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The relationship between multidimensional perfectionism and pre-competition emotions of youth footballers

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Published in:
Psychology of Sport and Exercise

DOI:
[10.1016/j.psychsport.2018.04.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2018.04.002)

Published: 01/07/2018

Document Version
Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication on the UWS Academic Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Donachie, T. C., Hill, A. P., & Hall, H. K. (2018). The relationship between multidimensional perfectionism and pre-competition emotions of youth footballers. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 37, 33-42.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2018.04.002>

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- 1 The relationship between multidimensional perfectionism and pre-competition emotions of
- 2 youth footballers

Abstract

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Objectives

Research has found that trait and dispositional perfectionism are related to pre-competition emotions. However, less is known about whether other aspects of perfectionism, such as perfectionistic cognitions, are related to pre-competition emotions. To address this limitation, the current study examined (i) the relationship between self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism and pre-competition emotions, and (ii) whether perfectionistic cognitions predict pre-competition emotions after controlling for these two dimensions of perfectionism.

Design

A cross-sectional survey.

Method

Two hundred and six youth footballers (M age = 15.54 years, SD = 1.93) completed self-report measures prior to their next competition.

Results

Regression analyses revealed socially prescribed perfectionism was a positive predictor of anger, while self-oriented perfectionism was a positive predictor of excitement. After controlling for self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism, perfectionistic cognitions were a positive predictor of anxiety, anger, and dejection.

Conclusion

The findings suggest that perfectionistic cognitions are important in regard to pre-competition emotions.

Keywords: adolescents; sport; cognitions; anxiety; anger; dejection

25

Introduction

26 How an athlete feels prior to competition is important. Pre-competition emotions have
27 been shown to influence the behavioural, motivational, physical, and cognitive functioning of
28 athletes (e.g., Martinent & Ferrand, 2009). Athletes experiencing positive pre-competition
29 emotions are normally better prepared, braced for competition, and energised, whereas
30 athletes experiencing negative pre-competition emotions are more prone to being ill-prepared,
31 distracted, and having displaced energy (e.g., Vast, Young, & Thomas, 2010). Apart from the
32 implications for performance, over time, pre-competition emotions will also likely influence
33 athlete wellbeing. Again, positive emotions are conducive to better wellbeing and negative
34 emotions are not (Diener, 2000). Research suggests that athletes vary considerably in the
35 emotions that they experience before competition with many athletes regularly reporting
36 difficulty managing their emotions (Campo et al., 2016). Therefore, in order to better
37 understand why some athletes report more negative and less positive pre-competition
38 emotions, and vice versa, it is necessary to identify the factors which explain the differences
39 between athletes in their pre-competition emotions.

40 Emotions are complex experiences of consciousness, bodily sensation, and behaviour
41 that reflect the significance of an event (Barrett Mesquita, Ochsner, & Gross, 2007). Although
42 emotion, mood, and affect are often used interchangeably, emotion is distinct from mood and
43 affect. Emotions (e.g., happiness) are generally short in duration, high in intensity, and relate
44 to specific events (Lazarus, 2000). Mood (e.g., a good mood), by contrast, is a more
45 prolonged experience encompassing a global set of emotions. We experience mood on a day-
46 to-day basis and it is relatively long-lasting, lower in intensity, and less specific than emotion
47 (Ekkekakis, 2013). Moods can occur without a specific event whereas emotions are activated
48 by a significant event. For example, when a person is angry, that person is typically angry
49 about something specific, whereas someone can feel down without an obvious reason.

50 Finally, affect refers to two broad aspects of all emotional experiences: hedonic (pleasure-
51 displeasure) and arousal (sleepy-activated) (Barrett et al., 2007). Affect is categorised into
52 positive (e.g., feeling good) and negative (e.g., feeling bad) experiences, is experienced
53 continually, but has varying degrees of intensity over time.

54 One popular approach to understanding emotions is cognitive-motivational-relational
55 theory (CMR; Lazarus, 1991). In this theory, emotions are deemed to arise from the
56 interdependent effects of primary and secondary appraisal of meaningful events (Lazarus,
57 2000). Primary appraisal determines whether a situation or an event is personally relevant and
58 congruent with an athlete's goals and core values. Secondary appraisal represents an
59 evaluation of perceived coping options, which then forms the basis for behaviour. Lazarus
60 argued that different emotions emerge because of broadly different appraisal patterns and that
61 each emotion is underpinned by a core relational theme. A core relational theme is the
62 perception of benefit or harm underlying positive and negative emotions. For example, a
63 positive emotion (e.g., happiness) is considered to emerge when individuals appraise progress
64 towards a goal, whereas a negative emotion (e.g., anxiety) is believed to arise when
65 individuals appraise uncertain existential threat.

