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Coping with Being Cut from the Team: Examining Grit, Resilience and Optimism in Response to Failure in College Athletes

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Abstract

This research investigated the ways in which optimism, grit and resilience are related to academic success and athletic participation for college students after they have gone through a significant negative event in their sport. Participants between the ages of 18 to 25 were evaluated on grit, optimism, resilience and coping strategies through the Grit Scale, the Life Orientation Test, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, and the Ways of Coping questionnaire. All individuals had been either cut from or left a collegiate sports team. Respondents also completed an informational demographics questionnaire assessing age, college grades, any ongoing participation in a sport, and appraisal of and attributions about the experience of leaving their team. It was predicted that individuals with higher levels of optimism, grit and resilience, as well as better coping skills, would achieve similar or better grades after than before leaving the team and would continue to participate in their chosen sport (in some role) following the experience of being cut. Results indicated that continued participation in sport was not associated with any of the proposed predictor variables, and assessment of changes in grades, unfortunately, could not be analyzed. In contrast, multiple significant relationships were found between resilience and coping mechanisms, in addition to aspects of attributional style. Furthermore, both resilience and a combination of resilience and grit, but not optimism, predicted adaptive coping strategies in participants. This study may help to further determine what helps individuals succeed after hardship, and also could help confirm the importance of both preparing sports participants for failure experiences and also supporting their subsequent efforts at success.

Coping with Being Cut from the Team: Examining Grit, Resilience and Optimism in Response to Failure in College Athletes

In the United States, professional and amateur sports have a significant impact on the lives of many people, regardless of whether they are athletes, supporters, fans, or employees (e.g., coaches). Most people do not, however, understand how hard it is to "simply" become a college athlete even if one was the best player on their high school team. College sports are much more competitive than high school sports, with only around 480,000 out of nearly 8 million high school athletes being able to move on to the next level (National College Athletic Association, 2016). This is a mere 6% of high school athletes; 94% must settle with not being able to move forward with their goal. For many of these students, it is not as simple as just being "done" with their sport; effects are usually deeper and more dramatic in effect.

Many athletes, if they try to participate at the next level, have to go through a try-out process in which they have to be in the best physical shape of their life, expect that they have a good day in terms of competing, and also hope that the coaches are even paying attention to them and are interested in them. This takes a tremendous amount of effort before try-outs, a tremendous amount of focus to control one's growing anxiety during try-outs, and a lot of patience while waiting to hear from the coach about the outcome. After training for several hours daily over the course of many years, many of these athletes in fact will not get the chance to continue with their goal. For most of these emerging adults, who usually range in age from 17 to 22 years, college represents the last time that they would have had a chance to participate competitively in their favorite sport. Once they hear back from the coach a few days later, if they even hear back, their dream could be shattered. Some of these athletes chose their college based on their sports team, or were even recruited by the coach. After being cut they may not know

what their next step should be. Should they transfer and try out at a different school? Should they try again next year at the same school? Or should they simply move on and focus on something else? They might blame themselves for their failure, blame the college coach, their high school coach, their basic abilities, or other factors. It is also problematic that there is usually little support for them at this point in their life, and the fact that most of the athletes that are being cut are in their first year of college adds to this issue.

College freshmen in particular may be at risk when facing being cut. They might be away from home and their parents and friends for the first time ever and too far away to take a quick trip back; they might be unsure of how to handle stressful, unpredictable situations (Ross et al., 1999) like getting cut. In most cases the transition from high school to college for freshmen results in "friend sickness", i.e., the feelings accompanying the loss of friends from "back home" due to relocation (DeBerard, Spielmans, & Julka, 2004). Some of them may also feel like they not only let themselves down but also their friends and family down by not making the team. They may be too scared to break the news to their parents, perhaps the only people they could contact in this depressing situation. For many it is also tough to move forward simply because they have been immersed in sports for half of their life. The familiar routine of going to practice several times a week, being around their friends, and feeling as if sports are an integral part of their life has gained great importance. An injury already has deleterious effects on an individual due to the loss of the athlete identity by not being able to perform for an extended period of time (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993). Getting cut or leaving a team, therefore, must also have a very traumatic effect, as there is very little chance of competing at a high level again, ultimately losing one's identity as an athlete. It is clear to see that most, if not all, of these students will go through a very rough time emotionally and psychologically, especially by being

in a new and different environment without an important part of their identity's routine. Finally, the lack of social support at this time can have a significant impact on academic achievement.

For all of the above reasons, the event of being cut can have a lasting impact on some of those approximately 6 million young athletes who essentially lose this part of their identity. It can impact their social ties, education, family, and many other aspects of their life (Webb, Nasco, Riley, & Headrick, 1998). It is therefore important to examine how this significant setback would impact their willingness to put forth effort in academics or other aspects of life, and also how this impacts their further participation in sports. Consequently, it is important to investigate what traits can help athletes cope with this significant setback.

In the eyes of many people, expert level performers can simply be identified by talent alone. In many cases, professional athletes, college athletes, and outstanding high school athletes are perceived to be inherently talented or genetically predisposed to excel. However, the biggest aspect that sets experts apart from everyone else is not talent, it is "acquired knowledge and skills or physiological adaptations effected by training. More plausible loci of individual differences are factors that predispose individuals toward engaging in deliberate practice and enable them to sustain high levels of practice for many years" (Ericson & Chamess, 1994, p. 67). Therefore, it is clear that there is more at play than talent.

Due to large number of individuals having to go through the event of getting cut, the objective of the present study is in terms of finding skills or traits that may further success in athletics and academics in response to such a tremendously impactful failure. Some of the factors previously found, which may be important for coping in college athletes are grit, resilience and optimism.

Grit

Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly (2007) defined grit as "perseverance and passion for long-term goals (1087)". Grit further entails "working strenuously toward challenges, maintaining effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress" (Duckworth et al., 2007 p. 1087). In other words, high levels of grit can support the achievement of a goal regardless of negative impacts. Interestingly, grit has been found to be significantly higher in persons with higher educational levels (Duckworth et al., 2007). Grit actually is a better predictor of success than IQ in regard to attaining higher levels of education, higher GPAs, and experiencing fewer career changes (Duckworth et al., 2007). Furthermore, the same study by Duckworth showed that grit increases with age, which could be the result of more maturity and more experience with accomplishing long-term goals. High levels of grit have been positively related to academic success in black males attending predominantly white colleges (Strayhorn, 2013). Grittier black males had higher grades compared to less gritty peers even when age, school year, degree aspiration, and other aspects were being controlled. Grit also positively relates to retention rates in the army, where individuals high in grit were less likely to voluntarily drop out of an Army Special Operations Forces selection course. "Grittier" individuals also show higher retention rates when working in sales, and display greater high school graduation rates (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014). These studies give evidence of the value of grit in goal attainment, even in stressful circumstances. Therefore, the present study could illuminate grit's importance for college athletes.

Getting cut from a team is difficult for athletes, as noted. It may put them at risk for depressogenic, pessimistic, "bleak" thinking, and it deprives them of the sport experience, which may have provided an important protective factor. Miller and Hoffman (2009) found evidence that individuals participating in a team sport and those who associate themselves with the

"athlete identity" are at decreased risk for depression and even have a lower chance of having had past-year suicide attempts (Miller & Hoffman, 2009).

Research by Duckworth et al. (2007) has also looked at grit in comparison to personality theory's concept of the "Big Five" personality traits (John & Srivastava, 1999). In their work, grit was significantly related only to conscientiousness, or individuals being more likely to articulate clear goals and stay committed to these goals. Duckworth argued that, "Grit overlaps with achievement aspects of conscientiousness but differs in its emphasis on long-term stamina rather than short-term intensity (p. 1087). This seems also to emphasize self-control as a part of grit (Duckworth et al., 2007,). Grit is also more highly predictive of an individual's number of career changes than any of the Big Five traits, according to Duckworth, with "grittier" individuals changing careers far less often. In one of Duckworth's initial studies, grit was shown to be highly predictive of first year cadets' completion of grueling summer training at the United States Military Academy at West Point; grittier cadets were far more likely to finish the intensive summer "Beast Barracks" training (Duckworth et al., 2007). Grit has also been found to predict success for young students participating in the Scripps National Spelling Bee, with higher levels positively associated with increased hours of studying, specifically on weekends (Duckworth et al., 2007).

Translated to sports and the athletic endeavor, grit could be related to the number of hours of working out outside of organized practice. This again underscores the definition of grit which has to do with people persevering through tough times to reach a goal. Taken together, these studies seem to support the idea that grit levels could predict who, after being cut from a team, would continue with their sport or would even try out again. To take this notion further, it could be that being cut from a team might in part result from having lower levels of grit

compared to one's fellow athletes. Additionally, through these previous studies, grit maybe related to work ethic and to continuous effort even after defeat or failure, risk of failure, or circumstances which push one "to the limit".

