted approximately one year, the respondents were provided with crucial efficacy information via creditable others. This tertiary source of Bandura's (1977) efficacy information served as a perceptual

screen, which in turn seemed to link with the founding of optimistic and pessimistic explanatory patterns described by Seligman (1990).

During the second stage termed "Awareness versus Skepticism," the respondents attempted to understand the contingency between personal attributes, operative pathways and subsequent Major Games capabilities. Respondent behaviors reflected an attempting, and in some cases eventual establishment of a broadened version of athletic efficacy in keeping with Dembo and Gibson's (1985) teaching efficacy. The breadth of operative pathways employed by the respondents during Stage Two reflected back to their explanatory patterns from Stage One. Such was the perceived situation specific reciprocal relationship between explanatory patterns and efficacy that Bandura (e.g., 1989, 1990, 1997) teased at.

The third stage of development was termed "Open Resourcefulness versus Closed Reliance." The achievement of Stage Three status happened when the respondents implemented the correct personal and operative pathways and subsequently experienced a confirmatory result in a Major Games. The struggle during Stage Three was one of sustaining success via the maintenance of the aforementioned personal and operative mechanisms. Based on this study, it seems that the stabilization of Major Games competence was linked with the respondents' capacities to remain hyper–vigilant in their retention of lessons from earlier performance barriers. The extent of such regulatory capacities (see Bandura, 1986) at the Major Games level seemed to reflect the severity of

previous efficacy experiences and the resulting duration of reflection (termed rumination).

The fourth stage was termed "Post–Competence Satisfaction versus Anger." During this final stage in the competence process, based on interviews from two respondents, it seems that methods of de–selection can be understood at least in part by the relationship between established ego–protective tendencies and previously discussed mastery and coping mechanisms (see Maddux, 1995 for a review). Because the optimist had to be less protective of his ego during Stages One and Two to expedite athletic improvement and task mastery, attributions for declining performance remained constant to sever persistence when progression became impossible. Such was the perceived relationship between task mastery, persistence and locus of accountability for the optimist. The pessimist, on the other hand, attributed her decline in performance to external factors learned previously in order to cope and persist during setbacks. Such a perspective represented the promise of future competence based on past confirmatory evidence. It seems that the explanatory patterns acquired during Stage One, then, helped explain differences in personal ownership during athletic decline. These discrepancies in self–referent thought, as transmitted via explanatory patterns, seem to be important factors that could be considered in the future when discrepancies in self–serving biases across athletic performers are considered.

On a general level, the emergent competence model as a whole ties in well with previous literature from social cognitive psychology. One such application highlighted in this discussion was the effect of SI on the entire competence

process for Major Games athletes. Previous literature including that of Bandura (1997), Gould, Hodge, Peterson and Giannini (1989) and my own (e.g., Marshall & Schinke, 1998; Schinke, 1999; Schinke, Draper & Salmela, 1997) acknowledged the importance of SI on athletic functioning. The immediate study delineated discrete operative mechanisms and explained how each influenced athletic development or stagnation. It seems based on this study that the earliest of experiences with SI can impede athletic progression and also affect how athletes access their operative mechanisms from their formative experiences onward to de–selection.

Seligman and colleagues (Peterson, Luborsky & Seligman, 1983; Seligman, 1990) and Försterling (1985) noted that these entrenched explanatory patterns, providing they are pessimistic, should be altered via attribution retraining. The immediate study again supports previous findings and pushes them further. For Major Games athletes, it seems that explanatory reformulation can take place via self–referent thought in lieu of clinical intervention. Such characteristics seem to indicate that high–performance athletes might not require external catalysts to push them beyond pessimistic rumination. Instead, it seems that such insights are likely to be arrived at by the athletes due to a combination of environmental discomfort and persistence.

On another level, literature over the past three decades has considered how proximal sources of control might influence the short and long–term development of performers. Abramson, Seligman and Teasedale (1978) acknowledged that people can be personally helpless and still capable of establishing pathways to

success via external resources. Bandura (1986) contributed to this discussion by acknowledging that reliance on others via codependence can undermine peoples' development of self–efficacy. More recently, Bandura (1997) and Skinner (1995) have considered that proximal sources of support can also enhance one's efficacy providing such resources are used sparingly at the correct times. Hence, based on past research, it seems that proximal (operative) mechanisms can enhance or undermine the human competence system depending on how they are accessed. The immediate study considered each of the aforementioned possibilities, though only in terms of Major Games athletes. Within this study proximal control mechanisms represented a double–edged sword. On one level, unavailable sources of proximal control (also termed operative mechanisms) seemed to increase the likelihood that the respondents were capable of meeting their performance objectives. There were some instances where external sources of support seemed to cover for a lack of adaptive efficacy expectations such as in the second stage of development for one pessimist. Though such assistance might have impeded personal competence development, the provision of operative sources of assistance increased the likelihood of pathways to end results. Hence, one athlete was able to eventually achieve positive Major Games experiences that they might not have otherwise achieved had she relied solely on personal efforts and abilities. The achievement of such pathways, in turn, seemed to add to the overall persistence of the respondent until she became a fully functioning competent athlete. Hence, proximal control appeared to be a necessary operative resource for the respondents given the complexity of their performance

environments. The key to competence development for these respondents, then, was the acquisition of an understanding of how to implement such mechanisms in a way that was beneficial for them as performers.

Chapter 6

OVERVIEW, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter serves as an overview of the study, as well as a synopsis of its findings, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and further research. The chapter is sub–divided into four segments. The first section provides an overview of the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and the employed research method. Section two summarizes the emergent findings. Section three considers the conclusions arrived at in the study. Section four suggests recommendations and implications as a result of the study's findings. Recommendations will be discussed in terms of: (a) the emergent conceptual framework incorporating how athletes and their personal and FSI might improve Major Games competence system via correct practice; (b) how an understanding of athletic competence development can inform educational curriculum for sport psychologists, coaches and national sport federations; (c) how the emergent model might be transferred to the domains of professional sport and higher education; and (d) how future research might be focused.

Overview of the Study

The nature of this study, namely the relationship between SI and athletic competence development, can be described in terms of the study's purpose, significance, and research method.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand, from the explanations of a few athletes, the relationship between SI and their Major Games competence

development. The athlete – SI relationship was considered in terms of short and long–term Major Games competence developments. It was believed that the development – based explanations of Major Games athletes would provide important insights into how and why athletes vary in their competence. In addition, the explanations of the respondents helped identify some of the essential SI serving as stakeholders in Major Games competence development.

Significance of the Study

Until the present researchers and practitioners have lacked a theoretical understanding of how SI affected the competence of Major Games athletes. Though researchers such as Bandura (1997) and Seligman (1990) have teased at the importance of SI on athletic functioning, they have not gleaned an anecdotal understanding of how, why and when SI affect athletes in Major Games contexts. Several of the applied sport psychologists have also teased at the relationship between athletes and their SI such as Salmela (1996), Orlick (1986) and Werthner (1999). However, these practitioners have not fully considered the theoretical reasons why athletic competence is affected by the SI within Major Games environments. Finally, it seems that formal coaching systems, which base their pedagogical approaches on the former two sources of information (e.g., Martens, 1990) are in need of such understanding to develop appropriate modules for high–performance coaches. This study is significant in that addresses all of the aforementioned discrepancies.

Method

Eight respondents from 4 Canadian national teams were purposefully selected for this qualitative study. The purposive sample was selected to achieve an in–depth understanding of the respondents' Major Games experiences. More specifically, the respondent group was selected in order to reach a deeper understanding of the relationship between SI and their Major Games competence development. The respondent group comprised 8 Canadian Major Games Athletes, 6 male and 2 female, from individual sports. Two respondents were members of the Canadian Shooting Team, three respondents were members of the Canadian Boxing Team, two respondents were members of the Canadian Badminton Team, and one respondent was a member of the Canadian Equestrian Team. The respondents were selected from across Canada. Based on the study's mandate as well as my personal ontological assumptions, the epistemological starting point was post–positivism, and the resulting method of data collection was semi–structured interviewing. All of the interviews, 13 in total, were audio–recorded on standard cassette tapes then transcribed by me into Microsoft Word 97 text format. The richness of responses to the flexible and open–ended questions provided data on a number of themes related to the study's major topic and more specific sub–questions. As the data instrument, I maintained a research log. Within the log, I recorded contextual information from each interview as well as my insights and my biases. Member checks from the respondents, an audit check conducted by another researcher, and expert feedback high–

performance coaches and one national team's technical director served as checks on the trustworthiness of my data interpretation.

Summary of the Research Findings

The major findings are summarized in this section. The research findings have been organized in accordance with the questions that directed this study.

Sub-problem One: How are athletes' past experiences with SI described as affecting athletic (Major Games) competence at the high-performance level?

Finding 1. It seems that the respondents' experiences served as confirmatory information of previous PSI suggestions. Because the athletes approached their national teams with optimistic or pessimistic expectations for the future, personal experiences were interpreted from their previously acquired reference point.

Finding 2. Three of the respondents were locked within Stage Two for at least six years of their Major Games careers. Dysfunctional initial sources of efficacy information were not re–attributed adaptively into controllable factors for an extensive period of time. Hence, early experiences with SI can facilitate tournament related stagnation and extensive associated rumination over the perceived non–contingent relationship between athletes, their resources and their performance environment.

Finding 3. One of the indications that the respondents were prepared for a competence experience was the recognition that their inner circle of friends should only be comprised of SI who prioritized them over broader formal organizational agendas. Sources of acceptable support, interestingly, were

accessed from personal and formal subsets. Hence, previous Major Games experiences indicated to the respondents that some SI members across subsets would be more trustworthy sources of assistance than others.

Finding 4. For pessimists, there seemed to come a time where past sources of efficacy information had to be discounted in order to strive for anticipatory Major Games competence. The past experiences of pessimists had to eventually be regarded as learning experiences informing them of the contingencies between past problems and potential solutions. Such was the move from helplessness to athletic efficacy for the most resilient of Stage Two pessimistic athletes.

