

1

2

3

4

5 Defining and Characterising Parental Resilience in Youth Sport

6 Devesh Patel

7 Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom

8 Julie Johnston

9 Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom

10 Mustafa Sarkar

11 Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom

12 Camilla J. Knight

13 Swansea University, United Kingdom

14 University of Agder, Norway

15 Greenhouse Sports, United Kingdom

16

17

18

19

20 Devesh Patel, Julie P. Johnston, Mustafa Sarkar. Nottingham Trent University (UK). Camilla

21 J. Knight, Swansea University (UK), University of Agder (Norway)

22 Please address all correspondence to Devesh Patel, Department of Sport Science, School of

23 Science and Technology, Nottingham Trent University, Clifton Campus, Clifton Lane,

24 Nottingham, NG11 8NS, UK. Email: devesh.patel@ntu.ac.uk

25

26

Abstract

Sport parenting research has established that parents encounter sport-specific stressors, which if not managed appropriately, can affect their wellbeing, as well as having adverse effects on how they support their children. Sport resilience literature has illustrated how athletes, teams, and organizations draw upon protective factors to buffer themselves from the negative effect of stressors. However, to date, little consideration has been given to resilience in parents. To this end, the purpose of this study was to define and characterize parental resilience in youth sport. Through a qualitative research design, 59 parents from 57 households, with children in several sports participated in either one-to-one interviews (n=25) or focus groups (n=34). Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Parental resilience within youth sport was defined as “a dynamic process in which parents draw upon multiple psychosocial assets and strategies to effectively manage their responsibilities and maintain their psychological well-being, when encountering a range of stressors.” The four psychosocial assets that characterized parental resilience were maintaining perspective in sport, the ability to perceive and utilize social support, adaptability to different circumstances in sport, and maintaining optimism in sport. This study extends sport psychology research by introducing the concept of parental resilience in youth sport, highlighting key indicators and outcomes of parental resilience, and identifying psychosocial assets that facilitate a parent’s ability to manage the stressors they encounter. With this framework, future research could look to understand the psychosocial assets that are most applied for specific stressors, and how parents developed these psychosocial assets over their sport parenting journey.

Key words: Dynamic process; Stressors; Psychosocial assets; Strategies

23

24

25

1 **Defining and Characterizing Parental Resilience in Youth Sport**

2 Resilience has become an important topic over the last two decades, advocated as a
3 necessary resource that enables individuals to positively deal with stressful situations across a
4 range of contexts (Saner, 2020). Within sport, athletes have to deal with a variety of
5 adversities, including injuries (Podlong & Eklund, 2006) and deselection (McGlinchey et al.,
6 2022), adding to the everyday stressors of life. Consequently, this results in a unique
7 experience for athletes and the need for a sport-specific definition of resilience (Gupta &
8 McCarthy, 2022).

9 The first study to define resilience in sport was the grounded theory of psychological
10 resilience in Olympic Champions (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). From their findings,
11 psychological resilience was defined as “the role of mental processes and behaviours in
12 promoting personal assets and protecting an individual from the potential negative effects of
13 stressors” (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012, p. 675, 2013, p.16). The protective factors identified in
14 the results included a positive personality, motivation, confidence, focused, and perceived
15 social support. The results highlighted that these protective factors buffered athletes from the
16 potential negative effects of stressors, through promoting challenge appraisals and meta-
17 cognitions, leading to facilitative responses and optimal performance. After exploring
18 individual resilience in elite sport, research progressed to examining team resilience in elite
19 sport, and was defined as “a dynamic, psychosocial process which protects a group of
20 individuals from the potential negative effects of stressors they collectively encounter. It
21 comprises of group processes whereby team members use their individual and combined
22 resources to positively adapt when experiencing adversity” (Morgan et al., 2013, p. 552). The
23 key protective factors of team resilience included group structure, mastery approaches, social
24 capital, and collective efficacy.

