MOOD STATES OF FEMALE COLLIGIATE SOFTBALL PLAYERS

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PREFACE

I sincerely thank my masters committee: Dr. Christine Cashel, Dr. Jerry Jordan and Dr. Steve Edwards for guidance and support in the completion of this research. I also want to thank the head coaches, their support staff and teams from Oklahoma State University, Margaret Rebenar; The University of Arkansas, Jamie Pinkerton; Iowa State University, Ruth Crowe; and Southwest Missouri State University, Holly Hesse for their cooperation and participation in this research. It would not have been possible without the cooperation of the staff's and teams involved.

Acknowledgments

This study was conducted to investigate whether mood states of female collegiate softball players affect play. Other areas of interest in this study included home advantage versus playing away games, coping techniques, and attribution styles of the athletes.

I never imagined the day would finally come where I would actually have to think what to write on this page. The most unbelievable part is the final paragraph has been written after countless hours of writing, rewriting and changing this research. There was so much time, energy and patience that transpired during this process, by so many.

Those who know me, know my life, are very aware of the path traveled to be at this moment. There are a few who kept encouraging my work even when the rest of life kept taking over. Dr. Christine Cashel, your guidance was incredible. You never gave up on this even through thousands of miles and years of development. Your stern emails always seemed to motivate me to continue on, even when the drive to finish wasn't there. CHEERS! Dr. Steve Edwards, you were my saint when I needed things to make sense. "The numbers", so many numbers! I appreciate your help. Dr. Jerry Jordan, for you help through this process and positive encouragement. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, my dearest friend, co-heart and mentor, Margaret Rebenar. Mere words can not express my sincere appreciation for your never ending support, even when times were tough and my time could have been more valuable in other areas. You quietly allowed me the freedom to go to school and get where I am today. You helped me find a balance with it all and listened when I needed to express myself. To my mother and father, Larry and Delores Thweatt, my life dream is to achieve and make you proud of who I am and what I have done with my life path. To my sisters, Julie, Leslee and Patti Jo, we can do anything we set our minds to. My living Grandparents Bill and Bernice Thweatt who never understood why I moved to twister alley Oklahoma, this is why. My Aunt Karen who has been a rock, especially through the last few years, I am so grateful to be your name sake. All of your endless support even through the "false alarms" of completion of

this Masters means more than I can express in writing. Your encouragement and support was a major factor in my determination to finish. To my friend Dr. Teri Nemmers, who stepped in major at the end and helped me get things in order. I admire you for your own recent achievement. And those who have quietly supported me personally and professionally a big thank you to all of you. To my two children which I love with all my heart and soul, Sarah Elizabeth and Adam Clinton-James ~ everything I do in life I do for you, unconditionally. I want to be the model for you that has shown you when you work hard at something, and you finish, the payoff is remarkable. Hopefully you have learned that from this experience. Be determined in your passions then you can do whatever you want in your own lives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Fast pitch softball is a popular sport in which many female athletes choose to participate. According to the American Softball Association, the numbers of teams from the early 1960's have increased from a few hundred teams nationwide, to a current number of over 250,000 (ASA, 2003). In 2003, more than four million individual athletes participated in the United States alone (ASA, 2003). The game is played as early as age 4 and skills are developed as soon as one can hold a ball and bat. Highly competitive play can begin as early as eight years old and continued development of elevated skill levels has increased in early stages of life.

In the past few decades, athletics at all levels have moved to a higher level of competitive play, techniques have been modified, broken down and eventually mastered. Technology has played a major role in the way skills are taught, and advanced techniques of teaching are now available because of computer technology. Several different computer programs have been developed to analyze every muscle movement and motion the body makes through video, thus skill and techniques are improving quickly and immensely. Sports performance specialists are now an important part of training and are utilized widely by athletes of all ages and skill levels to increase performance to higher skill levels. This practice is common for university, national and Olympic playing levels. Additionally the media too, has changed athletics by taking sports events from across the

globe into homes with children. Therefore, the rate of participation has increased, and the expectations to perform at a high level have also increased. What has now evolved in the sport due to all these factors is the need for athletes to not only perform well physically, but to be a well rounded athlete mentally and emotionally.

Yogi Berra once said, “Sport is 90% mental and only 10% physical”, thus, supporting the idea of importance of mental training in sport. Research on mood states and the psychological functions of sport has seen a great deal of attention from researchers around the globe. (Lane and Chappell, 2001) completed a study on mood and performance relationships among players at the world student games basketball. A study on mood was performed in August 1999 in London on “Mood Scores: Mood and performance in professional cricketers. Another study called “Mood and psychological skills of elite and sub-elite equestrian athletes” was performed in Alabama in 1999. Gendolla & Krüsken (2001) discuss the fact that people are presumably never ‘mood less’. Moods are relatively long-lasting affective phenomena (Ekman, 1984) which are, in contrast to short-lived emotions, experienced without concurrent awareness of their origins (Frijida, 1993; Schwarz & Clore, 1996). As Gendolla & Krüsken (2001) explained, moods can impact the amount of effort mobilized, and any challenge seems more difficult in a negative mood than in a positive mood. In other words, when an athlete is in a good mood and a challenge is present the amount of effort given will increase during a performance.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, states that “We have all experienced times when, instead of being buffeted by anonymous forces, we do feel in control of our actions, masters of our own fate. On

the rare occasions that it happens, we feel a sense of exhilaration, a deep sense of enjoyment that is long cherished and that becomes a landmark in memory for what life should be like. “Flow” is an optimal experience characterized by a sense of playfulness, a feeling of being in control, concentration and highly focused attention, mental enjoyment of the activity for its own sake, a distorted sense of time and a match between the challenge at hand and one’s skill level.” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997)

Contrary to expectation, ‘flow’ usually happens not during relaxing moments of leisure and entertainment, but rather when we are actively involved in a difficult enterprise, in a task that stretches our mental and physical abilities. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) Some people can become so focused during an activity they experience an almost euphoric state of joy and pleasure in the process. They lose track of time, are highly alert and feel they are performing to the best of their ability. Flow occurs when a person’s skill level is perfectly balanced to the challenge level of a task that has clear goals and provides immediate feedback. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

Csikszentmihalyis’ explanation of “How it feel’s to be in “the flow”? :

1). It is the feeling of being completely involved, focused and concentrating, with this either due to innate curiosity or the result of training.

2). It is having a sense of Ecstasy, and being outside everyday reality.

3). It is having great inner clarity and knowing what needs to be done and how well it is going.

4). It is to know the activity is doable and that the skills are adequate, and neither anxious nor bored.

5). It is a sense of Serenity with no worries about self, feeling of growing beyond the boundaries of ego, afterwards having the feeling of transcending ego in ways not thought possible.

6). Timeliness happens because one is thoroughly focused on present, and don't notice time passing.

7). It is having Intrinsic Motivation and whatever produces "flow" becomes its own reward. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Farmer, 1999).

Athletes have often reported a feeling of being "in the zone". According to Csikszentmihalyi and other psychologists, that would be their description of flow. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) 'Flow' is commonly reported by professional athletes and Olympic caliber athletes. Furthermore, Csikszentmihalyis' research suggests physical activity is the main trigger causing "flow" to happen outside of leisure, socializing and jobs.

Because Self-Efficacy (SE) is a key component in team sports, SE is a mood related variable that sports psychologists have studied a great deal. SE is a close relative to confidence because it refers to the conviction one needs to successfully execute the behavior necessary to produce a certain outcome (Bandura, 1977a). It is not concerned with ones ability per se, but with one's assessment of what one can do with one's ability (Feltz, 1992; McAuley, 1992). In softball, SE will show especially during stressful or pressure situations when a player must show a sense of confidence, e.g., as hitters are performing while down in the count with runners on in the bottom of the seventh inning. If the player has a high sense of SE it is more likely the athlete will get a hit, whereas if

the belief is missing the outcome may be a strike out or poorly hit ball. Confidence levels play a vital role in understanding and evaluating the differences between the athlete and their ability to perform. Confidence can, and will separate the elite athlete from the average player. This research will discuss several factors that involve mood states relative to performance as well as factors that contribute to variations of those mood states.

It is assumed moods and outlook can change the way an athlete performs during competition. Negative and Positive Affect have been investigated and are popular research topics as they contribute greatly to understanding general moods and attitudes of individuals. Some negative affect adjectives that describe mood include distress, upset, guilty, scared, hostile, irritable, ashamed, nervous, jittery and afraid (Watson et al., 1988). Some positive affect adjectives that describe the pleasure side of mood include attentive, interested, alert, excited, enthusiastic, inspired, proud, determined, strong and active (Watson et al., 1988). Moods can greatly affect an athletes preparation, competition, and post-contest feelings. Therefore, it is important to look at the athletes attributions per their performances, what coping style the athlete imparts and how performance may vary or change due to venue location (home versus away).

In softball, playing at home with your own fans cheering, familiarity with the field conditions, and not having to travel might give a team the edge on their opponent. There is extensive research on game venue and home advantage, and according to Edwards and Archambault (1989), more references were made to the difficulty of defeating a team on their home ground than any other single factor, including talent, win - loss record, injuries and momentum. Some authors have argued that home crowd

support (Gayton, Matthews & Nickless, 1987) or psychological factors such as aggression (McGuire, Widmeyer, Courney & Carron, 1992; Varca 1980) might contribute to home team advantage. Conversely, Baumeister and Steinhilber (1984) have demonstrated that when performing under pressure, professional baseball and basketball teams tended to play less well in front of their home crowd. Perhaps surprising, even though home advantage might be linked to players' psychological processes, there would appear to be a general paucity of research connecting game venue and, for example, players' psychological mood states (Kerr & van Schaik, 1995). It has been hypothesized that "with a balanced schedule, a team should win 50% of their home games" (Courney & Carron, 1992).

The outcome in softball may be composed of be a variety of elements causing a team to win or lose, and may include mood states, venues and coping styles. Previous studies have investigated the possibility of game outcome (i.e. winning versus losing) on a number of psychological variables. Kerr and van Schaik (1995) described how causal attributions have been examined with respect to, for example, the outcome of a competitive motor task (McAuley & Duncan, 1989); a bicycle ergometer 'race' (Biddle & Hill, 1988) and soccer (Robinson & Howe, 1987).

Specifically this research will investigate positive and negative affect of softball players, coping styles, and attributions during both home and away games.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine negative and positive affect mood states and coping style of female softball athletes during competition, to examine softball athletes'

mood states and coping style while playing at home versus away games and to examine and discover the softball athletes' attribution style in both positive and negative situations.

Hypothesis

***Ho1*:** It is hypothesized that there is no difference between mood states of the female softball athlete during competition.

***Ho2*:** It is hypothesized that there is no difference in the athletes' mood states when playing at their home field (home advantage), as opposed to playing away.

***Ho3*:** It is hypothesized that there is no difference in the athletes coping strategy when reacting to daily events.

***Ho4*:** It is hypothesized that there is no difference in the attribution style of the athletes.

Delimitations

The following were delimitations of the study:

1. The sample included collegiate players located only in the central Midwest.
2. The sample included only teams that play in the Division I school level.

