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Perceived Stress and Coping Strategies Among Young Lithuanian Tennis Players

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ABSTRACT

Background: The psychological preparation of young athletes is a relevant issue, varying across different sports. Tennis is one of the fastest-growing sports, especially in Lithuania, which highlights the importance of psychological preparation for tennis players. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the stress experienced by young tennis athletes, the factors that cause it, and the stress-coping strategies they use.

Methods: This cross-sectional study included a representative sample (n = 60) of tennis players aged 12–17 years (mean age 14.63, SD = 1.52; 50% male) who participated in Lithuanian tennis championships. A questionnaire was used, which included questions about stress experienced during competitions, signs of stress, the causes of stress, and the coping strategies applied.

Results: The study revealed that 25.0% of tennis players experience high levels of stress during competitions. Girls reported higher stress levels during competitions compared to boys. The main stress-inducing factors identified were: fear of making mistakes (63.3%), fear of losing (56.7%), opponents' skill level (55.0%), and the importance of the competition (31.7%). Fear of not meeting parents' expectations was a greater source of stress than fear of not meeting the coach's expectations. The most common stress symptoms experienced were anxiety, lack of concentration, negative thoughts, and increased heart rate. To reduce stress, tennis players most often listened to their favourite music, communicated with parents or friends, or talked with their coach.

Conclusion: The study revealed that all tennis players experience stress during competitions, and some of them experience high stress levels. This is more common among females than males. Young tennis players experience stress for various reasons, with both parents and coaches playing an important role. Although young athletes use several stress-coping strategies, they do not fully employ all effective coping methods. Therefore, the findings emphasise the importance of the coach's role in the psychological preparation of young athletes.

Keywords: young tennis players, stress factors, coping with stress, psychological preparation

1. INTRODUCTION

Stress is analysed from both positive and negative perspectives, depending on its intensity, and constitutes one of the most extensively examined subjects in sport science literature. According to Nuetzel (2023), various stressors, including competitive, organisational, and personal, are inherent to elite sports and may increase the risk of mental health-related problems and mental illness in elite athletes. However, encountering critical situations in sports is inevitable, and pre-competition anxiety can also be beneficial, as it helps to prepare the body for performance. Nuetzel (2025) states that elite athletes must risk their health by pushing themselves to their physiological and psychological limits. The repeated necessity to exceed these limits generates continuous stress and can lead to both physical and mental overload. Tossici et al. (2024) found that exposure to stressors can negatively affect athletes' health, well-being, and performance. High levels of anxiety and stress in sport may result in various outcomes, including unsatisfactory performance,

negative thought patterns, adverse emotions, depressive symptoms, as well as injuries.