25 Collectively, resilience research in sport has highlighted that resilience is a combination

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 of trait (i.e., protective factors), (dynamic and temporal) process (Hill et al., 2025), and
2 outcome (also referred to as positive adaptation) perspectives (Fasey et al., 2021; Fletcher &
3 Sarkar, 2012; Morgan et al., 2013). However, the definitions and conceptualizations of
4 resilience, including the identification of protective factors, have currently been generated
5 within the elite sports environment. Consequently, performance and a positive response to
6 significant change being viewed as signs of positive adaptation (Fasey et al., 2021; Fletcher
7 & Sarkar, 2012; Morgan et al., 2013). Furthermore, the protective factors identified in this
8 previous research are context-specific to individual (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012), team (Morgan
9 et al., 2013), and organizational resilience (Fasey et al., 2021) in elite sport. Thus, they are
10 specific to the distinct stressors encountered within these particular settings.

11 In progressing this body of work, future resilience research in sport needs to focus on
12 the context of youth sport (White & Bennie, 2015). Youth sport differs considerably from
13 elite sport, with research highlighting the need for coaches and parents to promote
14 performance and positive youth development simultaneously (Camiré et al., 2019; Côté et al.,
15 2007; Harwood et al., 2024). Youth sport also elicits unique stressors and experiences for
16 coaches and parents (Harwood & Knight, 2009; Hertting et al., 2020), differing from those
17 encountered by athletes within elite sport (Arnold et al., 2017, 2019, 2024). For example,
18 sport parenting research has highlighted alternative categories of stressors, including
19 organizational (e.g., managing daily logistics), developmental (e.g., managing concerns over
20 the child's sporting, personal, and educational development) and competition (e.g., managing
21 the demands of match preparation, and the child's emotions and reactions; Harwood &
22 Knight, 2009). As a consequence of these stressors, parents have outlined how supporting a
23 child's sporting journey can be difficult and can have an adverse effect on their psychological
24 well-being (Bean et al., 2014; Sutcliffe et al., 2021). Subsequently, understanding resilience
25 amongst key social agents, such as parents and coaches, is important (Fletcher & Sarkar,

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 2012), as their resilience may elicit different underpinning traits (i.e., protective factors),
2 processes, and outcomes which have currently not been investigated.

3 In answering these calls, studies have begun to understand resilience amongst coaches
4 (Sarkar & Hilton, 2020). However, there remains a need to extend this work to parents given
5 the important role that parents play in their young athletes' lives (Dorsch et al., 2021).

6 Recognising this role, sport parenting research to date has explored parental experiences
7 (Sutcliffe et al., 2024; Wiersma & Fifer, 2008). Furthermore, research has addressed the
8 methods they demonstrate to support their children in sport, specifically understanding
9 parenting styles, practices and behaviours (Elliot & Drummond, 2017; Harwood & Knight,
10 2015; Holt et al., 2009; Sapieja et al., 2011). Building on this increased understanding,
11 research has begun to highlight how parents cope with stressors (Burgess et al., 2016;
12 Harwood et al., 2019; Lienhart et al., 2020). Within sport parenting research, the coping
13 strategies adopted by parents vary in effectiveness, with lower quality strategies negatively
14 affecting how parents take care of their children and themselves (Hayward et al., 2017).

15 Although coping and resilience are often used interchangeably, there is a growing body of
16 evidence to suggest that these are conceptually different constructs (see, for a review,
17 Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Specifically, coping is characterised by its response to a stressful
18 encounter and by its varying effectiveness in resolving outstanding issues, whereas resilience
19 is characterized by its influence on one's appraisal prior to emotional and coping responses,
20 and by its positive, protective impact (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013).

21 There is a growing body of research that has addressed parental resilience in
22 developmental psychology (e.g. Easterbrooks et al., 2011; Eltanamly et al., 2023; Gavidia-
23 Payne et al., 2015; Suzuki et al., 2013; Widyawati et al., 2020), each providing their own
24 unique definition of resilience specific to the population and context being studied. However,
25 Davydov et al. (2010) emphasized that inconsistencies or shortcomings in core terminology