Limitations

The study was subject to the following limitations:

1. The sample included only four softball teams and the number of participants involved varied.

2. The sample taken was only in the 2005 spring season.

3. The sample included only the sport of softball excluding other female sports and activities.

Conceptual Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the researcher accepted the following assumptions:

1. The implications of the findings could not be applicable to any other female teams.

2. All athletes on the team completed the surveys without any difficulty or misunderstandings.

3. All female athletes, whether starters, nonstarters or relievers understood what their roles were for the team.

4. All subjects participated completely on a volunteer basis.

5. All subjects answered openly and honestly.

Definition of Terms

ACTIVE: working; full of action, busy, lively, quick

AFRAID: Hesitant; filled with fear; reluctant

ANXIETY: A state of uneasiness and apprehension, as about future uncertainties

ALERT: Vigilant; brisk; watchful; active

ASHAMED: Feeling unworthy or inferior

ATTENTIVE: Observation, notice or mental concentration

COGNITIVE ANXIETY: negative thoughts; worry

COLLECTIVE EFFICACY: The power or capacity to produce a desired effect as a group and the confidence the team has in key players (i.e. pitcher, big hitter, position player).

CONFIDENCE: freedom from doubt; belief in yourself and your abilities.

COPING STYLE:"...a state measure. It reflects an athlete's actual coping response following a particular event or source of stress appraised as stressful. (Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub, 1989; Endler & Parker 1990)

DETERMINE: Showing or having a fixed purpose; resolute

DISTRESS: Severe physical or mental strain; a painful situation

ENTHUSIASTIC: Intense feeling for a cause; eagerness

EXCITE: To stir up strong feeling, action or emotion; stimulate emotions

GUITLY: The feeling of responsibility for having done something wrong

HOME ADVANTAGE: A psychological comfort from playing on home field with supportive fans.

HOSTILE: Of or relating to an enemy; antagonistic

INSPIRE: To exert or guide by a driving influence; to arouse; and create high emotion

INTEREST: Have or display curiosity

IRRITABLE: easily annoyed; ill tempered; to respond abnormally to stimuli

JITTERY: to be intensely nervous

MOTIVATION: the psychological feature that arouses an organism to action

NERVOUS: Agitated; worried

PERCEIVED COMPETENCE: ones perceived ability, self efficacy or confidence. (Bandura, 1977)

PROUD: Showing or having a feeling of satisfaction; proper self-respect or self-esteem

SCARED OR FEARFUL: apprehensive; frightened; timid

SELF-EFFICACY: “The conviction one needs to successfully execute the behavior necessary to produce a certain outcome.” (Bandura, 1977). Not concerned with one’s ability per se, but with one’s assessment of what one can do with one’s ability (Feltz, 1992; McAuley, 1992)

SOMATIC ANXIETY: emotions that cause a physical change or reaction (Bray et. al., 2002)

STRESS: subject to physical or mental pressure, tension, or strain.

STRONG: Exerting or possessing physical power

UPSET: Negative emotions, annoyed, disturbed, troubled

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In an attempt to find if mood states affect performance, Chapter 2 will review topics to include: a) theoretical foundation of attributions, b) mood states: positive and negative affect, c) an overview of home advantage and its' relation to outcome of competition, and d) different coping methods of the female collegiate softball player.

Theoretical Foundation

An attribution is a perception or explanation of how a person perceives why something is the way that it is. An attribution process in sport has been identified by Weiner (1985) (See Figure 1). In general, it Weiner (1985) suggests that success is internalized and failure is externalized. For example, if a team wins, the outcome is attributed to more stable and controllable causes than losing outcomes. Therefore, the impact of different mood states might be relevant to the location of game venue and coping style.

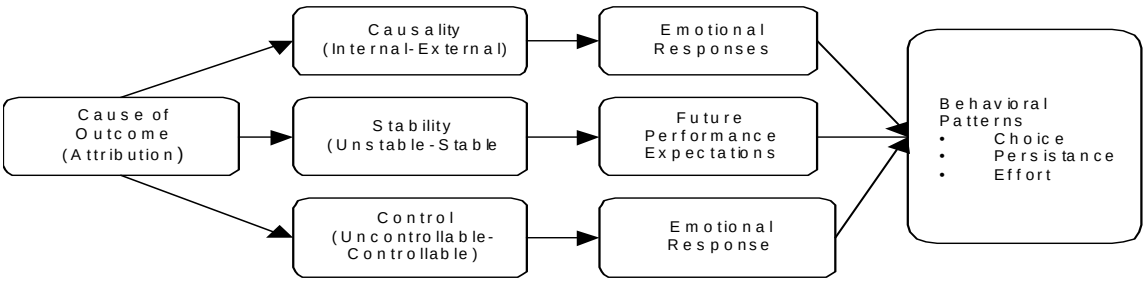


Figure 1. Attribution process in sport. Source*:* Adapted from Weiner, 1985.

It is evident that people in general continuously seek explanations for events in their lives and these explanations have important cognitive, emotional and behavioral outcomes. The attribution theory focuses on a person's judgments or evaluations of another person, causes a perception of feelings towards situations or others, and sometimes gives facts about people or events.

In the attribution theory there are four major beliefs of "reasons for success":

a) Motivation / Effort: Players succeed if they work hard, try their best and help each other.

b) Ability: Players succeed if they try to beat others, have talent and are naturally competitive.

c) Deception: Players who cheat and know how to impress the coach and know how to make themselves look better than they are.

d) External Factors: Players are lucky and wear the right clothes and equipment.

The Sport Situation Reaction Survey (SASS-R) short form was used to measure immediate attribution style along with five dimensions of internality, stability, globality, controllability, and intentionality for both positive and negative events. The questionnaire describes several positive and negative events in sport. In that situation, if such an event happened to the participant, they are asked to report what they thought might have caused it. In cases where there are many causes, the participant was to pick the single most likely cause if this event has happened to them. There are five questions concerning the cause and two questions concerning the event on the survey. Previous studies have shown that SASS-R has good construct validity. It has been used in a test-retest study in order to show it's relevance to attributions of collegiate athletes and confirming its reliability. Other questionnaires compared with the SASS-R include "The Attribution Style Questionnaire" (ASQ) (Abramson & Martin, 1981; Seligman, Abramson, & vonBaeyer, 1979), and the "Balanced Attribution Style Questionnaire" (BASQ) (Feather & Tiggeman, 1984). The ASQ measures attribution dimensions of internality, stability, and globality only, so only these dimensions of the SASS were used in the comparison of the two questionnaires. The SASS-R was used to specifically define attributions of the athlete not only in general but during specific events as well. Hanrahan and Grove (1990) have completed numerous studies concerning attributions, and thus, the significant amount of their research justified the decision to use the SASS-R for this study because it was event specific in addition to measuring general attributions. Five dimensions were covered including internality, stability, globality, controllability, and intentionality for both positive and negative events. The SASS-R was proven valid and test-retest reliable

in the authors previous studies. The measurement was intended for participants at the University level making it the best choice for the purpose of this study.

"Mood State": Positive and Negative Affect

The theoretical foundation of mood states is correlated to the attribution theory. Peak arousal for optimal athletic performance is a function of both positive and negative affect. In 1999, Totterdale attempted to explain mood versus performance variations. The extent are variations in performance of athletes related to the variations in their moods varies from one performance to the next cannot be because of state acquisition and loss, but might at least partly be explained by concomitant changes in the performer's mood states. In other words, performance variations may be related to what mood the athlete may be in at the time of that particular performance and may or may not affect their ability to consistently perform at their best.

The term positive affect refers to a pleasurable engagement or the extent to which a person avows a zest of life which includes states such as enjoyment, happiness, excitement, enthusiasm, and optimism. On the contrary, the term negative affect refers to negative feelings such as unhappiness, upset or unpleasantly aroused (Watson & Tellegen, 1985) and including states such as anxiety, fear, tension, and stress.

A positive mood, which has states of high arousal and high pleasure, has been linked to a range of performance-related behaviors (Baron, 1990; Forgas, 1998; Staw & Barsade, 1993). For example, anxiety has been linked for many years, to a negative state of arousal. Today that thought has changed. Some athletes claim that high levels of anxiety promote a zone of optimal functioning (Williams & Krane, 1992), hence,

allowing athletes to view anxiety as something that should be faced constructively rather than avoided at all costs (Nesti & Sewell, 1999). In contrast, negative mood such as displeasure or lethargy (low arousal) has a negative association with performance and possibly inhibits full function of the athlete. For example, in extreme cases, the inability to cope with persistent bouts of acute (sudden) stress in sport may lead to decreased motivation, emotional distress, poor athletic performance, and eventual psychological burnout and withdrawal from competitive sport (Anshel, 1996; Matheny, Aycock, Pugh, Curlette, & Cannella, 1986; Smith, 1986). Although acute stress is inherent in competitive sport, athletes can reduce its impact on their emotions and performance by using effective coping strategies (Anshel, Brown, & Brown, 1993).

Self-Efficacy (SE) is a mood related variable that sports psychologists have studied a great deal. SE is a close relative to confidence because it refers to the conviction one needs to successfully execute the behavior necessary to produce a certain outcome (Bandura, 1977a). It is not concerned with ones ability per se, but with one's assessment of what one can do with one's ability (Feltz, 1992; McAuley, 1992). The difference between self-efficacy and self-confidence is that self-efficacy refers to specific situations while self confidence refers to global situations (Carron, 1988). This means, for example, that the softball athlete may have high self- efficacy as a defensive player, but possess low self-efficacy as an offensive player. Research suggests that there appears to be a relation between SE and mood state prior to competition (Treasure, Monson & Lox, 1996). The higher the perceived SE of an individual, the better the sports performance will be. SE has been found consistently to be an important and necessary cognitive mechanism in explaining behavior in sport (Williams, 2001) Further, self-

efficacy may be considered a situation-specific form of self-confidence therefore there may be a link between SE and home advantage (HA) due to higher levels of SE consistently found associated with higher levels of performance. Therefore, it is consistent with a hypothetical SE-HA relationship (Courney & Carron, 1992). See Figure 2.

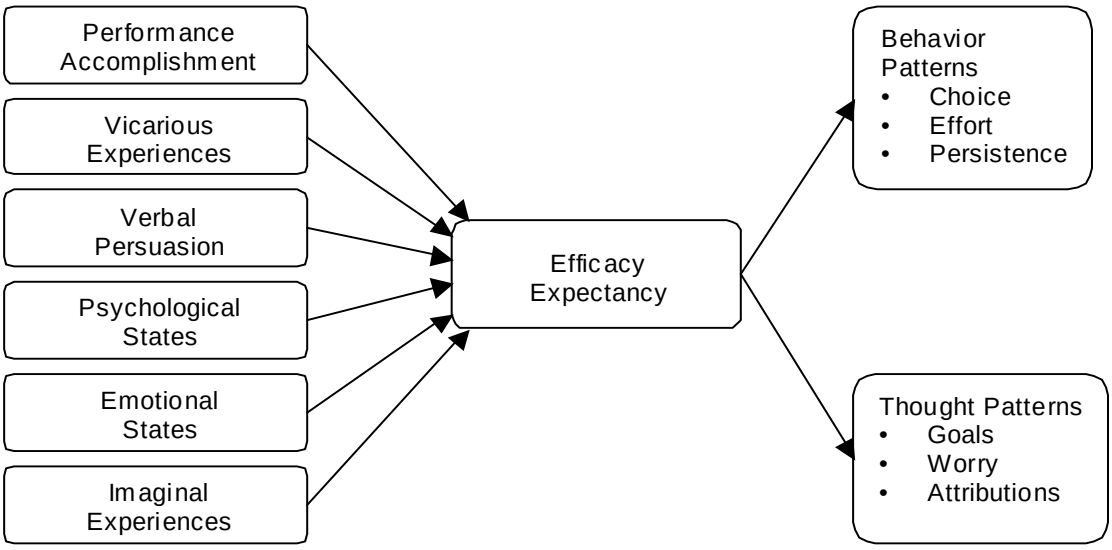


Figure 2. The relationship between sources of self-efficacy, efficacy expectations, and behavior and thought patterns. Source: Adapted from Feltz, 1988.

