

## The Meaning of Enjoyment for Recreational Golfers: Insights for Enhancing Sport Enjoyment

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### Abstract

Despite the important role enjoyment plays in prolonging sport participation and enhancing quality of life, it is a construct that remains understudied in the literature. This inquiry made steps towards remedying this shortcoming. The purpose of the inquiry was twofold. First, to obtain a rich description of the meaning of golf enjoyment for recreational golfers and, in the process, identify the factors that underlied and undermined their golf enjoyment. Second, to consider the implications of these findings for tailoring mental training to maximize opportunities for experiencing enjoyment in sport. Seven older recreational golfers were interviewed regarding their golf enjoyment. For each participant, a rich description of the meaning of golf enjoyment was presented. A cross-case analysis was then conducted to identify the shared sources of enjoyment as well as the factors that undermined enjoyment. Recommendations for enhancing enjoyment are presented.

Since World War II, the discipline of psychology has focused on pathology and how people endure under conditions of adversity (Jackson, 2000; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Attention to wellness, prevention, and positive emotions has been sorely lacking. To some extent, the field of sport psychology has mirrored this trend (Farres, 2002; Jackson). Abundant research on anxiety, stress, and related topics exists; yet in sport psychology there has also been attention paid to positive experiences, albeit to a lesser extent. Nonetheless, Jackson voiced concern that “the growing trend toward clinical approaches within sport psychology

may reinforce a focus on problems and difficulties rather than optimisation” (p. 136). In the field of psychology, Seligman is being instrumental in the push towards a positive psychology (Jackson; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi). With my work on enjoyment I hope to mirror this trend in the field of sport psychology.

The study of enjoyment is important as it promises to improve quality of life and also plays an important role in prolonging sport involvement (Ebbeck, Gibbons, & Loken-Dahle, 1995; Frederick, Morrison, & Manning, 1996; Weiss & Ferrer-Caja, 2002;

Weiss, Kimmel, & Smith, 2001). When one considers the psychological and physical benefits associated with sport and exercise, the importance of remaining active and making “sport for life” becomes apparent. In addition, enjoyment has been found to be a factor in peak performance (Cohn, 1991). Peak performance has been defined as “an episode of superior functioning” and is considered to be a state “more productive, creative, or efficient than typical functioning” (Cohn, p. 1). Given the influential role of enjoyment in sport it seems appropriate to divert effort and attention towards understanding how we can maximise opportunities for experiencing enjoyment in sport. In order to do this, we must first ask “What is it about sport that makes it enjoyable?” Indeed, a number of researchers (e.g., Bakker, De Koning, Van Ingen Schenau, & De Groot, 1993; Boyd & Yin, 1996; Brustad, 1988; Gould, Medbery, & Tuffey, 2001; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991; Pinel, Enoka, Hodge, & McKenzie, 1999; Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel, & Simons, 1993; Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1989; Yoo & Kim, 2002) have addressed this question by examining individuals’ sources of sport enjoyment and determining which best predict enjoyment.

Research examining sources of enjoyment has indicated that youth sport participants and elite athletes from a variety of sports report similar sources of enjoyment (Bakker et al., 1993; Gould et al., 2001; Pinel et al., 1999; Scanlan et al., 1989, 1993; Wankel & Kreisel, 1985; Yoo & Kim, 2002). From the results of these studies it appears that athletes derive enjoyment from factors associated with the process of participating (e.g., expending effort, learning, mastery) as well as the outcome of participating (e.g., rewards, special events, affiliation). Scanlan et al. stated that these results are in contrast to the widely held idea they termed “The Pizza Parlour Phenomenon”. The Pizza Parlour

Phenomenon is “the notion that enjoyment is what occurs at the pizza parlour *after* the hard work and skill learning are over for the day, week, or season” (Scanlan et al., p. 282).

Orlick (1998) also investigated sources of enjoyment, or what he termed “highlight domains”. Orlick identified five highlight domains within which individuals may experience joy, namely human contact; nature; play, physical activity, and sport; personal growth or accomplishment; and sensual experiences. Orlick suggested that “life is full of extraordinary opportunities for embracing simple joys within ordinary experiences” (p. 4) and that it is necessary for individuals to look for highlights within all the domains in order to stay healthy, reduce stress, live joyfully, and add a sense of balance and perspective to life.

Another trend in enjoyment research has been to determine what factors best predict enjoyment. Common predictor variables that have been investigated are perceived competence (Boyd & Yin, 1996; Brustad, 1988; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986), motivational/goal orientation (Boyd & Yin; Brustad), self-esteem (Brustad; Ommundsen & Vaglum), effort and mastery (Scanlan et al., 1993), ability (Brustad), significant others (e.g., parents, coaches) (Brustad; Ommundsen & Vaglum; Scanlan & Lewthwaite), positive team interactions and support (Scanlan et al.), learned helplessness in sport (Boyd & Yin), age (Scanlan & Lewthwaite), and years of participation in sport (Boyd & Yin).

Of the studies reviewed that investigated the predictors of enjoyment, over two-thirds found perceived competence to be a predictor of sport enjoyment (see Table 1). Unfortunately, only a handful of studies (Ashford, Biddle, & Goudas, 1993; Boyd &

Yin, 1996; Brustad, 1988; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991) investigated the individual contribution each of the predictor variables made to explaining sport enjoyment variance. However, for two of these studies (Boyd & Yin; Ommundsen & Vaglum) perceived competence was found to be the single most important predictor of sport enjoyment. Moreover, high positive correlations between enjoyment and perceived competence have been found for both adults and children (Carroll & Loumidis, 2001; Frederick et al., 1996; Spray, 2000; Williams & Gill, 1995). In conclusion, it appears that perceived competence plays an important role in the onset of enjoyment for both adults and children.

These findings propound that by strengthening individuals' perceptions of their competence, increased enjoyment may ensue. As individuals' goal involvement, that is whether they are task- or ego-involved, is predicted to determine how they assess their competence (Nicholls, 1984, 1989, 1992), a consideration of achievement goal theory is warranted within the study of enjoyment. According to Nicholls' achievement goal theory, individuals who are task-involved are predicted to use self-referenced judgments of competence. For these individuals success is defined, and perceived competence strengthened, by improvement, learning, and task mastery, and they set their goals accordingly. Conversely, ego-involved individuals are predicted to use other-referenced judgments of competence. These individuals consider themselves successful, and therefore strengthen their perceptions of competence, when they demonstrate superior ability compared to others. However, if they do not win (as defined by objective outcome) in competitive situations, and are therefore unable to demonstrate superior ability, their perceived competence will be undermined (Nicholls).

Within this framework, it is apparent that individuals' goal involvement and the goals they set will play a role in strengthening or undermining their perceived competence. Based on implications from previous research, goal involvement is therefore likely to have an effect on enjoyment levels. Indeed, empirical research bears this prediction out. Research has revealed the existence of strong positive relationships between task involvement and positive affect, such as enjoyment, satisfaction, and intrinsic interest, and either no relationship or a negative relationship between ego involvement and positive affect (Boyd & Yin, 1996; Duda, Chi, Newton, Walling, & Catley, 1995; Duda, Fox, Biddle, & Armstrong, 1992; Gano-Overway, 2001; Goudas, Biddle, & Fox, 1994; Goudas, Biddle, Fox, & Underwood, 1995; Kohl, 2002; Roberts, Treasure, & Kavussanu, 1996; Vlachopoulos, Biddle, & Fox, 1996; Williams & Gill, 1995). In addition, negative affect such as anxiety, tension, pressure, and boredom has been found to be positively correlated with ego involvement and negatively correlated with task involvement (Duda et al., 1992, 1995; Hall & Kerr, 1997). However, Vlachopoulos et al. found that for ego-involved individuals, the higher their perceptions of competence, the more likely they were to experience positive affect.

