

How to overcome trauma? Understanding emotional inducers in the life journey of and elite male para badminton player

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Abstract:

Problem Statement: Despite the desire of disability sport players to be treated equally, they often embody resilience in the face of life-altering trauma. However, the specific contextual factors that influence their emotional experiences remain poorly elucidated, hindering our understanding of their coping mechanisms.

Approach: This study uses a novel situational approach to emotional labor, which emphasizes the role of contextual elements – referred to as “emotional inducers” – in shaping emotional experiences in the sports field.

Purpose: The aim of this study is to examine the emotional inducers contributing to both positive and negative emotions in an elite badminton player who sustained a skiing accident at the age of 26. Although he was left paraplegic by the accident, he experienced a “second life” in the sports field of elite para badminton. **Results:** based on a validated procedure of data collection and analysis, emotional inducers of the participant’s emotional experience have been highlighted and categorized throughout his life course, allowing to identify: (1) four categories of positive inducers (e.g. Attractiveness of badminton) and three categories of negative inducers (e.g., Compete with other elite players) during the first life period; four categories of positive inducers (e.g. Quick understanding of the accident consequences) and three categories of negative inducers (e.g., Atmosphere of hospital) during the participant’s interlife period; six categories of positive inducers (e.g. attractiveness of para badminton) and four categories of negative inducers (e.g., Learning of new physical possibilities) during the second life period. **Discussion and conclusions:** Highlighting the inducers of the participant’s emotional experience throughout his life course from in-depth method allow to feed three highlights associated to three major recommendations for sport psychology practice: (1) Use past positive emotional inducers to strengthen players’ resources; (2) Enable Players to Accept Negative Inducers; (3) Connect past and future inducers of positive experiences.

Key Words: Adapted Physical Activity; Emotional Labor; Elite Sport; Sport and Exercise Psychology; Qualitative Design

Introduction

The life trajectories of players with disabilities often spark the admiration of the general public. Despite a malformation, an illness, or even an accident, these players engage in an elite sport and seek to be seen as full-fledged players. It is difficult to know if it is the sport that allows them to accept their disability, or if it is accepting the disability that allows them to do sport. There is however no evidence to support the assumption that all these players live harmonious lives despite their disabilities. According to a review of elite-adapted wheelchair sports performance (Perret, 2015), studies on elite players with disabilities are scarce, in comparison to those on able-bodied ones, due to the limited number of elite players with spinal cord injuries available to participate in scientific studies. Accessing the trajectories of these players can make it possible to understand if and how they found the resources to accept their disability, especially after an unforeseen accident. Indeed, although players who suffer injuries experience upheaval, particularly on a psychological level, some manage to benefit from these experiences, whether in terms of personal growth, psychologically-based performance enhancements, physical-technical development, or others (Udry et al., 1997). Therefore, these players seem to have constructed resources during their trajectory to overcome a trauma. In addition to previous studies on self-regulating mental states in sporting activities of people with disabilities (Prokhorenko et al., 2023), or on the dimension of the public’s personality in its acceptance of participation in physical activity by people with disabilities (Aida et al., 2022), the present study focuses on the emotional inducers experienced by an elite male para badminton player throughout his life course.

Definition of emotional inducers

According to Wagstaff and Tamminen (2021), emotion in sport reflects a mature area of research and a ubiquitous domain of applied sport psychology practice with individuals, dyads, teams, and organizations. Indeed, research on emotions in sport psychology has highlighted their important role in the resultant behaviors that ultimately influence sport performance (Janelle et al., 2020). To understand how emotions influence behaviors and ultimately sport performance, research in sport psychology has focused on several dimensions of

emotion, such as antecedents (e.g., Martinent et al., 2018) or consequences (McCarthy, 2011). However, there are still many things to explore in order to enhance the consideration of emotions in relation to performance. For example, the contextual elements that trigger the emotional experience remain little known. These elements are called “emotional inducers” and can generate a more or less intense positive or negative emotional experience (Petiot et al., 2023a). A situated psychological approach to emotions in sport underpinned this concept of inducers, which insists in the contextual dimension of experience. According to the latter, emotions can be apprehended in three interdependent stages. First, the individual perceives various inducers in the context. Second, these inducers trigger an emotional experience that is appraised as beneficial or harmful in this context, for achieving the individual’s well-being. This conceptualization in line with the ideas defended by Lazarus (2000) seeks to account for positive and negative reward values, or pleasantness and unpleasantness of events, from a general perspective. Third, faced with this experience, the individual carries out emotional labor which consists in making an effort to both regulate inner feelings and express appropriate emotions in the context, in order to be effective (Petiot et al., 2023a).