Finding 5. It seems that the quantity of time expended in rumination during the culmination of Stage One and throughout Stage Two affected the progression toward an initial competence experience, not the ability to achieve it. For optimists, the achievement of a confirmatory Major Games competence experience was rapid. Because less time was spent ruminating on operative malfunctioning, increased reflection targeted solution–based pathways. For pessimists, the progression toward a Stage Three confirmatory experience was more gradual. Impeded development indicated partial efforts expended in rumination.

Finding 6. For the 2 athletes who achieved Stage Four status, it seems that past formative experiences with both subsets of SI influenced de–selection behaviors. The optimistic athlete previously learned that there was no shame in attributing performance declines to personal effort and ability. During the

culmination of his career, he willingly recognized that declines in performance were at least in part caused by personal shortcomings. Once task difficulties preceded personal attributes, the optimist maintained an internal locus of control by de–selecting himself prior to being de–selected by an external source. Such behaviors were contrary to prototypical ego–protective tendencies. Conversely, the pessimist had resilient coping efficacy skills, which served her successfully in past achievements. Further, she had an entrenched ego–protective explanatory pattern that sustained her previously after setbacks. Both of these skills were employed during Stage Four as the athlete persisted when she should have de–selected herself. So, past Major Games experiences with SI affected the functionality of reflections and behaviors once competence was no longer achievable.

Sub-problem Two: How do the athletes' explanations of past national-team competence link with their subsequent behavioral approaches to performance?

Finding 7. Explanations of past athletic competence, as opposed to efficacy expectations, were only possible from Stage Three onward. Prior to Stage Three, the athletes did not have a clear understanding of what it was like to employ all of the appropriate personal and operative pathways concurrently in a Major Games experience. Hence, before Stage Three, athletes had efficacy expectations (beliefs) that sustained their persistence as they searched and tested various pathways that did or did not lead them toward Major Games competence.

Finding 8. Confirmatory Stage Three competence experiences ensured general strategies for future SI selection. For the optimists, confirmatory

experiences ensured an ongoing receptivity toward personal and formal support mechanisms providing such mechanisms were viewed as useful resources. For the pessimist, the initial Major Games competence experience confirmed the conservative selection of a constrained SI. Hence, it seems that optimists were more willing to work with a broadened version of SI including formal and personal support mechanisms than were pessimists.

Finding 9. All of the Stage Three respondents softened their consolidated plans immediately after achieving an initial competence experience. Explanations for success prioritized the importance of personal efforts and abilities and undermined the importance of operative mechanisms. In the short–term, the respondents were willing to modify their unique external operative mechanisms and pathways in an attempt to comply with their respective national teams. The result was a momentary heightened level of FSI acceptance, an immediate loss of control, and a resultant decline in performance.

Finding 10. The Stage Three decline in performance, for all but one Stage Three respondent, helped consolidate a philosophy where they prioritized themselves over their respective national teams. Hence, most of the respondents recognized that they had to remain hyper–vigilant in order to maintain their plans, and subsequently, re–establish their competence as Major Games competitors.

Sub-Problem Three: How and why does the relationship between high-performance athletes and their SI affect athletic competence at Major Games competitions?

Finding 11. The athletes' earliest national team – related information, transmitted via personal coaches, served as perceptual screens for subsequent Major Games experiences. When personal coaches were optimistic in anticipatory efficacy expectations for their athletes, their athletes seemed to inherit these adaptive efficacy expectations. Conversely, when personal coaches were pessimistic in the likelihood of their athletes achieving Major Games competence, their athletes inherited a similar pessimistic expectation of pending athletic inefficacy.

Finding 12. Pessimists were sub–divided into radicals and moderates during Stage One of their development. The separation into these subsets seemed to be the result of the duration of time between initial PSI information and personal confirmatory dysfunctional FSI – related experiences. Radicals received early minor dysfunctional experiences at their first training camps or on route to the competition. Moderates did not receive their confirmatory experiences until after their first Major Games experience.

Finding 13. Athletic competence was contingent on the respondents' respective methods of accessing operative mechanisms. The optimists were able to resource the appropriate operative pathways whenever necessary without relying on them consistently. The relationship between pessimists and their SI also led to competence, though via a behavior that resembled the maladaptive

version of proximal control. Whenever the pessimist's appropriate pathways were inaccessible, she rendered herself incompetent as an athlete. Hence, both methods of assistance facilitated Major Games competence. However, competence was heartier for the optimists than for the pessimist.

Finding 14. Personal and operative pathways were required due to the complexity of Major Games environments. Though the athletes believed themselves efficacious on a personal level, they eventually learned that they were unable to regulate all of the requisite administrative and logistical tasks within their environment. Hence, competence for Major Games athletes required a relinquishment of certain environmental challenges to creditable SI members. Athletes that had difficulty relinquishing control to the appropriate SI seemed to be rendered incompetent within Major Games contexts.

Finding 15. It seems that explanatory patterns can be explained via the reciprocal relationship between the respondents' attributions and their efficacy expectations. Considering the emergent model, the respondents' received efficacy information regarding their respective national teams from personal coaches. The functionality of this initial tertiary source of efficacy information seemed to be a causal factor leading to a long–term pattern of optimism or pessimism. Once explanatory patterns were established for the respondents, these seemed to color future explanations of the self – other relationship while in a national team context.

Finding 16. Optimists and pessimists varied in their ego–protective strategies during Stage Two and Stage Three, though their respective assignments

ensured their movement toward Major Games competence. For the optimists, assignments in times of failure were allocated to internal and external loci of control. The targeting of internal and external mechanisms reflected an intense search for personal and operative pathways to efficacy and subsequent competence. For pessimists, performance failures were assigned to external sources. This external delegation ensured that fragile perceptions of personal athletic efficacy remained intact during performance barriers.

Finding 17. Earlier differences in ego–protective strategies for optimists and pessimists influenced their latter Stage Four behaviors during de–selection. The Stage Four optimist indicated a satisfaction with past experiences, a willingness to accept personal accountability for performance decline, and a personal decision to move on to another context where competence was possible. The Stage Four pessimist attributed her performance decline to SI incompetence. The lack of personal accountability facilitated an unwillingness to remove herself from a performance environment without pathways to re–establish Major Games context.

Conclusions

The statements and generalizations that follow are the conclusions reached based on the findings of this study.

Conclusion 1. Many findings (e.g., 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17) suggest that athletes must go through discrete stages of development in order to become competent Major Games athletes. Within the first stage of development they develop efficacy expectations, via personal and PSI sources, regarding their

expected path to competence. In Stage Two, athletes experiment with and subsequently establish the appropriate personal and operative pathways to Major Games competence. Once such pathways are established, athletes implement them within a Major Games context and experience confirmatory information. Confirmatory experiences denote the beginnings of Stage Three of development. Finally, the athletes must learn how to maintain their consolidated pathways in order to stabilize their competence as Major Games competitors.

Conclusion 2. Findings in this study (e.g., 1, 2, 6, 11, 12, 15) suggest that the earliest Stage One information transmitted by personal coaches provided an understanding of the respondents situation specific explanatory patterns from that time onward to de–selection. When personal coaches anticipated that their athletes would experience the appropriate assistance from FSI, the athletes approached their national teams from that time onward with an open mind and heightened optimism. Conversely, when personal coaches anticipated that their athletes would be rendered inefficacious due to formal support mechanisms, such persuasive information from a creditable source was internalized by the athletes from that time onward.

Conclusion 3. Findings in this study (e.g., 1, 3, 8, 9, 11, 12) suggest that the SI of Major Games athletes is sub–divided into PSI FSI subsets. PSI is comprised of the athletes' family members, their personal coaches, mates and a few close friends from their national teams. PSI members are regarded as such because they prioritize their athletes' personal interests over national team functioning. FSI is comprised of all sources of national team selected support

including national team coaches, team managers, technical directors and national team athletes. Formal sources of support typically prioritize team interests over those of individual athletes.

Conclusion 4. The findings in this study (e.g., 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 14) suggest that high–performance athletes share in a relationship with both subsets of their SI. There seems to be no escaping the fact that regardless of SI –related expectations, athletes require personal support mechanisms for day to day assistance, and at very least, formal support mechanisms at Major Games venues. Though the athletes do not have to place members from both subsets within their inner circle of support, they do have to access members from both subsets in order to become and subsequently remain competent as performers.

Conclusion 5. The findings in this study (e.g., 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15) suggest that explanatory pattern does not predict the possibility of becoming a competent Major Games athlete. Optimistic and pessimistic respondents were able to achieve and sustain Stage Three status. However, explanatory pattern did serve as an indicator of the length of time taken to achieve Major Games competence. Optimists spent less time in rumination during Stages One and Two than did pessimists. Hence, they invested more initial energy discovering the pathways to Major Games competence than did pessimists. The result was expedited progress to athletic efficacy and a resulting confirmatory result.

Conclusion 6. Three findings in this study (e.g., 6, 16, 17) suggest that there is a discrepancy between the ego–protective tendencies of optimists and pessimists after tournament failure. For the optimistic respondents, assignments

of accountability were explained by a combination of internal and external controllable factors. For pessimists, assignments of accountability were delegated solely to external factors. This discrepancy between the explanations of optimists and pessimists indicates that heartier efficacy expectations shorten the amount of time it takes to achieve Major Games competence. Hence, it seems that ego–protective strategies are only necessary when high–performance athletes lack the efficacy expectations to sustain their motivation.

Recommendations

The conclusions derived from this study lead to several recommendations, which if implemented, have serious implications. The forthcoming recommendations and implications will be considered in terms of their relevance to sport and educational practice and sport, psychology, and higher education research. Recommendations from the aforementioned will be provided numerically.

Recommendations for Sport Practice

The conclusions from this study indicate that recommendations should be made to five discrete groups within the high–performance sport system: Major Games associations, formal coaching programs, national sport federations, sport psychologists and athletes.