Grit has also been shown to influence mood and well-being. In a study of undergraduate technology students, a significant positive correlation was found between grit, positive affect, overall happiness, and life satisfaction, as negative affect was significantly negatively correlated with grit. Furthermore, study authors reasoned that grit might play an important role in happiness through the actions of "working for one's goals, from close social relationships, renewable physical pleasures, and flow activities" (Singh & Duggal Jha, 2008, p. 44). In relation to stressful situations in sports, grit could improve coping because of a stronger buffering of negative mood states.

Resilience

Luthar and Cicchetti (2000) explained resilience as a process, occurring when people show positive adaptation and coping during trauma. It is thus the combination of a trait and skill that can be improved or decreased in strength. Therefore, the words "skill" and "trait": will be used interchangeably throughout this study to refer to resilience. In other words, resilience helps buffer against harmful outcomes and failure, but also gives one the power to persevere. One clear example of this is Scali and colleagues' research on anxiety disorders and resilience in women (Scali, Gandubert, Ritchie, Soulier, Ancelin, & Chadieu, 2012). Women who had survived breast cancer, as well as women without a previous breast cancer history, completed the 10-item CD-RISC resilience scale and were compared on lifetime psychiatric symptoms. Findings included that high levels of resilience were found to relate to fewer anxiety disorder symptoms. The most interesting finding of this study was that individuals who scored at

intermediate or high levels on the scale had also been exposed to a traumatic event in their life, indicating that resilience may be something that grows or shrinks through experience. In a similar study with students, resilience was found to positively relate to "psychological well-being and negatively associated with psychological distress, depression and anxiety (Haddadi & Besharat, 2010, p. 639)" as measured by the CD-RISC resilience scale, the Mental Health Inventory, the Beck Depression Inventory and Beck Anxiety Inventory, and the General Health Questionnaire. A study with a completely different sample was performed in relation to the military and whether resilience, unit support and postdeployment social support could buffer against several psychological disorders and difficulties (Pietrzak et al., 2010). Results indicated that resilience was positively related to unit support and mediated the association between unit support and PTSD and depressive symptoms. Thus, resilience could also be useful in connection with effective coping mechanisms.

Optimism

Scheier, Carver and Segestorm (2010) defined optimism as the "individual difference variable that reflects the extent to which people hold generalized favorable expectancies for their future. Higher levels of optimism have been related prospectively to better subjective well-being in times of adversity or difficulty (i.e., controlling for previous well-being)" (p. 879). High levels of optimism, in conjunction with grit, may lead people to feeling that a goal is still reachable even though tough to attain. Optimism can also help them to continue to strive to achieve it as opposed to giving up and abandoning their goals. The concepts of optimism and pessimism as personality traits were explicated in Seligman's groundbreaking 1990 book *Learned Optimism*. Optimists are persons who believe that defeat is just a temporary setback and that it is not their fault or due to things they have done. Additionally, optimists are unfazed by defeat, and when

confronted by a bad situation, perceive it as a challenge and try harder. They attribute failures not to circumstances that cannot be changed but to modifiable factors, and on the contrary, see successes as something other than a fluke or a lucky break. In contrast, pessimists are characterized by the belief that bad events will last a long time, will undermine everything they do, and are their own fault or their own doing. In other words, persons tend to explain positive and negative life events to themselves on dimensions of global versus specific, internal versus external, and stable versus unstable causes (Seligman, Peterson Kaslow, Tanenbaum, Alloy, & Abramson, 1984). Pessimistic attributions about the causes of negative events are internal ("it's my own fault"), stable ("I will never achieve this"), and global ("I can't do anything right"), while optimists explain the same events in an opposite fashion. On the other hand, optimists explain positive events as caused by internal, stable, and global factors, while pessimists explain these events as external ("I was lucky"), unstable ("this usually does not happen"), specific ("it only worked out well this one time"). Many negative self-characteristics like pessimism, in one way or another, increase the chance of developing a psychological disorder when hardship is experienced (Alloy et al., 2006; Swallow & Kuiper, 1988). Accordingly, athletes who go through significantly tough times like getting cut from a team would seem more inclined to try harder the following year or redouble their efforts at school work or other tasks if they are high in optimism. Their disappointment at the outset may eventually turn into eagerness and enthusiasm towards their next goal (Carver & Scheier, 2005), helping them progress further in other areas and be able to move mentally past their hardship. Wrosch and Scheier's (2003) assertion that optimists are more effective at coping when goals are blocked provides support for this idea.

Optimistic and pessimistic mindsets impact motivation, persistence and one's vulnerability to depression, depending on how we consistently explain events in our lives. These explanations can also inspire us to problem solve and strengthen our resilience in the face of adversity (Gillham, Shatte, Reivich, & Seligman, 2001). The Reformulated Learned Helplessness Theory (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978) predicts that pessimistic and optimistic explanations will lead to different expectations about the future. The internal, stable, and global "attributions" defined above lead to an expectation of uncontrollability of outcomes for negative events, leading to feelings of helplessness when setbacks are experienced. The alternative attribution characterized by externality, instability, and specificity will instead lead to an expectation of control and resilience.

Another aspect of possessing a positive outlook was discovered in regard to rehospitalization after coronary artery bypass graft surgery. In this case people with high optimism were less likely to require rehospitalization compared to patients with lower levels of optimism (Scheier et al., 1999). Optimistic people were less likely to be rehospitalized due to specific problems with their initial surgery and also overall health status. Optimism, then, appears to help control both physical and psychological issues. Overall, individuals with higher levels of optimism were found to not just have a better outlook on life but specifically also cope more efficient with the issues which they face. In a study of undergraduates, Scheier, Weintraub and Carver (1986) found that optimists engage more in problem-focused coping when the experience was perceived as being controllable. If the experience seemed uncontrollable optimists tended to use more positive reframing (trying to place the situation in the best possible light) than pessimists. In men, optimism was also positively related to seeking out social support. Therefore, in sum, and perhaps especially for persons whose life events that have shaken them

tremendously (e.g., serious defeat or setbacks in their sport), who are also in a fairly new environment with a new social group, the presence of optimism could go a long way with helping their coping process. High optimism could facilitate strategies such as problem-focused coping (i.e, attempting to change a situation), seeking social support; and positive reinterpretation of events.

In summary, significant research evidence demonstrated in several studies indicates that optimism, resilience and grit are positively associated with perseverance, goal striving, and goal attainment. Furthermore, for those persons who possess the characteristic of optimism, it has been demonstrated that they have better coping skills and are also more adaptive.

Coping Style

Optimism was found to be negatively related to "avoidance coping" and also perceived stress in a study of the relationship of optimism with mood, coping, and immune change response to stress (Segestorm, et al., 1998). Also, in a study by Brissette, Scheier, and Carver (2012), optimism was positively related to greater perceptions of support, greater friendship network size, and increased social support in college students over the course of a semester. Furthermore, greater optimism was also associated with better coping skills. All these aspects point to better coping strategies and improved help through friendships, which of course could help a student while struggling with a serious situation.

Coping strategies can be categorized as either *problem-focused* or *emotion-focused* efforts utilized to avoid psychological harm due to negative experiences (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). Problem-focused coping refers to attempts at reduction or alteration of the stressor itself, while emotion-focused coping focuses on reduction of the emotional stress that accompanies the stressful situation (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Coping as a construct was defined by Folkman

and Lazarus (1980, p. 223) as “the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them”. Each of the two primary coping strategies have sub-categories within them. Included under problem-focused coping are: active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint coping, and seeking of instrumental social support. Emotion-focused coping also includes: seeking of emotional social support, positive reinterpretation, acceptance, denial, and “turning to religion”. Emotion-focused coping is thought to be best used in situations that have to be accepted and must be endured, and is also termed avoidant coping, whereas problem-focused coping is also termed approach coping. Avoidant coping was found to correspond with higher levels of depression during adolescence compared to approach coping (Herman-Stahl, Stemmler, & Petersen, 1995). Similar results were also found by Dumont and Provost (1999) with avoidance coping being positively related to stress or distress and negatively correlated with self-esteem in a study of adolescents and their adjustment styles. Emotion-focused coping can have positive impacts in situations in which problem-focused coping is not a logical option.