Experiencing and managing stress is especially important for young athletes. Meidus (2005) states that all sports are becoming 'younger', requiring adolescents, whose mental capacities are not yet fully developed, to endure the full emotional and psychological load. During adolescence, physical and psychological changes make athletes particularly sensitive to various stressors and environmental influences. Research has shown that young athletes experience anxiety and tension before competition, particularly when they anticipate achieving high performance results (Gould et al., 1993). Moreover, the tension and anxiety increase when the athlete does not receive support or approval from their surrounding environment, particularly when experiencing pressure related to performance results. A considerable number of studies have shown that a coach has a significant impact on an athlete's career in sport and well-being (Blanchard et al., 2009; DeFreese & Smith, 2013; Nuetzel, 2023; Stipinienė & Lisinskienė, 2024; Suchanekas & Poteliūnienė, 2024), while parents can also play a no less important role at times (Bidžanova & Lisinskienė, 2023; Bois et al., 2009; Bonavolontà et al., 2021; Dorsch, 2017; Harwood & Knight, 2009; Lisinskiene et al., 2019; Newman et al., 2021). Certainly, various factors influence the stress among young athletes, which can be both external and internal. According to Pascoe et al. (2022), stress-inducing factors are any stimuli that provoke stress or a state of psychological tension when environmental demands exceed an individual's natural coping capacity. If external factors include the aforementioned environmental influences, internal factors affecting stress can be further categorised as various fears (e.g. fear of failure, fear of losing), experienced injuries (Brenner & Watson, 2024; Haraldsdottir & Watson, 2021), lack of self-regulation (Sabaliauskas et al., 2023), overtraining (Brenner & Watson, 2024), and insufficient psychological preparedness (Cowden et al., 2016). It is therefore unsurprising that, according to recent research, approximately 91% of athletes aged 16–17 experience some level of stress related to sport, with 25.5% acknowledging that stress negatively affects their performance outcomes (Ward et al., 2023). Scholars suggest that ignoring stress may contribute to the development of psychological disorders in the future. Therefore, the importance of psychological preparation for athletes is frequently emphasised (Lauer et al., 2017; Leffingwell et al., 2005; Skarbalius, 2023; Xanthopoulos et al., 2020). It is emphasised that in order to realise a young athlete's potential, it is important to focus on the development of psychological skills as early as possible (Lauer et al., 2017). Research has revealed that, in the opinion of coaches, an athlete's results are determined 50% by psychological preparation (Leffingwell et al., 2005). Moreover, in the sport of tennis, coaches even mention the importance of psychological preparation as accounting for 80% of results (Leffingwell et al., 2005). The scientific literature identifies three stress coping strategies used by athletes: problem-focused (aims to alter the stressful situation), emotion-focused (aims to to regulate the emotions caused by a stressful situation), and avoidance (aims to disengage from the stressful situation by cognitive or physical efforts) (Nicholls & Polman, 2007). The latest systematic analysis revealed that athletes most often use problem-oriented and emotion-regulative coping strategies (Nuetzel, 2023).

The scientific literature provides data on the stress among athletes in various sports. However, our study focuses specifically on young tennis players, a group that has been relatively under-researched, including in international studies (Cowden et al., 2016; García-Gonzálvez et al., 2022; Harwood & Knight, 2009; Kilit et al., 2019; Puente-Diaz & Anshel, 2005). Notably, tennis is rapidly developing in Lithuania, with an increasing number of young athletes participating in competitions and, consequently, experiencing stress. There is a lack of studies analysing which stressors specifically affect young tennis players in the country. We consider that the importance of psychological preparation in Lithuania has not yet been fully recognised, particularly with regard to young athletes. This is significant not only for achieving results but also in the long term, as it can help prevent loss of motivation and burnout, which leads many tennis players to leave the sport prematurely. For these reasons, understanding and identifying the causes of stress is highly significant, yet there remains a gap in the scientific literature regarding stress among young tennis players during competitions. Therefore, this study aimed to explore stress among young tennis athletes, including stress-inducing factors and the coping strategies the athletes use.

2. METHODS

Participants and procedures

In this cross-sectional questionnaire survey, the participants were tennis players aged 12 to 17

years. This age group was selected because adolescents within this range usually begin to compete actively in Lithuanian and international tournaments. The research involved a representative sample of 60 tennis players representing all age groups (12–14, 14–16, and 16–18 years old) who participated in the Lithuanian tennis championships. The mean age of the surveyed tennis players was 14.63 years (SD = 1.52). The sample was distributed by gender, comprising 30 boys and 30 girls.

Prior to conducting the survey, approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Lithuanian Sports University (Biomedical Research Approval No.: 2024 12 09 BI-TRS (B)-2024-721). The survey was administered in December 2024 using a Google Forms questionnaire, which was distributed directly to the identified tennis players, their parents, or coaches, and also completed by participants during competitions. Notably, for tennis players under the age of 16, parental consent was obtained prior to participation.