66 Athletes can express a range of pre-competition emotions both positive (e.g.,
67 excitement and enjoyment) and negative (e.g., anxiety, anger, and dejection) (Jones, Lane,
68 Bray, Uphill, & Catlin, 2005). The function of these emotions is complex. Some pre-
69 competition emotions can facilitate performance but the same emotion, under different
70 circumstances, may impair performance (Hanin, 2010). For example, anxiety, an emotion
71 underpinned by a core relational theme of facing uncertain existential threat, is a common and
72 normal experience for athletes and can fuel greater mental effort when experienced as
73 facilitative (Campo et al., 2016). However, anxiety may also cause muscle tension,
74 concentration disruption, and impaired performance (Hanin, 2010). Anger is similar in its

75 complexity. Anger, an emotion underpinned by the core relational theme of a demeaning
76 offence against me and mine, has the potential to mobilize energy and therefore improve
77 performance but may also impair performance because it can disrupt the focus of attention,
78 decision-making, and skill execution (Campo et al., 2016). Notwithstanding these
79 complexities, generally, negative emotions are considered more undesirable than positive
80 emotions because they are more likely to drain energy, overload attention, and decrease
81 readiness for competition, whereas positive emotions are likely to energize behaviour and
82 help maintain mental states that are conducive to better performance (Hanin, 2010).

83 **Personality as a critical antecedent of emotion**

84 Personality characteristics influence the experience of emotions as they imbue
85 achievement contexts with meaning that affects the appraisal process (Duda & Hall, 2001).
86 They can also encapsulate goals, intentions, and coping behaviours that are relevant to the
87 overall stress/emotion process (Lazarus, 2000). For these reasons, researchers and
88 practitioners have been interested in identifying personality characteristics that may provide
89 resiliency, or may confer vulnerability, in emotion and stress-related processes. Research has
90 found several personal factors that may buffer individuals from stress and negative emotions
91 during primary appraisal by increasing the likelihood of a significant event being appraised as
92 challenging rather than as threatening. These factors include self-confidence, task orientation,
93 and conscientiousness (Nicholls & Polman, 2007). Conversely, other personal factors have
94 been found to increase stress and negative emotions by increasing the likelihood of a
95 significant event being appraised as threatening and that the demands of the situation exceed
96 coping resources. These factors include (low) self-esteem, ego orientation, and neuroticism
97 (Nicholls & Polman, 2007). With these findings in mind, it is evident how in response to the
98 same events, personality characteristics will contribute to how “people perceive themselves

99 differently, think differently, cope differently, and experience and display emotions
100 differently” (Lazarus, 1998, p. 213).

101 Perfectionism is a multidimensional personality characteristic which reflects the need
102 to perfect the self (Hewitt, Flett, & Mikail, 2017). Some researchers consider perfectionism to
103 be a disposition (e.g., Stoeber, Corr, Smith, & Saklofske, 2018), whereas others consider it to
104 be a trait (e.g., Hewitt et al, 2017). Hewitt and Flett’s (1991) model of perfectionism includes
105 three trait dimensions: perfectionistic standards directed toward the self (self-oriented
106 perfectionism; SOP), directed toward others (other-oriented perfectionism; OOP), or
107 perceived to be directed from others (socially-prescribed perfectionism; SPP). SOP and SPP
108 are particularly relevant to this study. This is because both of these dimensions are related to
109 personal outcomes. In the case of SPP, it is related only to negative outcomes. In the case of
110 SOP it is more ambivalent as it is related to both negative and positive outcomes (e.g.,
111 Stoeber & Childs, 2010). On the role of SOP and SPP in stress/emotion processes, Hewitt and
112 Flett (2002) describe processes of stress generation, anticipation, perpetuation, and
113 enhancement. Underscoring these processes is the notion that unrealistic goals are tied to self-
114 worth and that a preoccupation with the importance of goals features heavily in the way
115 meaning is given to attainment. These features in turn influence the thoughts experienced
116 when pursuing goals including prompting the experience of self-defeating cognitive styles
117 (e.g., rumination), the tendency to catastrophize and exaggerate the consequences of failing,
118 and unconstructive coping behaviours (e.g., avoidance) (Flett & Hewitt, 2016).

119 When considering the relationship between perfectionism and pre-competition
120 emotions, specifically, competition provides an especially important situation for athletes
121 with higher levels of SOP and SPP. For both SOP and SPP, competition offers a means of
122 self-validation, enhancement, or annihilation, when important goals are achieved or not.
123 However, based upon the features of SOP and SPP, the specific emotions experienced are

124 likely to be different. SOP is complicated in that movement towards goals is possible due to
125 greater perceived control over personally meaningful goals (i.e., SOP is associated with the
126 pursuit of personal goals). As such, the anticipatory experience prior to competition may
127 include both positive emotions associated with the possibility of success and negative
128 emotions associated with the possibility of failure. Conversely, SPP includes goals over
129 which the individual has little control (i.e., SPP is associated with the pursuit of goals
130 imposed by others). In which case, there is little opportunity for respite from negative
131 emotional experiences via goal attainment. The anticipatory experience prior to competition
132 is therefore more likely to be dominated by negative emotions as personal effort is considered
133 largely futile and failure, to some degree, is likely to be perceived as inevitable.