One situation where emotion-focused coping is the only option could be a negative work environment. To use problem focused coping, the individual would have to quit their job, which in most cases is not a viable alternative. Krischer, Penney, and Hunter (2010) analyzed a situation in which individuals engaged in “production deviance” (e.g., intentionally working slowly, doing work incorrectly, or neglecting to follow procedures) and withdrawal (e.g., taking longer breaks than allowed, arriving late, leaving early). It was found that these two strategies are beneficial in reducing emotional exhaustion in response to perceptions of unfair or inadequate reward (e.g., not getting paid enough for one’s efforts). Another important point relevant to individual differences in coping is that these differences appear similar across

different demographic groups and are not influenced by ethnicity, gender, birthplace or parental education. Phinney and Haas (2003) examined college students' journal-based writing samples in a study of 30 undergraduates; participants were members of ethnic minority groups and also were first-generation college students. It was found that expressing in one's writing a sense of commitment was strongly related to coping style, which seems to strongly relate to grit. The authors also suggest that "Determination to accomplish a particular goal may be an important component in dealing successfully with problems that interfere with the goal" (Phinney & Haas, 2003, p.723). These findings support this study's hypotheses by demonstrating the importance that certain ways of coping can have on failure.

Due to the previously mentioned factors of grit, resilience and optimisms connections to coping, our first hypothesis states that those factors can predict individual's ways of coping. The literature has also identified the beneficial impact of grit, resilience, optimism and coping strategies. Therefore, the second hypothesis of the study is that higher levels of grit, optimism and resilience, in combination with good coping strategies, are significantly related to better grades and further participation in sports.

Current Study

Identifying adaptive characteristics (such as level of grit, optimism, or resilience) and behaviors (such as specific coping styles) that are protective factors for a setback such as getting cut from a team are essential to explore, and could inform effective coaching, support, and overall athlete well-being. Personality traits, attributions, and coping abilities all may play a part in adaptation. Specifically, while emotion-focused coping can be beneficial in some situations, problem-focused coping is likely the more beneficial approach when cut from a team, given that there are several options that can be pursued by the individuals; trying out again,

participating in another sport, participating in intramural leagues while also focusing more on academics. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to identify how levels of optimism, grit and resilience, in conjunction with coping, and problem-focused coping specifically, relate to academic performance and participation in athletics after a college level athlete is cut from or leaves a sports team. The identification of helpful traits should lead to incorporation of specific training methods by coaches to more successfully prepare athletes for serious setbacks in athletics and in life, in general --- part of a good coach's obligation.

Participants in this study completed the following measures online: Grit Scale (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007), Life Orientation Test-Revised (Scheier & Carver, 1994), the CD-RISC scale (Connor & Davidson, 2003), the Ways of Coping Scale (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985), and a short questionnaire assessing current and previous college grades and sports participation (e.g., any ongoing participation after leaving) and their understanding of the circumstances of being cut from their team.

Method

Participants

Participants were 39 current, full-time college students aged 18 to 24 years old. All were enrolled at four-year, Division III, colleges that are part of the State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC). To be eligible, participants needed either to have been cut from a team or have left a team on their own terms. The age range selected ensured a sample of participants who had experienced this stressor within the last few years, helping recency of recall of the event and improving validity of the data. Characteristics of participants are summarized in Table 1. A total of 20 females, making up 51% of total participants, and 19 males completed the questionnaires. Out of the 39 total participants, 5 were freshmen (12.8%), 13 were seniors

(33.3%), 8 were juniors (20.5%) and 13 were seniors (33.3%), with the average age being 20.4 years. Ethnic group was not assessed, but due to the number of colleges represented in the sample, it was anticipated that the participant sample was diverse with respect to ethnicity and socioeconomic status. A total of 16 (41%) left their team by choice, 21 (53.8%) were forced off the team and the remaining 2 (5.2%) individuals did not give a response. Further intramural participants totaled 8 (20.5%) with one (2.6%) individual not giving a response.

Measures

Life Orientation Test, Revised. Optimism was assessed through use of the Life Orientation Test, Revised (LOT-R; Scheier, Carver, & Bridges,1994; see Appendix A). This 10-item self-report scale identifies an individual's expectancy for positive or negative outcomes, and utilizes a 5-point Likert-type scale with item response values ranging from zero (representing "strongly disagree") to 4 ("strongly agree"). Examples of items include "In uncertain times, I usually expect the best" and "I hardly ever expect things to go my way". Negatively-worded items are reversed-scored prior to computing LOT-R total scores, and also included are four "filler" items (e.g., "It's easy for me to relax"; "I don't get upset too easily") which are not included in summed scores. Total scores thus reflect a sum of 6 of the 10 individual item values with higher scores representing higher levels of optimism. LOT-R total scores can range from 0 to 24 (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994). Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .82, and LOT-R also shows adequate convergent and discriminant validity in comparison with other personality variables (Scheier, et al., 1994). Cronbach's alpha for this measure in the current study was .69.

Grit Scale. Grit was measured through the use of the Grit Scale (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; see Appendix A). The Grit Scale is a 12-item self-report scale assessing the construct of

grit and persistence. The possible item response values range from one (representing an answer of "*not at all like me*") to 5 ("*very much like me*") on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Examples of Grit Scale items include "I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge" and "new ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones". Negatively-worded items are reverse-scored and item scores are then summed and divided by 12 to obtain an individual's final score on the measure. Thus, higher scores indicate higher levels of grit and range from 1 to 5. The scale has shown high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .89 (Erklund, et al. 2011). According to Duckworth et al., (2010) the scale has established construct and predictive validity, and has shown high internal reliability with an alpha of .82. Cronbach's alpha in the current study was .71.

Ways of Coping Scale. Participants' coping strategies were determined through the Revised Ways of Coping Scale (WOC; Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; see Appendix A). This self-report scale, using a 4-point Likert-type scale, assesses the different types of coping strategies individuals use, with response options ranging from "not used" to "used a great deal". The Ways of Coping has 67 items and is further divided into eight subscales (specific items on WOC which comprise each of the eight subscales are summarized in Appendix A). Each of the eight subscales has an acceptable Cronbach's alpha level (Problem-focused coping = .88, Wishful thinking = .86, Detachment = .74, Seeking social support = .82, Focusing on the positive = .70, Self-blame = .76, Tension reduction = .59, Keep to self = .65). The measure includes one problem-focused, six emotion-focused, and one mixed scale (Keep to self), identified by Folkman and Lazarus (1985) in a study of college students during three stages of a college examination. Cronbach's alpha for this measure in the current study was .94 for the overall scale. Cronbach's alpha for each subscale are as follows: Problem-focused coping = .808;

Wishful thinking = .771; Detachment = .565; Seeking social support = .642; Focusing on the positive = .622; Self-blame = .414; Tension reduction = .252; Keeping to self = .555.

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale. Connor and Davidson's 10-item self-report scale was used to evaluate participants' level of resilience (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson, 2003; see Appendix A). A 5-point Likert-type scale is used, with possibilities ranging from 0 ("not true at all") to 4 ("true nearly all of the time"). All items are summed to arrive at a total score, with higher scores indicating higher levels of resilience (Campbell-Sills & Stein, 2007). High internal consistency of this scale has been established, with a Cronbach's alpha of .85. Cronbach's alpha in the current study was .839.

Demographic Information/Sports Participation Questionnaire. To measure certain demographic variables, a Demographic Information/Sports Participation Questionnaire was developed by the investigator for use in the present study. Sample questions include basic personal questions like, "What is your gender?" and "What year in school are you currently in?", as well as questions about athletic and academic performance, including "Are you competing in an intramural sport?" and "What were your grades (GPA) the semester when you left your team?".

Procedure

A total of 20 Division III, four-year, SUNY colleges were contacted in order to identify participants for this study. Recruitment of potential participants began with the investigator contacting athletic directors and coaches, through the help of an associate athletic director in the SUNY system. Athletic directors assisted in turn by reaching out to coaches, who had lists of email addresses for all individual who had tried out for their teams, and their students who had been cut from a collegiate sports team or otherwise left their team -- within the past two years --

were invited to participate. Once these potential participants were identified, they were contacted by email by the athletic directors, informed about the study and its procedures and incentives, and given instructions on how to access and complete the study questionnaires and also how to contact the investigator if needed. A total of 35 participants supplied full responses that could be used for data analyses, and descriptive information is included in Table 1. Due to privacy concerns, it was not possible to identify the number of participants from each participating school. After reading an informed consent form and agreeing to participate online by using Qualtrics, participants were able to access the questionnaires. Study instructions encouraged participants to fill out the measures on their own time and by themselves.

Each participant completed the demographics questionnaire (assessing grades, information on their athletic setback, and their current participation in that sport or any sport); the Grit Scale, the Life Orientation Test, the CD-RISC, and the Ways of Coping Scale; copies of these measures can be found in Appendix A. Completing the questionnaires was estimated to have required approximately 30 minutes.