For Major Games associations. For Major Games associations, it is suggested that an ongoing program be employed in order to educate hired and volunteer sources of support in "best practice" procedures. These procedures

should include several types of supportive assistance. Three recommendations present themselves, namely:

1. Major Games associations should improve their on–site staff's understanding of how to assess the stage development and explanatory pattern of the Major Games athletes they intend to assist. Such endeavors would personally help athletes achieve and stabilize confirmatory Major Games competence experiences or work through competence barriers.

2. Major Games associations should improve the quality of educational resources available to formal coaches, personal coaches and others working in national sport organization or federation appointments affiliated with athletes in Major Games contexts. Such 3 to 4 day sessions have previously been attempted by the Canadian Olympic Association prior to Games. Training sessions, however, could be further improved by educating sport specific SI members of the relationship between athletes and both subsets of SI in Major Games contexts. This form of context–based education will provide each sport with the appropriate tools to help avoid the typical conflicts that occur between various subsets of their respective SI.

3. National Major Games associations should develop collaborative research plans to assess the in–depth feedback from athletes, coaches, and sport federations. This form of applied field research would ensure the ongoing improvement of on–site service delivery and pre–site educational programs.

For formal coaching programs. In Canada, the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) continually refines its coaching courses for

recreational, competition, and high–performance coaches. This study has something to offer all certified and aspiring coaches. Four recommendations present themselves, namely:

4. For recreational and competitive coaches interested in personal coaching, it seems that their explanatory patterns and persuasive efficacy information affects the competence development of the athletes they work with. Hence, formal educational possibilities for personal coaches should include testing procedures to define coaches' explanatory patterns. Coaches assessed as optimists should receive ongoing follow–up courses to ensure the stabilization of their optimistic explanatory patterns, and hence, the ongoing transmission of such adaptive patterns to the athletes they work with.

5. For those defined as pessimists, formal coaching interventions should include re–attribution training at either the individual or group level. Also, pessimists should receive training on personal reflexivity strategies to decrease the likelihood of pessimistic patterns being inherited by athletes they train. The result of such interventions would be an increase in optimism in developing Canadian athletes as well as the expedited progression of Canadian athletes to Stage Three Major Games competence development.

6. All coaches should also be provided with a simplified theoretical understanding of how athletic progression is affected by patterns of vicarious and persuasive efficacy information. With an acute awareness of the linkages between explanatory pattern and efficacy theory, educated coaches could then

disseminate such information informally to other developing coaches as well as other important members of their athletes' SI's (e.g., family).

7. High–performance athletes at the personal and formal levels should have an operative understanding of how they, in interactions with others, collaboratively affect the competence developments of the athletes they are or were affiliated with. Such understanding can be coordinated via formal coaching symposiums and think–tanks organized for bodies of coaches within and across sports. In addition, it is suggested that coaching programs develop team-building sessions for athletes and staff regarding how they might enhance coordinated efforts. It is believed that an ongoing formally facilitated collaborative approach to high–performance coaching could serve as a median to increased likelihood of athletic competence development.

For national sport federations. This study also has something to offer national sport federations. This premise is based on the fact that such organizations require successful athletic performance in order to increase the amount of money received from government funding. Two recommendations present themselves, namely:

8. It is imperative that national coaches and assigned Major Games staff develop a strong awareness of the developmental features of the athletes they are travelling with. Based on such awareness, FSI can improve their provision of services to the athletes they are supposed to be assisting.

9. FSI should also attempt to develop a collaborative approach with their athletes' PSI. It is this sort of collaborative approach that will improve the quality of SI synergy that seems to expedite Major Games competence development.

For practicing sport psychologists. There is an extensive body of sport psychology literature available for the applied sport psychologist. However, the most prevalent shortcoming of such material is the marginalizing of either theoretical or contextual understanding. This study holds specific recommendations for sport psychologists. Two recommendations present themselves, namely:

10. That applied sport psychologists consider the psychology theories and constructs appropriate to their context. Psychology theories will provide segue to improved and succinct athlete, coach and organizational interventions.

11. That applied sport psychologists maintain and enhance their research skills to assess their interventions. Another worthwhile possibility is that practitioners create long-term partnerships with researchers and research communities interested in assessing related field interventions. Via a reciprocal relationship with the research community, sport psychologist practitioners could provide enhanced services to their clients.

For Major Games athletes. There is very little information available to aspiring, novice, and experienced Major Games competitors regarding how to improve or sustain their performance. This study poses recommendations for this central group of achievers. Three recommendations present themselves, namely:

12. Promising elite athletes should affiliate with optimistic coaches or coaches who are involved in optimism interventions. The targeting of such coaches will increase the likelihood that athletes will receive adaptive efficacy information transmitted in an optimistic and congruent way. Inevitably, this deliberate and informed selection of suitable coaches will expedite athletes' Major Games competence developments as well as their overall enjoyment of the Major Games process.

13. Aspiring athletes should develop an improved understanding of the Major Games competence process that lies in front of them. With an improved understanding, athletes will better understand how and when to relinquish control to proximal sources of support. Further, aspiring athletes will develop a better understanding of how to balance personal and operative pathways in order to achieve prerequisite athletic efficacy.

14. Developing Major Games athletes should explain their performance barriers to a combination of personal and operative factors. Further, such explanations should be deemed as potentially controllable in order to sustain Major Games persistence.

General recommendations. Based on the previously discussed sport recommendations, there is also one more general recommendation.

15. Major Games competence requires a holistic–collaborative taking into account all of the aforementioned sport subsets. There is some evidence that several sport levels work collaboratively for coaching endeavors or competitive endeavors. However, deliberately designed Major Games competence programs

for large quantities of athletes require a carefully designed reciprocal business relationship between all these subsets.

Recommendations for Research

The research recommendations herein will suggest future branches of related exploration for sport.

1. This study considered the Major Games experiences of eight respondents from individual sports. From their explanations, and the subsequent analysis, a conceptual model of Major Games – related competence development was suggested. Now, it is necessary to test the emergent model with a larger sample of Major Games athletes from individual and team sports. Only then can the proposed Major Games competence model be regarded as representative of athletes' Major Games stage by stage competence developments.

2. The emergent competence based model could also be tested with other levels of athletes including recreational children, competitive children, youth sport athletes, recreational adults, and professional athletes. It seems based on this study's emergent model that SI affects the development of athletic competence. Similar studies, then, should consider the athlete–SI relationship across sport contexts. The result will be situation specific models for each sport context, and possibly, a broadened model that considers athlete–SI parallels across sport contexts.

3. Athletic competence–based research across sport levels and contexts could also elicit supplemental information from various subsets of their respective SI mechanisms. This broadened exploration might delineate supplemental

explanations of the athlete–SI relationship that athletes do not consider or are unaware of. Hence, a broader elicitation would provide a more complete understanding of the stage–based athletic competence process.

4. Sport researchers should work closely with the members of the contexts they wish to understand. Through a strong rapport between applied and research contexts, sport researchers can develop more trustworthy representations of the sport contexts and people they write about. Because the dissemination of such literature affects future research and applied practitioners alike, it seems fundamental that a close link between sport's applied and research communities should be maintained.

5. Studies similar to the immediate one should be devised for other elite performance contexts such as higher education, business, professional sport and entertainment. Such endeavors might delineate stage developments for each, and possibly, across all of the aforementioned achievement based domains. Hence, competence–based research with the same intentions as this study might suggest pathways to improved performance and expedited progression in several high–profile domains.

6. Future research into athletic competence development might also employ methods of observation coupled with interviewing. Such observations would enhance the credibility of the data.

Recommendations for Self-Efficacy Theory

The theoretical recommendation herein will suggest future explorations into self-efficacy theory.

1. Bandura (1986, 1997) has prioritized the four sources of efficacy information. It has been argued that personal experiences are primary sources of efficacy information, vicarious experiences have been presented as secondary, verbal persuasion as tertiary, and emotional and physiological information as supplemental. From this project, it seems that personal experiences might serve as primary sources to efficacy in the short-term. However, it also seems that verbal persuasion, the tertiary source of efficacy information, can become the primary source of long-term efficacy information as such information serves as a reference point for perceptions of optimism and pessimism. The prioritizing of sources of efficacy information must be reconsidered in terms of short versus long-term implications.

Extension of Findings and Conclusions to Higher Education

Though this study targeted high–performance sport, its emergent competence model holds several possibilities for other transferable elite performance contexts. One such context is graduate education. In terms of graduate studies, it is speculated that this study holds recommendations for educational departments, supervisory committees and graduate students.

For educational departments. It is speculated here that graduate departments are to graduate student competence what Major Games Associations and NSO's are to Major Games competence. With this parallel in mind, it is

worthwhile speculating how this study's recommendations might be transferable to education departments. Three transferable recommendations present themselves, namely:

1. That graduate faculties should assess the explanatory patterns of their faculty members, and in so doing, recognize those who are optimists from those who are pessimists. Such assessments might provide a window of understanding into the type of efficacy information that will be transferred to aspiring graduate students. Hence, explanatory pattern assessments could provide one source of criteria for faculty hiring practice.

2. Faculty members that are currently on faculty and assessed as pessimists via situation specific versions of Seligman's (1990) Attributional Style Questionnaires could be provided with re–attribution counseling sessions at the individual or group level. Such interventions should be arranged by the graduate department to improve the overall performance of their teaching staff as well as the graduate – related competence development of their students.

3. Departments could develop re–attribution courses for graduate students who are deemed as pessimists. Sessions would entail cognitive restructuring where past sources of educational – related information, which resulted in present inefficacy, would be reprocessed as potentially controllable via the appropriate pathways. This action, it is believed, could improve graduate persistence rates. Thus, departmental performance could increase via improved understanding of student needs, and subsequently, targeting consultation with specific students to ameliorate potential barriers to learning.

For supervisory committees. Supervisory committees are comprised of graduate level supervisors. It is speculated that the challenges of this subset can be paralleled with the challenges experienced by high–performance coaches. Four transferable recommendations to supervisory contexts present themselves, namely:

4. Based on an improved awareness of personal explanatory patterns provided by department assessments, graduate committees and their individual professors should be reflexive – introspection of their behaviors and how these might affect graduate student competence. Each supervisory professor's introspection could be followed through, for instance, by via a weekly journal where supervisory issues are considered in lieu of daily events. Such reflexive behaviors could lead to a reciprocal increase in graduate student persistence and teaching efficacy.

