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Foreword

Peter C Terry PhD FAPS FASMF FBASES

Centre for Health Research, University of Southern Queensland, Australia

It is a distinct privilege for me to write the foreword for this important textbook devoted to the subject of emotions in sport. Self-evidently sport and emotions share a close and often circular relationship. There are few things in life capable of generating the strong emotional responses we see from sport participants and spectators, covering the full spectrum of feelings from utter despair to unbridled elation. Equally, there are few influences on sport performance as powerful as emotions; inspiring some to new heights while condemning others to abject failure.

In my career as a sport psychology researcher and applied practitioner, which now spans nearly four decades, I have maintained an enduring interest in understanding the effects of emotions on human functioning, primarily in the sport and exercise domains. During my career, I have been blessed with many professional highlights, including the considerable challenge of applying my skills as a psychologist at several Olympic Games, where I have witnessed at close quarters how the dreams of young women and men have been dashed by an inability to effectively manage their emotions.

This area of study covers many related constructs – affect, emotions, moods, feelings – and, somewhat surprisingly, researchers invested in one construct rarely acknowledge research focused on the other, almost synonymous, constructs. Affect, a deliberately vague term used almost exclusively by psychologists, refers to a constellation of emotional responses, or simply as feelings in common parlance. Mood is often conceptualised as

representing a set of transient feelings typically involving more than one emotion (Lane & Terry, 2000). Although there are several well-chronicled distinctions between the two constructs of mood and emotion (see Beedie, Terry, & Lane, 2005), essentially these two terms collectively form one part of the classic ABC triad (affect, behaviour, cognition) devised by social psychologists to explain human functioning (Lazarus, 1982).

Feelings, emotions and moods are pervasive to human functioning and deeply influence an individual's effort, attention, decision-making, memory, behavioural responses, and interpersonal interactions. A favourite piece of anecdotal evidence from my career, illustrating how control over emotions may prove to be the key to successful performance, involved British double trap shooter Richard Faulds who used the image of himself as the “iceman” to stay cool, calm and collected at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. This self-image for keeping emotions at bay, essentially to become almost devoid of emotion, was triggered during lead-up competitions by placing a circular blue sticker (to denote calmness) on his watch, and augmented by regularly profiling of his mood responses to monitor how his emotional mindset was tracking. Mood profiling of the athlete (see Morgan 1980; Terry, 1995) on an almost daily basis commenced the day after Faulds arrived in Australia from Europe and continued until the morning of competition. The pattern of mood responses showed an early adjustment to the unsettling effects of intercontinental travel, characterised by low vigour and high fatigue scores. This was followed by an extended period of mood stability, with consistent zero scores for depression, anger, fatigue and confusion, accompanied by a slight increase in tension and vigour scores as the day of competition approached.

We had identified his optimum mood profile at international competitions over the previous three years and therefore a key challenge for me was to identify when optimum mood was achieved and to attempt to stabilise it using a range of pre-planned emotion

regulation strategies. As a 19 year old, Faulds had found the 1996 Atlanta Games to be emotionally overwhelming and therefore in Sydney he opted out of the Olympic Village environment, staying in a rented house in the suburbs with a fellow athlete, team coaches and myself. Faulds used his own transport, shopped for the food he liked to eat and generally, created a “home away from home” environment as a key method of stabilising his emotional responses. Listening to music was another crucial strategy used to manage his emotions. In a recent large-scale meta-analysis, emotion regulation was shown to be the most reliable benefit of music listening (Terry, Karageorghis, Curran, Martin, & Parsons-Smith, 2020) and the lyrics of Whitney Houston’s “One Moment In Time” provided the perfect inspiration for Faulds’ quest for glory, where he won gold in the tensest of shoot-offs against the reigning Olympic champion.

This innovative new textbook, skilfully compiled by editors Montse Ruiz Cerezo and Claudio Robazza, offers the reader cutting-edge information about contemporary theoretical, methodological and applied issues, with contributions from a veritable who’s who of leading international researchers and practitioners in the field. The diverse content provides practitioners, scholars, and researchers of sport and exercise psychology with a comprehensive set of insights into many areas in which emotions have a profound influence, with an emphasis on both the effective functioning and well-being of individuals. The text represents a valuable resource for undergraduate and postgraduate students, researchers, practitioners, coaches, athletes and all others involved in sport.

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