Following completion of the questionnaires, each participant was provided access to a debriefing statement that included instructions on how to learn more about the hypotheses and study results at the conclusion of the investigation. Also, as a precaution against any possible emotional distress that could be experienced by participants recalling “being cut”, the debriefing statement also included contact information of the counseling centers on each participating campus. Participants received a $10 gift card to Amazon.com (electronically, through their e-mail addresses) upon completion of the questionnaires in a way that maintained anonymity of their responses and data. IRB approval was obtained before beginning recruitment and data collection.

Results

This study's aim was to find out if levels of optimism, grit and resilience, in conjunction with coping strategies, relate to grades and to further participation in a sport after an athlete leaves a team. Because hypotheses focused upon relationship of three predictor variables, optimism, grit and resilience, to outcome variables of coping, grades, and future sports participation, multiple regression was used in data analysis. Correlational analyses were also completed between total scores and subscale scores for all measures. Following the online data collection, all data were imported from Qualtrics, uploaded to SPSS, and analyzed, beginning with computation of total measure scores and, for the Ways of Coping, subscale or factor scores.

The first hypothesis was that levels of optimism, resilience and grit could predict ways of coping. A stepwise multiple regression was conducted to evaluate whether total Grit score, total LOT-R score and total CD-RISC score could predict any of the Ways of Coping subscales. Surprisingly, this yielded negative results and did not support the hypothesis fully, in that optimism did not show any significant predictive power, and grit predicted just one WOC subscale. Resilience, on the other hand, showed predictive power in several instances.

Since LOT-R (optimism) scores did not predict any of the WOC subscales for coping strategies, analyses with Grit and CD-RISC (resilience) scores were exclusively used in other regression analyses to predict WOC subscales. Results of these multiple regression analyses can be found in Table 3. Stepwise linear regression was done to evaluate the first hypothesis of whether total Grit score, total LOT-R score and total CD-RISC score could predict any of the WOC subscales. All predictor variables were analyzed as continuous. Results indicated that level of resilience (CD-RISC scores) significantly predicted four WOC coping subscales: "problem focused coping" ($F(1, 31) = 13.102$; $R^2=.297$; $R^2_{Adjusted} = .274$; $p=.001$), "wishful

thinking" (F(1, 32)= 4.223; R^2=.117; $R^2_{Adjusted}$ = .089; p = .048), "seeking social support" (F(1, 32) = 9.431; R^2=.228; $R^2_{Adjusted}$ = .204; p=.004) and "focused on the positive" (F(1, 31) = 19.022; R^2=.38; $R^2_{Adjusted}$ = .36; p<.001). Thus, participants' level of resilience significantly predicted adaptive coping styles of problem solving, seeking support, and maintaining a focus on positive aspects of the situation, and those with greater resilience were more likely to engage in problem focused coping. "Wishful thinking" was also significant, but less so compared to the three other variables, and this finding might be explained as reflecting attempts and efforts to distract oneself and prevent rumination about the experience of being cut from their team.

"Detachment" as a coping strategy was significantly predicted both by resilience (F(1, 32) = 8.523; R^2=.210; $R^2_{Adjusted}$ = .186; p=.006) and also resilience in combination with grit (F(2, 31) = 7.048; R^2=.313; $R^2_{Adjusted}$ = .268; p = .04). This result (finding "detachment" related to grit) was the only coping strategy variable for which grit had any predictive power --- and this was only in connection with resilience. Importantly, grit score analyses resulted in a negative β, indicating that higher levels of grit result in lower levels of detachment style coping, while it was the opposite for resilience.

To evaluate hypothesis two, that higher levels of optimism, grit, and resilience, as well as good coping strategies are significantly related to better grades and further participation in sports, correlational analysis was completed using all WOC scales, gender, how individuals parted from their team, as well as total Grit, LOT-R and CD-RISC scores. Results are presented in table 4a and 4b. No correlation was found between continued intercollegiate participation, as in trying out for the team again or trying out for another team. The variables in question included optimism (r = -.026, p = .876), grit (r = .162, p =.333) and resilience (r = -.012, p = .946). Finally, none of the ways of coping subscales, problem focused (r = .057, p = .75), wishful

thinking (r = .163, p = .358), detachment (r = -.164, p = .355), seeking social support (r = .002, p = .990), focusing on the positive (r = -.033, p = .855), elf-blame (r = .175, p = .323), tension reduction (r = .213, p = .225), keeping to self (r = -.073, p = .683), showed a significant correlation with the sport participation. Participating in one or multiple intramural sports after being cut was found to correlate significantly and negatively with "seeking social support" coping, exclusively (r = -.422, p = .013). In other words, respondents who participated in intramural sports were less likely to use seeking of social support as a coping style. The variables of Internality vs. externality (r = .017, p = .920), stability vs. instability (r = .194, p = .243), globality vs. specificity (r = .260, p = .115), optimism (r = -.135, p = .425); Grit (r = .017, p = .921), resilience (r = -.173, p = .327), problem focused coping (r = -.063, p = .724), wishful thinking (r = -.2, p = .256), detachment (r = -.146, p = .408), focusing on the positive (r = .190, p = .290), self-blame (r = .023, p = .898), tension reduction (r = -.113, p = .523), keeping to self (r = -.045, p = .802) did not produce any significant results.

Analysis of grade data could not be accomplished, due to questions in the Demographics Questionnaire which apparently were unclear to participants. The questions about grades which were developed as part of the Demographics Questionnaire apparently led to an inconsistency in the ways in which the time frame for grades before and after participation was reported by participants. Finally, as would be expected, all WOC coping subscales, besides "focusing on the positive" and "keeping to self", showed a positive relationship with each other at .05 or .01 significance, evidence of validity of the total Ways of Coping scale scores.

Total CD-RISC resilience score was found to have a significant positive correlation with "problem focused coping", "wishful thinking", "detachment", "seeking social support" and "focusing on the positive" coping strategies at the .05 or .01 level. All of these coping

mechanisms could be viewed as positive ways, including wishful thinking. Wishful thinking could be result in an increase of motivation to achieve an outcome that was failed at first. This can be especially beneficial in combination with the other coping mechanisms correlated with resilience. Additionally, the way in which individuals left their team ("on their own" versus being "cut") correlated negatively with wishful thinking, and positively with self-blame and tension reduction coping, indicating that individuals who willingly left the team were less likely to engage in wishful thinking and were more likely to engage in self-blame and tension reduction coping.

When analyzing only the group of individuals who had been cut (Table 6a and 6b), higher current GPA was found to relate to less self-blame (r = -.668, p < .005), tension reduction coping (r = -.552, p = .027) and problem focused coping (r = -.625, p < .01), while intramural participation was related to lower levels of resilience (r = -.529, p = .029). Grit score was also found to be negatively correlated with tension reduction (r = -.526, p = .036) and keeping to self coping (r = -.544, p = .03). Resilience, furthermore, was significantly correlated with problem focused coping (r = .595, p = .015), seeking social support coping (r = .664, p = .005), and focusing on the positive coping (r = .78, p = .000).

On the other hand, when examining data only for individuals who parted with their team on their own terms (Table 7a and 7b), current GPA was also negatively correlated with "self-blame" coping (r = -.553, p = .021), with further intramural participation being positively correlated with "focusing on the positive" coping (r = .719, p = .001). Resilience correlated positively with grit (r = .473, p = .048), problem focused coping (r = .584, p =.011), detachment (r = .515, p = .029), focusing on the positive (r = .521, p = .032) and tension reduction coping (r = .470, p = .049).

As mentioned earlier, the online questions asked of respondents about GPA did not yield the intended data and therefore did not allow data analysis of the predictions for this study's hypotheses. Fortunately, however, assessing participants' current GPA was possible, with results of correlational analyses reported in Tables 5a and 5b. In terms of attributional style, internality was significantly negatively correlated with GPA, while stability was significantly positively correlated, showing that as GPA increased so did stable attribution, whereas internal attributions decreased. Additionally, problem focused coping, detachment, self-blame, tension reduction and "keeping to self" coping were found to correlate negatively with current GPA.

Post Hoc Analyses

Attributional style was also assessed in this study because.... Three questions included in the Demographics questionnaire which addressed this were adapted from Seligman's Attributional Style Questionnaire (Peterson et al., 1982). These questions asked about participants' view of the cause of their leaving their team as explainable by "internal or external", "stable or unstable", and "global or specific" causes. Correlational analyses indicated a significant negative correlation between internality-externality and stability-instability at the .05 level (r = -.368), indicating that as a person's internal attributions about being cut increased, their stable attributions decreased. Furthermore, stable attribution was also found to increase while "problem focused" (r = -.41, p = .016), "self-blame" (r = -.35, p = .043), "tension reduction" (r = -.344, p = .047) and "keeping to self" (r = -.385, p = .025) coping decreased. Not surprisingly, internal attributions were also positively related to the WOC factor of "self-blame" (r = -.387, p = .024).