Emotional inducers during elite players life course

The understanding of the contextual elements inducing players’ emotional experience could allow to help them overcome the difficulties they may encounter during their life course. The scientific literature has indeed already revealed the importance of certain elements, such as social support, in assisting players in their careers (Clement & Shannon, 2011). However, sport psychologists have few testimonies from players who have overcome trauma. Such testimonies could enable sport psychologists to take account of emotional experiences in developing resources to cope with adversity (McCarthy, 2011) and to build an acceptable way of life. To achieve this, a longitudinal research design should be profitable. For example, Samuel et al. (2015) analyzed the experiences of six competitive players having sustained a severe injury. The players completed various measures at three points of the injury process. Conclusions indicated that they exhibited similar change processes characterized by a reduction in emotional disturbance, maintenance of high athletic identity, a strategic decision to consult with others, and a subsequent decision to make the necessary adjustments to actively cope. In line with these previous findings, Petiot et al. (2024) conducted a lengthy interview with a table tennis player who was ranked among the 15 best players in the world. Results highlighted five periods (exponential progression, first difficulties, major difficulties, second career, and end of career) during which sports results and social environment were the main inducers of his positive and negative emotions.

Finally, it should be relevant to examine emotional experiences in players overcoming a trauma. To our knowledge, no study has analyzed the emotional inducers of a player suffering an accident which results in severe disability. What are the inducers that promote positive and negative emotions before, during, and after the accident? How sport psychologist could help players to find the resources to overcome a trauma and, why not, to maintain an elite practice? One way to answer these questions is to analyze the life course of players who have found themselves in this situation. The ‘life course of a practice’ is a concept derived from ergonomics used to analyze the long-term dynamics of experience within various social practices like sport (Hauw, 2013). This author focused on the life course of 17 players caught doping to reveal the place of these unethical actions in player’s life, and the elements characterizing their emergence in long-term dynamics. In the same perspective, we can identify where the emotions of elite disabled players come from at each stage of their life course and thus help sport psychologists support them in overcoming their trauma.

Aim of the study

The aim of the present study was therefore to analyze the inducers of an elite male para badminton player’s emotional experience throughout his life course. More specifically, we intended to identify and categorize the inducers of the player’s emotional experience: (1) during the first period of his life course (before his accident); (2) during the interlife period (during and just after his accident); (3) during the second period of his life course (after his accident).

Material & methods

Single case study design

The present research is based on an innovative single case study design, in the continuity of studies having collected data from one participant and adopted fine-grained analysis (Barker et al., 2013). Numerous studies based on a single case study design have been published in robustness reviews in sport psychology, like the work of Latinjak et al. (2016) about the effects of a goal-directed self-talk intervention on an elite player, or the research of Le Menn et al. (2019) about the decision-making of a handball expert goalkeeper dealing with critical situations. Furthermore, the single case study design seems particularly relevant to analyze the emotional inducers in the sports field (e.g., Petiot et al., 2024), by allowing an in-depth investigation of the relationships between emotional experiences during the players’ trajectory and the context in which they emerge.

Participants

A top badminton player, who became paraplegic after a skiing accident when he was 26, volunteered to participate in this study. During his rehabilitation, he discovered players playing para badminton in wheelchairs. He had previously been unaware that the sport existed. From this moment, he devoted his life to practicing and developing para badminton throughout France and, in the space of a few years, he won multiple national titles, as

well as several international ones. Recognized today as one of the best players in the history of this sport, he strives daily to make this sport better known, to perform with the French team, and to develop spaces allowing people with disabilities to practice (Fig. 1).