5. Supervisory professors and committee members should schedule regular meetings with like colleagues across departments in order to debrief one another on interactions with their respective graduate students. These meetings could serve as "think–tank" scenarios where professors could search for increased or improved facilitative operative pathways to student competence development.

6. Supervisory committees could develop an improved general understanding of how and why graduate student competence is affected by the graduate context. With this understanding, supervisory committees could provide their students with the appropriate suggestions and efficacy information in the appropriate way to ensure heightened ongoing persistence.

7. Supervisory committees should gain an understanding of their students' previous educational experiences prior to commencing supervision. Such developmental insights could provide information regarding potential difficulties, and therefore, how to circumvent potential graduate student problems.

For graduate students. It is speculated that the competence development of graduate students might be similar to that of Major Games athletes. Based on this speculation, there are possible student–oriented recommendations. Two transferable recommendations to graduate students present themselves, namely:

8. Graduate students should be selective of the supervisory committees that they involve themselves with. Supervisory committees could be optimized by selecting optimistic–efficacious professors. With such adaptive contexts, it becomes more likely that graduate students will enjoy their higher learning, and subsequently remain supportive of such contexts in terms of professional affiliation or funding.

9. Graduate students should remain reflexive of their own explanatory patterns as well as the explanatory patterns of surrounding graduate students. When graduate – related difficulties arise, these should be explained to personally controllable factors, externally controllable factors, or both. Preferably, setbacks should be explained in terms of potentially controllable personal and operative errors.

Multiple tier interventions. Having considered the influence of departments, supervisory committees and graduate students on graduate student competence development, one additional broader aspect can be considered: how these tiers might work synergistically.

10. In high–performance sport, findings suggested that Major Games competence entailed a lengthy process whereby the athletes had to learn personal and context – related management skills. It was the consolidated understanding and implementation of such skills that increased the likelihood of eventual competence experiences. In terms of higher education, it is speculated that graduate students could learn similar managerial skills. To achieve such skills, graduate skills should acquire and subsequently maintain the correct personal and operative pathways throughout their graduate experience.

Final Reflections

At the beginning of this study, it was suggested that there was a relationship between SI and athletic competence development in Major Games contexts. When the evidence from this study is considered, it seems that when athletes enter into Major Games contexts, they also enter into a relationship with various collaborative or dichotomous subsets of SI. Hence, it seems that Major Games competence has as much to do with the accessing and management of SI as the availability of each respective SI member. So, invariably the locus of accountability for Major Games competence development rests with the athletes themselves as opposed to any other external mechanism.

On another level, it seems that athletes interested in pursuing Major Games competence development enter into a process that lasts at least 10 years. What this would indicate is that athletes who are determined to become competent Major Games competitors will have to prepare themselves for an educational process within high–performance sport that is equivalent in duration to that of

graduate and post–graduate education. Hence, it seems that Major Games competence, much like any challenging educational endeavor, requires a heightened level of persistence that few are willing to commit.

So where has an improved understanding of this process left me as both researcher and educator of high–performance contexts? Though it seems clearer how I might go about assisting performers in their pursuit of excellence, I am aware of the limitations of my optimism along this vein of thinking. As I prepare to enter Stage One in my own professional development, I also know that I, as well as the performers that I will be working with, will experience various setbacks along the journey to competence. Not every SI member will serve as an adaptive source of efficacy information to my potential clients or myself. However, I am also now graced with the insight that competence is a process of discovery with many exciting pathways. I will remind others as I do myself, that persistence, discovery and competence, must become the bedfellows to professional and life long optimism.

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Appendix A

Preliminary Semi–Structured Interview Format

Section 1: Introduction

- Introduction and explanation of interview purpose
- Signing of consent form

Section 2: Understanding the Context

Experience:

- Please explain in general your past and most recent experiences while at Games Competitions.

Section 3: Facilitators of Competence

Attribution – Reflection: Thinking of a Positive Experience:

- Why did you perform as you did? Were all these reasons ones that you had direct control over?
- How did you know that you did / or did not have direct control over the reasons that you just described for your performances?

Resourcefulness:

- What sorts of things helped to enhance the performances you just described? Who helped you with it?

Efficacy:

- Think about the positive experience you just described. Did the experience influence what you expected in terms of future performance?

Experience:

- Coming off of the positive experience that you have just described, what was your next experience like? Did your previous experience play any role in the experience?

Section 4: Detractors from Competence

Attribution – Reflection: Thinking of a Negative Experience:

- Can you think of experiences where you should have performed better than you did
- Why did you perform as you did? Were all the reasons ones that you had direct control over?

Helplessness:

- Were there important factors that you needed and did not receive assistance with? How did these affect your performance? OR Were there important factors that you wanted to do yourself, and instead, received assistance from? Did this affect your performance?

Efficacy:

- Think about the negative experience just described. Does the experience influence what you expect in terms of future performance?

Experience:

- Coming off of the negative experience you just described, what was your next experience like? Did the previous negative experience play any role in the experience?

Section 5: Present Expectations of Performance

- How have these combined experiences with SI affected your expectations of what is to come in future Major Games tournaments?

Section 6: Additional Understanding and Debriefing

- Are there any additional SI – related issues to your performance experiences that you wish to elaborate on?
- Feedback provided by athletes regarding the interview experience.

Appendix B

Informed Consent for Participation in Research

Dear (Athlete):

Thank you for volunteering your time and information to this research study. You have been selected for a study titled "The Relationship Between Support–Infrastructure and Athletic Competence Development for Major Games." The purpose of this study is to identify and better understand the influence of support staff on competence to performance in international tournaments. You will be asked to explain why you have achieved the performances that you did during previous international tournaments.

The information gleaned from this study will be used as the main data for a doctoral dissertation, and therefore will be used as research within the fields of management and sport science. Concurrently, your feedback will also help improve support staff protocol for future international tournaments. I appreciate that you have a hectic schedule, so this study will be limited to one interview of approximately 120 minutes in length. There is also the possibility that you might be contacted by telephone at a later date and asked a few follow–up questions.

All information will be held in confidence throughout and after the study, and will only be viewed by you and me. From the analysis onwards, your responses will be examined only in terms of designated fictional names. This process will guarantee the confidentially of responses and your anonymity as a participant.

If you have any concerns, you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. Simply indicate your intention to me, and it will be honored.

I hope that with the aforementioned, you will feel free to share your experiences. In the meantime, if you have questions at any time, do not hesitate to contact me at 780–454–9975.

Please sign after reading:

I have read and understood the above information, and agree to participate in this research study according to the terms described above.

The Participant	Date yy/mm/dd
Home Telephone Number	Work Telephone Number

Facsimile Number

Mailing Address for Correspondence:
Name:_____
Street:_____
City: _____
Prov: _____
Postal_____
Code:
Please retain the second copy for your records

Appendix C
A Priori Personal Assumptions

Each researcher approaches a research study with specific biases. In the present work, there are 3 biases to be considered based on the research questions provided on page #5. These are the following:

1. It is assumed that I can glean an understanding of what high–performance athletes need from their SI based on perceptions and resultant explanations from their past experiences. Many would argue that such explanations would be situated, however, the similarities across athletes should indicate a pattern of what those needs might be. Based on past experiences as a national team athlete and practitioner, I believe that athletes across individual sports will share some similar needs from their coaches, assistant coaches, medical staff, administrative staff, mental training consultants, and family members. I believe that some of the generic issues to emerge from the data will include competence facilitating factors such as specific availability and avoidance techniques. SI availability factors that are anticipated as competence facilitating factors might include a coach who is available to speak with the athlete during a crucial moment while at the tournament. An SI avoidance technique that also might facilitate athletic competence could be an understanding by administrative staff that the athlete requires a few moments alone prior to commencing a warm–up strategy. I believe that the athletes will also share with me some of the competence debilitating factors they have experienced as a result of their SI. It is assumed that some of the factors that will emerge from the data might include SI – related debilitating availability and avoidance factors. A maladaptive availability factor will include an SI – related action whereby support is provided at an inopportune moment, or in an inappropriate way. A maladaptive avoidance technique might include any instance where the athlete expects or requires specific assistance, and such assistance is either intentionally or unintentionally not provided. It is believed that, cumulatively, these differences in past SI behavior will create adaptive or maladaptive expectations for each athlete. By developing an understanding of these expectations, which have resulted from past experiences with SI, it is believed that I can eventually develop an improved protocol for SI functioning geared toward human resource management at Major Games. Ultimately, it is believed that such educational programs will enhance the competence of high–performance athletes, and subsequently enhance their performances at Major Games competitions.
2. It is believed that past experiences, both adaptive and maladaptive, will link with the athletes' subsequent behavioral approaches to performance in their next Games tournament. From what I have seen, experienced, and read, athletes approach their performance environments with varying amounts of optimism or pessimism. These behaviors are in part the result of past experiences where SI has affected the athletes' competencies via their operative behaviors. Due to the complexity of the Major Games environment, it is assumed that athletes are reliant on those around them to carry out at least some of the tasks that might

otherwise become environmental constraints. Depending on the athletes' experiences with their SI in such complex environments, I believe that each athlete approach the subsequent Major Games contexts with varying behaviors that can be regarded as resourceful or helpless. When SI assistance contribute to positive results, and a perception of resourcefulness is reinforced, it is believed that the athletes perceive and then approach their performance environments with a sense of competence and a belief that any environmental complexities can be overcome. Such athletes are more resilient than athletes who have experienced maladaptive SI assistance in past Major Games. It is believed that athletes who have experienced a non–contingent relationship between personal efficacy and the competence to perform approach the next tournament with a pessimistic or "helpless" outlook regarding their capabilities to perform. Further, I believe that past experiences of general efficacy or general inefficacy will play a role on the athletes' behaviors in their subsequent tournaments.