Although there appears to be substantial support for the existence of a link between task involvement and enjoyment, there does not appear to be any research that has investigated whether enjoyment can be increased by strengthening task involvement. In fact, there are very few writings in the literature indicating how practitioners can help athletes increase enjoyment. Those that do exist stem from the work of Orlick and Pinel and are summarised below.

Orlick and colleagues (Orlick, 1996, 1998; St. Denis & Orlick, 1996) increased children's enjoyment by facilitating the development of positive perspectives through highlight training. Highlight training involves encouraging individuals to identify, record, and discuss their daily highlights (Orlick, 1996, 1998). Orlick (1996) described a highlight as "any simple pleasure, little treasure, joy, lift, positive feeling, meaningful experience, magic moment, or anything that has lifted the quality of the day for that person" (p. 18). Research has indicated that when individuals spend time thinking about and recording their highlights, they experience more enjoyment and have more positive self-perceptions (Orlick, 1998; St. Denis & Orlick). Enjoyment profiling (Pinel, 1999) is a similar technique that has been used as a means of increasing enjoyment with both youth and professional athletes (Pinel; Pinel et al., 1999). Although there is no empirical evidence to suggest the effectiveness of enjoyment profiling in enhancing enjoyment, its intuitive appeal is apparent. Enjoyment profiling is based on the concept of performance profiling (Butler & Hardy, 1992). In the first step of enjoyment profiling individuals brainstorm for sources of enjoyment in their sport. Next, they choose the sources that are most important to them and rate them as to their importance on a scale of 1-10. Of these important sources of enjoyment, individuals identify those that are under their control. In the last stages of the enjoyment profiling process, individuals choose two important sources of enjoyment that are under their control and identify specific strategies that will help them focus on these sources of enjoyment while they are participating in their sport. Similarly, other research-practitioners (e.g., Gould et al., 2001) have advocated identifying athletes' sources of enjoyment so coaches can build them into their coaching practices.

Despite the fact that many mental training practitioners (e.g., Anderson, Miles, Mahoney, & Robinson, 2002; Bull, 1991; Cox, 2002) have espoused that the aim of mental training is to enhance enjoyment (as well as performance), the role mental training could play in increasing enjoyment has received minimal attention in the literature and its effectiveness in this regard has never been examined. More research in this area is desperately needed. Specifically, we need to further our understanding of how mental training can be used to enhance enjoyment. Consequently, the purpose of this inquiry was twofold. First, to expand the youth and elite athlete-focused knowledge base of what makes sport enjoyable to include older recreational athletes by obtaining rich descriptions of the meaning of golf enjoyment for older recreational golfers. Second, to consider the implications of these findings for tailoring mental training to maximise the opportunities for experiencing enjoyment in sport.

The decision to focus this inquiry on recreational golfers arose in part because I was seeing so many disgruntled players in the clubhouse after a poor round of golf. A pursuit they engaged in for fun and recreation seemed to have incredible potential to immerse them into a bad mood and elicit relatively strong feelings of anger and frustration. For some, this negative affect endured throughout the day and many questioned why they persisted playing.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this inquiry was to identify the factors that underlied and undermined golf enjoyment for recreational golfers and provide practical suggestions for enhancing enjoyment based on these findings. The following research questions guided the inquiry:

1. What is the meaning of golf enjoyment for recreational golfers?
2. How can enjoyment be enhanced?

## Participants

Participants were seven recreational golfers (4 males, 3 females) who played golf at least twice a week on a regular basis. They were retired expatriates who spent their winters at La Manga Club, a resort on the southeast coast of Spain that boasts three golf courses. The participants varied in the number of years they had been playing golf (2-30 years), ability (handicap 19-36), and time spent practising (0-2 hours per week). All the participants were over the age of 45, the oldest was 73 (see Table 1). Pseudonyms were used throughout the report to preserve the anonymity of the participants.

## Procedure

This inquiry was qualitative in nature and conducted from a constructivist perspective. Each participant engaged in an in-depth semi-structured interview; the purpose of which was to develop an understanding of the meaning of golf enjoyment for each of the participants. The interviews were guided by an interview schedule and participants were asked to clarify and expand on responses that were unclear or ambiguous. Throughout the interviews I exercised caution so as not to lead the participants towards predetermined conclusions. When I felt as if all the questions had been fully answered and the participants had nothing more to add, the interviews were terminated. The interviews were audio-taped with the participants' permission and then transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were returned to the participants who were asked to read and amend them if they felt it would clarify or better represent their answers. The partici-

pants were also invited to expand their responses to any of the questions.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis was guided by Merriam (1998) and Bogdan and Biklen (1998). I read and reread the first interview transcript and wrote notes, comments, and observations in the margin with regards to interesting data that was relevant to developing an understanding of the meaning of golf enjoyment for that participant. While reading the data I began to develop a preliminary list of emergent categories into which I grouped the notes and comments. These categories were guided by the purpose of the inquiry, my knowledge and orientation, and the meanings made explicit by the participants (Merriam). The categories were constructed through the constant comparative method. A list of these categories was compiled and attached to the data. I then analysed the second interview. As I read the second transcript I kept the previously constructed list of categories in mind as I made notes, comments, and observations in the margin. The notes, comments, and observations from the second data set were then grouped into categories and a list of the categories compiled. The two lists were then compared and merged to create a master list. This process was repeated until all the data had been analysed.

The categories were then given names. Category names emerged from the participants, the literature, and/or my knowledge. Once I was satisfied with the categories, the data were assigned to the categories. Taking a clean copy of the data, I fractured the data into meaning units and assigned them to the relevant categories by writing the category code in the margin. Using Microsoft Word, I then created separate files for each category for each participant and cut and pasted the meaning units into the relevant category

thereby creating a file containing all the data for that category. For each participant I then linked the categories together to provide a rich description of his/her meaning of golf enjoyment. Direct quotations were used throughout the report in order to preserve the voice of the participants. A cross-case analysis was then conducted to identify the commonalities across participants. Based on this cross-case analysis, recommendations for how mental training may be used to enhance enjoyment were presented.

## Findings

### *Tom*

Tom portrayed his experience of enjoyment as “a feeling of well being, a good glow all over, inside”. Many sources of his golf enjoyment were related to his performance. He enjoyed playing well, the challenge of playing well consistently, and recognizing the improvements he made. However, his golf enjoyment also stemmed from factors relating to the environment, exercise, the social aspects of golf, and betting. Slow play, poor performance, and unfavourable environmental conditions diminished his enjoyment. These themes will be elaborated in the remainder of this section.

Simply put, Tom enjoyed playing well. He stated, “To me, enjoyment in golf is hitting a good shot”. It did not matter what type of shot it was – a tee shot, a fairway shot, a chip, or a putt – but he attested there “is a tremendous lot of satisfaction [when you] do the occasional perfect shot”. Tom described the satisfaction he felt when he played well: “You come off after having had a good score and [feel] ‘There’s life in the old dog yet. I can still do it. I’m not too old’. And that’s a very satisfied feeling. It motivates you”.