The purpose for using only emotional states in this study is because that several of the factors in Figure 2 include performance accomplishment, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and imaginable states, are considered uncontrollable. Psychological states and emotional states are measurable and can be controlled by different variables.

Those variables discussed through out this study were used to investigate attribution style, negative and positive mood states, coping style and home vs. away venue affects.

Collective-efficacy (CE) is the power or capacity to produce a desired effect as a group. This identifies the confidence that the team has in key players (i.e. dominant pitcher, big hitter, outstanding position player) and the coaches. CE beliefs are hypothesized to have substantial implications for group effort, persistence and performance, especially for tasks requiring interaction among group members for success (Bandura, 1990; 1997). Bandura stated that a strong sense of CE allows great teams to come from behind and win even when they are not playing at their best. Research suggests that CE plays a role in the alteration of mood states during different types of situations. The higher the CE the athletes' possess, the better the sport performance. Bandura's (1986) CE, perceived team efficacy should influence what participants choose to do as a team, how much effort they put into it, and what their staying power is when team efforts fail to produce the desired results. The belief that one's team may be able to produce the required performance may be just as important to performance success as the belief in one's own capabilities (Feltz, 1992), which is a great attribute in the team sport of softball.

Enjoyment of sport has also been identified as a positive affective response to the sport experience. It reflects generalized feelings such as pleasure, liking, and fun, but more specifically, excitement. Enjoyment and excitement can be intrinsically (internally focused) or extrinsically (external or outside of the body) motivated. These positive moods enhance the desire to continue future participation in the sport hence causing the athlete to commit to the sport and train to the best of their ability.

Optimism in sport is the belief that success is due to effort and ability and that success reflects overall "goodness". Failure is seen as situational and changeable, not a representation of whom they are. In contrast to optimism, when success is viewed as luck and timing, and failure is inevitable, it is called pessimism. There are three critical dimensions of optimism; (a) Permanence; (b) Pervasiveness; and (c) Personalization. According to Seligman (1991), explanatory style of optimism is the hallmark to whether an individual is an optimist or a pessimist (Seligman, 1999).

Permanence is the degree to which one feels events repeat themselves and continue to affect one's life either negatively or positively. In permanence, an optimist says that people who believe the cause of a bad performance is temporary will keep trying. Temporary explanations for bad events produce resilience. The pessimist would say the opposite, that a bad performance is permanent, will always be there, and will give up easily in bad situations which produces helplessness. The optimist believes good performances have permanent causes, are more optimistic, and they try even harder after they succeed. The pessimist sees the causes of success as temporary and tends to give up even when they succeed (Seligman, 1999).

The degree to which one feels that a particular experience will generalize to other contexts is called pervasiveness. Here, the optimist belief is that a bad performance has specific causes, while good performances will enhance anything he/she does. The pessimist gives up on everything when a failure strikes and believes that a bad performance has universal causes and good performances are caused by specific factors (Seligman, 1999). Hope is based on permanence and pervasiveness together, and to find temporary and specific causes for misfortune is the art of hope. To find permanent and

universal causes for misfortune is the practice of despair. These performers are most likely to choke and collapse under pressure (Seligman, 1999).

The degree to which one sees him or herself as the primary causal agent in either positive or negative events is called personalization. Here, the optimist would say people who blame external events when they fail do not lose self-esteem when bad performances strike. Those people who believe they cause good things to happen have better self-esteem. The pessimist who blames themselves when they fail have low self-esteem and tend to believe they are worthless, talent less, and unlovable (Seligman, 1999 p. 288).

To summarize, an optimistic explanatory style is one which errors are treated as temporary, specific to one practice or game, and atypical of one's potential, where one looks at successes as more permanent, more general, and certainly more indicative of one's true abilities. Through this, an athlete gains optimism and self-confidence. (Seligman, 1999)

Negative Affect refers to non-pleasurable engagement or the extent to which a person sees life as difficult and is discontented. A state that is important to understand in competitive sport is anxiety. In general, anxiety has been equated with a loss of emotional control and, therefore, viewed as something that will have a deleterious impact on sport performance. Anxiety has been defined as a response to a psychological or physical danger (Martens et. Al., 1990) which causes the individual to experience unpleasant negative emotions or distress (Everly & Rosenfeld, 1981). Elevated levels of anxiety can, in turn, have an adverse affect upon motor performance (Landers, 1980; Schmidt, 1988). Anxiety is experienced by individuals who perceive a situation to be threatening to their psychological or physical well being (Lazarus & Averill, 1972; Martens, Vealey

& Burton, 1990; Smith & Lazarus, 1990; Spielberger, 1966). Elite athletes are required to produce optimal performances in anxiety-producing situations. Sport anxiety symptoms may be perceived as positive (facilitative) or negative (debilitative) by different individuals. The perceived importance of the outcome is a contributing factor in competitive state anxiety. Some examples of underlying causes of anxiety in sport include: fear of failure, loss of control, previous performance failure, concentration disruption, skill level, ego threat, experience and coping style. For the purpose of this study and because of the complexity of the subject, anxiety will be viewed as a determinant for change in mood state, relation to and determination of the athletes' method of coping style for each individual.

According to Totterdell (1999), the term 'mood' is normally used to refer to affective (or feeling) states that are less intense, more persistent, and less directed than emotions. There is considerable agreement that the structure of mood can be represented as a circumplex, in which mood terms are arranged around the circumference of a circle, the principle axis of which represents two dimensions of mood (Feldman, 1995; Watson & Tellegen, 1985). There are several versions to this model, but the one relative for this study, rotates the dimensions of positive affect and negative affect (Watson & Tellegen, 1985). In a circumplex model designed by Watson and Tellegen (1985), Positive Affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA) are orthogonal constructs lying at 90-degree angles relative to each other. Each construct is bipolar and is anchored by adjectives representing high poles (e.g., active, excited, strong for PA; hostile, nervous, jittery for NA) and low poles (e.g. dull, sleepy, sluggish for PA; calm, placid relaxed for NA) of the constructs. This construction of mood is useful in both describing the structure of mood

and in explaining its relationship to other constructs (Huelsman, Nemanick & Munz, 1998).

In looking at different psychological mood states, it is important to judge the moods appropriation and strength and identify whether it is a Positive Affect (PA) or Negative Affect (NA). The instrumentation of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) designed by Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988), allows the individuals to give a self- assessed level of mood at a specific moment of time. The use of the PANAS, with the basis axes of Positive and Negative Affect, has become a widely used measure in mood research because of its impressive psychometric properties. PA and NA, as measured by the PANAS, vary independently from each other (Watson, 1988b). The PANAS measures positive and negative feelings and emotions, and contains ten positive adjectives including attentive, interested, alert, excited, enthusiastic, inspired, proud, determined, strong and active, and ten negative adjectives including distressed, upset, guilty, scared, hostile irritable, ashamed, nervous, jittery and afraid (Watson et. al., 1988). High Positive Affect is a state of high energy, full concentration, and pleasurable engagement and enjoyment, whereas Low Positive Affect is characterized by sadness, blue, downhearted, alone and lonely (Watson, 1988b; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). In contrast, NA is a general dimension of subjective distress and not pleasurable engagement that, "subsumes a variety of adverse mood states, including anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, fear, and nervousness, with low Negative Affect being a state of calmness and serenity" (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988 p.1063).

During the instrument development, participants were asked to indicate "how you feel right now, that is, at the present moment" (PANAS). They rated each adjective on a

5-point unipolar response scale, with 1 anchored with *very slightly or not at all*, 2 anchored with *a little*, 3 with *moderately*, 4 with *quite a bit*, and 5 with *extremely*. The alpha reliabilities range from .86 to .90 for PA and from .84 to .87 for NA (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). Scale validity ranges are reported to range from 62.8% in the moment solution to 68.7% in the general ratings (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Participants completed the PANAS post-competition.

Flow Theory

'Flow' is an optimal experience characterized by a sense of playfulness, a feeling of being in control, concentration and highly focused attention, mental enjoyment of the activity for its own sake, a distorted sense of time and a match between the challenge at hand and one's skill level (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988)

Contrary to expectation, Csikszentmihalyi (1988) reported that flow usually happens not during relaxing moments of leisure and entertainment, but rather when we are actively involved in a difficult enterprise, in a task that stretches our mental and physical abilities" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988).

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1988), there is a pathway to achieve flow: (a) make a game of it: Establish rules, objectives, challenges to be overcome, and rewards; (b) Powerful Goal: As you play the game, remind yourself frequently of the overriding spiritual, social, or intellectual purpose that drives your efforts; (c) Focus: Release your mind from all distractions, from within or without. Focus your entire attention on the game; (d) Surrender to the process: Let go. Don't strive or strain to achieve your goal. Just enjoy the process of work; (e) Ecstasy: This is a natural step for the preceding four steps. It will hit you suddenly, by surprise. But there will be no mistaking it, and (f)

Peak Productivity: Your ecstatic state opens vast reservoirs of resourcefulness, creativity, and energy. Your productivity and quality of work shoot through the roof.

It has been reported that flow feels like:

1. It is the feeling of being completely involved, focused and concentrating, with this either due to innate curiosity or the result of training.

2. It is having a sense of Ecstasy, and being outside everyday reality.

3. It is having great inner clarity and knowing what needs to be done and how well it is going.

4. It is to know the activity is doable and that the skills are adequate, and neither anxious nor bored.

5. It is a sense of Serenity with no worries about self, feeling of growing beyond the boundaries of ego, afterwards having the feeling of transcending ego in ways not thought possible.

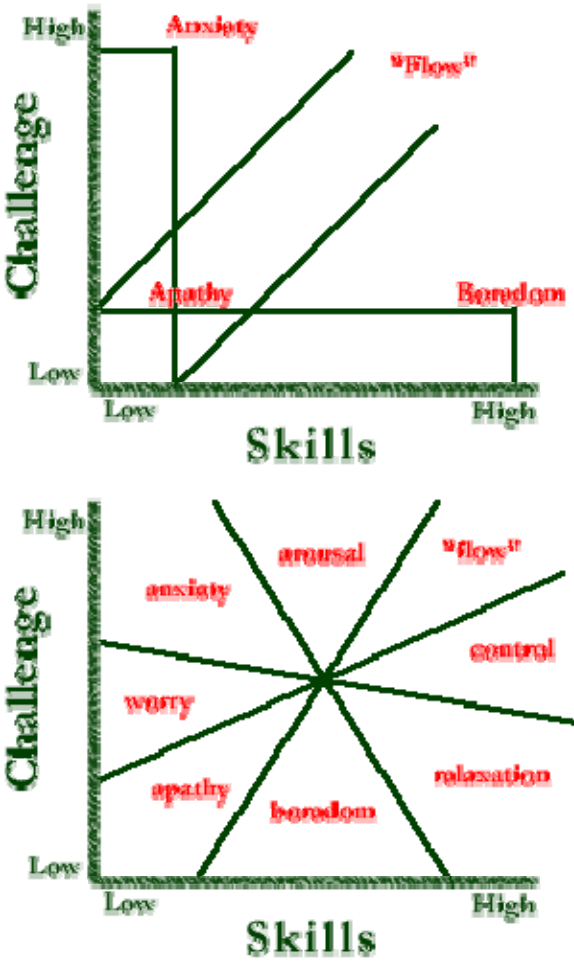
6. Timeliness happens because one is thoroughly focused on present, and don't notice time passing.