Instruments

In this quantitative study, a written questionnaire method was employed. A questionnaire was developed for the tennis players, comprising a socio-demographic section (including questions on age, gender, duration of tennis practice, and frequency of competition participation) and a main section. The main section contained questions regarding experienced stress and the coping strategies used. Respondents were asked, "How much stress do you experience during matches?"; they could select one response option out of five: "none at all", "a little", "a moderate amount", "a lot", or "a great amount". Participants were also asked, "What thoughts arise for you before a competition/match?"; for this question, they could select multiple response options from the provided alternatives (e.g. "I am anxious about the possibility of losing", "I am anxious that I will not perform to my full potential"). Additionally, they were asked, "What causes stress during competitions?"; respondents could choose multiple answers from the presented alternatives (e.g. "fear of losing", "spectators", "coach's expectations", "parents' expectations"). Young tennis players were asked, "Do you feel parental pressure regarding your performance?" and "Do you feel coach pressure regarding competition outcomes?". Participants were further asked, "What do you most often feel in relation to your coach?" and "What do you most often feel when your parents talk about your performance in tennis competitions?"; additionally, they were asked whether they experienced more stress when parents watched their matches and how parents reacted to losses. Tennis players were also asked to list the physical and psychological symptoms they experience under stress, choosing from provided options (e.g. "increased sweating", "accelerated heartbeat", "muscle tension", "anxiety"). Finally, respondents were asked which strategies they use to reduce stress, selecting from listed alternatives (e.g. "breathing techniques", "meditation and/or visualisation", "listening to favourite music").

Data analysis

Statistical data analysis was performed using SPSS 29.0 for Windows (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Quantitative survey data were initially processed by calculating means, standard deviations, and response frequencies. To test hypotheses regarding the equality of two groups, the Chi-Square Test was applied. Hypotheses concerning group equality were rejected if $p < 0.05$.

3. RESULTS

During the survey, participants were asked about their perceived competitive stress during competitions. The results indicated that 25% of young tennis players reported experiencing a lot of stress, while nearly half reported moderate stress. Only 6.7% of participants indicated that they did not feel stress at all. A statistically significant difference in perceived competitive stress during competitions between genders was observed, $\chi^2(3, n = 60) = 7.95$, $p = 0.047$ (Table 1). Girls reported experiencing higher levels of perceived competitive stress during competitions compared to boys.

Table 1. **Perceived competitive stress during competitions among young tennis players**

Response option	Total % (n)	Gender	
		Boys % (n)	Girls % (n)
No stress at all	6.7 (4)	0 (0)	13.3 (4)
A little amount of stress	25.0 (15)	33.3 (10)	16.7 (5)
A Moderate amount of stress	43.3 (26)	50.0 (15)	36.7 (11)
A lot or a great amount of stress	25.0 (15)	16.7 (5)	33.3 (10)

Note: *The response options of "A lot" and "A great amount" were merged due of correctness of the Chi-Square Test calculation.*

During the survey, participants were asked about the thoughts that arise before and during competitions. The results showed that two-thirds of the young tennis players (65.0%) reported feeling anxious about the possibility of losing, while around half were concerned that they would not demonstrate their full skills (51.7%) or play at their best level (56.7%). None of the respondents indicated feeling pressure from their coach or team. However, one in 10 participants reported feeling pressure from their parents (8.3%). No significant differences were found between boys and girls regarding the most common pre-competition anxious thoughts.

Participants were also asked, "Which factors most commonly cause you stress during competitions?". The findings revealed that nearly two-thirds of the players (63.3%) experienced stress due to fear of making mistakes, and 56.7% due to fear of losing (Table 2). Other less prominent stress-inducing factors included the importance of the match (31.7%) and the opponent's level (38.3%). Notably, young tennis players reported that stress was more often caused by fear of not meeting their parents' expectations rather than their coach's expectations. Comparing stress-inducing factors by gender, it was found that spectators caused significantly more stress for girls than for boys during competitions, $\chi^2(3, n = 60) = 4.02$, $p = 0.045$ (Table 2).