134 There is a significant amount of research which examines SOP, SPP and general
135 emotions outside of sport (e.g., in university students, school-aged children, and adult
136 community samples). This research indicates that SPP is consistently associated with negative
137 emotions. SPP has displayed significant positive and small-to-medium relationships with
138 anger, anxiety, and sadness (e.g., Hewitt & Flett, 1991, Hewitt & Flett, 2002; Stornelli, Flett
139 & Hewitt, 2009). SPP has also displayed a significant negative and small relationship with
140 happiness (e.g., Stornelli et al., 2009). The relationship between SOP and emotions, on the
141 other hand, is less straightforward. In relation to specific emotions, SOP has displayed a
142 significant positive and small-to-medium relationships with anxiety, anger, and sadness (e.g.,
143 Flett, Hewitt, & Cheng, 2008; Saboonchi & Lundh, 2003; Smith et al., 2016), whereas on
144 other occasions these relationships have been non-significant (e.g., Akram, Ellis, Myachykov,
145 Chapman, & Barclay, 2017). In regard to positive emotions, SOP has displayed a significant
146 negative and small relationship with happiness (e.g., Stornelli et al., 2009), whereas on other
147 occasions this relationship has been non-significant (e.g., Flett et al., 2008). SOP has also
148 displayed a significant positive and medium relationship with enjoyment (Flett et al., 2016).

149 Findings outside of sport are comparable to those in sport. Perfectionism has been
150 examined in relation to general emotions (i.e., emotions associated with sport participation)
151 and emotions following mistakes, and mainly in regard to negative emotions. In terms of this
152 research, significant positive and small-to-medium relationships have been found between
153 perfectionism dimensions similar to SOP and SPP and negative emotions in the form of
154 anxiety, anger, and dejection (e.g., Dunn, Gotwals, Causgrove Dunn, & Syrotuik, 2006;
155 Lizmore, Dunn, & Causgrove Dunn, 2016; Martinent, Ferrand, Guillet, & Gauthier, 2010). In
156 regard to pre-competition emotions, the majority of studies have focused on anxiety.
157 Dimensions of perfectionism similar to SOP and SPP displayed significant positive and
158 small-to-medium relationships with cognitive anxiety in the lead up to competition in some
159 studies (e.g., Hall, Kerr, & Matthews, 1998), whereas other studies have found that the
160 relationship between personal standards (a dimension of perfectionism similar to SOP) and
161 pre-competition anxiety to be non-significant (e.g., Frost & Henderson, 1991). There is also
162 some research examining anger in sport, which has found significant positive and small-to-
163 medium relationships between concern over mistakes (a dimension of perfectionism similar
164 to SPP) and trait anger and anger in response to mistakes during performance (e.g., Dunn et
165 al., 2006). However, to our knowledge, the relationship between perfectionism and pre-
166 competition anger has not been examined. This is also the case generally in research
167 regarding other pre-competition emotions in sport. The first purpose of the present study is to
168 build on existing research by examining, for the first time, whether multidimensional
169 perfectionism (SOP and SPP) predicts a range of pre-competition emotions in sport (anxiety,
170 anger, dejection, happiness, and excitement).

171 **Perfectionistic cognitions and emotion**

172 It is likely that some of the emotions associated with trait or dispositional
173 perfectionism are a result of a ruminative response style. Perfectionistic cognitions are

174 frequent automatic thoughts and images about the need to be perfect (Flett, Hewitt, Boucher,
175 Davidson, & Munro, 1998). These thoughts are characterized by recurrent thoughts about the
176 self-imposed pressure to be flawless, such as, “Why can’t I be perfect?” and “I should be
177 perfect” (Flett et al., 1998). Perfectionistic cognitions are a state-like manifestation of
178 perfectionism but their occurrence reflects a stable feature of a perfectionist’s cognitive
179 experience when they are chronically activated (Hewitt et al., 2017). Nevertheless, because
180 perfectionistic cognitions reflect a preoccupation with the attainment of perfection they tend
181 to be activated by perceived failure or stressful events (Hewitt et al., 2017). Following a
182 stressful event, perfectionistic individuals engage in rumination about falling short of their
183 ideal standard and, therefore, rumination plays an important role in the subsequent emotions
184 and distress they experience.

185 The majority of research that has examined perfectionistic cognitions has been outside
186 of sport. Together with a strong relationship with SOP and SPP, this research has found a
187 positive relationship between the frequency of perfectionistic cognitions and a range of
188 negative emotions and stress-related factors. Frequent perfectionistic cognitions have been
189 associated with self-criticism, negative forms of cognitive-emotion coping, and deficits in
190 positive forms of cognitive-emotion coping (e.g., Macedo et al., 2017). Frequent
191 perfectionistic cognitions have also been found to have a significant positive and medium-to-
192 large relationship with negative affect and a number of specific emotions, such as anxiety,
193 anger, and depressive symptoms (e.g., Flett et al., 1998). In addition, Flett and colleagues
194 have found that frequent perfectionistic cognitions were a unique predictor of anxiety and
195 depression after controlling for trait perfectionism (e.g., Flett, Hewitt, Whelan, & Martin,
196 2007). Therefore, as suggested by Flett et al. (2007), the frequency of perfectionistic
197 cognitions appears to offer additional information about the emotional experiences associated
198 with perfectionism.