7. It is having Intrinsic Motivation and whatever produces flow becomes its own reward. (Csikszentmihalyi,1988).

Athletes have often reported a feeling of being "in the zone". Csikszentmihalyi and other psychologists have stated that would be their description of flow. Flow is commonly reported by professional athletes and Olympic caliber athletes. According to

Csikszentmihalyis' research, physical activity is the main trigger causing "flow" to happen outside of leisure, socializing and jobs. Recent research has shown that both the challenges and skills must be relatively high before a flow experience becomes possible (Massimini & Carli, 1988).

Figure 3 exhibits two examples Csikszentmihalyi used to summarize the results of his research on "flow".



Csikszentmihalyi saw optimal activities in the "flow" channel moving outward as skills are gained, and certainly before apathy sets in - clearly this parallels Vygotsky's theory of proximal development in learning situations.

Here Csikszentmihalyi summarized the results of his empirical research in terms of the main feelings reported for the various combinations of skills and challenge in the various activities undertaken.

Figure 3. Csikszentmihalyis' results of flow

The theory as described by Lev Semenovich Vygotsky's was centered around the question of how humans, in their short life trajectory, advance so far beyond their initial

biological endowment and in such diverse directions? His theory included looking at the theory of value, theory of knowledge, theory of human nature, theory of learning, theory of transmission, theory of society, theory of opportunity and the theory of consensus. In summary he felt as though individuals are shaped by and have a hand in shaping society. He linked genetics, history and social context, and looked for a way to relate more than one multidiscipline, including education, psychology and medicine. His view of life was as a process which was dynamic and ever changing, evolving, and in need of a theory of unification to explain the process (Rozycki & Goldfarb, 2000).

Competition Venue: Home versus Away

In an informal content analysis of media sports, Edwards and Archambault (1989) found that more references were made to the difficulty of defeating a team on their home ground than any other single factor, including talent, win - loss record, injuries and momentum. Home advantage (HA) means home teams in sports competitions win 50% of games played under a balanced schedule (Courney & Carron, 1992). Researchers using this definition have found a HA in many different sports and many different levels of competition (Courney & Carron, 1992). Bray et. al., (2002) examined athletes pre-competition psychological states prior to playing evenly matched opponents over a balanced series of a regular season both at home and away venues. Results showed that players' psychological states were variable but reflected a significant pattern of higher self-efficacy and self-confidence as well as lower cognitive and somatic state anxiety before playing at a home venue compared to away. A study conducted by Terry, Walrand, and Carron (1998) found that rugby players reported more positive moods,

lower state anxiety, and higher self confidence prior to a home game versus an away game. Four factors that may contribute to the home advantage affect are the home crowd, distance to travel (travel fatigue), familiarity of the playing facilities and rule factors that might favor the home team (Courney & Carron, 1992). Regardless of the definition of HA, Courney & Carron's (1992) home advantage model supports the idea that playing at home is generally more favorable. (Bray, 1999; Courney & Carron, 1992).

Coping Theory

Coping is what an individual does when a situation or event is perceived as stressful. That is, when a situation is beyond our ability to respond effectively. A person's coping responses are situation-specific and change from situation to situation. Research has demonstrated that dealing with different types of stressors require different coping strategies (Anshel & Kaissidis, 1997), and is a source of enjoyment. The use of sport itself can be a way with coping with life's problems and gaining a sense of personal control. There is a natural process that individual's experience in order to cope with stressful situations. See Figure 4.

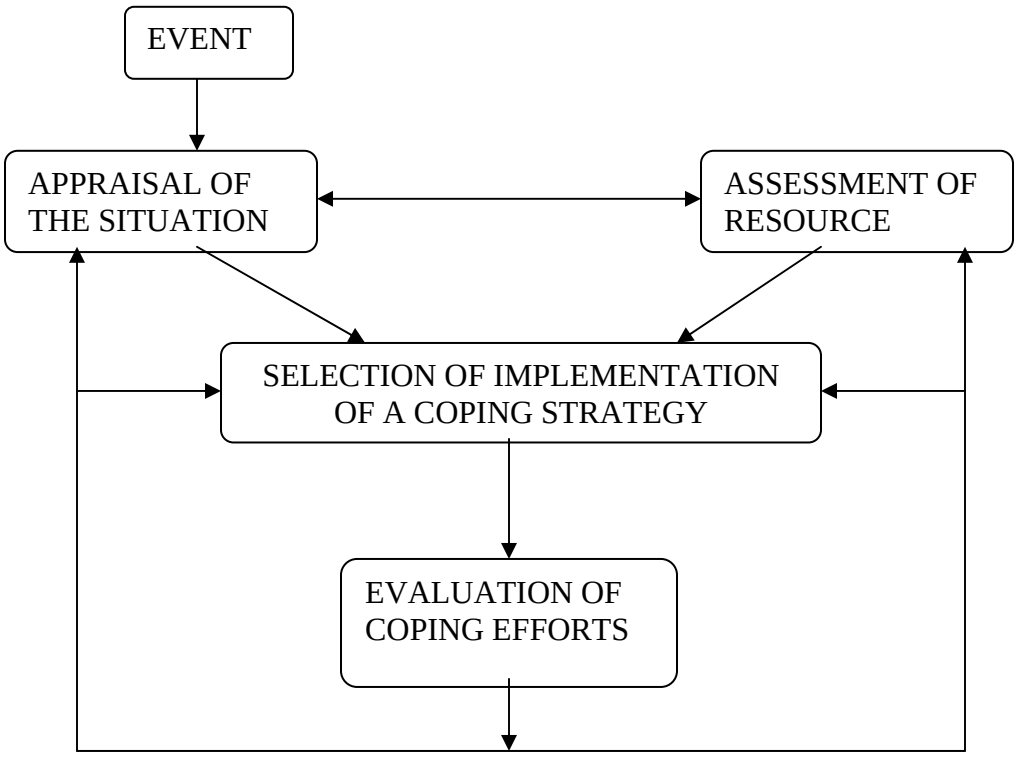


Figure 4. Natural Process of Coping (Greenglass, 1999)

Research presented by Greenglass, Schwarzer, Jakubuiec, Fiksenbaum, and Taubert (1999) that included the study of coping style in order to develop a new coping inventory. According to Folkman and Lazarus (1988), traditional research on coping has distinguished between problem-focused and emotional-focused coping. Problem-focused coping is seen as consisting of efforts aimed at altering the person-environment transaction or altering and managing the source of stress, and emotion-focused coping is aimed at regulating emotional responses elicited by the situation. Research has shown differences in the effectiveness of these two coping forms. Many agree that problem - focused coping is an effective individual coping strategy given some research findings that it is negatively related to distress symptoms (Billings & Moos, 1984; O'Neill & Zeichner (1985) Perceived control is an essential aspect of problem-focused coping.

Research reports that situational appraisals of control have been linked to performance of active problem-solving coping strategies (Folkman et al., 1981). Athletes that believe they have little control over their performance are less likely to engage in active problem-solving coping and more likely to imply emotion-focused strategies (Folkman, 1984). Perceived control refers to the belief that one can influence the environment. Research indicates that perceived control is associated with decreased stress levels and improved health (Israel, House, Schurman, Heaney, & Mero, 1989; Spector, 1986). According to Karasack (1979), perceived control also buffers the potentially deleterious effects of stress on mental and physical health. Furthermore, additional research suggests that individuals that have high self-efficacy feel they can more effectively control the demands of a challenge by taking adaptive action (Bandura, 1992). When challenges or threats occur and a person feels confident then success is more likely to occur (Schwarzer, 1993). Individuals with belief that outcomes are within their control likely employ control coping strategies than those who see outcomes resulting by chance (Schwarzer, 1992; 1993; Folkman, 1984; Bandura, 1992).

Emotional Coping was positively correlated with psychological distress including anxiety, depression and summarization. It was also found that emotional coping was negatively associated with performance satisfaction (Greenglass, 1993). This suggested that negative emotional coping itself may be a distress symptom. Research also showed that positive emotion focused coping strategies were beneficial ways of coping with stressful events (Dunkel-Schetter, Feinstein, Taylor & Falke, 1992). Further it was hypothesized that positive affect was related to the use of positive reappraisal (Haley et al., 1996).

Social support has been positively linked to ways of coping. According to Greenglass, Schwarzer, Jakubuiec, Fiksenbaum and Taubert (1999), there are several advantages to linking social support to coping. They noted that when viewing social support as a form of coping, one can theoretically link areas that have been previously viewed as conceptually distinct. Conceptualization of social support as coping broadens the concept of coping as it was traditionally defined to include interpersonal and relational skills. This approach recognizes the importance of resources in others which can be transformed into the behavioral and cognitive coping repertoire of the individual. It is felt that these positive coping strengths are ones that can be developed which is as important aspect in team sports such as softball where relationships are formed both on and off the playing field. According to Wills (1990), close relationships help a person cope with stress because in such relationships the person can disclose and discuss problems, share concerns, and receive advice that is keyed to a person's needs. Coping includes the process of cognitive restructuring.

Coping and positive psychology work together in order to attain happiness or enjoyment where several factors must be targeted, implemented, and learned. Some example terms include self-awareness, acceptance, self efficacy, as well as optimism and self-determination. Self-awareness and acceptance represents the time when an individual realizes their being, who they are, what they represent, and accepts those qualities as an integral part of society. Self-efficacy is the pure belief that one can do something. Optimism creates a positive outlook within with hope, faith and trust attached and self-determination as the inner drive to complete a task.

In a rare sports study on gender differences and coping, Madden, Kirkby and McDonald (1989) found that females were more likely to react to a slump with greater emotions (i.e. anger, accepting sympathy, etc.) than males, who preferred problem-focused coping techniques. In general, if a person's life is out of control, even a little bit, then the enjoyment level of the game decreases. Performance will continue to spiral downward if an affective coping mechanism or skill is not practiced. An individual's emotions and moods are affected and they can cause a change in reason for playing and alter the manner of which one plays the game. Therefore, it is an important task to identify what mood states can affect performance negatively and what coping technique the athlete posses in order to coach them effectively for their individual personality.

In order to assess coping styles of the softball athlete, each individual was administered the Coping Styles and Strategies (AC) (Carver, 1999) combined with the Proactive Coping Assessment (PCI) (Greenglass, Schwarzer, & Taubert, 1999) prior to the start of season play. The AC (Carver, 1999) assessed the different ways in which people respond to stress. Five scales were used to measure problem-focused coping. They included active coping, planning, and suppression of competing activities, restraint coping, and seeking instrumental social support. Five more scales measure aspects of emotion-focused coping including seeking of emotional social support, positive reinterpretation, acceptance, denial, and turning to religion. Finally, four scales measure coping responses that are less useful including focus on venting emotions including behavioral disengagement, alcohol/drug use, and mental disengagement. The AC asks the individuals to asses the level of stress they feel from a range of one to four; (1) - "I usually don't do this at all"; (2) - "I usually don't do this a little bit; (3) - "I usually do

this a medium amount"; and, (4)- "I usually do this a lot". The outcome will identify what coping strategy the individuals' choose during successful and unsuccessful events.