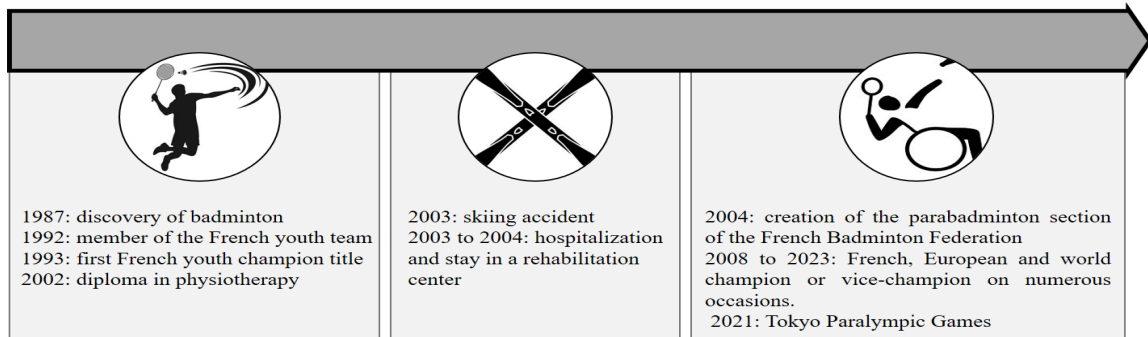


Fig. 1. Summary of player's trajectory

Data collection

Based on the timeline produced jointly with the player, we conducted a long interview with the player, lasting two hours and a half. Indeed, according to Hauw (2013), the reconstructing of an player's life course is both retrospective and prospective. The retrospective part consists in collecting data on the participant's trajectory and conducting biographical interviews. The prospective part involves creating a simulation of the activity using traces of the past, reconstructed with the help of the retrospective data. We adopted this approach to conduct a two-hour interview with the player. In the beginning of this interview, we explained to him this aim of the interview and presented the steps of data collection and analysis to ensure that the process was acceptable to him. Our objective was to analyze the inducers of his emotional experience, from his discovery of badminton as a child to his participation in the very first Olympic Games para badminton event in history (Tokyo, 2021). During the interview, we questioned the player about the elements of context that triggered his emotions throughout his life course (Table 1). The aim was not to ask him to analyze his activity *a posteriori*, but rather to encourage him to re-experience his past, as if he were reliving the situations a second time.

Researcher questions	Players' verbalization
In 2003, you had your accident. How did that happen?	Accident, yes, I hit the pole, I'm alone. I call the emergency services and I tell them "come, I'm paraplegic".
Oh yes? That's to say? Do you have any particular sensations that make you think you are paraplegic?	Well, as a physiotherapist I know what happened. The next day, I have back surgery, I have a vertebra that has exploded, a dislocation, and they operate on me, they put bars in my back. In the recovery room, I ask for my radios directly. I look, and I understand. No need to bullshit... At this moment we were still on "how we are going to announce it to the patient"...
You understood immediately... and what did you feel when you saw these radios?	The subject of my thesis as a physiotherapist concerned a paraplegic child. So, I knew what to expect. I knew where the limits were. I wasn't surprised: if my leg moved, I didn't automatically think I was going to be able to walk again. I knew they were reflexes.

Table 1. Interview excerpts

Data analysis

After this interview, an analysis was conducted in four stages, in line with the procedure adopted by Petiot et al. (2024) to highlight the emotional inducers of a table tennis player during his career: (1) the verbalizations collected from the interview were transcribed, and a first reading provided an initial overview of the data; (2) we identified the contextual elements triggering the player's emotional experience (e.g., 'parents' support') during the three investigated periods (first life period, interlife period and second life period); (3) these inducers were categorized according to two elements: the valence of the emotional experience generated (e.g., 'parents' support' was placed in the category entitled 'Positive emotional experience') and the similarity of these elements (e.g., 'parents' support' was also placed in the category entitled 'Social support'); (4) a figure presenting the inducer categories of the player's emotional experience was created.