199 Research that has examined the experience of perfectionistic cognitions in sport is
200 sparse. In one of two studies to date, Appleton, Hall, and Hill (2011) found that parent-
201 initiated motivational climates were a significant predictor of athletes' perfectionistic
202 cognitions. Specifically, athletes engage in more perfectionistic cognitions when they
203 perceive that their parents create an achievement climate that is highly critical and
204 disapproving of mistakes during competition. In the other study, Hill and Appleton (2011)
205 examined the relationship between perfectionistic cognitions and symptoms of athlete
206 burnout. Perfectionistic cognitions displayed significant positive and small relationships with
207 reduced sense of accomplishment, physical/emotional exhaustion, and sport devaluation. In
208 this study, perfectionistic cognitions also explained unique variance in burnout dimensions
209 beyond dispositional perfectionism (SOP and SPP in context of sport). These findings suggest
210 that not only is the sport environment potentially important in directing athletes' thoughts
211 towards perfectionistic cognitions, but such cognitions may play a role in negative emotional
212 experiences, such as burnout. Based on this research, it is reasonable to suggest that frequent
213 perfectionistic cognitions may also play a wider role in regard to the pre-competition
214 emotions experienced by athletes.

215 **The present research**

216 The current study had two purposes: (i) to examine the relationships between SOP and
217 SPP, as manifested in sport, and pre-competition emotions in youth footballers and (ii) to
218 examine whether perfectionistic cognitions predict pre-competition emotions after controlling
219 for SOP and SPP. It was hypothesised that SPP will positively predict more negative
220 emotions (anxiety, anger, and dejection), and SOP will positively predict both positive
221 (happiness and excitement) and negative emotions (anxiety, anger, and dejection). It was also
222 anticipated that frequent perfectionistic cognitions would positively predict positive and
223 negative emotions after controlling for SOP and SPP.

224

Method

225 Participants and procedure

226 Participants were 206 high level youth footballers (male = 78, female = 128, M age =
227 15.53 years, SD = 1.93, range = 11 to 19 years) recruited from sports clubs, sports academies,
228 and national teams across the United Kingdom. Their average length of sport participation
229 was 9.07 years (SD = 2.98, range = 1 to 17 years). Informed consent was gained from each
230 participant (and parent/guardian if under 18 years old) prior to completing the questionnaire.
231 The questionnaire was completed either at their training venue or competition location
232 between 45 minutes and 120 hours (i.e. 5 days) before their next game. The average time until
233 their next game was 24.32 hours (SD = 25.79). Participants were asked to indicate the
234 importance of their next competitive match on a scale of 1 (not important) to 7 (very
235 important). The average importance rating was 5.70 (SD = 1.49).

236 Measures

237 **The Child and Adolescent Perfectionism Scale (CAPS).** The CAPS (Flett, Hewitt,
238 Boucher, Davidson, & Munro., 1997) is a multidimensional perfectionism scale for use with
239 children and adolescents and measures self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) and socially
240 prescribed perfectionism (SPP). It contains 22 items rated on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all
241 true of me, 5 = very true of me). The stem of the instrument was adapted to focus athletes on
242 their participation in sport (“When practicing/playing football...”). By making this
243 amendment the measure captures dispositional perfectionism (e.g., perfectionism specific to
244 the domain of sport). Evidence for the validity and reliability of the scale has been provided
245 by Hewitt, Caelian, Flett, Collins, and Flynn (2002). Researchers have suggested that this
246 scale also has adequate psychometric properties when used to measure dimensions of
247 perfectionism in athletes (e.g., Appleton, Hall, & Hill, 2009).

248 Due to the multiple factors structures reported for the CAPS (e.g., Flett et al., 1997,
249 McCreary, Joiner, Schmidt, & Ialongo, 2004, O'Connor, Dixon, & Rasmussen, 2009), we
250 used ESEM to examine the factor structure of the CAPS in the current study. For the analyses
251 we used robust maximum likelihood estimator (MLR) in MPLUS 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén,
252 2008) and TARGET rotation to guide cross-loadings with a target value of approximately
253 zero (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2009). We used commonly adopted recommendations to assess
254 fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marsh, Hau, & Wen, 2004). Adequate fit was noted if $\chi^2/df < 3.00$;
255 RMSEA = $<.08$, CFI = $>.90$ and TLI = $>.90$; SRMR = $<.08$, BIC = lower represents better fit.
256 Using these fit indices, the original CAPS structure provided less than adequate fit: $\chi^2(208) =$
257 626.55 , $p <.001$; $\chi^2/df = 3.01$; RMSEA = $.10$; CFI = $.71$; TLI = $.68$; SRMR = $.11$; BIC =
258 12123.34 . So did the two alternative structures identified by other researchers: (1) McCreary
259 et al. (2004): $\chi^2(74) = 194.96$, $p <.001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.63$; RMSEA = $.09$; CFI = $.87$; TLI = $.84$;
260 SRMR = $.08$; BIC = 7468.33 ; (2) O'Connor et al. (2009): $\chi^2(74) = 226.92$, $p <.001$, $\chi^2/df =$
261 3.07 ; RMSEA = $.10$; CFI = $.84$; TLI = $.80$; SRMR = $.07$; BIC = 7573.40 .