The coping scale, Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) is a newly reconstructed, multidimensional research instrument used to assess the respondents' reactions to various situations. It is a distinction between self-regulatory threat appraisal and self-regulatory goal attainment is made to account for a positive facet of coping, namely setting of, and striving for goals. It goes beyond the traditional risk management when people face a threat and attempt to build up their resistance resources well ahead of time. It is distinguished by three main features: (a) It integrates planning and preventative strategies with proactive self-regulatory goal attainment; (b) It integrates proactive goal attainment with identification and utilization of social resources, and (c) It utilizes proactive emotional coping for self-regulatory goal attainment. The authors define proactive coping as the integration of personal quality of life management with goal setting and attainment. Rather than focusing on risk management and threat appraisal, this inventory focused on coping based on resourcefulness, responsibility, and vision. There were seven scales and a total of 55 items which implement, on a cognitive and behavioral level, a way of coping based on resourcefulness, responsibility and vision. (Greengalss, Schwarzer, Jakubiec, Fiksenbaum & Steffen; 1999) The first of seven scales was the Proactive Coping Scale which consists of 14 items that combines autonomous goal setting with self-regulatory goal attainment cognitions and behavior. The Reflective Coping Scale, the second scale, has 11 items that describes simulation and contemplation about a variety of possible behavioral alternatives by comparing their imagined effectiveness and includes brainstorming, analyzing problems and resources, and

generation hypothetical plans of action. The third scale was Strategic Planning. This 4-item scale focused on the process of generating a goal – oriented schedule of action in which extensive tasks are broken down into manageable components. The forth scale was Preventative Coping. Preventative coping dealt with anticipation of potential stressors and the initiation of preparation before these stressors develop fully. Preventative coping refers to a potential threat in the future by considering experience, anticipation or knowledge while proactive coping is driven by goal striving as opposed to threat. The next scale is Instrumental Support Seeking. This eight item scale focuses on obtaining advice, information and feedback from people in one's social network when dealing with the stressors. The sixth scale, Emotional Support Seeking was a five item scale aimed at regulating temporary and emotional distress by seeking companionship from one's social network. It is emotional self-regulation with the existence of significant others. The seventh scale was a three item scale called avoidance coping. Avoidance Coping eludes action in a demanding situation by delaying. The validity of the PCI was tested when Greenglass, Schwarzer and Taubert (1999) used additional scales in their research which measured coping styles including The Proactive Attitude Scale (Schwarzer, 1999b), The general Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer, 1998), The Brief Cope (Carver, 1997), Depression Measured by the Hopkins System Checklist (Derogatis, Shipman, Rikels, Uhlenhuth & Covi, 1974), and Internal Control (Peacock & Wong, 1990). The Alpha reliability ranged between .76 and .86 thus causing the researchers to report correlations between all the different scales.

Hueselman, Nemanich and Meuiz (1998) suggest, the best descriptors of trait-mood may be the best descriptors of state mood. Also, the decision to use only high-pole

markers presupposes that the lower poles affect are measured adequately by low ratings on the high-pole items, therefore, in this case, the decision to use the PANAS was an appropriate method of measurement of mood states for this authors research.

The PCI was used because rather than focusing on risk management and threat appraisal, this inventory focused on coping based on resourcefulness, responsibility and vision. The assessment was designed to assess coping styles on a daily basis, which in relation to mood states, change as the days go by or are altered due to events or situations that may arise.

The AC was used in order to attempt to assess the different ways that individuals respond to stress. Since collegiate softball is a highly competitive sport, stress can be highly correlated with performance successes and failures.

For the sake of simplicity of administration and explanation of the coping assessment, the PCI and AC were combined.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH AND DESIGN

Introduction

A significant body of research over the past 20 years has considered the influence of various emotional states on performance and behavior in sport (Terry, 1955a). Women's fast pitch softball has had little research directly related to mood states and their effect on performance or coping during both positive and negative events and situations that might alter mood or change performance on the field. Investigations of correlation of successful and unsuccessful events location of venue have seen a large body of research.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether possible psychological mood states among female softball athletes could be linked to location of game venue (playing at home vs. away). It was to identify the reaction or coping style of individual athletes during different stressful events or situations as well as discover what attribution style each athlete attributes their successes or failures to. Since the correlation of success or failure is correlated to change in mood and attitude, it tends to be subjective, it will be used however not significant to the outcome of this investigation.

In this chapter the author will present the participants and data collection (planning, instrumentation, procedure, scoring, and data analysis) to identify correlation

between athlete's mood states and performance. It has been hypothesized that there is no difference between mood states of the female softball athlete in competition, that there is no difference in the athletes mood states when playing at home venue vs. away venue (home advantage), that there is no difference in coping styles of the individual athletes, and that there is no difference in each individual athlete's attribution styles.

Participants

The participants were female Division I Collegiate Fast pitch players. The individuals came from four different Division I schools including Oklahoma State University, University of Arkansas, Iowa State University and Southwest Missouri State University. There were 72 participants. Although this represents a small sample size, it is important for this study because the subjects are all members of a similar group.

It was requested that each participant read and complete an informed consent statement. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that there would be no penalty for non-participation in the study. Numbers were assigned to each participant in order to protect the confidentiality of each individual and so that the investigators would not know the participants identities. All assessments were given by proctor and not the researcher. During the study, the coaches were not privileged to any of the information including which athletes took part. All completed assessments were appropriately destroyed following the completion of this study. The study was approved through the university's Institutional Review Board. See appendix A.

Data Collection

The planning and development for this study was completed at Oklahoma State University. Actual data collected on behalf of the investigation occurred during the participants spring competitive season, in the year 2005.

Procedure

This research is using a purposive and convenience sampling technique. Purposive sampling is the basic knowledge of a select group of a population, in this case a softball team. Because of the need for softball players, four teams including *Oklahoma State University, University of Arkansas, Iowa State University and Southwest Missouri State University* were convenient sample groups for this research.

Each participant from the four schools was given four different pencil and paper pencil and paper assessments, one to measure mood state, one to determine attribution style following a specific event, and two to identify coping strategies.

The first series of assessments were for identification of coping strategy in general and following an event. The Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) and Assessment of Coping (AC) were administered prior to any competitive play for the playing season. The timing of the administration correlates to the PANAS assessment measuring mood states in order to gage how the individuals are coping given the events that may be occurring at that time. The outcome showed what coping methods the participants use to deal with stressful events and different life events related to competition.

The PANAS and SASS-R were administered after selected games; after and within one hour on four home and four away occasions. There have been many different

assessments used in the research of measuring mood states. Watson, Clark and Tellegen's (1988) PANAS assessment uses two bipolar dimensions in Positive Affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA), which are relevant to this particular study. The Profile of Mood States is widely used to measure mood, however, it measures four mono-polar dimensions rather than the bi-polar model as in the PANAS. The four poles include PA high and low poles, and NA high and low poles. They all are good sources for measuring state mood; however, the mono-polar dimensions include trait-moods irrelevant to this study. For comparison purposes, the UWIST (Matthews, et. al., 1990) also measures Positive and Negative hedonic tones using 8 adjectives describing individuals moods "at that very instant" and would be a good source of measuring mood states relevant to this investigation if the author needed a different assessment.

The Sport Situation Reaction Survey Short Version (SASS-R) was chosen for its ability to measure a player's attribution of sport for a specific event. For this study the SASS-R as used to measure differences at home and away venues and immediately following a win or a loss of games. The scoring was such that whatever number the player chose for that reaction was the actual number on the scale therefore it made understanding of the scoring and meaning of response easy.

The total number (N) of games for this study was eight (N= 8), four home games and four away games, played throughout an approximate four to six week time-frame.

The data was separated by variables in order to investigate if exercise induced mood states alter performance in the individuals. Whether game venue, both home and away, outcome of winning or losing the game, the attribution to what caused the success or failure and coping style were factors. All four of the teams' outcomes were combined

in order to look at individual statistics and not separate them out as teams and to determine how the female athlete in general feels.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The first section of this chapter will provide a brief overview of the data analysis. Following will be the demographics of the subjects tested in this study. Then final section will be the statistical results of data analysis and discussion of the results as they relate to each of the research questions in Chapter 1.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed in four categories:

1) Table 4.1 Demographics
2) Table 4.2 PANAS mood states including Positive Affect and Negative Affect
3) Table 4.3 Sport Situation Reaction Survey (SASS-R)
4) Table 4.4 Home versus Away Venue Statistics

Each question on the instruments was analyzed using T-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Each dependant variable was analyzed for significant differences.

The following demographics were compared in Table 4.1. The participants involved in the study came four Division 1 institutions: Oklahoma State University, Arkansas, Iowa State University and Southwest Missouri State. School year

classifications were four levels including freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. All participants were female collegiate softball athletes.

Table 4.1

Demographic information for sample (N=72)

	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	Totals
Oklahoma State	3	7	7	2	19
Arkansas	6	4	5	3	18
Iowa State	6	6	2	4	18
Southwest Missouri State	6	4	4	3	17
Total number	21	21	18	12	72

The demographics show that the number of participants from each team was very similar. Given the numbers between classes of participants, the number of underclassmen (freshmen and sophomores) was larger than the upperclassmen (juniors and seniors).

In Table 4.2 table the venue outcomes showed that there was a greater chance of winning at home versus away, and a greater chance of losing while playing away as opposed to home. The number of home opportunities was smaller than away opportunities due to one team's inability to play any home games due to weather during the time of the research.

Hypothesis one stated that there was no difference between mood states of the female softball athlete during competition and the hypothesis was rejected. In other words there was a significant difference in moods while competing. Table 4.2 represents the significant t-test values for the Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) concerning venue location and outcome for each opportunity. The

instrumentation of the PANAS was to allow the individuals to give a self- assessed level of mood at a specific moment of time.

Table 4.2

Mean and significant t-value for Positive and Negative Affect Scale

		Mean	**t-value**	**Significance**
Positive Affect	Home	33.10	3.11	0.010
	Away	29.40		
	Win	35.70	8.98	0.01
	Loss	25.60		
Negative Affect				
	Home	16.60	-3.50	0.01
	Away	20.10		
	Win	15.90	-9.13	0.01
	Loss	25.20		

It was hypothesized that there was no difference in the athletes' mood states when playing at their home field (home advantage), as opposed to playing away and the hypothesis was rejected because the results of the investigation determined the athletes possessed a different level of attitude while playing at their home venue as opposed to playing away. The athletes felt, in general, as though there were greater advantages to playing at home than away, and in turn, their moods were more positive and upbeat. Thus, according to the statistics of outcome, more games were won while playing at home than away.

It was hypothesized that there was significant differences in attribution style of the athletes and the researcher rejected the hypothesis. The data determined that the

attitude of the players was different between players and there was several different factors the athletes listed as to why the event happened the way it did. Table 4.3 represents the significant differences for The Sport Situation Reaction Survey (SASS-R) where the instrument measured immediate attribution style along with five dimensions of internality, stability, globality, controllability, and intentionality for both positive and negative events while being compared at both home and away events.

Table 4.3

Comparisons for home versus away and win versus loss pairs

	HOME	**AWAY**	**WIN**	**LOSS**	**t-value**	
HOME VS AWAY	5.30	5.50			-1.23	
WIN VS LOSS			5.20	5.20	-0.43	
HOME VS AWAY	5.10	4.90			1.16	
WIN VS LOSS			5.20	4.60	4.17	**
HOME VS AWAY	4.50	4.20			1.23	
WIN VS LOSS			4.70	3.80	4.09	**
HOME VS AWAY	5.00	5.40			-2.22	**
WIN VS LOSS			4.80	5.10	-1.19	
HOME VS AWAY	3.00	3.10			-0.46	
WIN VS LOSS			3.60	3.20	1.96	
HOME VS AWAY	4.20	3.70			1.95	
WIN VS LOSS			4.10	3.50	2.40	**

** Notes significant difference .05 level

The author compared home versus away contests at (.05) significance level and there were significant differences in two of the comparisons of home versus away where playing at home t-value was very high. What this meant to the researcher was that there is a greater chance of winning while playing at home than away contests. With the four teams that participated in the study, it was apparent that there was much more success overall while playing at home versus playing away. Therefore, with the findings from

Table 4.4 it would be suggested to attempt to schedule more home games if plan is to win more often.