Tom kept a record of his golf scores and calculated his average score on each golf

course in La Manga. At the end of each year he compared the averages to those from the previous year: “If the scores are lower, or the average Stableford points are higher, then that’s very satisfying and I get a lot of enjoyment because I know, very slightly, I’m improving”. In addition, Tom revealed:

I’ve got a list of just about every golf course I’ve ever played on and the best score I ever achieved on that course... If I beat it, do better, then I’ll change it. That’s just a little bit of personal pleasure I get out of doing these things and try and make them better.

The challenge to hit the “perfect shot” or make an important putt also served to fuel Tom’s golf enjoyment. Indeed, the inherently challenging nature of golf was critical to Tom’s enjoyment of the game:

Most of us are capable of doing the perfect drive, the perfect putt, the great chip – chip it in the hole – and having done it, we know we can do it. Physically and mentally we’re capable of doing it but the problem is we can’t do it as often as the experts and this is why you have this challenge... I think what I’m saying is probably true of most golfers, they’re determined to do these perfect shots more often. It certainly is [true] for me, [I enjoy] the challenge.

Just as playing well served to increase Tom’s golf enjoyment, playing badly undermined it. Playing badly caused Tom to get angry and frustrated, especially if a poor shot was due to his carelessness or not taking enough time to prepare for the shot and compose himself.

Besides performance related sources of enjoyment Tom enjoyed the exercise inherent in golf and being outside in the fresh air. In

fact, regardless of whether he was playing golf or not, Tom enjoyed walking: “I think it’s very good for a person, especially someone my age, to get that fresh air and have exercise”. Tom particularly liked playing golf on a nice sunny day when it is “not too hot”, “not freezing cold”, and “not raining”.

Although Tom enjoyed playing golf in good company with friends, golf was not a social event for him. He noted, “I don’t like to talk a lot on the golf course. I like to think about the game”. Nonetheless, the occasional sidebet with his playing partners added to his enjoyment and made the game more interesting for him.

Besides playing badly and playing in bad weather, slow play and course maintenance were two factors that negatively impacted Tom’s golf enjoyment. Tom did not enjoy playing on temporary tees or temporary greens. He explained, “[With] temporary greens... it’s like putting over a ploughed field... You could hit a perfectly good putt and two inches from the hole it could turn at right angles. That sort of thing, it’s not golf”.

Neither did Tom like slow play. He described himself as an impatient golfer and became irritated and annoyed if he played with slow players or the flight in front was slow and held him up. Because slow play had a tendency to affect his performance it was a double blow for him with regards to his golf enjoyment.

### *Nancy*

Nancy’s golf enjoyment stemmed from a variety of sources. The main factors that underlied her golf enjoyment were the environment, exercise, performance, sensual experiences, and feelings of achievement. Conversely, playing poorly and/or in bad weather conditions, other players’ actions on

the course, slow play, and fatigue detracted from Nancy’s golf enjoyment.

The scenery and views afforded through playing golf were central to Nancy’s enjoyment of the game: “I enjoy the West Course particularly here because I enjoy the scenery of golf. The views are spectacular wherever you play... The senses are alert and appreciating the natural wonders of life”. Moreover, Nancy enjoyed golf the most when the course was “very lush and very green”.

Another critical environmental factor that affected Nancy’s enjoyment was the weather. She noted, “There would be no way that I would go out [and play golf] in the rain and cold and sleet and snow. That would be of no fun to me whatsoever. So, being here [in southern Spain] is wonderful”. Indeed, Nancy recounted a time when she pulled out of a competition because it was “cold and windy and awful”.

Nancy also enjoyed the exercise afforded through playing golf as it provided her with “physical well being and [a] sense of achievement”. The sense of achievement resultant from playing well was also a source of her golf enjoyment, whether it was hitting a good shot: “I enjoy hitting a good ball. There’s nothing like it. It really is a tremendous sense of achievement”; or achieving a good score overall:

I’m not out there to win prizes. I’m out there for me, to have a good time... And if I happen to win something one day, which I did, I mean, that was such a fantastic achievement... I mean, that was just wonderful... It wasn’t the winning, it was achieving my first ever 36 points.

Performance emerged repeatedly as an underlying factor of enjoyment for Nancy. Sometimes the joy came from hitting a su-

perb shot, other times it resulted from a feeling of having played well in general. Her enjoyment of hitting a good shot was further heightened when her senses were also stimulated: “I enjoy seeing that little ball going into the hole and the nice ‘clunk’. I enjoy hearing the correct ‘clunk’ or ‘ting’ when I hit a good shot”. Indeed, it transpired that performance played a pivotal role in Nancy’s golf enjoyment and involvement in golf: “I suppose if I’m playing well, it’s wonderful and I can’t wait to get out there again. And if I’m not playing well, my attitude is ‘Leave it alone. Forget about it’”. Nevertheless, even when Nancy was not playing well she noted, “I still quite enjoy it because I enjoy the walk and the views”.

The social aspects of golf were not a great allure to Nancy. Instead, she enjoyed playing alone:

I love playing golf on my own... You can talk to yourself. I can play at my own pace. I don’t have to listen to idle chatter and I’m confident that I’m not holding up the players behind,... I like to get on with it. In fact, I find it disruptive if people want to chat all the way round the course and I get a bit bored [with] people telling me where they had dinner last night, who they went out with. I’m not interested. I’m there to play golf. I want to hit the ball and get on with it.

For sure, slow play irritated Nancy and detracted from her golf enjoyment as it caused her to “feel under pressure” and “uptight”. Furthermore, players who do not take care of the course, by replacing divots and repairing pitch marks for example, nor abide by the rules of golf, also aggravated her.

### **Sam**

Without a doubt, Sam derived great pleasure from playing golf. Moreover, he enjoyed

having an interest in golf. When Sam was growing up in Wales sports outside rugby had no appeal to him, something that changed since he discovered golf:

Sport really in Wales consisted of rugby football and rugby football!... So all the other things that quite a lot of my friends used to play, such as tennis or whatever, never really interested me. I rather enjoy being interested in golf; and I am interested in it, it’s nothing that I have to force myself into being interested in. It’s a pastime that I thoroughly enjoy.

Indeed, Sam pronounced, “I very rarely come off the course very depressed. I do enjoy almost every round”. However, while we were talking about the meaning of enjoyment within the context of golf Sam commented, “I find it very difficult to be quite clear as to why or what constitutes enjoyment and what doesn’t”. Despite this, he was able to articulate the factors that both underlied and undermined his golf enjoyment, many of which appeared to be related to physical comforts. Sam portrayed how these factors impacted his enjoyment of the game: “I think, really, I’m very much a hedonist. I think it’s the physical things, it really is. If I’m wet, if I’m miserable, if I’m too cold, if it’s too early for me – I’m not enjoying myself”.

Sam derived enjoyment from the scenery on the golf course: “From an enjoyment point of view I enjoy dramatic courses”; and being outdoors: “One of the things that I enjoy is the very basic business of being outside in the open air for four-and-a-half or five hours”. Sam also enjoyed the walk and carrying his golf bag rather than using a trolley.

Although Sam highlighted he did not play golf for social reasons, he did derive enjoyment from the social aspects of golf; for



example, the opportunity to meet new people:

It's the social aspect of meeting people with a very different mind-set or approach to my own. Because an awful lot of them, very obviously, are sport oriented and I never really was... And obviously there are loads of different people here [at La Manga], different personalities, different backgrounds, different interests.