262 With this in mind, we used exploratory factor analysis (a combination of principal
263 components analysis and principal axis factoring with parallel analysis) to derive a more
264 psychometrically sound version of the CAPS that matched Flett et al.'s (1997) proposed
265 structure. We identified that a two-factor version of the CAPS consisting of 10 items with the
266 highest loading factors was the most robust in regard to exploratory and exploratory-
267 confirmatory structure. For the subsequent ESEM, this model provided adequate fit: $\chi^2(34) =$
268 61.12 , $p <.001$; $\chi^2/df = 1.75$; RMSEA = $.06$; CFI = $.95$; TLI = $.94$; SRMR = $.06$; BIC =
269 5299.68 . SOP was comprised of items 1, 2, 6, and 7 and SPP was comprised of items 5, 8, 10,
270 12, 17, and 19. In support of the use of this version, it had adequate internal reliability (SOP:
271 $\alpha = .72$, SPP: $\alpha = .88$) and was highly correlated with the full-length version of the CAPS
272 (SOP: $r = .75$, $p <.001$, SPP: $r = .97$, $p <.001$).

273 **Perfectionistic Cognitions Inventory (PCI)**. The PCI (Flett et al., 1998) is a 25-item
274 measure of the frequency of experiencing perfectionism-related thoughts. Participants
275 indicate how frequently they experienced each of the cognitions (e.g., “Why can’t I be
276 perfect?”) over the last week on a 5-point scale (0 = not at all, 4 = all of the time). Higher
277 scores indicate more frequent perfectionistic thinking. Evidence to support the validity and
278 reliability associated with the scale has been provided by Flett et al. (1998). The PCI has also
279 been used for investigations in sport (e.g., Hill & Appleton, 2011).

280 We also conducted ESEM to examine the factor structure of the PCI given that there
281 is debate regarding its unidimensional versus multidimensional structure (see Stoeber,
282 Kobori, & Brown, 2014a, 2014b). The same procedures were used as for the CAPS. Using
283 the fit indices described above, the 25-item unidimensional PCI provided less than adequate
284 fit: $\chi^2(275) = 622.06$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 2.26$; RMSEA = .08; CFI = .76; TLI = .74; SRMR =
285 .08; BIC = 14787.46. So did the 3-factor structure advocated by Stoeber et al. (2014): $\chi^2(116)$
286 = 236.56, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 2.04$; RMSEA = .07; CFI = .87; TLI = .85; SRMR = .07; BIC =
287 10175.46.

288 As with the CAPS, using exploratory factor analysis (again, a combination of
289 principal components analysis and principal axis factoring with parallel analysis with parallel
290 analysis) we identified that a unidimensional version of the PCI consisting of the 10 items
291 with the highest factor loadings was the most robust in regard to exploratory and exploratory-
292 confirmatory structure. For the subsequent ESEM, this model provided adequate fit: $\chi^2(35) =$
293 72.29, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 2.07$; RMSEA = .07; TLI = .91; CFI = .93; SRMR = .05; BIC =
294 5858.61. PCI items were 3, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, and 25. In support of the use of this
295 version (PCI-short), it had high internal reliability ($\alpha = .87$) and was highly correlated with
296 the full-length version of the PCI ($r = .95$, $p < .001$).

297 **Sport Emotion Questionnaire (SEQ).** The SEQ (Jones et al., 2005) is a 22-item
298 measure of the emotions athletes commonly experience prior to competition. The SEQ
299 examines five emotions which can be grouped into two higher-order dimensions: negative
300 emotions (anxiety, anger, and dejection), and positive emotions (happiness and excitement).
301 The participants were asked to indicate “how they feel right now, at this moment” in relation
302 to their upcoming sports competition on a 5-point scale (0 = not at all, 4 = all of the time).
303 Jones et al. (2005) have provided evidence of the reliability and validity of the SEQ. As with
304 the two other instruments we assessed the factor structure of the SEQ. The original five-factor
305 model provided acceptable fit: $\chi^2(199) = 347.04$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 1.74$; RMSEA = .06; CFI =
306 .93; TLI = .92; SRMR = .06; BIC = 10684.34.

307 **Analytical approach**

308 To test the hypotheses, we conducted five hierarchical regression analyses (one for
309 each emotion). As differences in anticipatory emotions are likely to depend on how proximal
310 to the event assessments are taken (e.g., Hanton, Thomas, & Maynard, 2004), we used the
311 time until competition (‘time’) as a covariate in the main analysis. In Step 1, a predictor block
312 consisting of time was entered. In Step 2, a predictor block consisting of SOP and SPP was
313 entered so to assess the unique predictive ability of each dimension. Finally, in Step 3, a
314 predictor block consisting of perfectionistic cognitions was entered so to evaluate the
315 incremental predictive ability of perfectionistic cognitions.

316 **Results**

317 **Preliminary analysis**

318 Due to missing data from individual responses (> 5%), two participants were removed
319 from the sample. Once these values were removed, there were 174 complete cases and 30
320 cases with incomplete data. In the cases of incomplete data, the average of missing data due

321 to non-response was 1.82% (SD = 0.75, range = 1.45 to 4.35%). Each missing item was
322 replaced using the mean of each case's available non-missing items from the relevant
323 subscales. This method of imputation is considered to be an appropriate strategy when the
324 amount of missing data is low (Graham, Cumsille, & Elek-Fisk, 2003).