Table 2. **Comparison of stress-inducing factors among young tennis players during competitions**

	Total % (n)	Gender	
		Boys % (n)	Girls % (n)
Fear of losing	56.7 (34)	53.3 (16)	60.0 (18)
Spectators	28.3 (17)	16.7 (5)	40.0 (12)
Coach's expectations	10.0 (6)	10.0 (3)	10.0 (3)
Parents' expectations	25.0 (15)	20.0 (6)	30.0 (9)
Opponents' level	55.0 (33)	40.0 (12)	36.7 (11)
Importance of the match	31.7 (19)	30.0 (9)	33.3 (10)
Poor physical preparation	10.0 (6)	6.7 (2)	13.3 (4)
Poor technical preparation	18.3 (11)	16.7 (5)	20.0 (6)
Poor tactical preparation	10.0 (6)	10.0 (3)	10.0 (3)
Poor psychological preparation	20.0 (12)	24.1 (7)	16.7(5)

	Total % (n)	Gender	
		Boys % (n)	Girls % (n)
Fear of making mistakes	63.3 (38)	53.3 (16)	73.3 (22)

Participants were asked whether they experienced significant parental or coach pressure regarding performance outcomes. The results revealed that one-third of the tennis players reported never (33.3%) or rarely (33.3%) experiencing parental pressure, while one-quarter (26.7%) sometimes felt such pressure. No statistically significant gender differences were observed, $\chi^2(3, n = 60) = 1.40$, $p = 0.706$. Additionally, 50.0% of the athletes reported sometimes experiencing coach pressure related to competition results, whereas the remainder reported never experiencing it. No statistically significant gender differences were found, $\chi^2(1, n = 60) = 0.267$, $p = 0.606$.

The study also investigated the emotions expressed by parents and coaches perceived by young tennis players regarding their performance in competitions. The results indicated that 78.0% of athletes perceived support from their coaches, and approximately half perceived support from their parents (Table 3). Notably, one in four respondents reported parental neutrality, while only 15.3% reported coach neutrality. Although no statistically significant gender differences were detected, some tendencies are worth noting: boys reported perceiving more parental and coach support, whereas girls reported experiencing greater parental and coach disappointment regarding their performance.

Table 3. **Comparison of emotions experienced by young tennis players from parents and coaches regarding competition performance, by gender**

	Total % (n)	Gender	
		Boys % (n)	Girls % (n)
Emotions related to parents			
Support	53.3 (32)	60.0 (18)	46.7 (14)
Neutrality	26.7 (16)	20.0 (6)	33.3 (10)
Pressure	6.7 (4)	10.0 (3)	3.3 (1)
Disappointment	6.7 (4)	3.3 (1)	10.0 (3)
Pride	6.7 (4)	6.7 (2)	6.7 (2)
Emotions related to a coach			
Support	76.7 (46)	86.2 (25)	70.0 (21)
Neutrality	15.0 (9)	10.3 (3)	20.0 (6)
Pressure	1.7 (1)	0 (0)	3.3 (1)
Disappointment	1.7 (1)	0 (0)	3.3 (1)
Pride	3.3 (2)	3.3 (1)	3.3 (1)

The study examined the physical and psychological signs of pre-competition stress experienced by young tennis players. The results indicated that the most frequently reported signs were anxiety, lack of concentration, negative thoughts, and elevated heart rate (Table 4). When comparing the physical and psychological signs of pre-competition stress by gender, no statistically significant differences were observed.