3. There are specific reasons why the relationship between high–performance athletes and their SI affect athletic competence in Major Games settings. First, it is believed that for athletic competence to occur, athletes require self–efficacy and general efficacy. It is believed that athletes with strong and weak conceptions of self–efficacy alike can be rendered incompetent by dysfunctional SI. The complexity of the Major Games setting includes a wider number of tasks than athletes typically face in competitions. For instance, most national level tournaments have limited concerns regarding athlete security. Athletes do not have to clear security in order to come and go from the competition venue. In addition, the social events for national and minor international tournaments may not be mandatory for athletes. Also, demands from media might be more lenient at smaller competitions than at Major Game competitions. Finally, the SI required for national and smaller international tournaments might be limited to a hand–full of SI members. In all of the aforementioned examples, the Major Games context is considerably more complex than the typical tournament environment. Athletes who are usually self–reliant people might find themselves dependent on a wide range of SI members. Conceivably, this enlarged group of SI members can be employed as human resources that can simplify the highly complex Games environment. When high–performance athletes are able to employ SI members to ameliorate some of the aforementioned environmental complexities, it is conceivable that the athletes will perceive themselves as competent. Precisely, the athletes will remain self–efficacious while also becoming efficacious on a general–operative level. Conversely, when high–performance athletes are unable to or choose not to resource their SI while in a complex Major Games environment, even the most self–efficacious of athletes will probably be rendered incompetent due to a lack of general efficacy. So, the competent athlete is assumed be competent in part due to a functional SI who assist in the simplification in what otherwise would be an overwhelmingly complex tournament environment.

Appendix D
Letter of Attestation

Dear (Athlete):

Enclosed please find your coded explanations of support staff - related issues discussed during your recent interview. Please read over your "Athlete Profile" and provide any suggestions or feedback regarding the accuracy of the depiction. If the explanation is representative of how you now feel, please provide an "ok" in the left-hand margin. On the other hand, if the explanations are slightly or completely different from how they were intended, please provide clear and concise explanations of how you wish to refine or revise the explanation. Revisions can either be provided in the left-hand margin or in between the lines of coded transcript.

To expedite the final analysis of the findings you will be provided with three weeks from the post marked "registered" date to make any necessary changes. Once you have completed all changes, please sign this form and return it along with the explanations to the address provided in the post marked envelope. Should I not hear from you within the specified time, I will follow-up with one phone call in an attempt to reach you. If, at this time, I am still unable to reach you, the explanations will be considered as your intended representation of events.

Finally, as promised during the initial consent form, the information provided will remain confidential and anonymous.

Please sign after reading:

I attest that the presentation and / or changes provided are accurate presentations of my experiences as provided to the researcher.

_____ _____

The Participant Date yy/mm/dd

Please retain the second copy for your records

Appendix E
Athlete Profiles

Athlete Competence Profile

Dear ----;

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in the study titled "The Relationship between Support–Infrastructure and Athletic Competence Development for Major Games." I have completed the analysis of your interview and arrived at some findings. This package contains a general explanation of the reasons for your competence development as a Major Games athlete. Take your time and read the following explanation and look over the enclosed diagrams. You will notice that the highlighted component explains visually how you progressed through an athletic path from national team selection to the present.

I hope the information proves worthwhile and useful to you in your future endeavors in sport. Please read through the description, sign, and then follow the instructions provided in the "Letter of Attestation."

Sincerely yours,

Robert J. Schinke

Sport Strategist

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Tel: 0–780–454–9975
Fax: 1–780–482–0867 (att'n Rob Schinke)

Athlete Profile

Athlete: (Robert)

Athletic Progression: My perception is that you began your national team affiliation as a "guarded optimist." What this basically means is that I believe that you were optimistic about your opportunity as a team athlete. However, you did have some initial concerns as a result of warnings from personal coaches. As a result of these warnings, I believe that you were pessimistic on some level regarding the eventual possibility that you might not receive the support you needed from formal support staff (designated coaches, designated managers, national federation).

I gathered that your initial experience travelling internationally as a junior was positive. Part of the reason for this is based on my perception is that you had inexperienced support-staff who were prepared to cater to your every need. With this kind of support to assist you, it seems that you performed well and had a positive first tournament experience (at the junior level).

Your first few senior experiences confirmed the concerns that your personal coaches warned you about. Based on what I understood, you were roomed with inappropriate roommates, your competition plans were disregarded, and your team was generally not as supportive as it was in your initial international experiences as a junior. It seems that you found this very disappointing and spent some time reflecting on the possibility that senior team assignments would not be as positive as former junior team assignments.

Based on my perception, these reflections resulted in a lot of thought regarding the ineptness of your national federation as well as the poor qualities within your national team. The result seems to be linked to a short-term decline in senior level of performance – especially at the domestic level when you were in the presence of people you believed had a different agenda than assisting you. Your decline in results seems to have led to additional reflection regarding your national team and how you distrusted them. This seems to have lasted upwards of one year.

It seems that as a result, you returned to your own personal support system and relied on them to provide the support that you felt should have been provided by people within your national federation. With the guidance of your personal support-staff, you seem to have detached from your national team, at least for the short-term. You began working on a competition plan and continued to refine it until you began to re-establish your confidence. The refinements that you did seem to have included the removal of certain national team athletes from your support because they were detracting from your confidence.

From what I understand, you have recently started to increase your confidence once more. I believe that there are glimpses that you are returning to the same level of performance that you had prior to your decline in performance and de-selection from the team for ---.

Recommendations:
Your plans are still in the process of refinement, and when your protocol stabilizes, you will achieve a level of performance as a consistent national team competitor. The next stage in your development requires a selective accessing of formal support staff from people who travel as part of your national team's infrastructure at international tournaments. You will resource these people incorrectly a few times prior to learning how to establish a correct balance of "who fits where."

Athlete Profile

Athlete: (Chanta!)

Athletic Progression: It is my belief that you began your national team affiliation as a "guarded optimist." What this basically means is that you were optimistic about your opportunity as a team athlete. However, I gather that you did have some initial concerns as a result of early experiences with a dysfunctional personal coach. Your initial Games experience in --- was positive despite complications regarding travel and lack of support from at least one national teammate. Though the performance was enjoyable, I gather that this was one factor that started a process where you began to distrust the agendas of others in international tournament settings.

It is my perception that your positive – optimistic view of national team experience did not last long. From --- I understand that you experienced numerous setbacks in your aspirations due to national team malfunction. Malfunction included incomprehensible team de-selection and national team athlete betrayal. From what I understand, you reflected quite heavily on these issues and became pessimistic regarding receiving any formal support from your federation or national team. Throughout this process, it seems that you began consolidating a personal support-staff to compensate. You believed that the only way to develop as a world class performer was with the support of a small group of trustworthy people. These people included personal coaches from Germany as well as sponsors.

Your return to the national team happened in --- during the World Championships. I gather that this was a breakthrough in athletic competence development. It is my perception that you knew what you needed to do in order to perform to capability and which support could help you with it. I gather that due to no other Canadian dressage athletes being present for the competition, you were able to utilize your own resources as support however you saw fit. The result was a notable achievement. This achievement seems to have helped confirm that you were a notable world-class athlete. Further, your immediate accomplishment seems to have reminded you that your difficulties with national team selection were solely structural (organizational).

With your return to Games success you seem to have maintained your support system and stayed loyal to them. Your results were described as stabilized for the short-term until --- when I gather that you altered your support system. In ---, you seem to have re-establish collaboration with your national team, and the result seems to have been a decline in performance as well as a personal betrayal from the national team coach of the time. I believe that this lesson re-established was that you had to remain with your personal support system in order to remain a world-class performer.

You seem to have remained constant with your support-system, and included only the necessary team administrators into your circle. Formal staff permitted to help you seemed to be restricted to Chef de Missions, and they were only solicited for help once they proved themselves trustworthy. With your consolidated competition protocol, it appears that you stabilized your performance and reached a level of world-class performance yet to be paralleled by any North American to this day.

Recently, you have begun to consider that your time-span as an athlete is limited. You have increased your coaching capacities while still competing for national team appointments. At this time you have a strong distrust for the national federation and are increasingly unwilling to relinquish any form of control to them due to a concomitant of past betrayal. Your distrust seems to have taken up a fair part of your energy, and this leaves you with less interest in athletic endeavors as well as a decline in motivation to compete. It is my perception that this misplaced focus has trickled into your motivation and thus impinged on your ability for re-selection.

Recommendations:
Remain within your consolidated plan. Decide whether you choose to pursue team appointments. If choosing to remain a Major Games athlete, return to a constrained level of collaboration with your Chef de Mission, and reinvest your focus into internally controllable factors such as self-development and personal support staff matters. Spend less time ruminating on your own and with others regarding what is personally uncontrollable in the short-term.

Athlete Profile

Athlete: (James)

Athletic Progression: It is my perception that you began your national team affiliation as a "naive optimist." What this basically means is that it seems you were optimistic about your opportunity as a team athlete. You experienced nothing but support from personal coaches and family. Your first experience with the national team seems to have been adaptive and conducive to a long-term perception of trust.

Your first setback seems to have happened in --- when you tried out for the Olympics and did not make the team. Based on what I have discerned from your explanation, you did not perceive this setback as any form of failure. Instead, you recognized that you had certain weaknesses as a shooter and attempted to improve yourself in these areas. Because your initial setback was perceived as nothing more than inexperience, and inexperience was viewed as potentially controllable, it seems that you moved forward with an internal focus.

Your return to the national team seems to have happened shortly thereafter, and I gather that you knew that it was only a matter of time before you would become a world-class athlete. With persistence, an internal focus, and parental support, it seems that very little time was spent on any national team - related organizational malfunctions that occurred during your athletic development.