Playing in good company was another crucial element in Sam's golf enjoyment. Not only did he "enjoy the company" of his playing partners, but "good company" defined the meaning of enjoyment within the context of golf for Sam. He also enjoyed playing with his family, especially his wife. He described why he thought this was the case:

[Golf] is something that my wife and I do together. I find that enjoyable... It isn't the companionship aspect, it's more that it's something that we have not done before,... something we've only been doing for the last two years. That in itself is very enjoyable. [Also], I don't feel very competitive towards my wife.

Playing well was a further source of Sam's golf enjoyment. When he plays a good shot he related: "I don't quite jump up and down, but mentally I do". This feeling was possibly exaggerated when Sam played consistently well over a few holes. Sam indicated that, for him, the meaning of enjoyment is "playing two or three holes consistently". He went on to describe an occasion where he was really delighted with his play:

We were playing the North Course and the 18<sup>th</sup> hole and I had a good-ish drive and an absolutely excellent second shot.

So I had two good shots one after the other. I was very happy with that... And if truth be told, as I was walking over the bridge there were some people that I knew who had seen the shot. So I was pleased with that as well, to be honest.

Sam had a benign tremor that caused him to shake, especially his hands. It appeared that the satisfaction Sam felt when he played well was particularly heightened because of the additional challenge his tremor presented. Indeed, the inherent challenge of golf was integral to Sam's golf enjoyment:

I enjoy the sport aspect of the hitting of the stationary ball. I mean, I know from other games like billiards and snooker how difficult that is. There's a greater ease, it seems to me, in hitting a moving ball than a stationary ball... I do find [it] difficult [to hit a stationary ball], and it is the challenge I suppose.

Although Sam highlighted that part of his golf enjoyment came from the challenge associated with "the sport aspect of the hitting of the stationary ball", it was not so much the "physical whacking" of the ball he enjoyed as what happened to the ball after it had been struck that he found enjoyable:

For me it has to be the end product, it's the way the ball goes. I do find it aesthetically a very pleasing sight when the ball rises after a certain trajectory and goes up in the air and then seems to hang in the air forever and then comes down.

It was apparent that Sam enjoyed golf for a number of reasons. However, certain things detracted from his enjoyment. One of these factors was poor performance. Sam tended to become resigned and angry when he was not playing well, which made golf less enjoyable for him. Nor did he enjoy having to

play on wet and cold days. The only other aspect of golf that lessened Sam's enjoyment was certain behaviours of his playing partners:

There are occasions when you're playing with people who... talk an awful lot about what they have to do and what they're not going to do and that does annoy me. That does irritate me, analysing every shot. [It's] that their ambitions, or their efforts to improve their game, are impinging on me.

Other players' comments towards his game also sometimes impacted Sam's enjoyment levels. He reported getting annoyed when others said things like, "That was almost a good shot' . . . Not because people are being patronising, but they're being too kind and that I don't think is too enjoyable".

### *Lee*

Lee enjoyed golf for a number of diverse reasons. He described golf as a "melange of so many attractions", explaining:

It's a total package of things that we derive pleasure from. Some physical, some mental, some emotional, [and some] spiritual. It's because golf is on so many different levels like that, that makes it special... [Golf is] mentally, physically, [and] emotionally so demanding and satisfying.

Indeed, these challenges were quite central to Lee's enjoyment of the game:

I think we enjoy being challenged as a basic instinct,... I think we all like to be tested. We all like to be doing something stimulating and interesting... [and golf is] very, very challenging... I think, really, at any level, at any age, we all are convinced we can improve our personal

performance and the anticipation of doing that is quite central to my motivation for playing [golf].

By viewing golf as a positive challenge, Lee enjoyed the competitive and demanding aspects of the sport. The sense of achievement that is felt when the challenge has been met and one performs well, proved to be a great source of enjoyment for Lee:

Say you do well on a difficult hole, you tend to remember that. And some clubs, as you well know, are more difficult to play with than others; one tends to remember those, when you've done particularly well... Talking about it like this, I mean, it sounds a bit dumb, but these are the kinds of thing that make one feel, 'That was all rather good'. There's nothing on a more intellectual or philosophical level.

Evidently, playing well was a significant source of enjoyment for Lee and he summarised this quite succinctly: "If I've done well I feel good. If I've done badly I don't feel good".

Lee's enjoyment of golf was not limited to sources related to his performance. As highlighted above, Lee derived enjoyment from many different aspects of golf, one of which related to the social component. Lee enjoyed meeting interesting people and playing in good company. A sub-theme of the social sources of enjoyment that emerged for Lee was playing with family:

The most enjoyable golf I've played is when we had our two sons here... The older one and I went and played 9 holes together and that was brilliant... It was a joy to watch him as his game has improved so much. When you play with the

family that's wonderful, to play with your own kids.

Although Lee delighted in describing this round with his son, he hastened to point out that the enjoyment of playing with his family did not always extend to playing with his wife. He revealed, "We don't find that conducive to good marital relations".

The physical activity involved in golf emerged as another source of enjoyment for Lee: "The fact that this is also a physical thing adds to the appeal;... it is good to do something physical. When I was your age, we expected people my age now to be dead".

In sum, when asked to describe the ideal conditions in which to play golf Lee responded:

Playing with people who are roughly contemporaries, but better than I am because we all get charged up when playing with better players;... on a pleasant day; probably here [in La Manga]; no pressure, nobody in front holding us up, nobody behind breathing down our necks; and playing well, consistently at all times, beating the others and coming in with 40 points.

The only unenjoyable aspect of golf that Lee identified was playing badly. However, it was more than the simple act of hitting a bad shot that detracted from Lee's enjoyment of the game:

At the age that I am we all accomplish certain things in our lives. We get used to winning and being good at stuff that we take on board. It's been totally frustrating to be playing golf and not playing well. You think 'Oh God,... am I over the hill? How much time do I have left

to get better at this?' So it does get quite personal.

### *Laura*

A number of different factors underlied Laura's golf enjoyment, yet it was environmental factors and the social aspects of golf that emerged as the more dominant themes. Laura could be described as a "people person". She repeatedly commented on how much she "enjoy[s] being in the company of other people" when she is playing golf and she also stressed the importance of being "able to have a laugh and a giggle" with the people she is playing with. Indeed, the opportunity afforded her through golf to meet new people was an underlying component of her golf enjoyment. She revealed, "Being by myself,... it's a big benefit to be here [in La Manga] and be able to join in a game of golf in the day time and the social aspects in the evening".

However, Laura's golf enjoyment was grounded in more than simply being in the company of others. Laura described how her golf enjoyment could be heightened or diminished depending on who her playing partners were:

You must get on with people. If you have any sort of... bad feeling;... when you don't like somebody and you think, 'Oh, they're not a nice person',... it's very difficult to enjoy the game. I want to be comfortable with the people [I am playing with]... I had a social round, yesterday with friends,... nice people, and that makes a good round of golf.

Aside from the enjoyment the social aspects of golf offered Laura, being outdoors, experiencing the scenery, and playing in good weather were also key factors underlying Laura's enjoyment of golf. Laura left no doubt about her love for the outdoors:

If I can be outdoors, I'm outdoors... I like to be in lovely surroundings [and] that's what you get when you play golf generally... I enjoy the nature, the countryside. When I'm on the West Course sometimes I feel like that's being in heaven, because there are times... when there are not many people and you think you have your own private golf course. Then automatically, when you feel that way, everything falls into place – you play well, you get physical exercise.

Without a doubt, “having gentle exercise while you go round, to keep well” added to the meaning of Laura's golf enjoyment.