Table 4.4

Demographic information summary for venue and outcome of events (N=42)

Venue Outcomes	Total
Home / Win	9
Home / Loss	4
Away / Win	5
Away / Loss	14
Total Home Opportunities	13
Total Away Opportunities	19

Because of the significant subjectivity and inability to score open ended questions fairly, the long form Sport Situation Reaction Survey information was not used and the researcher used only the short form R-SASS for the purpose of this study.

It is hypothesized that there was no difference in the athletes coping strategy when reacting to daily events and the hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant difference in coping strategies between individual athletes. In order to learn more about coping strategies of participants, the Proactive Coping Inventory Scale (PCI) combined with Coping Styles and Strategies (AC) was administered prior to competition. This assessment was designed to correlate coping styles on a daily basis, with mood states, to discover if they change or stay consistent when events or situations change or are altered. It was important to compare coping because mood can change with situation and knowing how an athlete chooses to deal with change could affect many aspects of the game and life in general.

The following definitions were significant in the outcome of the assessment of coping strategy. The researcher discovered the listed coping strategies were listed as the most often used by the participants in this study. Furthermore, the need for understanding how important including coping for the use of this study was also discovered.

Proactive Coping Inventory and Coping Styles and Strategies Significant Subscales

Reflective Coping Scale. This scale, with 11 items, describes simulation and contemplation about a variety of possible behavioral alternatives by comparing their imagined effectiveness and includes brainstorming, analyzing problems and resources, and generating hypothetical plans of action.

Strategic Planning. This 4-item scale focuses on the process of generating a goal-oriented schedule of action in which extensive tasks are broken down into manageable components.

Preventive Coping. Preventive coping deals with anticipation of potential stressors and the initiation of preparation before these stressors develop fully. Preventive coping is distinct from proactive coping. Preventive coping effort refers to a potential threat in future by considering experience, anticipation or knowledge. In comparison, proactive coping is not based on threat but is driven by goal striving. The 10-item Preventive Coping Scale has good internal consistency and item-total correlations.

Emotional Support Seeking. This 5-item scale is aimed at regulating temporary emotional distress by disclosing to others feelings, evoking empathy and seeking

companionship from one's social network. It is emotional self-regulation with the assistance of significant others.

Restraint Coping. This 4-item scale deals with reservation and timing in making decisions or actions based on timing.

Turning to Religion. This 4-item scale measures the level at which challenges are handled by turning to a higher power or belief system as well as how often.

Alcohol-Drug disengagement. This 1-item scale measures the level at which alcohol-drugs are used in order to cope.

Coping has a very broad spectrum of use in every day life and for the purpose of this study it was important in understanding because of comparisons including winning and losing which can change moods faster than one can imagine. Coping can also help a coach control an athlete that may have negative behavior such as throwing a helmet or trash talking. By understanding that coping behaviors can be controlled or changed, a coach can use methods for example by firmly asking the athlete to refrain from throwing objects and changing or redirecting the behavior. If the behavior does not change the coach can then begin altering mood and attitude by instruction on what behavior is appropriate. Hopefully the mood can be redirected into a positive direction at that point.

Another reason for comparing coping is to allow for an open relationship between coaches and players concerning understanding certain behaviors. For instance, one athlete may rebound quickly from an error made on the field while another may carry it with them into the next play. If a coach can identify that coping skill then redirecting the focus is more likely. It would be logical to have a system in place, such as a ten second rule where the player is allowed to be angry or disappointed concerning the error with no

interference, at that point the behavior is expected to change or the rules change, and others may then step in for reinforcement.

Coping is such a huge part of every day life and especially significant when a game that changes from one second to the next, both positively and negatively occurring. In this game of softball, one team wins and unfortunately one has to lose. The correlation here is how players handle both ends of the spectrum and all the aspects that occur.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate negative and positive affect mood states and coping style of female softball athletes during competition, to examine softball athletes' mood states and coping style while playing at home versus away games, and to examine and discover the softball athletes' attribution style in both positive and negative situations. This chapter will provide a summary of the research findings related to the research questions, the conclusions drawn by the investigator, and recommendations for future research.

Summary

The findings of this study add to the existing knowledge that there is such thing as home advantage, that positive and negative moods do affect performance, and that all individuals attribute and cope with their successes and failures differently.

The following research questions were tested:

1. Is there a difference between mood states of the female collegiate softball player?

2. Is there any difference in athletes' mood states when playing at home versus away (home advantage)?
3. Is there any difference in athletes coping strategy when reacting to daily events?
4. Is there any difference in each individual's attribution styles?

***Ho1*:** It was hypothesized that there was no difference between mood states of the female softball athlete during competition. Using the t-test in comparing paired samples (home vs. away; win vs. loss) significant differences were found in comparing mood states: positive affect / home vs. away, positive affect / win vs. loss, negative affect / home vs. away and negative affect / win vs. loss, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The study results indicated there were significant differences on a continuum for moods that athletes have, whether they are super happy and upbeat to depressed and negative. It is in this authors opinion that most of the athletes are in the middle somewhere or through out that continuum. Moods are something that the individuals have control over; therefore it is important to identify moods, and direct them in the appropriate direction for the good of the individual and team. It is possible to change mood therefore an important part of not only this study, but conducting a team as well. The author learned that moods are very important in setting the tone for the team. If there is a positive feeling in the air, the tendency for greater output is more likely and may aid in success as well where a negative tone is very hard to work within. Negativity is a depressant and creates bad energy that is why it is so important to try and set the mood early on a positive note. Both negative and positive moods are very contagious.

***Ho 2*:** It was hypothesized that there was no difference in the athletes' mood states when playing at their home field (home advantage), as opposed to playing away. There were significant differences in some of the questions measuring home vs. away events and win loss; therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The purpose for rejecting Ho: 2 was because there is a definite advantage in playing on your home field. There is a familiarity with the venue, home crowd cheering, consistency in pre-game and post-game rituals as well as no travel, sleeping in your own bed (most likely), better meals and the overall feeling of being at home. From this we can learn that one must coach differently while playing away. Location is always a factor, so play more home games and if you can't do that find locations that aren't hard to get to, have decent place to stay and take care of the overall welfare of the players. Factors such as climate and distance can play a role in the athlete acclimating to surroundings and whether the athlete feels well rested. There is much research out there already that confirms the hypothesis and home advantage philosophy.

***Ho 3*:** It was hypothesized that there was no difference in the athletes coping strategy when reacting to daily events. There was a significant difference in comparing coping strategy between players and teams therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. Coping was probably one of the biggest realms in this study and in coaching. Coping is a behavior that can be modified or changed. When dealing with athletes, learning what coping method the athlete exemplifies especially under adversity is critical, i.e., a coach can create a situation where the athlete throws a bat, and the coach can say "you won't do that." If the athlete does not comply, the coach may choose to apply punishment in order to change the behavior. In coping there is a continuum where there are athletes who act

out and externalize their emotions or wear them on their sleeve. At the other end of the spectrum, the athletes that internalize and shut down become unapproachable. Again, this author found that the majority of the athletes fall somewhere in the middle of that continuum. There is a great deal of information on coping and it is the job of coaches to learn how to identify and manage the different styles. That too is why great teams make great come back wins, and why clutch hitters get the big hit under pressure. There are positive ways that we find ways of channeling intensity, adversity and other factors that might make the elite athlete fail. There is a belief system related to collective efficacy that factors in along with the ability to manage the situation.

***Ho4*:** It was hypothesized that there was no difference in the athletes' attribution style. There were some significant differences in comparing what the athletes attributed to the win or loss outcome and what they attributed to performance; therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. This hypothesis was rejected because the author found that the athletes found many different reasons for why they did or did not performed the way they did. For the most part the participants took responsibility for both good and poor performances. To name a few of the negative attributes listed in the study, players blamed other players for mistakes, fatigue and tiredness, and coaching decisions. Because of this reasoning, the author felt as though there were broad spectrums of performance, both enhanced play and poor performance.

Within the limitations of this study, it can be concluded that this information could be valuable in assessing athletes. Researchers as well as coaches may be able to use the information gathered in this study to learn what players attribute to their successes and failures. It can be used to learn about coping with success and failure and adversity.

Positive and Negative moods can affect performance and the research suggests it is an important part of how the athletes approach competition The study may also help to inform coaches concerning the importance of learning to understand their players at a different level beyond athleticism. It suggests that venue locations make for different mind set of play, and how wins and losses can be directly affected. This study could be very useful for future studies specifically concerning positive negative affect, attribution style, coping strategies and home advantage studies.

Some of the things the author would change if I had to do the study over again would be having more teams participate. By only having four teams research was limited to the amount of data collected to back findings. The researcher would consider using one conference, thus all participating teams would be competing against each other. That would allow the investigation of win versus loss between two different types of play. Another possibility would be to use the USA today Top 25 Team rating and use teams that possess a high level of talent. The research could also include a comparison of conference play versus tournament play as they bring two different areas of focus and different levels of play. Usually tournaments are played with a small number of teams and the teams don't usually play each other very often except in tournaments.

If there were a future study to come from this the researcher would focus more directly on the coping strategy aspect as there is so much to learn about it, not only in sport but in life in general.

By rejecting the hypothesis concerning mood state, the researcher learned that moods play a vital role in flow of atmosphere. Negative moods can be controlled or changed by simply giving cues or suggesting that behavior change or improve. With

positive mood, one may have more opportunity to achieve flow, have better optimism and fell better about life in general. There is a long continuum with positive and negative affect and many athletes range somewhere in the middle range while competing if they are achieving flow.

By rejecting the hypothesis concerning home advantage, the researcher discovered that there were many more advantages to playing at home such as comfort levels with playing field, home crowd support, less fatigue from travel and consistency with pre-game protocol to name a few. There are many negatives to traveling to away venues including unfamiliar playing surfaces, change in protocol, sleeping in different beds, eating out travel fatigue. The outcome of the games while playing at home during this study was significantly higher in the win column compared to losing.

Hypothesis three concerning coping strategies was rejected and the data showed that coping has open ended opportunity for research. The most important aspect that the researcher learned was that coping is controllable and that a coach must learn to understand each player as an individual in order to coach them well.

And finally, hypothesis four concerning attributions was rejected and the research showed that with every athlete, the reasons that they believe a particular situation may have happened is very different from one another. The participants usually looked at either internal or external factors for answering why or what a particular instance may have occurred. For example, it showed that some athletes took responsibility for an error while another may have blamed the field conditions or another player. Another example would be a great play by an infielder. They may attribute to luck or to the fact that they are skilled or prepared.

In general, with all the rejections of hypothesis, the researcher learned that there sometimes is no specific explanation for anything, just that each individual has their own unique way of seeing things, reacting to things and attributing to things, while in the meantime, dealing with the outcome whether it be positive or negative situations.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made regarding the future studies with collegiate female softball athletes as well as all other collegiate athletic sports concerning mood states affecting performance studies.

1. Replicating this study could include all levels of collegiate softball athletes. It would further the implications that whatever level would be researched, similar findings might be found, possibly at different levels due to competition levels.