Separate analyses conducted for the subset of participants (N = 21) who were cut from their team indicated that internal attribution correlated positively with self-blame coping (r =

.682, p = .004), while stable attribution correlated negatively with tension reduction coping (r = -.517, p = .04). For individuals who parted on their own terms, internality was found to relate negatively with detachment coping (r = -.532, p = .023) while globality related positively with self-blame coping (r = .509, p = .031).

Discussion

The intent of this study was to examine character traits which might help individuals cope with failure, persist in the wake of it, and not abandon their goals and pursuits in sports. The first hypothesis explored the predictive value of one's levels of grit, optimism and resilience in regard to one's ways of coping. The results indicated that "grittier" individuals reported responding to failure with less detachment from the situation based on multiple regression analyses. In explaining this finding, it is important to consider that this coping strategy could be either adaptive or maladaptive. First, on the face of it, responding with <u>less</u> detachment (e.g., engaging in longer periods of cognitive rumination or "re-hashing" one's being cut) might be a viable way of coping for some if this provided "closure" or led to problem-solving. Less detachment could also reflect an increase in socialization or other strategies. Alternatively, less detachment could indicate an enduring negative effect of being cut, or could indicate that grit in this instance might not be as useful a trait as resilience. Resilient individuals might initially "detach" or seek distance from the situation at first, and then bounce back, using the time to reflect before resuming their typical interactions.

The findings of relationships between resilience and seeking social support lend themselves to several possible conclusions. Social support is more of an "immediate help line" compared to detachment. Social support, unlike detachment, is more about actively seeking out

help with ones' problem rather than seeking out individuals with whom to socialize, which could explain why resilience positively predicts seeking social support. The predictive power of resilience for "problem focused" and "focus on the positive" coping strategies is less clear. It could be that with problem focused coping an individual high in resilience is more likely to pay attention to what caused their failure --- and therefore should be able to avoid the same mistake in the future. "Focused on the positive" strategies in coping suggest that resilient individuals can view positive outcomes (e.g., "happy endings") connected to the goal at which they have "failed" with at first. Furthermore, being focused on the positive does not indicate that resilient people do not also pay attention to the negative, which can be taken from the combination of predictability of problem focused coping as well. Focusing on the positive can also be identified as a way to keep ones' "eyes on the prize", always knowing what the end goal is and not allowing distractions. Surprisingly, the WOC coping strategy which resilience did not seem to predict is "tension reduction". This is, at first, surprising because tension reduction includes the item "I jog or exercise" but also includes two other items namely "Got away from it for a while; tried to rest or take a vacation" and "Try to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication, etc." The last two items seems almost counterintuitive to expectations for an athlete high in resilience. The relationship between detachment and seeking social support might seem odd at first as those would cancel each other out, but the results can be interpreted a little different. In regard to both, one could figure that a resilient person could decrease their social interaction (detach) in order to commit more energy to figuring out why they failed in their task or how to improve but in trying to find a solution, would also reach out to individuals that could potentially help with this task. Furthermore, the positive relationship between resilience and wishful thinking could mean that "daydreaming", "brainstorming", or

simply spending time imagining one's future life in sports (or lack thereof) is necessary in order to be able to conceptualize and

Findings for hypothesis two, exploring relationships between grit, resilience, optimism and ways of coping, and reasons for separating from teams and later athletic participation, were less clear. Leaving a team on ones' own terms was found to be connected to lower "wishful-thinking" and higher "self-blame" and "tension reduction" coping strategies. Lower wishful-thinking could indicate respondents were generally less happy being on their team and therefore were relieved when they finally left said team, whereas self-blame could happen in either circumstance (being cut or leaving the team). Alternatively, making the decision to leave one's team could lead to a more enduring sense of regret for not trying harder to make things work. Further analysis of these two factors in future studies seems warranted. Furthermore, the "tension reduction" finding seems to unveil and important aspect which should be analyzed further, especially in the case of athletes as participants. Its first item is in regard to working out to decrease tension, "I jog or exercise", which would speak for many athletes. On the other hand, the item deals more with avoidance coping, "Got away from it for a while; tried to rest or take a vacation", and the final item deals with negative habits to decrease tension, "Try to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication, etc." A scale which includes more items like the first one might be beneficial when looking at athletes specifically.

The unexpected outcome of the study that grit and optimism had no effect on continuance of participation in the same or different intercollegiate sport refutes our hypothesis and the results of several studies (Duckworth et al., 2007; Eskreis-Winkler, et al., 2014; Segestorm, et al., 1998; Wrosch & Scheier, 2003). This result could be explained by methodological issues: not taking the questionnaires seriously, not filling them out completely

and carefully, participants completing different parts of the questionnaires at different times, or misinterpretation questions asked in the Demographics/ Information questionnaire. Alternatively, this finding could mean that assessing grit – or even having grit --- for those who have left a sport recently is of little use overall --- in that the person may not have yet found a way to re-initiate pursuit of their athletic goals and may still be in a period of finding this out. The mean Grit scale score for this sample was 3.72 (out of a possible range of 1 to 5), indicating that the athletes in this sample had an overall high level of grit. Eskreis-Winker and her colleagues (2014) reported an average Grit Scale score of 3.47 for a random sample of non-college-aged adults. A personal communication with this investigator (2018) indicated that self-reported grit levels in college students can be inflated. Specifically, Dr. Eskreis-Winkler noted, "We often find that due to reference bias, people who are technically not as gritty give themselves higher grit than those who are incredibly gritty (and thus, have higher self-standards)". In the final analysis, it may be that the ability to show resilience in the wake of failure, at least in the present study's sample of athletes, seems most important.

Most of the results from the analysis of data for the subgroup of participants who were cut individuals were expected. The relationship of higher current GPA with lower levels of self-blame and tension reduction are very plausible as those seem to be more negative ways of coping. Lower levels of problem focused coping, on the other hand, does follow an expected path, as this is one of the positive coping strategies and therefore warrants further investigation in future studies. Similarly, intramural participation relating to lower resilience also warrants further analysis, although this might be the result of deciding to not try out again for the same team, and therefore taking an "easier way out" through intramurals. An expected outcome of this analysis was the relationship of grit to coping. Grit negatively related to tension reduction and

keeping to oneself, which in this case seem to be negative coping strategies. Resilience being related to problem focused coping, seeking social support coping and focusing on the positive coping was also not surprising.

One aspect of this study that could have been improved is the way in which the Information Questionnaire items were worded in regard to assessment of grade point average (GPA). The two questions included "What is your current GPA (if alumni: Last GPA in college)" and "What was your GPA the semester when you left your team? Was this a change from previous grades?", which resulted in the inability to analyze these data in particular, as the time frame between the different GPA's were not identical across each individual. To receive an accurate and consistent measure of GPA change across participants in response to failure these questions should simply have asked about the participants' GPA the semester before leaving the team as well as the GPA the semester following leaving the team. Also, the Demographics Questionnaire should have asked for if the participant participated in a NCAA, DII sport with only a yes or no response being possible, while adding another question asking if it is the same sport they left or a different one, again with only the possibility to respond with yes or no. Further limitations of the study include low Cronbach's alpha in several scales. These include ways of coping subscales of detachment (.565), seeking social support (.642), focusing on the positive (.622), self-blame (.414), tension reduction (.252) and keeping to self (.555) as well as the Life Orientation Test-Revised (.686).

Through this study it becomes clear that resilience is one aspect that should be taught to athletes to a greater degree as soon as possible, as it seems to help significantly with coping after being cut or leaving a team. This skill might then also generalize to other athletic setbacks like injury, inability to accomplish an athletic goal, complete retirement from sports and perhaps also

in relation to post collegiate decisions and adjustment. The identification of this helpful trait should lead to incorporation of specific training methods by coaches to more successfully prepare athletes for serious setbacks in athletics and in life, perhaps even in the earliest grades in school. Further studies will hopefully identify ways to teach individuals resilience and additional beneficial traits to prepare athletes and nonathletes alike for negative experiences, through coaching and also teaching. Future studies should also involve the use an overall subjective well-being scale to analyze the current factors in connection with well-being. Significant negative situations in sport and life cannot be avoided, but this present study's findings indicate that effective "ways of coping" can be identified.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Participants

Variable	*N*	% total
Sex		
Male	19	48.72
Female	20	51.28
Class		
Freshman	5	12.82
Sophomore	13	33.33
Junior	8	20.51
Senior	13	33.33
Age		
18	2	5.13
19	7	17.94
20	12	30.77
21	12	30.77
22	4	10.26
23	1	2.56
24	1	2.56
Parting		
By Choice	16	41.02
Forced	21	53.85
Intramural Participation		
Yes	8	20.51
No	30	76.92