Playing well also contributed to Laura's golf enjoyment. Indeed, she encapsulated the meaning of enjoyment simply as “being able to play well”. She went on to describe how she experienced this enjoyment:

Well, you have a good shot – maybe in the long game, in the short game, or you have a super putt, or a super chip – and you just have got like a light happy feeling coming inside yourself... You think ‘Yippee! Brilliant! I've done something! Why can't I do it all the time?’

Not only did Laura's own good performance add to her enjoyment of the game, but Laura also iterated that she found it “very enjoyable seeing somebody else playing well”. Despite the enjoyment Laura obviously derived from golf, she found it difficult to portray the depth of her golf enjoyment: “I can't say. I don't know how to describe it... I would give it an 8 out of 10”.

Aside from instances when Laura did not feel comfortable with her playing partners, she was unable to identify any factors that undermined her golfing enjoyment. She noted, “There are none for me really, as long

as I'm playing reasonably and it's not too distracting with outside noises, I enjoy the game”. However, lack of organization on the first tee prior to the start of the game was a source of aggravation for her:

It's frustrating when people don't turn up for their tee times... [If] you have to wait... before you tee off I find that very frustrating, especially when it's always going back and forwards. It's not like [the marshals say,] ‘Oh, Laura, you are playing now with these people’,... they change their minds.

### *Phil*

Phil struggled to define the concept of enjoyment to his satisfaction. He philosophised over the meaning and experience of enjoyment and what he believed determined whether something was enjoyable. He arrived at what seemed to be the most satisfactory explanation for him through considering the concept of friendship:

I struggled to define friendship the other day. The Americans use the term very freely, they don't really mean friendship by my yardstick. But even I found it hard to define, anymore than I could define enjoyment really. To me it's thinking about friends, however distant, and it's a sort of inward smile, if you like. Reflecting about them you get some warmth of an inward smile. With enjoyment it's not so different... But what is that that makes you say ‘I enjoyed that’? It's almost incapable of definition;... I'm not sure I can define it, the feeling of enjoyment.

Nonetheless, Phil was able to articulate the factors that underlied and undermined his golf enjoyment.

Phil's golf enjoyment was strongly related to his performance. Specifically, Phil derived pleasure and satisfaction from hitting the ball a long way. Reflecting on why he found this pleasurable he noted, "I think partly because it's not that frequent that it becomes ordinary. It's something exceptional. Something rather nice that you have done that comes off. Something rather good". Another performance related source of golf enjoyment for Phil was hitting a good shot where "it gets almost precisely where you aimed for and intended it to be, and that's not easy. And then you get a succession of those and it adds to your enjoyment". Phil's enjoyment was further heightened with appreciation for how difficult the game of golf is. Indeed, feelings of achievement were an important source of Phil's golf enjoyment:

Enjoyment is that I have done things that I have wanted to do as well as I would like them to be done. When it was climbing it was sort of 'conquering', [whether it was a] fear of heights or maybe feeling faint, or a particular rock face... [I derive enjoyment from achieving] something that I didn't think I could do or trying something that I thought was difficult. There was one difficult situation where on the North [Course] I was in the barranca<sup>1</sup> with some stones and to get to the green I had to get a lot of lift as there were trees in the way. And it was one of the rare things where everything went absolutely right. I missed the stones, I shot the ball high from in the barranca, out the barranca, over the trees, and it landed by the pin.

Recognition of his improvement and the learning experience in golf also served to enhance Phil's golfing enjoyment, especially if it was something that he consciously worked towards improving:

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<sup>1</sup> *Barranca* is the Spanish term for ravine

I think there is some satisfaction that's more worked for, where with some effort results are better... If I concentrate on [one thing, and] there's improvement in one area by a little more diligence and careful thought then that's nice too. I think, 'Ah, I did that, you know two weeks ago I was nowhere near'.

Although task oriented, and focused on his own performance, winning in a competitive situation amplified Phil's enjoyment. He remarked, "If you happen to be winning as well then that's an extra, that's a nice thing". When playing in a team event Phil's enjoyment was heightened when he was able to make a contribution to his team:

If it's a team thing, like a Thursday [Owners' Scramble, and] I've made a good contribution to the team effort then that matters too... Some Thursdays, when we're in a bit of difficulty, I can sometimes produce something out of the hat, which helps... That's a plus, in nice company, when I can make a contribution.

Besides performance related factors, Phil also derived his golfing enjoyment from being outside, the physical activity associated with walking round the course, and the social aspects of the game. Throughout his life, Phil had always enjoyed being outdoors. Although he could not pinpoint what is was about the outdoors he enjoyed so much, he reported:

I certainly get more pleasure from outdoor life than being indoors... I've [always] been an outdoorsman, whether it's been bird watching or sailing or being on the sports field. I'm not sure why. All I know is that is what I've wanted to do – spend time on farms or game reserves in Africa. Maybe there's much more going

on there than indoors [where] we have created much of the structures [and] it's our own input and not so much input from other naturally occurring things. There is a lot of interest there in the big wide world; we can find something new all the time.

Besides providing Phil with the opportunity to be outdoors, golf also provided him with “an excuse for a good walk”. He explained:

I can't just go and exercise normally without having some motive: hitting a silly little ball around or getting to the top of that hill to see some views I haven't explored before... [Golf] provides a motive, however trivial... It gives some sort of rationale for being out walking. Otherwise you'd be walking back and forth and you'd start to think how daft this is. But if you take the ball with you it's less crazy!

Phil attested, “Playing with people you enjoy being with is also significant [to golfing enjoyment]”. Phil and his wife derived a lot of enjoyment from playing with each other and he enjoyed playing in good company in general. Furthermore, when his playing partners played well, especially if they were friends or regular competitors, it added to his golfing enjoyment.

Although Phil derived his golfing enjoyment from a number of different sources, two factors undermined his enjoyment: poor performance and slow play. He noted, “I'm not a perfectionist, I settled for 98% a long time ago, but I think it's when [my performance] falls short of what I'm capable of then it's frustrating, irritating, and not very satisfying”. Phil expanded:

If the shots are going well I'm pretty happy walking round [the course]. If I

have a bad shot I can usually put that by, [but] if I get a second bad shot or a third bad shot then I start to think about that, which I shouldn't. I should put it aside and start afresh. But it's part of me. I don't enjoy it. I feel frustrated [and] I feel I'm being rather stupid and I don't like being stupid. So that's part of it and that detracts from the enjoyment.

Playing badly had an overt effect on Phil's demeanour; a change his wife recognized even when she was not playing in the same group as him.

Slow play was another source of frustration for Phil. Not only did he not enjoy having to wait with nothing to do between shots, but the hold-ups also broke his rhythm, which had a negative impact on his performance:

I need involvement and active sport... There are times on the West [course] when you can be hanging around the tee for 20 minutes. So having got mobile and the stroke has become reasonably fluid, you start from scratch again,... [which] is not the way I'm going to play the best golf.

### *Annika*

Annika derived her golf enjoyment from a number of diverse sources, including opportunities for personal development, social factors, exercise, the environment, the privilege of being able to play golf, care for personal appearance, and her performance.