Ethical considerations

The present study has been based on ethical considerations defined by Petiot et al. (2024). The participant willingly volunteered to participate in this study. After presenting the aim of the research and the steps of data collection, we were constantly assured of his voluntary participation. We guaranteed his anonymity

and the fact that he would always have the right to examine the articles before submission. This was the case for the present contribution. Furthermore, the participant has been informed that, in accordance with the provisos of the French Data Protection Law (RGPD), he may exercise his right to access and rectify the collected data if necessary. Thus, the methodology employed is in line with the ethical recommendations of the Ethics Committee of the researchers' university. Indeed, in the case of a study involving a single case, an adult, invited for an interview and not for an interventional study or invasive observational study, our Committee considers that the informed consent of the participant is sufficient.

Results

The reconstruction of the player's life course led us to identify three major periods during which the inducers of his emotional experience varied (Fig. 2). The "first life" period extended from his discovery of badminton when he was a child to his skiing accident. The "second life" period extended from the end of his rehabilitation until today, during which he became a top para badminton player. Between these two life periods, the player experienced a critical period, during which he learned to live with his disability.

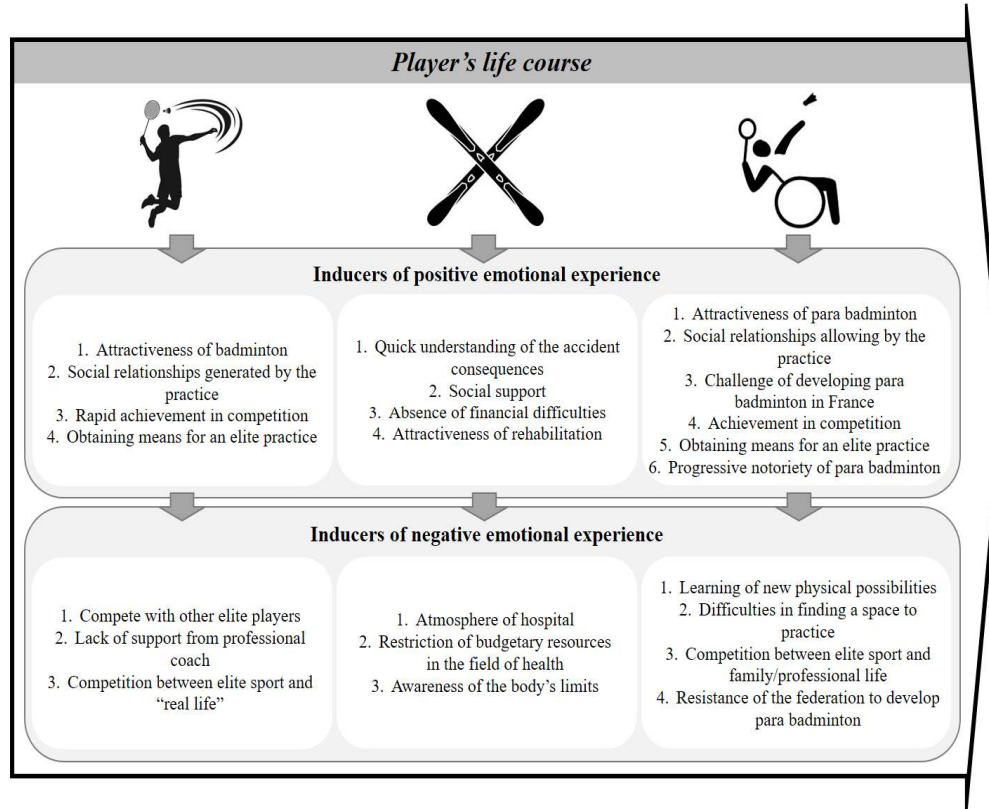


Fig. 2. Player's emotional inducers during his life course

Inducers of emotional experience during the first life period

During the player's first life period, his emotional experience was strongly positive. He regularly felt great pleasure resulting from four main inducers. First, the attractiveness of badminton had quickly generated pleasure when practicing it as a child. He used to play against the wall of his house, enjoyed juggling there, doing footwork drills, and alternating high and low strikes. When asked to specify what gave him such pleasure when practicing, he mentioned the effort required by the sport. A second important positive inducer was the social relationships he developed thanks to badminton. He trained with a "very human" coach and with partners who are still close friends. He even considers them as part of his family. The emotions experienced by the player during training with this coach were intense and positive.