2. A subsequent study might focus on the differences in the way individual softball players choose to cope with venue location (home vs. away) and event outcome (win vs. loss). Even though there have been other studies on mood states with other sports, there has not been enough research specific to the collegiate female softball athlete especially considering the popularity of the sport in this century. Furthermore, this study might be used to further focus on specific attributes especially coping as there is so much to learn about it's importance in athletic buoyancy.

3. The study can help the understanding that coaching strategies might need to be looked at more in depth such as scheduling more home games; developing more than one pre-game strategies for different protocols; and, possibly hiring a sport psychologist as a coach that travels with the team when it must play away. The study showed that athletes

performed better while playing at home so more contests should be played at home if possible. While at home the pre-game protocol is very consistent, however while a team is traveling, and equipment might not always be accessible, it is important to have more than one plan of action for warming up prior to games so that players can stay can stay consistent and not be thrown into crisis prior to competition. Also, by having a Coach/Sport Psychologist on staff and with the team at all times, the athletes have someone to help keep them focused and better able to cope even while playing away. It is a growing trend to have Sports Psychologists work with teams but they are not always readily available.

4. Further studies could help coaches learn to coach individual players differently by learning about moods in turn helping them to perform at their highest standards. Since moods can be completely bi-polar, it is valuable to understand the differences between players as to what moods allow them to perform well and what moods may hinder their performance. It is important to know that not all athletes will be the same and that for best chemistry of teams, communicating between athletes and coaches and athletes and athletes is imperative. For example athlete A may be cheery and happy even while under duress while athlete B may get angry or appear depressed. Even under both situations the athlete may be able to perform at a high level. Understanding that and accepting that is vital in coaching athletes independently.

5. Coaches could learn to coach athletes differently at different years of experience. This meaning that a freshman with no higher level of experience would need to be coached differently from a senior that has four years of experience. Maturity and leadership seems to come once the athlete moves in to upper class status.

6. Further investigation could reveal the possibility that certain coping styles make better athletes or poor performers in different situations (stress, anxiety or excited etc.). It could also help coaches' better deal with the daily stressors of life in order to redirect focus for competition or practice. Too often an athlete will come to practice or event with a poor test grade, boyfriend problems or just exhausted and it is partially the staff responsibility to redirect behavior for that time period.

7. Further investigation of what differences athletes have concerning attribution and mood and how it can make a team gel or disintegrate affecting outcome of event.

8. Coach's may look at practicing players in extreme pressure situations to mimic game like atmosphere and continuously take players out of their comfort zone in order to play better at away competitions. In reality, there are different elements at every venue and with different teams that might change the game such as field conditions, atmosphere, weather and umpires as well as playing a team that may be more skilled or ranked causing different anxiety moods to occur.

9. Coaches could use this study in order to understand the relationship between everyday life and sport and better help the athletes learn how to balance the life of a student-athlete. Athletes have so much more to deal with than the average student. They have academics and athletics along with their every day lives and especially with incoming freshmen, it is important to be aware of behavior and mood changes that could lead to depression or failure. A coach should learn as much as possible about the athlete so that when an unforeseen or slow developing crisis occurs, it can be identified and dealt with before it becomes too serious.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	Wednesday, October 27, 2004
IRB Application No	ED0540
Proposal Title:	Mood States of Collegiate Softball Players
Reviewed and Processed as:	Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 10/26/2005

Principal Investigator(s)

Kimberly Ward
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Stillwater, OK 74075

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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

☒ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact me in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-1676, colson@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

SCRIPT FOR SUBJECT RECRUITMENT

Thank you for your time and consideration of participation in this research project titled “Mood States of Collegiate Softball Players”. This research will seek to find how mood variations may affect performance. Four different questionnaires will be administered to each of you during different periods of competition during a four to six week period. You will be asked to answer questions concerning your feelings at that exact moment in time. For the purpose of validity, you are asked to answer all questions openly and honestly. Confidentiality will be assured through identifying numbers that will to track data only. No names will be connected to the identifying numbers. This research project is completely voluntary to you, the participants, and there will be no consequences for not participating and you may withdraw at any time. For further questions or concerns please contact the researchers’ advisor, Dr. Christine Cashel at 744-6815.

Thank you for your consideration of participation.

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM FOR INSTITUTION PARTICIPANTS

ISTITUTION CONSENT FORM

To Whom It May Concern:

I, _____, Head Softball Coach at _____ consent to allowing the research study of Kim Ward called “Mood States of Collegiate Female Softball Players” to my softball athletes. I understand that the research assessments will begin prior to start of play of competition season as well as post-game and will at no time conflict with the interest of the athletes. This study will take place spring 1995. I understand that my athletes can participate in this study voluntarily and will not take any action if they choose not to participate.

_____ _____

Signature Date

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO COACH

Coach,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the research for my Master's thesis. I do appreciate the time that you and your team will give.

In order to make this as simple as possible here are a few guidelines to follow.

1. Please read through the recruitment script WITH your team. Make sure they understand that they DO NOT have to participate, that the research is completely volunteer basis. However do encourage they participate as their identities will be kept confidential from you the coach, any or your staff, our staff, myself and my advisor. In other words, you can't use their responses against them as you will have no idea who answered what.
2. Please read through WITH your team the consent form and make sure they understand it, THEN SIGN IT with their name, not number. Collect all of them and place them in your coaches' folder for safe keeping.
3. Finally the Assessment Phase: PRIOR TO FIRST COMPETITION please give the three stapled assessments first. (The single page assessments are for after a competition)
4. As soon as season begins, please implement the single sheets post competition after your first 4 home games and first 4 away games possible. They MUST be completed within one hour of competition. (Not to take away from post game talks etc.) They measure their feelings and attributes from that game). Also, have them mark whether it is a home game or away game; win or loss. This is very important to know as I am looking for Home Advantage situations as well.

Please have your girls put their folder number on each sheet in case they fall out of folder for ID purposes

As soon as you have completed the assessments, please mail them back to me as soon as possible. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Kim Ward

Kim Ward

Phones:
(W) 405-744-5884
(C) 405-612-6232
(H) 405-377-7662
email: wardkd@okstate.edu

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FOR VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR INFORMED CONSENT

A. AUTHORIZATION

I,_____, hereby authorize or direct Kim Ward, or associates or assistants of her choosing to perform the following treatment or procedure.

B. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH AND ASSOCIATED RISKS/BENEFITS

I give my authorization to participate in the study named "Mood States of Collegiate Softball Players". The study involves research and will be conducted through Oklahoma State University. The principle investigators are Christine Cashel, SAHEP Instructor of Leisure Services and Kim Ward, SAHEP Student in Leisure Services. I know I will be doing assessments before and after competitions. I also know I will do a coping assessment midway through the procedure. The study will run approximately one month, from April-May, 2003. I may withdraw at any time with no penalty. The researcher protects my confidentiality, by using the last four digits of my social security number, as identification, and the data will be destroyed at the completion of the study. There are no foreseeable risks to me.

If I have any questions, I may contact:

Dr. Christine Cashel; Advisor and Principle Investigator
Oklahoma State University
443 Willard Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078
405-744-6815

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Oklahoma State University
415 Whitehurst, Stillwater, OK 74078
405-744-5700

Sharon Bacher, IRB Executive Secretary
Oklahoma State University
415 Whitehurst, Stillwater, OK 74078.
405-744-5700

I understand that participation is voluntary and that I will not be penalized if I choose not to participate. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and end my participation in this project at any time without penalty after I notify the project director, Dr.Christine Cashel.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: _____ Time:
(a.m./p.m.)

_____

Name (typed) Signature

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it.

Signed: _____

Project director or authorized representative

APPENDIX F

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE AFFECT SCHEDULE (PANAS)

PANAS Questionnaire

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the response that best describes the **extent that you feel RIGHT NOW, that is, at this present moment.**

	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
1. Interested	□	□	□	□	□
2. Distressed	□	□	□	□	□
3. Excited	□	□	□	□	□
4. Upset	□	□	□	□	□
5. Strong	□	□	□	□	□
6. Guilty	□	□	□	□	□
7. Scared	□	□	□	□	□
8. Hostile	□	□	□	□	□
9. Enthusiastic	□	□	□	□	□
10. Proud	□	□	□	□	□
11. Irritable	□	□	□	□	□
12. Alert	□	□	□	□	□
13. Ashamed	□	□	□	□	□
14. Inspired	□	□	□	□	□
15. Nervous	□	□	□	□	□
16. Determined	□	□	□	□	□
17. Attentive	□	□	□	□	□
18. Jittery	□	□	□	□	□
19. Active	□	□	□	□	□
20. Afraid	□	□	□	□	□

APPENDIX G

SPORTS SITUATION REACTION SURVEY – SHORT FORM
(SASS-R)

Please complete this page within 30 minutes of completing your main event.

Please rate how well you think you performed in your main event (circle).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very poor performance			average			very good performance

Please write down what you believe was the single most likely cause of your level of performance (e.g., why did you perform well or poorly today):

_____

Is this cause something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Totally due to other people or circumstances						Totally due to me

In the future when performing in a competition, will this cause be present again? (Circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Will never again be present						Will always be present

Is the cause something that just influences your performance in competitions, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Influences just this particular event						Influence all my life events

Is the cause something that is controllable by **you**? (Circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Controllable						Uncontrollable

Is the cause something that is controllable by **others**? (Circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Controllable						Uncontrollable

Is the cause something that is intentional or unintentional? (Circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Intentional						Unintentional

APPENDIX H

PROACTIVE COPING INVENTORY (PCI)

AND

ASSESSMENT OF COPING (AC)

The Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI):

Reactions to Daily Events Questionnaire

The following statements deal with reactions you may have to various situations. Indicate how true each of these statements is depending on how you feel about the situation. Do this by checking the most appropriate box.

In scoring responses, 1 is assigned to "not at all true," 2 to "barely true," 3 to "somewhat true," and 4 to "completely true."