Golf was more than just a physical sport for Annika. In the three to five months preceding the interview she had come to value the more intellectual and stimulating aspects of the game. Annika viewed golf as an activity with multiple dimensions and something “deeper” than merely hitting a ball around a course. As such, she saw golf as a vehicle

for personal development and growth. Certainly it was her appreciation of these different levels that fuelled her golf enjoyment: “People should see in golf not only the sporting aspects, but also the mental dimensions. Working both body and muscles as well as mental and meditative goals will give you more fulfilment for the time you spend in golf”. In fact, given her lifelong concern for personal growth and her desire to “try to give the situations in life depth, [whether] it be a social engagement or to improve personal discipline etc”, it is not surprising that she transferred this attitude to her golf game. Indeed, part of her enjoyment of golf came from the personal responsibility she felt for her self-development and her quest to expand her knowledge:

[The enjoyment comes from] the responsibility to bring me on a higher level of thinking and feeling and doing things, not only to do them without any respect. That I think is important. You can combine [golf] with a lot of feelings, with aesthetic things. You can combine it with spirituality. There are such a lot of things and I know only so much. There may be a lot more and it’s very interesting to bring it into discussion... I am very interested... in people who are thinking like this.

Indeed, Annika professed that this social discourse and the opportunities that arise in golf “to take part in the life of another person and in the way these men or women... play, make you more rich”. In fact, she likened the experience to reading books by different authors.

A second aspect of golf that Annika enjoyed was that it is a game that provokes “discussion with yourself” and in which no one can be blamed save yourself. Annika explained:

You have discussion with yourself because golf is not a sport where you can say, ‘My partner, he did not hit the ball in this way. He did everything wrong. He was not on my level’. With golf, if you make a mistake, if you miss a point, or something else, it’s you, only you, and that’s very interesting. Because not every day’s the same, your condition and your co-ordination are different. If the moon is full it’s another day. All these influences.

Due to the nature of golf there are plenty of opportunities to set goals; a characteristic that greatly appealed to Annika as it allowed her to plan and monitor her personal development:

[Goals provide] a clear perspective in an area of your life within which you can encourage yourself every day or every week, however you want it, to go [forward]. And you have an interest which gives you the feeling that you can work on it and you can create something with you... Besides, it’s not only fun, it’s also a thing you have to do; you should always work on your personal development.

The social aspects of golf also made an important contribution to Annika’s golf enjoyment. Being in contact with other people was central to her enjoyment. She attested, “It’s nice to have people around you, it gives you also good feelings [when you’re] close to friends”. Meeting new people and developing friendships were also vital elements of enjoyable golf for Annika:

The social thing is very important, I didn’t believe it before, but in golf you are always with people – acquaintances, friends, and people you don’t know, but you always find a way to join them.

That, for me, is very important because I'm very interested in contact... I think also you can find friendship, which, for me, is very important.

Furthermore, social contact with individuals from diverse countries provided Annika the opportunity to speak different languages thereby further developing her language skills and contributing to her personal development.

Perhaps related to the importance Annika placed on the social aspects of golf, it became apparent that interaction with her playing partners during the round was critical to her golfing enjoyment:

You should be sure that the other players are interested in your game as well as in their own. That's important. That's a social and psychological point... I'm not interested to play with people who are only concerned with their thing and their ball and their movement and they don't react to whatever you say... For me, the atmosphere between people is one of the main things in my life.

Annika's golfing enjoyment was heightened when her playing partners were able to create a relaxed, positive, and warm friendly atmosphere in the flight and provide encouragement.

Besides enjoying the physical activity inherent in golf, Annika also enjoyed the resultant health benefits from this exercise. She had noticed her physical condition had improved since she started playing, which in turn contributed to a sense of well-being and satisfaction:

I think it's nice to go, to move, not to sit too long, to do it for your blood. It's like a motor for your circulation and that

gives me a good feeling. If I walk such a long time and my condition is well, and afterwards, when I lay down for half an hour I feel a little bit tired but in a very good mental feeling, I think, 'I've done a lot. I feel well'. It's nice.

The environment was also a source of Annika's golf enjoyment, both in terms of weather (Annika enjoyed the sunshine and "hated" the wind) and the scenery:

I look around at the animals I see and the palms. And I enjoy the attitudes of the animals. There are some small black birds and they don't fly away, they stay. These things. I look to the nature and to the green and I take the atmosphere and circumstances around me.

Annika appreciated being able to live in such a beautiful location and felt privileged she was able to play golf:

It's kind of special. It gives me always a feeling of happiness, to have the freedom to do it, to be free and able to have the time to spend on [golf]. And I think it's a kind of privilege to have. It makes me happy. I'm happy to stay here and this happiness I don't forget. It's every day I say it once or twice. And when I stand on the high level [of the tee] and look over the barranca I'm happy to be here.

Annika's performance affected her golf enjoyment. Playing well made golf more enjoyable for her. However, a poor performance would not only detract from her golfing enjoyment during the round, but could also affect her feelings once the round was finished. She recounted a recent round:

One day I was so bad. [I was] disappointed about my golf and I thought I



never will bring it to a better position. And at first I was very angry and tears came. It takes me the whole evening to find my self-confidence and I didn't find it this evening. It was totally confusing for me that I could be so disturbed from this golf. And nothing helped me, saying 'It's only a game', no.

Annika described one last source of her golf enjoyment: "One of the important things is to look trendy! Which trousers, which shirt to look nice? And to have pleasure with these things too".

### **Discussion and Recommendations**

The preceding descriptions of the participants' meanings of golf enjoyment revealed the unique ways these individuals derived enjoyment from golf, in addition to providing an understanding of the factors that detracted from their golf enjoyment. Despite the apparent differences between participants, a number of commonalities existed. Rather than presenting these common themes with the individual findings I have chosen to present them as part of the discussion and use them as a platform for considering how practitioners can tailor mental training to help athletes derive greater enjoyment from their sport. The recommendations that resulted are presented under four main headings: Performance and enjoyment; Personal development and enjoyment; Non-performance factors and enjoyment; and Balanced attitude and enjoyment.

### **Performance and Enjoyment**

All seven participants derived enjoyment from performing well on the golf course. Notably, only one participant reported that getting a good score at the end of his round was a source of his golf enjoyment. Five of the remaining participants reported that it was the act of hitting a good shot that they found enjoyable and three defined enjoy-

ment as hitting a succession of good shots or playing consistently throughout the round. One participant enjoyed being able to contribute to his team's score when playing well in team events. Three of the participants mentioned winning as a source of enjoyment, though at least one noted that this was an added bonus to performing well. Perhaps not surprisingly given the above findings, six of the participants noted that playing badly undermined their golf enjoyment.

Given the link between performance and enjoyment it seems important that mental training practitioners continue to assist athletes in the development of the necessary mental skills to enhance performance in their pursuit of increasing enjoyment. The use of a multi-modal approach to such training has been advocated by many research-practitioners (e.g., Stodel, 2004; Taylor, 1995). Moreover, by using highlight training (Orlick, 1996, 1998) athletes can be encouraged to reflect on their performance and focus on what they did well. By encouraging athletes to focus on the things that went well and forget about the low points of their performance, they are more likely to come away with positive perceptions of how well they did.

Furthermore, by facilitating the development of athletes' mental skills so the athletes have a sense of control over their performance, practitioners may be able to further increase sport enjoyment. Stodel (2004) found that after 15 weeks of mental training participants enjoyed golf more because they had developed a sense of control over their golf performance. In short, they commented that they had learned skills that, when applied, allowed them to play better golf. Before the training many of the participants were unaware that they could learn to control their performance and that it was possible to develop skills that would enable them to focus

or relax more effectively and therefore facilitate enhanced performance. Certainly there appears to be a necessity for practitioners to educate in this regard.