Note: Total number and percentage of Sex, Class, Age, Reason for parting and intramural participation of subjects

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Questionnaire Data

	N	*M*	*SD*
Attributional Style			
External vs Internal	39	*4.03*	1.69
Unstable vs Stable	39	*3.56*	2.35
Specific vs Global	39	*3.67*	2.39
LOT-R Score	38	*15.32*	3.92
Grit Score	38	*3.72*	0.48
Resilience Score	34	*32.00*	5.28
Coping Styles			
Problem focused	34	*20.26*	6.85
Wishful thinking	34	*8.38*	4.24
Detachment	34	*8.88*	3.39
Seeking social support	34	*12.44*	4.26
Focusing on the positive	33	*8.76*	2.62
Self-Blame	34	*4.91*	2.18
Tension reduction	34	*4.47*	2.34
Keep to self	34	*4.06*	2.32

Note: Means and standard deviations of Attributional style questions, LOT-R, Grit and Resilience scores and Coping Styles

Table 3

Regression Analysis

		Problem Focused	Wishful Thinking	Seeking Social Support	Focused on the Positive	Detachment
CD-RISC	Adjusted R^2	0.27***	0.12*	0.23**	0.36****	0.19**
	β	0.55	0.34	0.48	0.62	0.46

Grit and CD-RISC model	Grit	0.08***
	Adjusted R^2	
	Grit (CD-RISC)	-0.36 (.56)
	β	

Table 4a

Results of Correlational Analysis

	Intramural Participation	Cut or Left	Intercollegiate Participation	Internal vs External	Stable vs Unstable	Global vs Specific	Optimism	Grit	Resilience
Intramural Participation	1	0.21	-0.07	0.02	0.19	0.26	-0.14	0.02	-0.17
Cut or Left	0.21	1	-0.04	-0.17	0.28	0.23	-0.04	0.06	0.02
Intercollegiate Participation	-0.07	-0.04	1	0.15	-0.17	0.15	-0.03	0.16	-0.01
Internal vs External	0.02	-0.17	0.15	1	-.37*	0.05	-0.06	-0.17	-0.19

Stable vs Unstable	0.19	0.28	-0.17	-0.37*	1	0.15	0.05	0.08	-0.15
Global vs Specific	0.26	0.23	0.15	0.05	0.15	1	-0.06	0.12	-0.00
Optimism	-0.14	-0.04	-0.03	-0.06	0.05	-0.06	1	0.17	0.22
Grit	0.02	0.06	0.16	-0.17	0.08	0.12	0.17	1	0.30
Resilience	-0.17	0.02	-0.01	-0.19	-0.15	-0.00	0.22	0.30	1
Gender	-0.03	0.07	0.04	0.02	-0.01	-0.03	-0.01	0.30	-0.12
Problem Focused	-0.06	-0.22	0.06	0.21	-0.41*	-0.01	-0.12	-0.10	0.55**
Wishful-Thinking	-0.20	-0.35*	0.16	0.14	-0.22	0.13	0.00	-0.13	0.34*
Detachment	-0.15	-0.33	-0.16	-0.06	-0.15	-0.13	0.02	-0.17	0.46**
Seeking Social Support	-0.42*	-0.32	0.00	0.27	-0.20	-0.21	0.12	-0.12	0.48**
Focusing On The Positive	0.19	-0.28	-0.03	0.05	-0.24	0.09	0.09	0.19	0.62**
Self Blame	0.02	-0.40*	0.18	0.39*	-0.35*	0.23	0.09	-0.16	0.21
Tension Reduction	-0.11	-0.47**	0.21	0.20	-0.34*	0.01	-0.22	-0.24	0.32
Keep To Self	-0.05	-0.08	-0.07	0.04	-0.39*	0.15	0.09	-0.22	0.22

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4b

Correlational Analysis

	Gender	Problem Focused	Wishful-Thinking	Detachment	Seeking Social Support	Focusing On The Positive	Self Blame	Tension Reduction	Keep To Self
Intramural Participation	-0.03	-0.06	-0.20	-0.15	-0.42*	0.19	0.02	-0.11	-0.05
Cut or Left	0.07	-0.22	-0.35*	-0.33	-0.32	-0.28	-0.40*	-0.47**	-0.08
Intercollegiate Participation	0.04	0.06	0.16	-0.16	0.00	-0.03	0.18	0.21	-0.07
Internal vs External	0.02	0.21	0.14	-0.06	0.27	0.05	0.39*	0.20	0.04
Stable vs Unstable	-0.01	-.41*	-0.22	-0.15	-0.20	-0.24	-0.35*	0-.34*	-0.39*
Global vs Specific	-0.03	-0.01	0.13	-0.13	-0.21	0.09	0.23	0.01	0.15
Optimism	-0.01	-0.12	0.00	0.02	0.12	0.09	0.09	-0.22	0.09
Grit	0.30	-0.10	-0.13	-0.17	-0.12	0.19	-0.16	-0.24	-0.22
Resilience	-0.12	0.55**	0.34*	0.46**	0.48**	0.62**	0.21	0.32	0.22
Gender	1	-0.06	-0.12	-0.23	-0.09	-0.02	-0.07	-0.10	0.18

Problem Focused	-0.06	1	0.60**	0.66**	0.65**	0.55**	0.61**	0.45**	0.49**
Wishful-Thinking	-0.12	0.60**	1	0.51**	0.57**	0.37*	0.62**	0.48**	0.53**
Detachment	-0.23	0.66**	.051**	1	0.54**	0.57**	0.44**	0.43*	0.34*
Seeking Social Support	-0.09	0.65**	.057**	0.54**	1	0.35*	0.47**	0.38*	0.38*
Focusing On The Positive	-0.02	0.55**	0.37*	0.57**	0.35*	1	0.35*	0.36*	0.25
Self Blame	-0.07	0.61**	0.62**	0.44**	0.47**	0.35*	1	0.44**	0.55**
Tension Reduction	-0.10	0.45**	0.48**	0.43*	0.38*	0.36*	0.44**	1	0.4*
Keep To Self	0.18	0.49**	0.53**	0.34*	0.38*	0.25	0.55**	0.42*	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5a

Correlational Analysis Including GPA

	GPA	Internal vs External	Stable vs Unstable	Global vs Specific	Optimism	Grit	Resilience
GPA	1	-0.33*	0.42**	-0.22	0.03	0.14	-0.18

Internal vs External	-0.33*	1	-0.37*	0.05	-0.06	-0.17	-0.19
Stable vs Unstable	0.42**	-0.37*	1	0.15	0.05	0.08	-0.15
Global vs Specific	-0.22	0.05	0.15	1	-0.06	0.12	-0.00
Optimism	0.03	-0.06	0.05	-0.06	1	0.17	0.22
Grit	0.14	-0.17	0.08	0.12	0.17	1	0.30
Resilience	-0.18	-0.19	-0.15	-0.00	0.22	0.30	1
Problem Focused	-0.52**	0.21	-0.41*	-0.01	-0.12	-0.10	0.55**
Wishful-Thinking	-0.27	0.14	-0.22	0.13	0.00	-0.13	0.34*
Detachment	-0.44**	-0.06	-0.15	-0.13	0.02	-0.17	0.46**
Seeking Social Support	-0.26	0.27	-0.20	-0.20	0.12	-0.12	0.48**
Focusing On The Positive	-0.19	0.05	-0.24	0.09	0.09	0.19	0.62**
Self-Blame	-0.62**	0.39*	-0.35*	0.23	0.09	-0.16	0.21
Tension Reduction	-0.34*	0.20	-0.34*	0.01	-0.22	-0.24	0.32

Keeping To Self	-0.35*	0.04	-0.39*	0.15	0.09	-0.22	0.22

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5a

Correlational Analysis Including GPA

	Problem Focused	Wishful-Thinking	Detachment	Seeking Social Support	Focusing On The Positive	Self-Blame	Tension Reduction	Keeping To Self
GPA	-0.52**	-0.27	-0.44**	-0.26	-0.19	-0.62**	-0.34*	-0.35*
Internal vs External	0.21	0.14	-0.06	0.27	0.05	0.39*	0.20	0.04
Stable vs Unstable	-0.41*	-0.22	-0.15	-0.20	-0.24	-0.35*	-0.34*	-0.39*
Global vs Specific	-0.01	0.13	-0.13	-0.21	0.09	0.23	0.01	0.15
Optimism	-0.12	0.00	0.02	0.12	0.09	0.09	-0.22	0.09
Grit	-0.10	-0.13	-0.17	-0.12	0.19	-0.16	-0.24	-0.22
Resilience	0.55**	0.34*	0.46**	0.48**	0.61**	0.21	0.32	0.22
Problem Focused	1	0.60**	0.66**	0.65**	0.55**	0.61**	0.45**	0.49**
Wishful-Thinking	0.60**	1	0.51**	0.57**	0.37*	0.62**	0.48**	0.53**
Detachment	0.66**	0.51**	1	0.54**	0.57**	0.44**	0.43*	0.34*