I gather that you achieved finalist positions by ---, but your breakthrough as an athlete happened at the --- World Championships. There, it seems that you were able to exert personal control over your training, your accommodations, your meals, and your performance. When you won, I believe that you attributed your performance to the personal regulation of your environment. Though the performance was a success, it seems that you set a framework where you limited the possibility of performing equally at Olympic competitions. I gather that you did perform successfully at Commonwealth Games where there was less logistical complexity than at Pan-American and Olympic Games. You repeated your success at the --- World Championships.

All setbacks that occurred once you were a competent major Games performer (from --- onwards) seem to have happened as a result of an inability to cope with environmental constraints (poor accommodations, poor food, etc.). It is my belief that you had a very strong understanding of the competition protocol that worked best for you and attempted to be diligent about repeating it. From what I have discerned, it was an inability in repeating the protocol that bothered you and subsequently detracted from your competence as an athlete.

Despite having the odd setback at Major Games competitions such as Auckland ---, you seem to attributed declines in performance to external factors. This

characteristic seems to have helped maintain your motivation and persistence within your sport. I believe that you knew that there would be other competitions where you could implement your protocol, and you looked forward to such tournaments.

Recently, you seem to have begun noticing your time-span as an athlete as limited. It seems that you have shifted at least some of your interest toward business and other concerns. As related to sport, I gather that you still enjoy your participation. This is reflected in your willingness to remain affiliated with your national team as a potential source of human resource support.

Recommendations:
On a cognitive level, your strongest attribute as a performer was your awareness regarding what worked for you as a performer. When you were able to implement such plans in World Championships and less complex Games environments, you met with incredible success. The weakness was your struggle with coping mechanisms. Precisely, you were easily discouraged during Games contexts where you were unable to stay with your own self-imposed structured environment. This weakness impinged upon your ability to perform in Pan-American Games, and to a larger extent in Olympic Games. These coping skills need to be developed in order to push through coping struggles.

Athlete Profile

Athlete: (Donald)

Athletic Progression: It seems that you began your national team affiliation as a "guarded optimist." What this basically means is that I believe you were optimistic about your opportunity as a team athlete. However, you did have some initial concerns as a result of warnings from personal coaches and former national team members. As a result of these warnings, it appears that you were pessimistic on some level regarding the eventual possibility that you might not receive the support you needed from formal support staff (designated coaches, designated managers, national federation).

Your initial experience travelling internationally in --- seems to have been positive. I believe that part of the reason for this was the naïve outlook that you carried with you to training camp. You seem to have enjoyed your training camp (---), made a strong connection with your support staff, and subsequently performed quite well at the Commonwealth Games.

There seem to have been minor concerns throughout your initial training camp, and you noticed these due to a low-grade pessimism caused by other peoples' warnings. Though such warnings did not seem to have affected you in the immediate, it was inevitable that they would later on. Soon after completing the --- Commonwealth Games, you moved forward to your next tournament in Thailand. There, your confidence seems to have been challenged. I gather that you performed below personal expectations and assigned the cause of performance decline to poor tournament planning by national team staff. This was the moment where your concerns regarding national team support staff credibility seem to have been challenged initially. This moment, in essence, seems to be when you began a spiral downward into radical pessimism.

I gather that you began spending a great deal noticing and then reflecting on national team staff's ineptness from that point onward. Reflections seem to have focused on their slotting you as an average athlete and their favoritism of some athletes over others. I believe that you regarded yourself as part of the outer circle as a result of who your personal coach was. It is unknown why such interpretations caused a high degree of pessimism in you. However, a misplaced focus on national team agenda seems to have resulted in a long-term decline in international performance. I believe that your decline in results led to additional reflection regarding your national team and the mistakes they were making during training camp and at tournaments. Your downward spiral seems to have lasted upwards of 8–9 years.

Since the training camp in ---, you seem to have turned to a select few people to help you through what was a long-term entrenched pessimistic behavior. You seem to have started altering your competition plan, asserted your autonomy

during training camps, and begun to avoid negative sources of support. This was an intuitive measure I believe to be correct. Since ---, you have remained on the national team and seem to have continued refining your competition plan in an attempt to return to your initial confidence level (from ---). I believe that this attempt varies in its intensity as a result of a sustained lack of confidence and continued disbelief that your actions will lead to a successful resolution of poor performance. Therefore, you seem to have drawn on a constrained support-system in order to instill within you the confidence that you lack.

Considerations:
Your plans appear to be in the process of refinement, and when your protocol stabilizes, I believe that you will achieve a level of performance as a consistent international competitor. Unfortunately, I believe that you have spent considerable time reflecting on your mistakes and other peoples' contributions to those mistakes. This sort of reflection seems to have created a well-entrenched pattern of performance - related helplessness. Due to what appears to be a misplacement of focus, I believe that you did not spend ample time searching for solutions and recrafting an optimal tournament protocol.

Recommendations:
In order to move forward, you will have to put forth an exerted effort to focus on whatever is personally controllable (by yourself and those who you elicit for help). You will also have to rework your relationship with at least the team manager for the --- Olympics. This way you will have some formal support in order to work your environment to your best advantage. Finally, you will have to rework your self-confidence in order to re-establish your search for a refined competition protocol. This will have to be done in order to compete to your potential at the --- Olympics.

Athlete Profile

Athlete: (Mark)

Athletic Progression: It seems that you began your national team affiliation as a naïve optimist. What this means is that I believe that you approached your first team experience with a high level of enthusiasm and no reservations. The reason for your openness was a high level of support from family and your personal coach. Neither sources of personal support had any reservations or past negative experiences with your national team.

Though I gather that your initial results were moderate, you did show glimpses of success starting the --- World Championships. From --- through to ---, it seems that you were experiencing moderate results. It also seems that you were less intense in your performance - related goals. Perhaps this was part of your move through inexperience toward maturity. I believe that you were moving through a transitional period from ---. During this time you were learning what you needed to do in order to perform at potential. Also, I gather that you remained open to having members of your formal (team appointed) support-staff and personal support staff (personal coaching), and resourced help from both of these subsets.

I gather that your big breakthrough happened in --- at a tournament in Sweden. Though you did not mention this in your interview, I believe that your level of intensity and ambition was stepped up before this point. In essence, the Swedish tournament served as an indication that you were ready to establish yourself as a world-class athlete. I gather that there were certain things you did to achieve this quality of result, though they were not shared with me during our discussion.

The --- Commonwealth Games served as confirmation that you were capable of performing successfully on the world stage. I gather that part of the reason for your success was a vow made that you would win that tournament for your deceased nephew. This catalyst helped push you out of the comfort zone, and the result was success.

Since the --- Commonwealth Games, I gather that you have had your share of successes at venues such as the --- Olympic Games, Liverpool, and at the --- Commonwealth Games. These performances seem to confirm that you are a world class performer capable of brilliance in the ring. Conversely, it also seems that you have had your share of inconsistent performances while at tournaments. These inconsistencies have occurred sporadically each competition season. Examples seem to include various World Championships, moderate results at the Francophone Games, and last year, also at the National Championships.

It seems to me that you move between two stages of athletic competence. One stage reflects an unconsolidated competition protocol, and the other reflects the protocol of a world-class performer. What seems to be happening for you is that

you either forget, or let slide actions or behaviors that can lead to consistent performance at Major Games. One such example seems to be the level of comfort that you approach your tournaments with. It seems that when you are too comfortable, you lose close fights, that in retrospect, you could have won. When you are less comfortable, either as a result of yourself or an external catalyst, you seem to perform better. Another factor that seems to enhance your performance is an extended support-infrastructure. What this seems to indicate is that you perform on average better at Olympic, Pan-American, and Commonwealth Games, than you do at World Championships.

Recommendations

I believe that unless you find a way to instill some discomfort to your tournament protocol, you will continue to perform with inconsistency. Should you decide to instill a level of discomfort to your protocol, you will improve your performance, and increase the chances of success consistently.

Athlete Profile

Athlete: (Sam)

Athletic Progression: It seems that you began your national team affiliation as a naïve optimist. What this means is that I believe that you approached your first team experience with a high level of enthusiasm and no reservations. The reason for your openness was a high level of support from family and your personal coach. Neither sources of personal support had any reservations or past negative experiences with your national team.

I gather that your initial Games experience was a positive one. At the Francophone Games, it seems that you approached your opportunity with a high degree of enthusiasm and openness. You were prepared to work collaboratively with your personal coach as well as the national team head coach. With a high level of optimism, the result was a silver medal. From this experience, I gather that you went forward with enthusiasm and high expectations for the future.

Your next major tournament was the --- World Championships. You were selected based on your previous result at the Francophone Games. I gather that you approached the training camp with a high level of enthusiasm as well as a high level of trust toward formal support-staff (e.g., national coach). I believe that the training camp prior to the --- World Championships denoted a transitional stage for you. Precisely, you experienced a setback within the training camp due to an inappropriate assignment of a sparring partner. You were injured as a result, and I believe that you developed an awareness that even experienced team support do make judgement errors. Though you performed moderately at the --- World Championships, I gather that you did view it as a wonderful learning opportunity.

During the --- World Championships, through the --- Pan-American Championships, and up until the Commonwealth games Training camp, I believe that you were attempted to work through refinements in your competition protocol. One of these refinements was which support staff to resource from the national team as part of your support system. I believe that with issue unresolved, you lacked complete confidence in your readiness.

The --- Commonwealth Games served as confirmation that you were capable of performing successfully on the world stage. I gather that part of the reason for your success was a solid consolidated support-staff. You had both your personal coach and team manager who were members of your personal support. You also were more willing to access help from a select few outside peripheral sources such as a sport psychologist. With this level of comfort and reassurance, it seems that your confidence increased to the point where it resembled that of the --- Francophone Games.

Your level of accomplishment at the --- Commonwealth Games and the --- Pan-American Games is notable. I believe that you have a developed a relatively strong understanding of how you need to prepare and who you need to resource in order to perform at ability. The result is a level of results unparalleled by few on the national team.

It seems that you did have a setback after your return to success in ---. Your setback occurred in Europe during the Spring of --- when you received a lack of appropriate support from a travelling national coach. You were unable to use strategies that the coach provided to you in the moment, you did not like his dictatorial style, and as a result you did not trust him. Because that experience was associated with a decline in performance, I believe that it reminded you of the importance of solely resourceing people you trust while in tournament environments. I believe that you will maintain this lesson for the remainder of your boxing career.