In order to increase enjoyment, it appears worthwhile for practitioners to help individuals develop skills and approaches that will allow them to develop a sense of control over their performance. One such approach is the preshot or preperformance routine (Singer, 2002; Wrisberg & Pein, 1992). Lidor and Singer (2003) noted “by developing a personalised and meaningful routine, the athlete feels more in control over what he or she is about to do and, therefore, the performance outcome” (p. 71). Practitioners should help athletes develop a routine that helps them attain a confident, focused, and optimally aroused state prior to, and during, skill execution (Cox, 2002; Lidor & Singer). For guidelines for developing preshot routines see Cohn (1994); Cohn and Winters (1995); and Lidor and Singer. In addition, simple arousal and attentional control techniques used outside the context of a routine, such as deep breathing and self-talk, may also be beneficial in helping golfers obtain a sense of control (Stodel, 2004).

A further suggestion for cultivating a sense of control in athletes emanates from research in the area of flow; a concept often likened to enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Dattilo, Kleiber, & Williams, 1998; Kimiecik & Harris, 1996; Kimiecik & Jackson, 2002; Stevens, Moget, De Greef, Lemmink, & Rispens, 2000). Flow has been described as “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it” (Csikszentmihalyi, p. 4). The central component of flow is the “challenge-skill balance” (Csikszentmihalyi; Jackson, 2000; Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi,

1999). That is, the individual must have the necessary skills to meet the demands of the task for flow to occur. If the challenge of the task is greater than the individual’s skill level then there is little chance he or she will feel in control and therefore will not experience flow. Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi argued that in order to gain control, and have a chance of experiencing flow, individuals need to define the challenge in terms of something that is realistic. Consequently, helping athletes set realistic goals that are within their control may help them develop a sense of control over their performance. Indeed, Gilbourne and Taylor (1998) found that goal setting can empower injured athletes “with skills that . . . create an enhanced sense of control” (p. 124).

### **Personal Development and Enjoyment**

Six participants reported that factors relating to their personal development on the golf course contributed to their golf enjoyment. All six derived enjoyment from feelings of achievement on the course and three noted, more specifically, that their enjoyment came from recognition of improvement. One individual also believed that golf led to personal growth and this was a source of her enjoyment of the game. These findings support those in the extant literature. Feelings of improvement and mastery have been linked to enjoyment in the past, both as sources and predictors of enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Gould et al., 2001; Orlick, 1998; Scanlan et al., 1989, 1993). The finding that improvement is a source of enjoyment suggests that in order to enhance enjoyment practitioners should help athletes plan for improvement, develop the mental skills necessary for improvement, and focus on the improvements they make. Approaches practitioners can take within these three areas will be delineated in the remainder of this section.

In order to plan for improvement athletes should have an understanding of their current skill level and their desired skill level. Practitioners have used both objective and subjective assessment tools to solicit such information. Several experienced practitioners have shied away from psychometric testing and instead have emphasised interviewing, observation, and self-evaluation tools as key elements in identifying athletes' needs and their strengths and weaknesses (Halliwell, Orlick, Ravizza, & Rotella, 2003). One such tool, performance profiling (Butler & Hardy, 1992), is growing in popularity with practitioners, as it actively involves the athlete in the assessment process (Farres & Stodel, 2003; Weinberg & Williams, 2001).

Once an athlete's strengths and weaknesses have been identified, goals can be set to plan for improvement. As the athletes engage in the process of developing their skills they should be encouraged to regularly evaluate their progress. Orlick (2000) noted that ongoing learning centres on reflecting on what went well during a performance, why it went well, and what can be improved; drawing out lessons from each performance and then acting on these lessons; and assessing how important factors, such as focus and commitment, affect performance. Evaluation records, such as those used by Orlick (1986, 1998) and Stodel (2004) may be developed to help the athlete with this process.

The fact that improvement emerged as a source of enjoyment in this inquiry, as well as in other research, suggests it is important that practitioners facilitate the individual's development of the necessary mental skills for improvement. Indeed, this is the primary aim of mental training and its effectiveness in enhancing performance is well documented in the literature (e.g., Perkos, Theodorakis, & Chroni, 2002; Rogerson &

Hrycaiko, 2002; Terry, Mayer, & Howe, 1998; Thelwell & Greenlees, 2001).

Moreover, the finding that improvement is an important contributor to enjoyment underscores the importance of focusing on learning and improving rather than on how well one is doing in comparison to others. According to achievement goal theory (Nicholls, 1984, 1989, 1992), fostering a task involvement will encourage individuals to focus on their own improvements rather than make normative comparisons. Whether an individual is task or ego involved in any given achievement situation is dependent on his or her dispositional goal orientation and his or her perception of the motivational climate (Duda et al., 1995; Kavussanu & Roberts, 1996; Roberts, 2001). The question of whether dispositional or situational factors play the more important role in shaping individuals' goal involvement remains to be answered. However, preliminary findings suggest that affective responses are more heavily influenced by situational factors, whereas cognitive and behavioural responses are more influenced by individual factors (Newton & Duda, 1999; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2000; Seifriz, Duda, & Chi, 1992). These findings imply practitioners should intervene at both levels, but especially at the situational level in the case of maximising enjoyment.

Consultants are likely to maximise their effectiveness in strengthening task involvement if they take an interactionist approach. By teaching significant others in the environment how to foster a mastery oriented climate, and helping athletes strengthen their task orientation, the quality and frequency of positive sport experiences may be augmented. Unfortunately, unless the practitioner is also the coach they might find it difficult to impact the motivational climate and will have more chance of impacting the in-

dividual's dispositional goal orientation. By targeting interventions at the individual level it may be possible to strengthen dispositions so they override conflicting cues in the environment. Practitioners should assist athletes in goal setting, establishing practice sessions, evaluating their performance, and taking control over their learning (Duda & Treasure, 2001). Moreover, practitioners must make an effort to work in a task involving manner during all their interactions with athletes. What practitioners say and do, how they reward the individuals they work with, and their performance expectations all convey their values to the athlete (i.e., whether they value winning or improving).

### **Non-Performance Factors and Enjoyment**

The participants also derived enjoyment from sources that were neither related to their golf performance nor their personal development. These sources can be organized into the following four categories: social, environmental, exercise, and sensual experiences. The social aspects of golf cultivated the participants' golf enjoyment in a number of ways. Six of the participants enjoyed playing in good company, while the remaining participant indicated that she enjoyed playing alone. Three of the participants simply enjoyed playing with their family, while a further two enjoyed being in contact with other people on the course. Four of the participants enjoyed the opportunity golf afforded them to meet people. Playing with better golfers was a source of enjoyment for two of the golfers and three noted that they particularly enjoyed golf when their playing partners were playing well. Lastly, one participant reported that she enjoyed being involved in her playing partners' game.

Not only did the social aspects of golf underlie all seven participants' golf enjoyment,

so did the exercise inherent in golf. All the participants reported that they enjoyed the physical activity associated with playing golf and three of them talked about feeling healthy as a result of playing golf and/or mentioned that it gave them a sense of well being. A less common (noted by only two of the participants), but no less important source of enjoyment related to the sensual experiences golf provides. For example, the sound of a good shot or the ball falling into the hole.

Factors relating to the environment also emerged as sources of the participants' enjoyment. The most commonly cited source of enjoyment regarding the environment was playing in good weather; all the participants except one talked of this. In addition, each of four participants derived enjoyment from being outdoors and the scenery and views afforded from being on the golf course. Lastly, two participants emphasized that the condition the course was in could impact their golf enjoyment.