Table 4. **Comparison of physical and psychological signs of pre-competition stress experienced by young tennis players, by gender**

	Total % (n)	Gender	
		Boys % (n)	Girls % (n)
Increased sweating	20.0 (12)	26.7 (8)	13.3 (4)
Elevated heart rate	41.7 (25)	43.3 (13)	40.0 (12)
Muscle tension	36.7 (22)	40.0 (12)	33.3 (10)
Increased urge to urinate	18.3 (11)	16.7 (5)	20.0 (6)
Feeling of fullness in stomach or abdominal pain	16.7 (10)	10.0 (3)	23.3 (7)
Skin changes	1.7 (1)	0 (0)	3.3 (1)
Slowed movements and motion on the court	30.0 (18)	23.3 (7)	36.7 (11)
Anxiety	58.3 (35)	60.0 (18)	56.7 (17)
Negative thoughts	55.0 (33)	50.0 (15)	60.0 (18)
Lack of concentration	43.3 (26)	43.3 (13)	43.3 (13)

The study indicated that, to reduce stress, young tennis players most frequently used methods such as listening to their favourite music, talking to parents or friends, and communicating with the coach (Table 5). No statistically significant gender differences were found in the use of stress reduction methods. However, some notable tendencies emerged: a greater proportion of boys used breathing techniques compared to girls, χ^2 (1, n = 60) = 3.27, p = 0.07.

Table 5. **Comparison of stress reduction methods used by young tennis players**

	Total % (n)	Gender	
		Boys % (n)	Girls % (n)
Breathing techniques	48.3 (29)	60.0 (18)	36.7 (11)
Meditation and/or visualisation	8.3 (5)	10.0 (3)	6.7 (2)
Autogenic training	3.3 (2)	3.3 (1)	3.3 (1)
Listening to the coach's advice, communicating with the coach	38.3 (23)	43.3 (13)	33.3 (10)
Talking to parents/ friends	43.3 (26)	50.0 (15)	36.7 (11)
Attending sessions with a psychologist	1.7 (1)	3.3 (1)	0 (0)
Listening to my favourite music	66.6 (40)	73.3 (22)	60.0 (18)
I dont use any methods	11.7 (7)	6.7 (2)	16.7 (5)

4. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the stress experienced by young tennis players during competitions, indicating stress-inducing factors, the physiological and psychological signs of stress, and the strategies used by tennis players to reduce and cope with stress.

The study revealed that almost all young tennis players experience stress during competitions, with one in four reporting high levels of stress. Additionally, female players experienced higher stress levels compared to male players. Similar patterns have been observed in other studies. Pascoe et al. (2022) reported that female athletes are more likely to experience stress than male athletes. They are also more likely to experience mental health problems and disorders and are exposed to a greater number of psychological stressors. The present study confirmed that female athletes face a higher quantity of various psychological stressors due to inequalities arising from individual, interpersonal, organisational, and social processes. Nuetzel (2023) found that female athletes exhibited higher levels of anxiety than male athletes, experienced more stress related to coaches, perceived stressful situations as more negative, and reported higher tension and anxiety, greater sensitivity to various stress-inducing events, and a stronger tendency to seek social support. Kew et al. (2025) identified gender differences in mental health symptoms among elite athletes, including indicators of anxiety and distress. Female athletes were found to be at higher overall risk of anxiety and had twice the probability of experiencing distress compared to male athletes. These findings indicate that female athletes are more frequently exposed to psychological stressors and more commonly diagnosed with mental health disorders, including a higher risk of depression, compared to male athletes.

Our study identified the main stress-inducing factors among young tennis players. Regarding stress experienced during competitions, the factors most frequently reported were fear of making mistakes, fear of losing, and parents' expectations. Notably, spectators induced stress more frequently in girls than in boys, and girls were also more likely to experience stress due to fear of making mistakes. Gustafsson et al. (2016), studying athletes aged 15–19 across various sports, found that fear of failure significantly affects stress and burnout in young athletes. Specifically, fear of shame and humiliation constitutes a psychological stress-inducing factor. In addition, experiencing stress related to fear negatively impacts athletes' satisfaction with their performance and sporting achievements. Sagar et al. (2009) qualitatively examined elite adolescent athletes (including tennis players) and similarly reported that fear of failure is associated with stress. Fear of losing also influences athletes' social interactions, often leading to increased irritability or becoming quieter. Our results revealed that one in four surveyed tennis players occasionally experiences pressure from their parents. On the other hand, the majority of young tennis players reported feeling support from their coaches, and half of them from their parents. These findings partially reflect patterns observed in previous studies. For instance, Nuetzel (2023) highlights that coach support is crucial for coping with both organisational and competitive stress-inducing factors, and her study indicated that athletes are more likely to seek support from individuals with whom they feel close. Therefore, parents and coaches are the closest sources from whom athletes expect positivity and assistance. Kilit et al. (2019) examined 14 year-old tennis players during periods of prolonged physical exertion and investigated their responses to coach encouragement and support. The study confirmed that coach encouragement positively affects training intensity, performance, and the level of enjoyment experienced during training.