325 Next, internal reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) was performed on each subscale.
326 Internal consistencies are displayed in Table 1. All scales demonstrated sufficient internal
327 consistency ($\alpha > .70$). The measured variables were then screened for univariate outliers (see
328 Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Standardized z-scores ± 3.29 ($p < .001$, two-tailed) were used as
329 criteria for detecting univariate outliers. This procedure led to the removal of seven
330 participants. Because multivariate outliers can distort the results of correlation and regression
331 analysis, we removed one participant with a Mahalanobis distance larger than the critical
332 value of $\chi^2(8) = 21.96$ ($p < .001$). The final sample was 196 participants.

333 When testing for normality, the dejection and anger variable were positively skewed
334 (dejection skewness = 1.97, SE = 0.17; anger skewness = 1.74, SE = 0.17). All other variables
335 were considered univariate normal (absolute skewness: mean = -0.26, SE = 0.17; absolute
336 kurtosis: mean = -1.04, SE = 0.35). The two skewed variables (dejection and anger) were
337 subsequently transformed as per the guidelines provided by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013).
338 The transformed variables were substantially less skewed (dejection skewness = 0.37, SE =
339 0.17; anger skewness = 0.47, SE = 0.17) and both had a significant positive and large linear
340 relationship with the original variable (dejection: $r = .81$; anger: $r = .85$). These transformed
341 variables were used in subsequent analyses.

342 **Descriptive statistics, reliability, and bivariate correlations**

343 Means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and bivariate correlations are
344 reported in Table 1. Participants reported high levels of SOP (5-point scale), moderate levels

345 of SPP (5-point scale), and moderate levels of perfectionistic cognitions (5-point scale). The
346 sample also reported low-to-moderate levels of pre-competition emotions. Notably, the levels
347 of anger and dejection were low. Overall, the descriptive statistics suggest that, in regard to
348 pre-competition emotions, the youth footballers had largely positive experiences, with few of
349 them reporting negative experiences. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed between
350 SOP, SPP, perfectionistic cognitions, and pre-competition emotions (Table 1). Using Cohen's
351 recommendation (1988), both SOP and SPP displayed a significant positive and medium
352 relationship with perfectionistic cognitions. Also of note, SOP displayed a significant positive
353 and small relationship with anxiety and excitement, while SPP displayed a significant positive
354 and small relationship with dejection and anger. There were no significant relationships
355 between SOP and SPP and happiness. The frequency of perfectionistic cognitions displayed
356 significant positive and small-to-medium relationships with anxiety, dejection, and anger.

357 **Hierarchical regression analyses**

358 The results of the hierarchical regression analyses are reported in Table 2. The first
359 hierarchical regression included anxiety as the criterion variable. Time was not a significant
360 predictor of anxiety. SOP and SPP accounted for an additional 1% of variance in anxiety.
361 This was not statistically significant increase or model. Entering the frequency of
362 perfectionistic cognitions resulted in an additional 11% of variance being explained in
363 anxiety. This increase was statistically significant.

364 The second hierarchical regression included dejection as the criterion variable. Time
365 was not a significant predictor of dejection. SOP and SPP accounted for an additional 2% of
366 variance in dejection. This was not a statistically significant increase or model. Entering the
367 frequency of perfectionistic cognitions resulted in an additional 4% of variance being
368 explained in dejection. This increase was statistically significant.

394 hypothesised that frequent perfectionistic cognitions would predict positive and negative
395 emotions after controlling for SOP and SPP.

396 **Multidimensional perfectionism and pre-competition emotions**

397 Consistent with the hypotheses, SPP was a unique positive predictor of anger
398 (although in the context of a non-significant overall model). The predictive ability of SPP for
399 pre-competition anger is aligned with research in sport that has reported similar findings for
400 general anger (i.e., trait anger; Dunn et al., 2006) and anger following mistakes (i.e.,
401 anger/dejection following mistakes; Lizmore et al., 2016). However, unlike previous research,
402 our findings illustrate for the first time that a relationship between perfectionism and anger
403 exists in context of anticipatory pre-competition experiences for athletes. In doing so, a
404 clearer picture is emerging of the likely emotional experiences associated with higher SPP at
405 key points in the performance process. Given the complex role of anger in regard to
406 performance, it is difficult to assert that this is necessarily debilitating. However, it highlights
407 the possibility that the ability to regulate anger effectively may be particularly important for
408 athletes reporting higher SPP (see Hill & Davis, 2014). In addition, in regard to wellbeing,
409 there is likely to be little benefit in an emotional experience that is characterised by higher
410 levels of anger generally, anger when preparing for competition, and anger during
411 competition.

412 In partial support of our hypotheses, SOP was a unique predictor of excitement. There
413 is a small amount of evidence of similar relationships in sport for enjoyment of competition
414 generally (e.g., Carter & Weissbrod, 2011). To our knowledge, however, this is the first time
415 the relationship between SOP and a specific positive pre-competition emotion has been found
416 in sport. In regard to explaining the relationship between SOP and excitement, it is
417 noteworthy that SOP includes a mix of approach and avoidance goals (Kaye, Conroy, &

418 Fifer, 2008). Approach goals are typically associated the perceptions of competence and
419 positive emotions (Huang, 2011). Therefore, what we have observed here may be reflective of
420 the presence of approach goals in the motivational underpinning of SOP. The experience of
421 positive emotions did not extend to happiness, however, it may be that this pattern of findings
422 is due to differences in the two emotions in regard to intensity (excitement is typically a high
423 intensity emotion whereas happiness is typically a low intensity emotion) and/or core
424 relational themes (excitement typically reflects the anticipation of goal achievement whereas
425 happiness typically focuses on making reasonable progress toward achieving a goal) (Jones et
426 al., 2005; Lazarus, 2000).