However, when he joined the elite practice sessions at INSEP (in French, *Institut National du Sport, de l'Expertise et de la Performance*), the player began to experience the competition with other players in a negative way. He spoke about the uncertainties generated by this competition. He sometimes found himself dealing alone with feelings of sadness and fear when his position at the highest level was in danger. These negative emotions also came from a lack of support from his professional coach. He mainly played doubles but felt less acknowledged by the coach than those playing singles. The coach also refused to allow him to choose his own partner. Furthermore, during his years at INSEP, the player felt cut-off from the normal life of a young man outside this structure, feeling more negative emotions (Table 2).

Table 2. Inducers of the player's positive and negative emotional experience during the first life

	Categories	Excerpt from the interview
Inducers of positive emotional experience	Attractiveness of badminton	"I had a choice with tennis but I quickly preferred badminton. I think that it is the effort, even today. Without effort, I was frustrated. This feeling, I have always had it"
	Social relationships generated by the practice	"I think it was due to his engagement during the training, and his pedagogy... he was very focused on each player. When someone is there for me, when there is mutual trust, I devote myself fully to training".
	Rapid achievements in competitions	"The others were two or three years older than me. When you come back to your category, you perform. I was a rather explosive player and I put the steering wheel where I wanted, even against big guys. So, I compensated with a good hand and with the vision of the game".
	Obtaining means for an elite practice	"When you are spotted, you enter the French team... And then, directly to Paris. It was the first 'hopes section' in France. And then, at INSEP, you leave your parents for a month and a half because you don't come home every weekend. It's expensive and you have to compete every weekend".
Inducers of negative emotional experience	Compete with other elite players	"There were talented young people and, in addition, a policy of development with the outside world. If you don't prove yourself in two or three years, it's over".
	Lack of support from professional coach	"I was told 'we can't keep you, there are four players in front of you'".
	Competition between elite sport and "real life"	"You're cut off from the world, you live in a cocoon, you're in a structure that is very closed in on itself"

Inducers of emotional experience during the interlife period

The player's skiing accident caused a deep change to occur in his life. Yet, despite this accident, four inducers promoted positive emotions. For example, the player quickly understood he was paraplegic due to his training as a physiotherapist. Indeed, he have experience working with injured players. He experienced more positive emotions than if he had nurtured false hopes. He even expressed satisfaction at being able to understand quickly and independently what had happened to him. Second, the player was strongly supported by his family and friends. He described the joy he experienced when they visited him. These social relationships played a major role in his reconstruction, like the absence of financial difficulties. Lastly, the player's positive emotions were quickly induced by the same elements as when he was a child: the attractiveness of rehabilitation because of the effort required and the challenge it imposed. However, the payers also experienced negative emotions during this Interlife Period. Three inducers generated negative emotions during this critical period of the player's life course: the hospital environment, funding restrictions in the field of health, and awareness of the body's limits. During the interview, he did not insist on the negative emotions triggered by these inducers despite our requests, as if they had not been salient in his experience. More precisely, these negative emotions seem to have been counterbalanced by the positive emotions he experienced during the period, especially related to social support (Table 3)

.Table 3. Inducers of the player's positive and negative emotional experience during the interlife period

	Categories	Excerpt from the interview
Inducers of positive emotional experience	Quick understanding of the accident's consequences	"The subject of my thesis as a physiotherapist concerned a paraplegic child. So, I knew what to expect. I knew where the limits were. I wasn't surprised: if my leg moved, I didn't automatically think I was going to be able to walk again. I knew they were reflexes".
	Social support	"A hyper present entourage, a lot of friends. In the hospital, thirty people visit me. I received a lot of visitors at that time. It is this whole journey that has given me this resilience."
	Absence of financial difficulties	"I had no particular financial problems. So, I had no reason to say I'm not well."
	Attractiveness of rehabilitation	"One of the happiest days of my life was when I put my ass on a wheelchair: I understood that it was my new best friend". The rehabilitation appeared as a challenge: "Rehabilitation was already physical, and I was up for the challenge. When they told me it was hard to keep my balance, I said, "go ahead, bring me the ball". And two weeks later, I succeeded. I like to look for the limits".
Inducers of negative emotional experience	Hospital atmosphere	"I'm not saying it was easy, especially the hospital, the 'white coats'"
	Restriction of budgetary resources in the field of health	"They explain to you that there are no more electronic games or billiards, that they have to put two beds together because it's more profitable. The reality of everyday life, that was it".
	Awareness of the body's limits	"Neither do I underestimate the moments when I said to myself 'I can't do this or that anymore'".