The Proactive Coping Subscale

1. I am a "take charge" person.	1	2	3	4
2. I try to let things work out on their own.	1	2	3	4
3. After attaining a goal, I look for another more challenging one.	1	2	3	4
4. I like challenges and beating the odds.	1	2	3	4
5. I visualize my dreams and try to achieve them.	1	2	3	4
6. Despite numerous setbacks, I usually succeed in getting what I want.	1	2	3	4
7. I try to pinpoint what I need to succeed.	1	2	3	4
8. I always try to find a way to work around obstacles; nothing really stops me.	1	2	3	4
9. I often see myself failing so I don't get my hopes up to high.	1	2	3	4
10. When I apply for a position, I imagine myself filling it.	1	2	3	4
11. I turn obstacles into positive experiences.	1	2	3	4
12. If someone tells me I can't do something, you can be sure I will do it.	1	2	3	4
13. When I experience a problem, I take the initiative in resolving it.	1	2	3	4
14. When I have a problem, I usually see myself in a no-win situation.	1	2	3	4

Reflective Coping Subscale

1. I imagine myself solving difficult problems.	1	2	3	4
2. Rather than acting impulsively, I usually think of various ways to solve a problem.	1	2	3	4
3. In my mind I go through many different scenarios in order to prepare myself for different outcomes.	1	2	3	4
4. I tackle a problem by thinking about realistic alternatives.	1	2	3	4
5. When I have a problem with my co-workers, friends, or family, I imagine beforehand how I will deal with them successfully.	1	2	3	4
6. Before tackling a difficult task, I imagine success scenarios.	1	2	3	4
7. I take action only after thinking carefully about a problem.	1	2	3	4
8. I imagine myself solving a difficult problem before I actually have to face it.	1	2	3	4
9. I address a problem from various angles until I find the appropriate action.	1	2	3	4
10. When there are serious misunderstandings with co-workers, family members, or friends, I practice before how I will deal them.	1	2	3	4
11. I think about every possible outcome to a problem before tackling it.	1	2	3	4

Strategic Planning Subscale

1. I often find ways to break down difficult problems into manageable components.	1	2	3	4
2. I make a plan and follow it.	1	2	3	4
3. I break down a problem into smaller parts and do one part at a time.	1	2	3	4
4. I make lists and try to focus on the most important things first.	1	2	3	4

Preventative Coping Subscale

1. I plan for future eventualities.	1	2	3	4
2. Rather than spending every cent I make, I like to save for a rainy day.	1	2	3	4
3. I prepare for adverse events.	1	2	3	4
4. Before disaster strikes, I am well-prepared for its consequences.	1	2	3	4
5. I plan my strategies to change a situation before I act.	1	2	3	4
6. I develop my job skills to protect myself against unemployment.	1	2	3	4
7. I make sure my family is well taken care of to protect them from adversity in the future.	1	2	3	4
8. I think ahead to avoid dangerous situations.	1	2	3	4
9. I plan strategies for what I hope will be the best possible outcome.	1	2	3	4
10. I try to manage my money well in order to avoid being destitute in old age.	1	2	3	4

Instrumental Support Seeking Subscale

1. When solving my own problems, other people's advice can be helpful.	1	2	3	4
2. I try to talk and explain my stress in order to get feedback from my friends.	1	2	3	4
3. Information I get from others has often helped me develop my own solutions to problems.	1	2	3	4
4. I can usually identify people who can help me develop my own solutions to problems.	1	2	3	4
5. I ask others what they would do in my situation.	1	2	3	4
6. Talking to others can be really useful because it provides another perspective on the problem.	1	2	3	4
7. Before getting messed up with a problem, I'll call a friend to talk about it.	1	2	3	4
8. When I am in trouble, I can usually work out something with the help of others.	1	2	3	4

Emotional Support Seeking Subscale

1. If I am depressed I know who I can call to help me feel better.	1	2	3	4
2. Others help me feel cared for.	1	2	3	4
3. I know who can be counted on when the chips are down.	1	2	3	4
4. When I'm depressed I get out and talk to others.	1	2	3	4
5. I confide my feelings in others to build and maintain close relationships.	1	2	3	4

Avoidance Coping Subscale

1. When I have a problem I like to sleep on it.	1	2	3	4
2. If I find a problem too difficult sometimes I put it aside until I'm ready to deal with it.	1	2	3	4
3. When I have a problem I usually let it simmer on the back burner for a while.	1	2	3	4

Proactive Coping: combine autonomous goal setting with self-regulatory goal attainment cognitions and behavior.

Reflective Coping: describes simulation and contemplation about a variety of possible behavioral alternatives and included brainstorming, analyzing problems and resources, and generating hypothetical plans of action.

Strategic Planning: focuses on the process of generating a goal-oriented plan of action.

Preventive Coping: deals with anticipation of potential stressors and the initiation of preparation before these stressors develop fully.

Instrumental Support Seeking: focuses on obtaining advice, information and feedback from people in one's social network when dealing with stressors.

Emotional Support Seeking: aimed at regulating temporary emotional distress by disclosing to others feelings, evoking empathy, and seeking companionships from one's social network.

Avoidance Coping: eludes action in a demanding situation by delaying.

Coping Strategies Measure

Identify a recent stressful event.
How frequently have you used each of the following strategies?

3—frequently 2—sometimes 1—once or twice 0—never

Appraisal-focused coping

Considered several alternatives for handling the problem.	3	2	1	0
Drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation once before.	3	2	1	0
Tried to step back from the situation and be more objective.	3	2	1	0
Went over the situation in my mind to try and understand it.	3	2	1	0

Problem-focused coping

Tried to find out more about the situation.	3	2	1	0
Talked with spouse or other relative about the problem.	3	2	1	0
Talked with friend about the problem.	3	2	1	0
Talked with professional person (e.g., doctor, lawyer, clergy)	3	2	1	0
Prayed for guidance and strength.	3	2	1	0
Discussed feelings with others.	3	2	1	0
Sought help from persons or groups with similar experiences.	3	2	1	0
Made a plan of action and followed it.	3	2	1	0
Took things a day at a time, one step at a time.	3	2	1	0
Tried not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch.	3	2	1	0
I knew what I had to be done and tried harder to make things work.	3	2	1	0
Bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation.	3	2	1	0

Emotion-focused coping

Tried to see the positive side of the situation.	3	2	1	0
Got busy with other things to keep my mind off the problem.	3	2	1	0
Told myself things that helped me feel better.	3	2	1	0
Got away for a while.	3	2	1	0
Made a promise to myself that things would be different next time.	3	2	1	0
Exercised more to reduce tension.	3	2	1	0
Let my feelings out somehow.	3	2	1	0
Took it out on other people when I felt angry or depressed.	3	2	1	0
Tried to reduce tension by drinking more.	3	2	1	0
Tried to reduce tension by eating more.	3	2	1	0
Tried to reduce tension by smoking more.	3	2	1	0
Tried to reduce tension by taking more tranquilizing drugs.	3	2	1	0

Assessment of Coping

We are interested in how people respond when they confront difficult or stressful events in their lives. There are lots of ways to try to deal with stress. This questionnaire asks you to indicate what you generally do and feel, when you experience stressful events. Obviously, different events bring out somewhat different responses, but think about what you usually do when you are under a lot of stress.
Use the following scale to answer:

1—I usually don't do this at all. 2—I usually do this a little bit.
3—I usually do this a medium amount. 4—I usually do this a lot.

Active Coping

I take additional action to try to get rid of the problem.	1 2 3 4
I concentrate my efforts on doing something about it.	1 2 3 4
I do what has to be done, one step at a time.	1 2 3 4
I take direct action to get around the problem	1 2 3 4

Planning

I try to come up with a strategy about what to do.	1 2 3 4
I make a plan of action.	1 2 3 4
I think hard about what steps to take.	1 2 3 4
I think about how I might best handle the problem.	1 2 3 4

Suppression of competing activities

I put aside other activities in order to concentrate on this.	1 2 3 4
I focus on dealing with this problem, and, if necessary, let other things slide a little.	1 2 3 4
I keep myself from getting distracted by other thoughts or activities.	1 2 3 4
I try hard to prevent other things from interfering with my efforts at dealing with this.	1 2 3 4

Restraint Coping

I force myself to wait for the right time to do something.	1 2 3 4
I hold off doing anything about it until the situation permits.	1 2 3 4
I make sure not to make matters worse by acting too soon.	1 2 3 4
I restrain myself from doing anything too quickly.	1 2 3 4

Seeking social support for instrumental reasons

I ask people who have had similar experiences what they did.	1 2 3 4
I try to get advice from someone about what to do.	1 2 3 4
I talk to someone to find out more about the situation.	1 2 3 4
I talk to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.	1 2 3 4

Seeking social support for emotional reasons

I talk to someone about how I feel.	1	2	3	4
I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives.	1	2	3	4
I discuss my feelings with someone.	1	2	3	4
I get sympathy and understanding from someone.	1	2	3	4

Positive reinterpretation and growth

I look for something good in what is happening.	1	2	3	4
I try to see it in a different light to make it seem more positive.	1	2	3	4
I learn something from the experience.	1	2	3	4
I try to grow as a person as a result of the experience.	1	2	3	4

Acceptance

I learn to live with it.	1	2	3	4
I accept that this has happened and that it can't be changed.	1	2	3	4
I get used to the idea that it happened.	1	2	3	4
I accept the reality of the fact that it happened.	1	2	3	4

Turning to religion

I seek God's help.	1	2	3	4
I put my trust in God.	1	2	3	4
I try to find comfort in my religion.	1	2	3	4
I pray more than usual.	1	2	3	4

Focus on and venting of emotions

I get upset and let my emotions out.	1	2	3	4
I let my feelings out.	1	2	3	4
I feel a lot of emotional distress and I find myself expressing those feelings a lot.	1	2	3	4
I get upset and am really aware of it.	1	2	3	4

Denial

I refuse to believe that it has happened.	1	2	3	4
I pretend that it hasn't really happened.	1	2	3	4
I act as though it hasn't even happened.	1	2	3	4
I say to myself 'this isn't real."	1	2	3	4

Behavioral disengagement

I give up the attempt to get what I want.	1	2	3	4
I just give up trying to reach my goal.	1	2	3	4
I admit to myself that I can't deal with it and quit trying.	1	2	3	4
I reduce the amount of effort I'm putting into solving the problem.	1	2	3	4

Mental disengagement

I turn to work or other substitute activities to take my mind off things.	1	2	3	4
I go to movies or watch TV to think about it less.	1	2	3	4
I daydream about other things than this.	1	2	3	4
I sleep more than usual.	1	2	3	4

Alcohol-drug disengagement

I drink alcohol or take drugs in order to think about it less.	1	2	3	4

VITA

KIMBERLY DIANE WARD

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: MOOD STATES OF FEMALE COLLIGIATE SOFTBALL PLAYERS

Major Field: Leisure Studies

Biographical:

Personal Data:

Born to Larry and Delores Thweatt in Escondido, CA on February 27, 1966
Current Resident of Stillwater, OK
E-mail kim.ward@okstate.edu

Education:

Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts, Palomar Community College, San Marcos, CA, 1993.

Bachelor of Arts in Leisure Studies, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, 1997.

Completed the Requirements of the Master Science in Leisure Studies in July, 2006.

Experience:

Assistant Women's Softball Coach, Oklahoma State University, 1996-2000.

Interim Associate Head Women's Softball Coach, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, 2000-2001.

Associate Head Women's Softball Coach, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, 2001 - Present

Professional Memberships:

National Fast Pitch Coaches Association, 1996-Present

Name: Kimberly Diane Ward Date of Degree: July, 2006

Institution: Oklahoma State University Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: MOOD STATES OF FEMALE COLLIGIATE SOFTBALL PLAYERS

Pages in Study: 87 Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Leisure Studies

Scope and Method of Study: The research assessed: a) negative and positive mood states; b) coping styles in every day life; c) differences in playing at home and away contests, and d) attribution style of female collegiate softball athletes. Subjects were recruited from four Midwest Universities with Division 1 level softball programs. There were 72 total participants ranging from freshman to senior school level status. The subjects completed four surveys, a mood assessment, coping assessment, attributional assessment and home, away, win and loss information. Data analysis included descriptive indices, multi-factor ANOVA, and t-test reliability analysis.

Findings and Conclusions: The findings of this study add to the existing knowledge that there is such thing as home advantage, that positive and negative moods do affect performance, and that all individuals attribute and cope with their successes and failures differently. Therefore, within the limitations of this study, it can be concluded that this information could be valuable in assessing athletes. Researchers as well as coaches may be able to use the information gathered in this study to learn what players attribute to their successes and failures. It can be used to learn about coping with success and failure and adversity. Positive and Negative moods can affect performance and the research suggests it is an important part of how the athletes approach competition. The study may also help to inform coaches concerning the importance of learning to understand their players at a different level beyond athleticism. It suggests that venue locations make for different mind set of play, and how wins and losses can be directly affected. This study could be very useful for future studies specifically concerning positive negative affect, attribution style, coping strategies and home advantage studies.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Christine Cashel