427 SOP did not uniquely predict any negative pre-competition emotions (anxiety, anger,
428 and dejection). In regard to anxiety, some previous studies examining dimensions of
429 perfectionism similar to SOP and pre-competition anxiety have also found non-significant
430 relationships, though often findings depended on if other dimensions of perfectionism are
431 controlled for (Frost & Henderson, 1991; Hall et al., 1998; Stoeber Otto, Pescheck, Becker, &
432 Stoll, 2007). Here, SOP had a significant positive relationship with anxiety at a bivariate level
433 and this disappeared once SPP and perfectionistic cognitions were taken into account. In
434 considering these findings, the relationship between SOP and anxiety may be wholly
435 explained by perfectionistic cognitions. That is, SOP may contribute to higher anxiety but this
436 is because SOP prompts more frequent perfectionistic cognitions. In regard to pre-
437 competition dejection and anger, levels of SOP appear to provide little information regarding
438 these emotions. However, it remains possible that SOP is important in terms of anger
439 reactivity to mistakes in sport as this has been found by others examining dimensions of
440 perfectionism similar to SOP (e.g., Dunn et al., 2006; Lizmore et al., 2016; Vallance, Dunn,
441 & Dunn, 2006).

442 **Perfectionistic cognitions and pre-competition emotions**

443 In partial support of the hypotheses, frequent perfectionistic cognitions were found to
444 be important when considering some but not all pre-competition emotions. Corroborating the
445 results of previous studies of perfectionistic cognitions and emotions (e.g., Flett et al., 1998),
446 we found that perfectionistic cognitions account for significant additional variance in negative
447 emotions (anxiety, anger, and dejection) over and above the variance predicted by SOP and
448 SPP. In regard to why this is the case, perfectionistic cognitions reflect a cognitive
449 preoccupation with the attainment of perfection. The persistent engagement in thoughts
450 regarding the need for perfect, and ongoing self-vigilance, draws intense attention to the
451 discrepancy between the actual self and the desired perfect self (Flett et al., 2007). It is
452 therefore unsurprising that these cognitions are related to negative emotions in athletes. With
453 this in mind, our findings indicate that to better understand the pre-competition emotional
454 experiences of athletes, practitioners need to consider not only whether athletes are higher or
455 lower in SOP and SPP but also if they are experiencing more or less frequent perfectionistic
456 cognitions as they approach competition.

457 Perfectionistic cognitions did not predict any positive emotions above SOP and SPP
458 (happiness and excitement). Therefore perfectionistic cognitions appear comparatively
459 unimportant in regard to the experience of positive emotions. While the role of perfectionistic
460 cognitions in the experience of negative emotions is more intuitive, it is less clear why, given
461 the prediction of negative emotions here, perfectionistic cognitions were not also negatively
462 related to positive emotions beyond SOP and SPP (or related to negative emotions at all in the
463 bivariate correlations). We consider this finding to be indicative of the notion of co-activation
464 whereby the experience of higher levels of negative emotions do not necessarily coincide
465 with the experience of lower levels of positive emotions, and that positive and negative
466 emotions can be experienced concurrently (e.g., excitement and anxiety) (see Ekkekakis,
467 2013). We also consider the finding to indicate that perfectionistic cognitions are more

468 relevant to the core relational themes that underpin negative emotions, such as perceptions of
469 harm and threat, but are less relevant to the core relational themes that underpin positive
470 emotions, such as perceptions of benefit or goal progress.

471 Given these mixed findings, one final important issue to acknowledge is the current
472 debate regarding perfectionistic cognitions. In the current study, we adopted Flett et al.'s
473 (1998) approach with the intention to capture perfectionistic rumination (i.e., negative,
474 repetitive, and persistent thoughts that pertain to the perfect self). Nevertheless, Stoeber et al.
475 (2014) recently argued that perfectionistic cognitions are multidimensional, and include
476 different elements some of which are more positive (e.g., MPCCI; Kobori & Tanno, 2004).
477 These two models offer alternative approaches to studying perfectionistic cognitions that may
478 be useful in regard to understanding the different ways perfectionism manifests cognitively.
479 Researchers may therefore wish to revisit the relationships examined in the current study
480 using the approach advocated by Stoeber et al. (2014) and compare the two approaches in
481 regard to predicting pre-competition emotions in athletes. This includes comparing
482 ruminative perfectionistic cognitions, as measured here, and cognitions that capture a broader
483 array of content such as striving, concerns, and demands (Stoeber et al., 2014).