Recommendations

Be sure to maintain your competition protocol and remain selective of who you resource. This does not mean that you cannot include new comers. You simply have to weigh what they are saying and decide whether the information is appropriate until you trust them. Also, in anticipation of instances where you travel without people from your circle, additional autonomy will need to be practiced. This form of discussion can be done in collaboration with your personal coach and your sport psychologist as a think tank situation. Within the discussion, a protocol regarding where and how to assert autonomy must be discussed.

Athlete Profile

Athlete: (Sarah)

Athletic Progression: It seems that you began your national team affiliation in shooting as a "guarded optimist." What this basically means is that I believe that you were optimistic about your opportunity as a team athlete. However, it seems that you did have some initial concerns as a result of past experiences in ---. Early maladaptive experiences seem to have included personal coach betrayal and a viewing of maladaptive treatment accorded to other national team athletes. As a result of these formative experiences, I believe that you approached the shooting team as a pessimist. It seems that pessimism was geared toward the possibility that you might not receive the support you needed from formal support staff (designated coaches, designated managers, national federation).

Your initial experience travelling internationally to Cuba seems to have been positive. Part of the reason for this based on my doctorate is that you had a less experienced international coach who was prepared to cater to your individual needs. With this kind of support to assist you, I gather that you performed well and had a positive first tournament experience. Though your own performance was positive, it seems that you did experience minor organizational malfunction regarding transportation and visa arrangements. More importantly, it seems that you witnessed serious disorganization accorded to other team athletes (the forgetting of a team entry by formal support staff).

Your next important assignment was to the World Championship team in Cyprus. You seem to have approached the competition as a guarded optimist with minor distrust of your formal (team) support system based on what you previously experienced and observed. Your coaches were described as less doting than in Cuba, and one of the coaches seems to have questioned your athletic ability. With high expectations, an unconsolidated competition plan, and a lack of adequate support, I gather that you experienced your first performance barrier. I believe that the decline in performance might have left you unphased had you not experienced negative performances in past sport (---). When you experienced the decline in shooting performance, you seem to have suffered an extreme loss of confidence. In addition, I believe that you also lost trust in your formal support-infrastructure. The result seems to have been a high degree of sport - related pessimism which followed you for at least four years.

Beyond ruminating about your lack of formal support, I gather that you began to solicit help in the form of a personal support structure. This help seems to have included personal athletes, and on occasion, international coaches. These people seem to have been tapped into in order to search for pathways through personal and organizational weaknesses. I believe that they seem to have provided some of the answer regarding what you need to re-establish Major Games competence.

More recently, you seem to have begun tapping into a wider support infrastructure. Precisely, I gather that you have started developing a collaborative approach with your national coach and other national team athletes. This return to an internal focus (which was lost after Cuba) seems to have helped re-establish your enjoyment within the sport of shooting. In addition to what I perceive to be an alteration of perspective, and the widening of support, you have also begun to assert your autonomy as an athlete. You seem to be developing an improved understanding of who can assist you, how to tap into them, and what sorts of physical environments to avoid.

Though world-class results have yet to show themselves, I gather that you are optimistic that they will within the next few years.

Recommendations:
You have formalized your competition protocol, and this is a very good step toward a heightened performance result. Be sure to remain focused on internally controllable factors. Also, you must slowly move toward personal autonomy with less of a need for support from coaches and other athletes. The reason for this suggestion is the uncontrollability of these variables. Finally you should experience your breakthrough shortly. Be certain to stay within your structure after return to success because there is a typical short-term decline in performance after achieving success due to heightened comfort. Good Luck.

Athlete Profile

Athletic Progression: It seems that you began your national team affiliation as a "guarded optimist." What this basically means is that I believe that you were optimistic about your opportunity as a team athlete. I gather that this enthusiasm was supported by family members. However, I believe that you did have minor initial concerns as a result of cautioning from personal coaches. It seems that emphasis in their cautioning was on reminding you to maintain your individual orientation. As a result of these suggestions, it seems that you were slightly guarded on some level regarding the eventual possibility that you might not receive complete support in your endeavors.

Your initial experience travelling internationally as a junior seems to have been positive. I believe that part of the reason for this is that you were optimistic of the initial opportunity. The result, as I gather it, was a level of success, as well as some confirmation that you were a talented athlete.

I believe that you approached your initial senior Games experience with the same naïve enthusiasm that you had as a junior. After a few years of moving up the ranks, I gather that you established yourself as a Major Games athlete. At the time, I believe that you were open to the help of your national team coach, and that you tapped into him as part of your support-infrastructure. I discerned that you expected him to have ample knowledge to guide you through the labyrinth of Major Games performance.

Just as the --- Commonwealth Games was a positive initial opportunity, it also seems to have provided you with some vicarious indication that your national team and its formally appointed support staff were not as creditable as you had initially hoped. You seem to have noticed that your coach was easily influenced by some of his athletes. Further, I gather that he did not act in the best interest of the national team (e.g., he allowed a physically ill athlete to perform when she should not have). With a number of maladaptive actions carried on by the coach, I believe that you lost trust in formal support credibility. This was later confirmed by inappropriate drinking by the national team's technical advisor.

As a result of these maladaptive lessons, it appears that you juggled training at the national training center with supplemental coaching by personal coaches in ---. I gather that it was quite evident to you that you needed to work collaboratively with national team support, but needed to rely more on personal resources.

Though you were taking the correct step of developing your own support-staff, and supplementing these with national team athletes and the national team facility, I believe that you were making one serious error. At least part of your energy while you were reaching the height of your career seems to have been spent ruminating and discussing team - related concerns with personal support. Such concerns seem to have included the weaknesses within the national team. It

seems that thoughts and discussions also emphasized your national team coach's lack of conviction as well as his inability to pair you with the appropriate doubles partner. I believe that this form of pessimism misplaced part of a focus that could have been placed on what was internally controllable.

I gather that you eventually began to assert control where you felt the national coach should have done so on your part. You approached the best-suited doubles partner, and eventually began competing with him. Because much time was spent with an inappropriate pairing, it seems that less time was spent on refining a collaborative competition protocol with ---. I believe that the result was adequate performance, but the inability to reach your potential in terms of results. These experiences seem to have left you with some resentment toward the national team as you stepped away from team affiliation.

Recently, you have returned to sporadic competition in order to promote badminton and enhance sales. You continue to compete successfully at the national level, however, it seems that the level of enjoyment derived from tournaments is questionable.

Appendix F

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ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Degree	Specialization	University	Year
Ed. D Suma Cum Laude	Education Administrative Leadership	University of Alberta	2000
M.A. Suma Cum Laude	Sport Psychology/ Human Kinetics	Ottawa University	1995
B.A. Soc. Sci. (Cum Laude)	International Relations	Ottawa University	1991
B.A. (Cum Laude)	English Literature	Ottawa University	1989

MEMBERSHIPS

Canadian Society for Psychomotor Learning and Sport Psychology since 1993.

Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology since 1994.

The International Society Of Mental Training And Excellence since 1995.

Canadian Equestrian Federation since 1978.

Horse Trials Canada since 1978.

TEACHING APPOINTMENTS

Institution	Position	Department	Year
Univ. of Alberta	EDAL 612 Research Methods Graduate Level	Educational Admin. and Leadership	2000
Univ. of Alberta	PEDS 304 (seminar) Sport Sociology	Sport Sciences	1997-1998
	PEDS 201 (seminar) Sport Ethics	Sport Sciences	1995-1998

ATHLETIC HISTORY

International Achievements

Member	Canadian Equestrian Team 1991 Pan-American Games
Member	Canadian Equestrian Team 1987 Pan-American Games (Team Silver Medal)
Captain	Ontario Young Riders Three Day Event Team 1983-87

National Achievements

1989	Ontario Athletic Achievement Award
1988	Ontario Best Ever Gold Carded
1987	Ontario Leading Young Rider Award
1986	Canadian Leading Equestrian
1986	Ontario Leading Young Riders Award

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Function	Institution	Year
Team-Building Coordinator	K.F.C., Pizza Hut, Taco Bell Canada (Tricon Ltd.)	1998
Western Canadian Representative	Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology	1997
Athlete Services Olympic Games	Canadian Olympic Association Atlanta, United States	1996
Athlete Services	Canadian Olympic Association	1995
Pan-American Games	Buenos Aires, Argentina	

CONSULTATIONS

Consultant	Canadian National Boxing Team	1996-00
Consultant	Canadian Figure Skating Association	1995-00
Consultant	Canadian Equestrian Team	1999
Consultant	Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Shooting Team	1995-97
Consultant	University of Alberta Women's Field Hockey Team	1996

Consultant	Ontario Provincial Women's Volleyball Team	1994-95
Consultant	Ottawa University Women's Volleyball Team	1994-95

SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS

Schinke, R. J., da Costa, J. & Andrews, M. The process of building Major-Games competitors. Submitted for publication.

Schinke, R. J., da Costa, J., & Andrews, M. (2000). Social cognitive considerations regarding graduate student difficulties. Submitted for publication.

Courneya, K. C., Bobick, T., & Schinke, R. J. (1999). Does the theory of planned behavior mediate the relationship between personality and exercise behavior? Basic and Applied Social Psychology. In Press.

Schinke, R. J., & da Costa, J. (2000). Qualitative research in the sport sciences. Avante. In Press.

Bloom, G. A., Durand-Bush, N., Schinke, R. J., & Salmela, J. H. (1998). The importance of mentoring in the development of coaches and athletes, International Journal of Sport Psychology, 29 (3), 267-281.

Bloom, G. A., Schinke, R. J., & Salmela, J. H. (1998). Assessing the development of perceived communication skills by elite basketball coaches International Coaching and Sport Science Journal, 2 (3), 3-10.