When discussing the obtained findings, it is worth recalling the 'triangle' of parent–child–coach relationships and the importance of three-way collaboration. Crespo and Miley (1998) emphasised that parents are a part of the shared team, whose success depends on whether all members maintain a unified philosophy towards the process. It is essential that parents provide emotional support to their children while not becoming overly involved in the entire process of sport or attempting to assume the coach's role. Research with tennis players in other countries has shown that acute stress in tennis most frequently arises from negative comments made by coaches and close significant others (Puente-Diaz & Anshel, 2005). Bois et al. (2009) also revealed in a study of adolescent basketball players and tennis players that parents can influence pre-competition anxiety. The presence of both parents before competitions increased anxiety levels in all participants, except for male tennis players. Female tennis players reported higher parental pressure than other participants, which is consistent with the findings of our study concerning female tennis players. The educational role of parents before competitions

was associated with anxiety in tennis players. Parental pressure before competitions was linked to increased anxiety in all players, whereas parental praise and understanding were negatively associated with anxiety in female tennis players. Thus, excessive parental involvement, if not intended to support and praise athletes, may have a negative psychological impact on young athletes (Bonavolontà et al., 2021).

The study investigated not only whether tennis players experience stress during competitions but also which stress symptoms they perceive. Before commenting on the results, it is worth noting that stress symptoms are typically classified as physiological (e.g. increased sweating, rapid breathing, etc.), psychological (e.g. feelings of anxiety, difficulty controlling thoughts, maintaining focus, etc.), and behavioural (e.g. changes in voice, wandering gaze, trembling, etc.) (Martens, 1999). In our study, young tennis players most frequently reported increased heart rate and muscle tension among physiological symptoms, feelings of anxiety and negative thoughts among psychological symptoms, and slowed movements and impaired mobility on the court among behavioural symptoms. It should be noted that behavioural symptoms can be difficult for athletes to assess themselves, as they are often more easily observed externally, i.e. by observing the athlete. Although no differences were found between stress symptoms experienced by female and male players in our study, such differences have been observed in other research. For example, García-Gonzálvez et al. (2022) found that physiological stress symptoms were more common among female athletes than male athletes.

Various strategies, both individual and complex, are used to cope with emerging stress. The present study allowed us to identify the stress-coping strategies most commonly used by young athletes. To reduce stress, tennis players most frequently reported methods such as listening to favourite music, communicating with parents or friends, consulting with their coach, and practicing breathing techniques. Other studies have shown that tennis players use avoidance strategies (e.g. distancing thoughts or trying not to think about failure, pushing failure-related thoughts aside and focusing on positive aspects), positive self-talk, and problem-focused coping strategies (i.e. confronting and resolving the problem) to overcome fear of failure (Sagar et al., 2009). Our study did not reveal any differences in stress-coping strategies between female and male athletes. However, such differences have been observed in other research. For instance, a review by Nuetzel (2023) indicated that female athletes tend to use emotion-focused coping strategies, whereas male athletes are more likely to use task-focused coping strategies to manage stressful situations.