484 **Limitations and other future directions**

485 The present findings must be considered in the context of the study's limitations.
486 Firstly, the study utilized a cross-sectional design. Longitudinal studies are needed to
487 understand the relationships over time and determine whether SOP, SPP, and perfectionistic
488 cognitions are associated with changes in pre-competition emotions over time. Secondly, the
489 SEQ captures general pre-competition emotions. Some of the emotions, such as anxiety and
490 anger include more complex dimensions not measured here (e.g., cognitive and somatic
491 anxiety; Martens et al., 1990 and verbal and physical anger; Spielberger, 1999). Future

492 studies should consider examining the relationship between SOP and SPP, perfectionistic
493 cognitions and these different dimensions of state anxiety and anger. Thirdly, as we amended
494 both the CAPS and PCI in order to create more psychometrically sound versions of the
495 measures, some caution may be required in terms of how well these newer versions compare
496 to other versions used elsewhere. In two cases, SPP and PCI, the very large correlations
497 between the new and the original scales suggest that there are unlikely to be any difference in
498 findings. However, in the case of SOP, the correlation was lower so this might not be the
499 case. Fourthly, our study focused on a sample comprised exclusively of youth footballers
500 recruited from football academies and national teams. Future studies should therefore
501 examine whether the findings generalize to other populations (e.g., adults or different sports)
502 and contexts (e.g., competitions that are objectively very important or objectively
503 unimportant). Lastly, contextual information collected from participants was limited (e.g.,
504 they were not asked whether they anticipated success or failure). Such contextual factors may
505 be important when considering the experience of pre-competition emotions. This information
506 would make a valuable addition to future work of this kind.

507 **Conclusion**

508 This study provides the first study in sport to examine the relationships between SOP,
509 SPP, perfectionistic cognitions, and pre-competition emotions. This study revealed that SPP
510 was a unique significant positive predictor of anger, while SOP was a unique significant
511 positive predictor of excitement. Moreover, perfectionistic cognitions predicted negative pre-
512 competition emotions beyond SOP and SPP (anxiety, anger and dejection) but not positive
513 emotions (happiness and excitement). Whether an athlete expects perfection of him or herself,
514 believes others expect it of them, or experiences thoughts centred on perfection,
515 perfectionism appears important in regard to pre-competition emotions. Those working with

516 athletes will need to take all these aspects of perfectionism into account to help footballers

517 manage pre-competition emotions.

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Table 1

Descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and internal reliability for self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism, perfectionistic cognitions, and pre-competition emotions

Variable	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Self-oriented perfectionism	4.23	0.59	.72								
2. Socially prescribed perfectionism	2.26	0.83	.88	.05							
3. Perfectionistic cognitions	1.46	0.85	.87	.34**	.38**						
4. Anxiety	1.73	1.24	.87	.15*	.04	.32**					
5. Dejection	0.44	0.09	.87	.02	.16*	.24**	.35**				
6. Excitement	2.60	0.98	.85	.22**	-.02	.13	.21**	-.16*			
7. Anger	0.50	0.81	.88	.04	.21**	.29**	.25**	.73**	-.12		
8. Happiness	2.32	1.07	.89	.12	-.01	.12	.03	-.24**	.78**	-.19**	
9. Time	24.45	25.88	-	-.07	.06	.02	-.07	.11	-.16*	.09	-.06

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

Table 2

Hierarchical regression analyses with self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism and perfectionistic cognitions predicting pre-competition emotions

Criterion Variable	Predictor Variables	F	df	R ²	R ² change	β	t
Anxiety							
Step 1		0.94	1, 178	.01			
Step 2	Time	0.76	3, 176	.01	.01	-.07	-0.97
	Time					-.07	-0.88
	SOP					.09	1.16
	SPP					-.01	-0.09
Step 3		5.88***	4, 175	.12***	.11***		
	Time					-.07	-1.03
	SOP					-.01	-0.18
	SPP					-.13	-1.71
	PCI-S					.36***	4.58
Dejection							
Step 1		2.15	1,178	.01			
Step 2	Time	1.84	3, 176	.03	.02	.11	1.47
	Time					.10	1.39
	SOP					.03	0.42
	SPP					.13*	1.76
Step 3		3.16*	4, 175	.07*	.04*		
	Time					.10	1.35
	SOP					.03	-0.37
	SPP					.06	0.74
	PCI-S					.22**	2.64
Excitement							
Step 1		4.83*	1, 178	.03*			
Step 2	Time	4.28**	3, 176	.07*	.04*	-.16*	-2.20
	Time					-.15*	-2.01
	SOP					.20**	2.78
	SPP					-.03	-0.47
Step 3		3.61**	4, 175	.08	.01		
	Time					-.15*	-2.04
	SOP					.18*	2.30
	SPP					-.07	-0.88
	PCI-S					.10	1.26
Anger							
Step 1		1.48	1, 178	.01			
	Time					.09	1.22

Step 2		2.48*	3, 176	.04*	.03		
	Time					.08	1.12
	SOP					.04	0.58
	SPP					.17*	2.33
Step 3		4.18**	4, 175	.09**	.05**		
	Time					.08	1.08
	SOP					-.02	-0.31
	SPP					.09	1.16
	PCI-S					.24**	2.99
Happiness							
Step 1		0.61	1, 178	.00			
	Time					-.06	-0.78
Step 2		1.42	3, 176	.02	.02		
	Time					-.05	-0.70
	SOP					.14	1.80
	SPP					.04	0.53
Step 3		1.31	4, 175	.03	.01		
	Time					-.05	-0.72
	SOP					.11	1.43
	SPP					.01	0.15
	PCI-S					.08	0.99

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, *** p < .001, two-tailed.