Seeking Social Support	0.65**	0.57**	0.54**	1	0.35*	0.47**	0.38*	0.38*
Focusing On The Positive	0.55**	0.37*	0.57**	0.35*	1	0.35*	0.36*	0.25
Self-Blame	0.61**	0.62**	0.44**	0.47**	0.35*	1	0.44**	0.56**
Tension Reduction	0.45**	0.48**	0.43*	0.38*	0.36*	0.44**	1	0.42*
Keeping To Self	0.49**	0.53**	0.34*	0.38*	0.25	0.55**	0.42*	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6a

Correlational Analysis Results for "Cut"Respondents Exclusively

	GPA	Intramural Participation	Internal vs External	Stable vs Unstable	Global vs Specific	Optimism	Grit	Resilience
GPA	1	-0.13	-0.46	0.37	-0.22	-0.05	0.43	-0.21
Intramural Participation	-0.13	1	0.26	0.13	-0.01	-0.04	-0.29	-0.57*

Internal vs External	-0.46	0.26	1	-0.22	-0.11	-0.13	-0.45	-0.21
Stable vs Unstable	0.37	0.13	-0.22	1	-0.04	0.11	0.16	-0.36
Global vs Specific	-0.22	-0.01	-0.11	-0.04	1	-0.09	0.14	0.09
Optimism	-0.05	-0.04	-0.13	0.11	-0.09	1	0.31	0.32
Grit	0.43	-0.29	-0.45	0.16	0.14	0.31	1	0.20
Resilience	-0.21	-0.57*	-0.21	-0.36	0.09	0.32	0.20	1
Problem Focused	-0.63**	-0.20	0.26	-0.43	-0.04	0.09	-0.30	0.60*
Wishful Thinking	-0.32	-0.14	0.19	-0.36	0.40	-0.06	-0.22	0.34
Detachment	-0.45	-0.38	0.16	-0.23	-0.25	0.16	-0.18	0.49
Seeking Social Support	-0.34	-0.41	0.20	-0.24	-0.34	0.20	-0.20	0.66**
Focusing On The Positive	-0.37	-0.39	0.10	-0.33	-0.04	0.17	0.18	0.78**
Self Blame	-0.67**	0.13	0.68**	-0.30	0.25	0.16	-0.47	0.09
Tension Reduction	-0.55*	-0.24	0.15	-0.52*	0.24	-0.27	-0.53*	0.34

Keep To Self	-0.45	-0.04	0.08	-0.39	-0.04	0.19	-0.54*	0.26

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6b

Correlational Analysis Results for "Cut" Respondents Exclusively

	Problem Focused	Wishful Thinking	Detachment	Seeking Social Support	Focusing On The Positive	Self Blame	Tension Reduction	Keep To Self
GPA	-0.63**	-0.32	-0.45	-0.34	-0.37	-0.67**	-0.55*	-0.45
Intramural Participation	-0.20	-0.14	-0.38	-0.41	-0.39	0.13	-0.24	-0.04
Internal vs External	0.26	0.19	0.16	0.20	0.10	0.68**	0.15	0.08
Stable vs Unstable	-0.43	-0.36	-0.23	-0.24	-0.33	-0.30	-0.52*	-0.39
Global vs Specific	-0.04	0.40	-0.25	-0.34	-0.04	0.25	0.24	-0.04
Optimism	0.09	-0.06	0.16	0.20	0.17	0.16	-0.27	0.19
Grit	-0.30	-0.22	-0.18	-0.20	0.18	-0.47	-0.53*	-0.54*

Resilience	0.60*	0.34	0.49	0.66**	0.78**	0.09	0.34	0.26
Problem Focused	1	0.56*	0.78**	0.72**	0.76**	0.49	0.45	0.52*
Wishful Thinking	0.56*	1	0.35	0.48	0.28	0.65**	0.42	0.62**
Detachment	0.78**	0.35	1	0.67**	0.63**	0.27	0.37	0.51*
Seeking Social Support	0.72**	0.48	0.67**	1	0.60*	0.41	0.37	0.52*
Focusing On The Positive	0.76**	0.28	0.63**	0.60*	1	0.16	0.16	0.06
Self Blame	0.49	.65**	0.27	0.41	0.16	1	0.50	0.56*
Tension Reduction	0.45	0.42	0.37	0.37	0.16	0.50	1	0.60*
Keep To Self	0.52*	0.62**	0.51*	0.52*	0.06	0.56*	0.60*	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7a

Correlational Analysis Results for Respondents Leaving a Team On Their Own

	GPA	Intramural Participation	Internal vs External	Stable vs Unstable	Global vs Specific	Optimism	Grit	Resilience
GPA	1	-0.03	-0.24	0.41	-0.31	0.09	-0.11	-0.15
Intramural Participation	-0.03	1	-0.05	0.15	0.36	-0.19	0.25	0.15
Internal vs External	-0.24	-0.05	1	-0.41	0.22	-0.01	0.13	-0.16
Stable vs Unstable	0.41	0.15	-0.41	1	0.17	0.03	-0.02	0.02
Global vs Specific	-0.31	0.36	0.22	0.17	1	-0.02	0.09	-0.12
Optimism	0.09	-0.19	-0.01	0.03	-0.02	1	0.01	0.10
Grit	-0.11	0.25	0.13	-0.02	0.09	0.01	1	0.47*
Resilience	-0.15	0.15	-0.16	0.02	-0.12	0.10	0.47*	1
Problem Focused	-0.43	0.10	0.08	-0.32	0.12	-0.29	0.13	0.58*
Wishful Thinking	-0.18	-0.12	-0.06	0.10	0.17	0.09	-0.01	0.43

Detachment	-0.36	0.17	-0.53*	0.16	0.19	-0.14	-0.12	0.52*
Seeking Social Support	-0.13	-0.36	0.22	0.03	0.05	0.08	0.02	0.33
Focusing On The Positive	0.13	0.72**	-0.14	-0.03	0.35	0.04	0.29	0.52*
Self Blame	-0.55*	0.14	0.00	-0.20	0.51*	0.05	0.25	0.43
Tension Reduction	0.14	0.27	0.01	0.18	0.12	-0.22	0.38	0.47*
Keep To Self	-0.21	-0.02	-0.03	-0.38	0.37	-0.02	0.21	0.18

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7b

Correlational Analysis Results for Respondents Leaving a Team on Their Own

	Problem Focused	Wishful Thinking	Detachment	Seeking Social Support	Focusing On The Positive	Self Blame	Tension Reduction	Keep To Self
GPA	-0.43	-0.18	-0.36	-0.13	0.13	-0.55*	0.14	-0.21

Intramural Participation	0.10	-0.12	0.17	-0.36	0.72**	0.14	0.27	-0.02
Internal vs External	0.08	-0.06	-0.53*	0.22	-0.14	0.00	0.01	-0.03
Stable vs Unstable	-0.32	0.10	0.16	0.03	-0.03	-0.20	0.18	-0.38
Global vs Specific	0.12	0.17	0.19	0.05	0.35	0.51*	0.12	0.37
Optimism	-0.29	0.09	-0.14	0.08	0.04	0.05	-0.22	-0.02
Grit	0.13	-0.01	-0.12	0.02	0.29	0.25	0.38	0.21
Resilience	0.58*	0.43	0.52*	0.33	0.52*	0.43	0.47*	0.18
Problem Focused	1	0.59*	0.51*	0.54*	0.32	0.66**	0.39	0.47
Wishful Thinking	0.59*	1	0.56*	0.54*	0.31	0.49*	0.35	0.46
Detachment	0.51*	0.56*	1	0.28	0.42	0.46	0.25	0.14
Seeking Social Support	0.54*	0.54*	0.28	1	-0.02	0.39	0.14	0.24
Focusing On The Positive	0.32	0.31	0.42	-0.02	1	0.38	0.45	0.40

Self Blame	0.66**	0.49*	0.46	0.39	0.38	1	0.06	0.58*
Tension Reduction	0.39	0.35	0.25	0.14	0.45	0.06	1	0.20
Keep To Self	0.47	0.46	0.14	0.24	0.40	0.58*	0.20	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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Appendix A

Demographic Information/Sports Participation Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. What year in college are you currently in?
4. What is your current GPA (if alumni: Last GPA in college):_____
5. What was your GPA the semester when you left your team? Was this a change from previous grades?
6. From which sport were you cut? Or, if you were not cut, what sport did you leave?
7. Are you still participating in that sport or considering to try out again?
8. Are you competing in another intercollegiate sport? If so, which one?
9. Are you competing in an intramural sport? If so, which one?
10. If you were cut from your team, what month and year in college was it for you?
11. If you were cut from the team please answer yes; if you parted due to other circumstance please answer no?
12. In just a few words in the space provided, could you describe your view of how you happened to leave your team, including why you feel your participation in this sport ended? Please use this page and follow these instructions before beginning your response:

    - Recall the situation of leaving your team and imagine it vividly happening;
    - Decide what you feel was the one major cause of this happening;
    - Write the cause in the blank space provided below, and, finally
    - Answer the three questions about the cause that are written beneath the space

Answer to question 12:

Questions about the cause you wrote above – please answer:

13. Is the cause due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (Choose one)

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

    Totally due to others Totally due to me

14. In the future, will this cause again be present?

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

    Totally due to others Totally due to me

15. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Totally due to others Totally due to me

Life Orientation Test, Revised (LOT-R)

Instructions: Please be as honest and accurate as you can throughout.