Inducers of emotional experience during the second life period

Following his rehabilitation, the player began a ‘second life’ during which he became an elite para badminton player. It is striking to note the similarity between the inducers that emerged during this period and those generating positive emotions during the player’s first life period. For example, the attractiveness of para badminton induced real pleasure. Despite the difficulty encountered in playing in a wheelchair, he explained that he was quickly “caught up” in the game.

The components of badminton that he liked before his accident could also be found in para badminton. Moreover, the player mentioned the positive emotions experienced in relation to the social relationships developed around the practice, the successful development of para badminton in France, or his victories in many competitions. These inducers procured him pleasure, satisfaction, and pride. Finally, he progressively had the means to train at elite level, and noted the growing reputation of para badminton.

However, the player found it hard to assess his new physical abilities, which caused him disappointment and discouraged him during his first wheelchair experience. Para badminton forced him to build a new style of play. The player did not immediately find a place to practice the sport, especially in his region where para badminton did not exist. It was therefore necessary to be accepted by able-bodied players and to change their habits. Moreover, negative emotions (feeling of not doing things as well as possible, pressure related to overexertion, etc.) were induced by a perceived conflict between his elite practice and his family/personal life. Finally, he experienced negative emotions, such as injustice and anger, on account of the Federation’s reluctance to develop para badminton. He found the lack of recognition for the sport, compared to badminton for able-bodied players, particularly difficult to live with (Table 4).

Table 4. Inducers of the player’s positive and negative emotional experience during the second life

	Categories	Excerpt from the interview
Inducers of positive emotional experience	Attractiveness of para badminton	“My wheelchair is a new toy. I get caught up in certain aspects of the practice, the learning, the technical aspects”.
	Social relationships generated by the practice	“I meet exceptional people. At the end of the match, people give you advice that will maybe allow you to win the next time. The solidarity is just exceptional”.
	Challenge of developing para badminton in France	“I realized that you could play badminton in a wheelchair, but that there was nothing in France! So, I revealed my ‘rebellious’ side: I told myself that if I didn’t do it, it would never happen... I felt a desire to give what I had been able to receive”.
	Achievements in competitions	“I understood how to move a wheelchair and I had precision: it allowed me to have a few medals for more visibility”.
	Obtaining means for an elite practice	“It became my job. I was now 80% free to train, whereas before, it was on top of my job.”
	Progressive reputation of para badminton	“I was not looking for recognition at all costs, but rather to be able to say that yes, badminton is suitable. The fact that it’s in the Paralympics Games is a mind-blowing boost”.
Inducers of negative emotional experience	Learning new physical techniques	“It was necessary to play against my nature. If I smash today, I am countered. The tactic is different. A lot of things had to be changed”.
	Difficulties in finding a place to practice	“I lived in a region where para badminton did not exist. There was no coach, so when they saw a guy in a wheelchair arrive...”.
	Competition between elite sport and family/professional life	“It was difficult to reconcile everything. I had my job, my family, and I built my house. In Asia, they’re 20 years ahead of us”.
	The federation’s reluctance to develop para badminton	“The leaders gave me possibilities, but as soon as I proposed something, I was told ‘it’s complicated’. But no, it’s not complicated!”.

Discussion and practical recommendations

The present research contributed to deepen the understanding of the origin of players’ emotional experience, through a longitudinal design allowing a long-term approach of experience. In line with Hauw (2013), by studying the inducers of an elite player’s emotional experiences during his life course, we assume that what may hold in a particular context will elucidate the development of equivalent actions in other contexts or with regard to other practices.

Indeed, the life course of the participant to the present study attests that players not only learn motor skills to perform, in line with the contribution of Petiot et al. (2024). More specifically, face to a trauma, they found resources to build a new way of life. The present study therefore feed three major highlights leading to practical recommendations (Table 5).