Surprisingly, the athletes in this study rarely used warm-up routines as a means of calming themselves before performance. Although ensuring good physical condition is important in cases of excessive arousal, performing an effective warm-up is particularly beneficial (Miškinis, 2002). Equally important are strategies such as diverting thoughts away from competition and performing autogenic training (Miškinis, 2002). In cases of initial apathy (when inhibitory processes dominate in the cerebral cortex), the athlete should not be left alone; they should be calmed, engaged in an energetic warm-up, and apathy should be broken. This helps achieve an optimal competitive state, where the athlete approaches the start of a competition in a positive mood, with clear thinking and focused attention on the upcoming performance. According to our study, tennis players rarely use calming techniques such as autogenic training or concentration and relaxation through visualisation. It can be assumed that young athletes may be unfamiliar with these techniques or lack the experience and skills to apply them. According to Skarbalius (2023), coaches should instruct athletes on which actions to take and how to perform them to optimise mental energy. Therefore, a coach's knowledge of psychological preparation forms the foundation for an athlete's psychological readiness. Notably, one in five tennis players indicated that poor psychological preparedness was a source of stress. Consequently, psychological training is closely linked to fostering self-confidence, enhancing self-esteem, and developing mental toughness. Mental toughness and self-confidence are among the key attributes that help athletes cope with stress and experience it less intensely (Cowden et al., 2016).

It should be noted that young athletes and their coaches do not make full use of all effective stress-coping strategies. The results of this study also highlight the role of parents and coaches in managing stress among young athletes: coaches and parents should provide not only technical guidance but also emotional support to help athletes cope with stress. Collaboration between parents, coaches, and athletes is essential to ensure a successful and long-term career among young tennis players. In summary, the study demonstrated that

stress among young tennis players is a complex and multifaceted process influenced by both individual psychological factors and external conditions. An effective stress management system should address all of these aspects and be oriented towards the psychological needs of the athletes.

This study is not without limitation. One aspect that could be improved is the insufficient consideration of each athlete's individual circumstances. To examine the topic more comprehensively and in greater detail, it would be valuable to complement the study with a qualitative component, such as conducting semi-structured interviews, exploring each athlete's personal situation, and analysing individual cases and stress factors more thoroughly. Another concern is the relatively wide age range of the participants, which was necessary to obtain a sufficiently large sample. The ability to cope with stress is likely closely related to an athlete's experience, psychological maturity, and social development; therefore, results may vary among tennis players of different ages. It is also worth mentioning that the study used a questionnaire developed for this study. Although the obtained results revealed that the stress-related data of tennis players replicated the trends obtained in other studies, employing analogous research instruments used in other studies could achieve a more accurate comparison of the data.

Future perspectives. Previous studies have identified that one of the stress-inducing factors may be the opponent's unfair behaviour (Puente-Diaz & Anshel, 2005). Since this factor was not examined in the present study, its potential impact on the stress experienced among tennis players remains unclear. However, future research should take this factor into account. Further investigations on athlete stress should also consider how stress affects tennis players depending on their skill level and experience. Additionally, future studies would be valuable to observe changes in athletes' stress levels over time, for example, across a competitive season as their performance level evolves. It would also be relevant to explore the extent to which parents and coaches experience stress due to their children's competitions and the training process, as well as the potential effects of this stress on young athletes.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that one in five young tennis players experience a high level of stress, while half of them experience a moderate level of stress during competitions. Girls reported experiencing a lot of stress or a great amount of stress more frequently than boys. The main stress-inducing factors among young tennis players were fear of making mistakes, fear of losing, fear of not demonstrating their skills, or fear of not showing their best performance. For a quarter of the players, parental expectations also contributed to stress during competitions. To cope with or reduce stress, young tennis players most often listen to their favourite music, talk to parents or friends, communicate with the coach, or practice breathing techniques. However, young athletes do not fully use all effective stress-coping strategies. These findings highlight the importance of the coach's role in the psychological preparation of young athletes.

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