Try not to let your response to one statement influence your responses to other statements. There are no "correct" or "incorrect' answers. Mark one answer per item.

Mark the letter and answer according to your own feelings, *rather than how you think "most people" would answer.*

Agree A Lot	**Agree A Little**	**Neither Agree Nor DISagree**	**DISagree A Little**	**DISagree A Lot**
5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**

_____1. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.

_____2. It's easy for me to relax.

_____3. If something can go wrong, it will.

_____4. I'm always optimistic about the future.

_____5. I enjoy my friends a lot.

_____6. It's important for me to keep busy.

_____7. I hardly ever expect things to go my way.

_____8. I don't get upset too easily.

_____9. I rarely count on good things happening to me.

_____10. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

Participant #_____ **Date:_____**

LOT-R; Source: Carver, Scheier, & Bridges, 1994

12-item Grit Scale

Directions for taking the Grit Scale: Here are a number of statements that may or may not apply to you. For the most accurate score, when responding, think of how you compare to most people -- not just the people you know well, but most people in the world. Please circle one answer for each item from the choices listed. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer honestly!

1. I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.

Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

2. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.*

Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

3. My interests change from year to year.*

Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

4. Setbacks don't discourage me.

Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

5. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.*

Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me

Not much like me
Not like me at all

6. I am a hard worker.

Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

7. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.*

Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

8. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.*

Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

9. I finish whatever I begin.

Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

10. I have achieved a goal that took years of work.

Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

11. I become interested in new pursuits every few months.*

Very much like me

Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

12. I am diligent.

Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

Ways of Coping (Revised)

Please read each item below and indicate, by using the following rating scale, to what extent you used it in the situation you have just described.

Not Used	Used Somewhat	Used Quite a Bit	Used A Great Deal
0	1	2	3

___1. Just concentrated on what I had to do next – the next step.

___2. I tried to analyze the problem in order to understand it better.

___3. Turned to work or substitute activity to take my mind off things.

___4. I felt that time would make a difference – the only thing to do was wait.

___5. Bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation.

___6. I did something which I didn't think would work, but at least I was doing something.

___7. Tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mind.

___8. Talked to someone to find out more about the situation.

___9. Criticized or lectured myself.

___10. Tried not to burn my bridges, but leave things open somewhat.

___11. Hoped a miracle would happen.

___12. Went along with fate; sometimes I just have bad luck.

___13. Went on as if nothing had happened.

___14. I tried to keep my feelings to myself.

___15. Looked for the silver lining, so to speak; tried to look on the bright side of things.

___16. Slept more than usual.

___17. I expressed anger to the person(s) who caused the problem.

___18. Accepted sympathy and understanding from someone.

___19. I told myself things that helped me to feel better.

___20. I was inspired to do something creative.

Not Used	Used Somewhat	Used Quite a Bit	Used A Great Deal
0	1	2	3

___21. Tried to forget the whole thing.

___22. I got professional help.

___23. Changed or grew as a person in a good way.

___24. I waited to see what would happen before doing anything.

___25. I apologized or did something to make up.

___26. I made a plan of action and followed it.

___27. I accepted the next best thing to what I wanted.

___28. I let my feelings out somehow.

___29. Realized I brought the problem on myself.

___30. I came out of the experience better than when I went in.

___31. Talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.

___32. Got away from it for a while; tried to rest or take a vacation.

___33. Tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication, etc.

___34. Took a big chance or did something very risky.

___35. I tried not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch.

___36. Found new faith.

___37. Maintained my pride and kept a stiff upper lip.

___38. Rediscovered what is important in life.

___39. Changed something so things would turn out all right.

___40. Avoided being with people in general.

___41. Didn’t let it get to me; refused to think too much about it.

___42. I asked a relative or friend I respected for advice.

___43. Kept others from knowing how bad things were.

___44. Made light of the situation; refused to get too serious about it.

Not Used	Used Somewhat	Used Quite a Bit	Used A Great Deal
0	1	2	3

___45. Talked to someone about how I was feeling.

___46. Stood my ground and fought for what I wanted.

___47. Took it out on other people.

___48. Drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before.

___49. I knew what had to be done, so I doubled my efforts to make things work.

___50. Refused to believe that it had happened.

___51. I made a promise to myself that things would be different next time.

___52. Came up with a couple of different solutions to the problem.

___53. Accepted it, since nothing could be done.

___54. I tried to keep my feelings from interfering with other things too much.

___55. Wished that I could change what had happened or how I felt.

___56. I changed something about myself.

___57. I daydreamed or imagined a better time or place that the one I was in.

___58. Wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with.

___59. Had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out.

___60. I prayed.

___61. I prepared myself for the worst.

___62. I went over in my mind what I would say or do.

___63. I thought about how a person I admire would handle the situation and used that as a model.

___64. I tried to see things from the other person's point of view.

___65. I reminded myself how much worse things could be.

___66. I jogged or exercised.

Ways of Coping Subscales and Corresponding Items for each:

Problem Focused Coping:

62. I go over in my mind what I will say or do.
46. Stand my ground and fight for what I want.
49. I know what has to be done, so I am doubling my efforts to make things work.
52. Come up with a couple of different solutions to the problem.
35. I try not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch.
26. I'm making a plan of action and following it.
64. I try to see things from the other person's point of view.
54. I try to keep my feelings from interfering with other things too much.
39. Change something so things will turn out all right.
2. I try to analyze the problem in order to understand it better.
48. Draw on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before.

Wishful Thinking:

55. Wish that I can change what is happening or how I feel.
58. Wish that the situation would go away or somehow be over with.
57. I daydream or imagine a better time or place than the one I am in.
59. Have fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out.
11. Hope a miracle will happen.

Detachment:

21. Try to forget the whole thing.
13. Go on as if nothing is happening.
24. I'm waiting to see what will happen before doing anything.
12. Go along with fate; sometimes I just have bad luck.
4. I feel that time will make a difference – the only thing to do is to wait.
53. Accept it, since nothing can be done.

Seeking Social Support:

45. Talk to someone about how I'm feeling.
18. Accept sympathy and understanding from someone.
28. I let my feelings out somehow.
31. Talk to someone who can do something concrete about the problem.
8. Talk to someone to find out more about the situation.
42. Ask a relative or friend I respect for advice.
60. I pray.

Focusing on the Positive:

23. I'm changing or growing as a person in a good way.
38. Rediscover what is important in life.
20. I am inspired to do something creative.
15. Look for the silver lining, so to speak; try to look on the bright side of things.
Self-Blame:
9. Criticize or lecture myself.
29. Realize I brought the problem on myself.
51. Make a promise to myself that things will be different next time.

Tension Reduction:

32. Got away from it for a while; tried to rest or take a vacation.
33. Try to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication, etc.
66. I jog or exercise.

Keeping to Self:

14. I try to keep my feelings to myself.
40. Avoid being with people in general.
43. Keep others from knowing how bad things are.

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (Connor & Davidson, 2003)

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements as they apply to you. If a particular situation has not occurred recently, answer according to how you think you would have responded.

1. I am able to adapt when changes occur.

0	1	2	3	4
Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time

2. I can deal with whatever comes my way.

0	1	2	3	4
Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time

3. I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems.

0	1	2	3	4
Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time

4. Having to cope with stress can make me stronger.

0	1	2	3	4
Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time

5. I tend to bounce bac after illness, injury, or other hardships.

0	1	2	3	4
Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time

6. I believe I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles.

0	1	2	3	4
Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time

7. Under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly.

0	1	2	3	4
Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time

8. I am not easily discouraged by failure.

0	1	2	3	4
Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time

9. I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life's challenges and difficulties.

0	1	2	3	4
Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time

10. I am able to handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear and anger.

0	1	2	3	4
Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time