Table 5. Recommendations for sport psychology practice

What?	Use past positive emotional inducers to strengthen players' resources	Enable Players to Accept Negative Inducers	Connect past and future inducers of positive experiences
When?	Before a trauma	During a trauma	After a trauma
Why?	Working with players on the inducers of their emotions can enable them to build a solid system of resources likely to help them in the case of trauma.	Supporting players during trauma is facilitated by acceptance that is likely to promote a process of compensation for negative inducers.	Building bridges between former and new emotional inducers to reinforce the solid foundations of the player's life course while opening up a new field of possibilities.
How?	Through Life Course Interviews		

Use past positive emotional inducers to strengthen players' resources

According to our results, the player in the present study had built up, prior to his accident, the resources that allowed him to overcome this particularly difficult moment. This result allow us to formulate a first recommendation, consisting in developing players' resources to overcome a trauma by working on their inducers of emotional experience (e.g., social support). In this player's experience, several elements generated a positive emotional experience early in his career, one of which was social support. It has already been shown that coaches', parents', and peers' support plays a significant role in shaping youth sport experiences (Clement & Shannon, 2011). Our study corroborates these results, showing how important it is that sport psychologists both help players to identify such positive elements to create a favorable context. On the contrary, the participant's experience during his first life period deteriorates when he arrives at INSEP. The competition with other players intensifies, and he feels there is a lack of support from his professional coach. Our study shows that it is essential for players to deepen their relationships with those coaches who demonstrate a high level of benevolence towards them. More generally, it is essential that sport psychologists guide players in identifying the inducers likely to support them during difficult events or possible trauma.

The life course interview is a way to identify inducers in collaboration with the player, especially if the psychologist focuses on the critical incident experienced during the trajectory. As the result of psychological work carried out with air force crews during the Second World War, Flanagan (1954) explained that an incident is critical if, from the individual's point of view, it relates to an important aspect of the job and includes effective or ineffective behavior regarding a specific situation. More precisely, the psychologist can adopt a critical incident method to identify the contextual elements triggering the emotional experience during high stakes moments of the life course. For example, Petiot et al. (2023b) identified the inducers of the emotions felt by physical education teachers during critical incidents experienced in difficult contexts. They asked teachers to detail those events in their careers that had generated intense positive or negative emotions. This methodology may be useful for consultants working with players to identify the origins of their emotional experiences. Identifying inducers in this way would allow players to be aware of the contextual elements such as social support likely to reduce the impact of trauma.

Enable players to accept negative inducers

Second, following his accident, our player's experience was marked by a rapid awareness of the gravity of his injury. His X-ray made him realize that he would never be able to walk again. Being aware of this helped him to accept his disability and project himself into the future. During his hospitalization, and despite contextual elements likely to generate negative emotions (e.g., hospital environment), he was, on the contrary, mainly impacted by inducers of positive emotions. A process of compensation appeared to be at work, as if understanding what had happened to him allowed him to focus on the positive contextual elements around him. In line with Debois et al. (2012), psychological monitoring appears useful in helping players successfully negotiate these sensitive transitions, especially as it provides them with an opportunity to talk about their life, to communicate a sense of their previous experiences to others and, in this way, to maintain a coherent identity and sense of self. However, it is essential for players to adopt a relevant technique so as to avoid any aggravation of the event's psychological costs.

Thus, data from the player's life course led us to recommend that psychologists assist players in accepting their negative inducers in order to initiate a compensation process. The life course interview is a way to facilitate players' acceptance of the disability, which is conducive to encouraging them to counterbalance negative emotions by being aware of positive inducers. More precisely, the player's experience gives credibility to approaches defending the idea that psychological support should not necessarily involve players' conscious control of their psychological faculties. Techniques such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) can be effective in mitigating the post-injury psychological distress among injured players. From the work of Hayes et al. (1999), ACT incorporates the concepts of mindfulness, acceptance of thoughts and emotions, and values-driven behavior into principles related to change. They argue that interventions based on metaphor, paradox, and experiential exercises can enable individuals to break free of language traps, deal with behavioral disorders, and

enhance general life satisfaction. By encouraging the verbalization of emotions without trying to analyze them *a posteriori*, the life course interview seems a way to adopt in line with the principles of ACT, in alternative to traditional methods focused more on psychological skills intended to promote the player's ability to control internal processes. Players could be encouraged to shift their attention to positive contextual elements rather than internal states, such as anxiety or frustration. In the case of a player who experiences a trauma, such as the one in our study, it is therefore possible to facilitate acceptance of the disability, which is conducive to encouraging the player to counterbalance negative emotions with an awareness of positive inducers.