As practitioners, we want to encourage athletes to focus on these other sources of enjoyment inherent in their sports besides their performance. An appreciation of the non-performance sources of enjoyment is especially important when the athlete is not performing well. Focusing on something you are not doing well is not enjoyable. In the case of golf, rather than focusing on mistakes and the negative emotions associated with them, we need to teach golfers to switch their attention to such things as the scenery, the company of their playing partners, or some other source of enjoyment. As a result, they will be less likely to maintain a negative frame of mind for the round, which will make the game more enjoyable for them.

The key thing as a practitioner is to help athletes develop strategies that will help them derive enjoyment from all sources of sport enjoyment. Pinel (1999) suggested using enjoyment profiling as a framework within which to do this. Within the context of golf, Stodel (2004) used the concept of the ‘circle’ (See “The Circle of Focus in Golf” in this Issue of the Journal of Excellence). The ‘circle’ is designed to help golfers vary their focus while playing so they are able to focus appropriately on their upcoming shot during the preparation and execution phase and then switch their focus away from their performance between shots. Stodel reported that golfers found that by turning their attention away from golf in-between shots they had more time to appreciate other sources of enjoyment. Furthermore, the participants felt more comfortable enjoying these other elements of golf as they knew they had developed a new tool (i.e., the ‘circle’) that would help them return their focus to golf when necessary.

An idea similar to the ‘circle’ may be applied to tennis. Performance in tennis, similar to golf, is interrupted by periods of relative inactivity between points and games. At these times it is important that the players do not focus on how well or how poorly they are playing. As with golf, these periods of downtime provide the perfect opportunity for tennis players to focus on elements of tennis they enjoy that are not related to their performance. For example, the smell of new tennis balls, the warmth coming off the court on a summer’s day, the feeling of exerting oneself, and the sounds of the birds. Practitioners can help tennis players develop a cue to switch their focus away from their performance once the point is over and then switch it back onto the game in time to prepare for the next point. Obviously time between performance episodes in tennis is

significantly less than that in golf, but this type of strategy may still be effective.

More often, sports require continuous performance. Consider distance running, cycling, and cross-country skiing. Typically there are no breaks in performance in these sports. However, they place little attentional demands on the participants so provide ample opportunities for the individual to appreciate diverse sources of enjoyment. Setting a watch to ‘beep’ every few minutes can serve as a cue for these athletes to look for highlights in what they are doing and help them focus on positive aspects of their workout. Alternatively, they could search for highlights every kilometre they run, ride, or ski.

### **Balanced Attitude and Enjoyment**

Although the participants greatly enjoyed golf and derived this enjoyment from diverse sources, a number of factors undermined the participants’ golf enjoyment. All but one of the participants indicated that playing badly took away from their enjoyment of the game. In addition, three of the participants reported that slow play made their golf less enjoyable. Moreover, despite the fact that all except one of the participants cited social factors as contributing elements to their golf enjoyment, four described instances where their playing partners undermined their enjoyment of the game. Similarly, despite the fact that all the participants derived their enjoyment from sources related to the environment, four of them also reported that aspects of the environment, such as the weather, the course conditions, and the time of day they were playing, could make golf less enjoyable.

The majority of these factors are out of the golfers’ control. Golfers cannot control the slow play of the group ahead or of their playing partners; they cannot turn a cold, windy day into a warm sunny one; they can-

not change other golfers' behaviours; and sometimes, despite all their best efforts to prepare properly, focus on each shot, and stick to their game plan, they will still not play as well as they would like. Yet these aspects of golf are all too often the source of golfers' frustration and anger. It is not surprising that this frustration and anger undermines golf enjoyment; as Orlick (2000) noted, "getting angry . . . interferes with your reason for being there, whether you are seeking enjoyment, consistency, or a high quality performance" (p. 92). Not only is anger a negative emotion, but it is also impossible to be angry and focus on the upcoming shot at the same time and therefore performance will be affected. In order to enhance enjoyment, our efforts as practitioners may best be directed towards helping athletes develop more balanced and accepting attitudes towards the more negative aspects of their sport and teaching them to control any anger and frustration that remains.

Stodel (2004) found that recreational golfers developed more balanced attitudes as a result of engaging in mental training. The golfers in her study did not attribute their more balanced attitudes to specific mental training techniques, but felt that their attitudes had changed because they were better able to forget about mistakes and focus on positive things, put the negative aspects of golf in perspective, and be more *carpe diem*. Moreover, some had developed the belief they could overcome lapses in performance. Consequently, when their performance declined they did not get as upset because they had faith it would return soon enough. For one participant, developing an awareness of how his attitude was negatively affecting his performance was enough to elicit change. Perhaps it was the general philosophy of the training, or the awareness it provoked, that brought about the participant's change in

attitude. These findings highlight the value of encouraging athletes to reflect on how their thoughts and attitudes affect their performance and enjoyment.

Athletes must be aware that their attitude is their choice and it is only they who can change it. If an athlete is predisposed to negative thinking and has the tendency to always look for the negative in everything they do, it is critical they learn to turn this pattern around. Looking for something positive, however small, can be the first step to make a change (Orlick, 2000). Orlick also suggested getting more rest, reducing life stress, keeping track of the good things that happen to you each day, doing something for yourself every day, opening yourself to experiencing your own successes, and remaining open to the positive emotions of those around you will foster a positive perspective.

## Conclusions

Enjoyment is an important construct to study within the realm of sport. Not only is it a key motive for sport participation (Ebbeck et al., 1995; Frederick et al., 1996; Weiss & Ferrer-Caja, 2002; Weiss et al., 2001), but enjoyment is also important for quality of life and is a factor in peak performance (Cohn, 1991). Consequently, it seems appropriate to divert effort and attention towards understanding, and subsequently maximizing, enjoyment. However, the role mental training could play in increasing enjoyment has received minimal attention in the literature.

Much of the research that has focused on the study of enjoyment to date has examined the sources and predictors of enjoyment. Diverse sources of enjoyment have consistently been found in the literature (Bakker et al., 1993; Gould et al., 2001; Pinel et al., 1999; Scanlan et al., 1989; Yoo & Kim,

2002). This inquiry supports the belief that enjoyment can be derived from many sources, both intrinsic and extrinsic, and provides a unique contribution to the literature by extending this line of research to a golfing population and older individuals engaging in sport at a recreational level.

Based on the participants' meanings of golf enjoyment, a number of recommendations for how mental training may be used to enhance enjoyment were presented. In sum, practitioners should help athletes develop mental skills that enhance performance and allow the athletes to develop a sense of con-

trol over their performance; encourage athletes to reflect on their performances and record their highlights; guide athletes in the setting of realistic goals that focus on learning and improvement rather than on how well they are doing in comparison to others; help athletes evaluate their performances and then plan for improvement and recognize areas in which they have improved; strengthen task involvement; teach athletes to focus on non-performance sources of enjoyment when appropriate; and lastly, enable athletes to develop more balanced and accepting attitudes towards the negative aspects of their sport.

Table 1

Demographic profiles of the participants

Participant	Sex	D.O.B (age)	Golf experience (years played)	Handicap	Rounds played/week	Practice time/week
Phil	M	13/1/30 (69)	30	19	3	negligible
Tom	M	10/5/26 (73)	25	25.2	3	2 hours
Lee	M	22/5/35 (64)	3	28	3	1.5 hours
Nancy	F	5/10/41 (58)	4	36	2	0
Annika	F	21/1/40 (59)	2	36	3-4	1-2 hours
Sam	M	2/3/38 (61)	2.5	28	2	55 minutes
Laura	F	(>45)	16	21	3	negligible

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