Schinke, R. J., Draper, S. P., & Salmela, J. H. (1997). A conceptual model of team building in high-performance sport as a seasonal process Avante, 3 (2), 47-62.

Schinke, R., Bloom, G., & Salmela, J. H. (1995). The professional development of elite basketball coaches, Avante, 1 (1), 48-62.

Bloom, G., Salmela, J. H., & Schinke, R. J. (1995) Opinion des entraineurs experts sur la formation des aspirants entraineurs, Sport, 151, 46-51.

Schinke, R. J. (1995). The career markers of elite basketball coaches - a qualitative analysis. Unpublished master's thesis.

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Schinke, R. J. (2000). How Major-Games competitors develop. Coaches Report, 7 (3). In Press.

Tabakman, J. F., & Schinke, R. J. (2000). The conscious coach. Coaches Report, 7 (2). In press.

Schinke, R. J. (1999). Psychology intervention and performance enhancement. Coaches Report, 6 (3). 22-26.

Schinke, R. J. & Marshall, D. (1998). A method of assessing elite team performance in the post-season to improve results for the following season. Coaches Report, 5 (1), 18-23.

Rodgers, W. M., & Schinke, R. J. (1997). Development and assessment of a field intervention to encourage positive lifestyle behaviors in adults. Alberta Cancer Board: Research Update, 4 (3), 1-2.

Bloom, G. A., Salmela, J. H. & Schinke, R. J. (July, 1995). Expert coaches' views on the training of developing coaches. In R, Raway-Vanfraechem & Y. Vanden Auweele (Eds.) FEPSAC Conference Proceedings. Free University of Brussels: Brussels, Belgium. pp 401-408.

BOOKS

Schinke, R. J. & Schinke, B. (1999). Zielgerichtet reiten mit mentalem training. Warendorf, ALG: FN.

Schinke, R. J., & Schinke, B. (1997). Focused riding: Sport psychology techniques for equestrians. London, UK: Compass.

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

Schinke, R. J. & Magannon, K. (October, 1998a). Directions for sport psychology research in applied contexts: What discursive psychology can reveal about athlete and pracitioner. Paper presented at The Canadian Society for Motor Learning and Sport Psychology Annual Conference. Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.

Schinke, R. J., & Magannon, K. (October, 1998b). Directions for qualitative research in sport psychology: Examining past assumptions and methods to enhance future inquiry. Paper presented at The Canadian Society for Motor Learning and Sport Psychology Annual Conference. Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.

Magannon, K., & Schinke, R. J. (1998). What dialogism can reveal about social support in exercise settings. Paper presented at The Canadian Society for Motor Learning and Sport Psychology Annual Conference. Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.

Rodgers, W. M., Hall, C. R. & Schinke, R. J. (August 1998). Functions of imagery in sport and exercise. Paper presented at The American Psychological Association Annual Congress, San Francisco, US.

Durand-Bush, N., Bloom, G. A., & Schinke, R. J. (September 1997). Promoting innovative consulting experiences as graduate students. Workshop presented at The Association For The Advancement Of Applied Sport Psychology Annual Congress, San Diego, CA, US.

McGannon, K., Rodgers, W. M., & Schinke, R. J. (September, 1997). Enhancing adherance to physical activity through social support: A theoretical basis for intervention. Poster presented at The Association For The Advancement Of Applied Sport Psychology Annual Congress, San Diego, CA, US.

Schinke, R. J., Poon, P., Rodgers, W. M., & Maganon, K. (June 1997). The perceived and intended behaviors of exercise leaders. Poster presented at The North American Sport Psychology Association Annual Conference, Boulder, Colorado, US.

Schinke, R. J., Rodgers, W. M., Pinel, B., Poon, P. (October, 1996). A case study of a lifestyle enhancement program for adults. Paper read at The Association For The Advancement Of Applied Sport Psychology Annual Congress. Virginia, US.

Rodgers, W. M., Schinke, R. J., Poon, P., Pinel, B., & Blanchard, C. (October, 1996). Trials and tribulations of intervention assessment and field research: Identifying

issues and searching for solutions. Paper read at The Association For The Advancement Of Applied Sport Psychology Annual Congress. Virginia, US.

Rodgers, W, M., Poon, P., Schinke, R. J., & Pinel, B. (October, 1996). Methodological issues and data management for intervention and field research. Paper to be read at The Association For The Advancement Of Applied Sport Psychology Annual Congress. Virginia, US.

Pinel, B., Rodgers, W. M., Poon, P., & Schinke, R. J. (October, 1996). A case study of an intervention to enhance enjoyment in youth hockey players. Paper read at The Association For The Advancement Of Applied Sport Psychology Annual Congress. Virginia, US.

Poon, P., Rodgers, W. M., Pinel, B., & Schinke, R. J. (October, 1996). Participant recruitment and data collection with dancers. Paper read at The Association For The Advancement Of Applied Sport Psychology Annual Congress. Virginia, US.

Schinke, R. J., Rodgers, W., & Pinel, B. (June, 1996). Development and assessment of a field intervention to encourage positive lifestyle behaviours. Paper read at The North American Sport Psychology Association Annual Conference, Orillia, Ont.

Schinke, R. J., Bloom, G. A., & Salmela, J. H. (October, 1995). The evolution of communication skills by elite expert basketball coaches. Paper read at The Canadian Society for Motor Learning and Sport Psychology Annual Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Schinke, R. J., Draper, S. P., & Salmela, J. H. (October, 1995). The development of team building components by professional ice hockey and basketball coaches. Paper read at The Canadian Society for Motor Learning and Sport Psychology Annual Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Bloom, G. A., Schinke, R. J. & Salmela, J. H. (September, 1995) The cyclical nature of mentoring in elite sport. Paper read at The Association For The Advancement Of Applied Sport Psychology Annual Congress. New Orleans, U.S.

Bloom, G. A., Salmela, J. H. & Schinke, R. J. (July, 1995). Expert coaches views on the training of developing coaches. Paper presented at the 9th European Congress of Sport Psychology. Brussles, Belgium.

Schinke, R. J. (May, 1995). Formalizing competitive procedures for elite equestrians. Poster presented at The World Mental Training Congress. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Bloom, G. A., Schinke, R. J., Mack, D. E., Durand-Bush, N. (May, 1995). Methods for acquiring applied mental skills training as a graduate student. Panel discussion at The World Mental Training Congress. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Schinke, R. J., Draper, S.P., & Salmela, J.H. (October, 1994). The conceptual model for team building as a seasonal process in high performance ice-hockey and basketball. Paper read at The Canadian Society of Motor Learning and Sport Psychology Annual Conference. Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Bloom, G., Schinke, R. J., & Salmela, J.H. (October, 1994). Feedback and recommendations from expert team coaches regarding the future direction of coaching. Paper read at The Canadian Society of Motor Learning and Sport Psychology Annual Conference. Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Salmela, J. H. & Schinke, R. J. (December, 1993). The development of expert national team coaches in basketball. Final Report, Basketball Canada, 109-154.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Schinke, R. J. (Mar. 6-7, 2000). Sport psychology for athletes. Canadian Amateur Boxing Association – NCCP Level IV, Task 8. Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Schinke, R. J. (Nov. 14-15, 1999). Sport psychology for coaches. Canadian Amateur Boxing Association – NCCP Level IV, Task 7. Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Schinke, R. J. (June 11-12, 1998). Sport psychology for boxers. Canadian Amateur Boxing Association – NCCP Level IV, Task 7. Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada.

Schinke, R. J. (Jan. 14, 1998). Sport strategy for boxers. Canadian Amateur Boxing Association – NCCP Level V, Task 13. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Schinke, R. J. (Dec. 7-8, 1997). Sport psychology for boxing coaches. Canadian Amateur Boxing Association – NCCP Level IV, Task 7. Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada.

Schinke, R. J. & Bloom, G. (June 1994). Psychological and Sociological Perspectives of Human Movement. Ottawa University Enrichment Mini Course.

Schinke, R. J., & Schinke, B. (April 6-7, 1994). Youth in sport: Coping with competitive stress - presentation and workshop. Chateau Laurier, Annual Pony Club General Meeting, Ottawa: Ontario.

APPLIED PUBLICATIONS

Schinke, R. J. (1997). Focused Riding Techniques. Dressage, 9, 32-33.

Schinke, R. J., & Schinke, B. (1997). Will to win. Horse & Rider, 5, 32-38.

Schinke, R. J. (1996). Arrousal levels for peak performance in three day eventing. International Eventing, 2, 50-51.

Schinke, R. J. (1996). Goal-setting for three day event performers. International Eventing, 1, 51-52.

Schinke, R. J. (1995). Mental preparation for three day event competitions. International Eventing, 12, 30-31.

Schinke, R. J. (1995). Putting together your competition package. Australian Horse & Rider, 10, 28-30.

Schinke, R. J. (1995). Focusing and direction for equestrian performers. Australian Horse & Rider, 9, 27-29.

Schinke, R. J. (1995). Establishing the optimal level of relaxation - activation for peak performances in equestrian. Australian Horse & Rider, 8, 26-28.

Schinke, R. J. (1995). The uses and implementation of imagery in equestrian. Australian Horse & Rider, 6, 30-32.

Schinke, R. J. (1995). A general understanding of sport psychology concepts for elite equestrians. Australian Horse & Rider, 5, 24-26.

Scholarships		Value
1996	Marie Louise Imrie Graduate Student Award.	$500.00
1996-97	University Of Alberta Ph. D. Scholarship.	$13,000.00
1995-96	University Of Alberta Ph. D. Scholarship.	$13,000.00
1987	Ontario Best Ever.	$ 2,000.00
1986	Ontario Best Ever.	$ 2,000.00
1986	Canadian Equestrian Team Leading Canadian Award. Athletic - Tuition	$ 2,500.00

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Served on organizing committee or assisting with fundraising for the Children's Aid Society, Canadian Cancer Society, Prescott Russell Association for the Mentally Challenged, Riding for the Physically handicapped, Canadian Pony Club National Tetrathalon.

PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS

Team building, infrastructure management, Olympic, Professional sport, corporate sector intervention.