Connect past and future inducers of positive experiences

Third, it is indeed striking to note that before and after his accident, our player's emotional experience was altered by similar inducers. The attractiveness of the practice, the social relationships, and the achievements in competitions were again crucial elements allowing him to feel positive emotions during his second life period. This result suggests that the way of overcoming a trauma depends on the player's ability to stabilize the contextual elements inducing positive emotions. In our study, the player also found alternative positive inducers in his "new life" (e.g., the development of para badminton in France), which offered him new opportunities. It was this association of similar and alternative inducers that fostered his positive emotions. His testimony therefore extends the research data on the experience of players who have to deal with adversity during their career (McCarthy, 2011). It also corroborates the need to rely on existing inducers and new perspectives as an essential compromise for reconstruction. Various autobiographical methods would allow players to connect these former and new emotional experiences.

Thus, consultants can support players' reconstruction by guiding them in the process of connecting their former and new inducers. The life course interview seems a way to build relationships between the inducers experienced during the players' first and second life. Owiti et al. (2021) developed a comprehensive understanding of the psychological processes at work during club mutations by using a qualitative approach to uncover the different components of the narratives produced by twenty professional basketball players. They adopted a three-layer functional model, including autobiographical reasoning which concerns mainly change in the self. The results revealed that when players develop active attitudes by seeking for solutions and sharing their experience with others, they can create the adaptability conditions necessary for their successful mutation. Participants in this study exhibited flexible and proactive behaviors which made possible the appropriation of those elements in the environment that favored a positive change experience. It is possible to use methods like the life course interview to promote an player's awareness of former and new inducers, in the same way that individuals working with these players can stimulate the building of a good story by regularly asking players to narrate their experience and help them to regulate the components that are not well linked with good stories (Owiti et al., 2021). For example, a consultant can construct a timeline with players and then conduct an interview in which they are invited to verbalize the contextual elements inducing their emotions. The psychologist could therefore draw the player's attention to the inducers that have always been important to them (and on which they should rely), while supporting them in the exploitation of new positive inducers.

Conclusions

This study aimed to analyze the inducers of an elite male para badminton player's positive and negative emotional experience throughout his life course, in addition to previous research focused on the experience of people with disabilities (Aida et al., 2022; Prokhorenko et al., 2023). More precisely, the present study was conducted in concordance with the criteria described by Smith et al. (2014) to judge the quality of a qualitative research¹. For example, the "substantive contribution" of this study is related to the elements of context inducing the emotional experience of an "extra-ordinary" player who overcame a trauma by becoming an elite para badminton player. This testimony is very rare in sport psychology. More precisely, results did not reveal a total break between his two life periods, as if they were totally impermeable. The player rebuilt himself after his accident by finding contextual elements that were "a bridge" in a relative continuity with those which had generated his positive emotions before it.

Even if a case study is context-dependent, sport psychologists can learn from the player's experience, not only to help players to overcome other traumas, but also to learn to overcome injuries, which are frequent events with high emotional impact. However, it is essential to keep in mind some limitations of the present study. As a single case study, the results cannot be generalized. Moreover, the procedure employed involve placing crucial importance on player's perceptions, with the risk of memory decay. It is possible that the player reconstructed perceptions due to the time interval following the occurrence of the situations described, like others studies adopting the same methodological approach (e.g., Petiot et al., 2024).

Conflicts of interest - If the authors have any conflicts of interest to declare.

¹ Smith et al. (2014) proposed 16 criteria to judge the quality of a qualitative research: substantive contribution, impact, width, esthetic merit, coherence, dialogue as a space of debate and negotiation, personal narrative and storytelling as an obligation to critique, engaged embodiment as a condition for change, worthy topic, strong rigor, sincerity, resonance, credibility, transparency, incisiveness, and generativity.

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