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 can hinder conceptual development, ultimately affecting the quality and trajectory of
2 subsequent studies. Across these multiple definitions, parental resilience has been
3 conceptualized as both a trait and process (Gmuca et al., 2019; Pastor-Cerezuela et al., 2016;
4 Rajan et al., 2018; Sorkkilla & Aunola, 2022), with the key outcomes of resilience involving
5 positive parental behaviors and practices. One such example of these definitions is Gavidia-
6 Payne et al. (2015), who defined parental resilience as the “capacity for parents to deliver
7 competent, quality parenting despite adverse circumstances” (p.111). At the time, the authors
8 argued that the concept of parental resilience was a neglected concept which required further
9 refinement and investigation to allow the development of bespoke interventions to enhance
10 quality parenting. What is clear from the existing literature within parental resilience in
11 developmental psychology is that parental resilience is a population and context-specific
12 concept that needs to account for the goals, values and principles that are woven into the
13 daily routines and practices of family life (Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015). Through highlighting
14 these conceptual differences and considering specific calls for researchers within sport to
15 explore parental resilience (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Harwood & Knight, 2015), there is a
16 clear need to better understand parental resilience, including identifying protective factors, in
17 youth sport.

18 Sport is a unique context, where individuals choose to participate in highly critical
19 settings, with success and failure having clear consequences (Galli & Gonzalez, 2015). With
20 sport providing unique circumstances for parents, it is not wise to assume definitions and
21 models of resilience within developmental psychology will be applicable to the context of
22 youth sport (Wagstaff et al., 2016). Through parents experiencing distinct stressors in youth
23 sport (Harwood & Knight, 2009), this setting may elicit alternative psychological
24 characteristics, which may be protective and promotive in nature (Masten et al., 2009). With
25 these factors having a dual protective and promotive effect, they will subsequently be referred

1 to as psychosocial assets, which have not currently been explored in the current parental
2 resilience literature. Therefore, it is important to consider the impact of youth sport when
3 understanding parental resilience and specifically, the need to define and characterize
4 parental resilience in youth sport.

5 To this end, there were two aims to this study. The first aim was to define parental
6 resilience in youth sport. The second aim of this study was to characterize parental resilience,
7 determining the key psychosocial assets that facilitate parental resilience. By doing so, this
8 research will help to understand the key factors that can assist parents in supporting
9 themselves as well as their children when encountering stressors in youth sport.

10 **Method**

11 **Research Design and Underpinning Philosophical Assumptions**

12 This study was underpinned by critical realism. Critical realism assumes that a single
13 reality exists, despite being highly complex and multi-layered (Bhaskar, 1979; 2020), and this
14 reality exists no matter how it is viewed by individuals (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2021).
15 Subsequently, through an appropriate research design, one can attain knowledge that is closer
16 to reality for a particular population, specifically identifying causal mechanisms driving
17 social events, activities, or phenomena.

18 In adhering to methodological coherence (Poucher et al., 2020), critical realism aligned
19 with the research design, sampling approach, the data collection strategies utilized, and the
20 data analysis strategy. A qualitative descriptive approach was used for this study
21 (Sandelowski, 2000, 2010), utilizing purposive, maximum variation sampling with parents
22 from a wide range of sports. This helped to capture a wide range of perspectives on a topic
23 (Benoot et al., 2016; Kahlke, 2014). Specifically, data were collected using interviews and
24 focus groups to understand parents' experiences, thereby allowing for a broad insight into the
25 phenomenon being explored (Kahlke, 2014; Neergaard et al., 2009). In remaining close to the

1 participants' descriptions, the data were subsequently analyzed using reflexive thematic
2 analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Sandelowski, 2000, 2010). Reflexive thematic analysis
3 enables researchers to critically reflect on their role in their research, and in producing data
4 relevant to the research question. Furthermore, in specifying the philosophical assumptions
5 that informed the use of reflexive thematic analysis, specifically through a critical realist lens,
6 the iterative stages within reflexive thematic analysis allows researchers to understand how
7 individuals make meanings of their experiences, how broader social contexts inhibit these
8 meanings, and the construction of social processes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019, 2021;
9 Clarke & Braun, 2014; Lim, 2011).

10 **The Research Team and Positionality**

11 To ensure judgemental rationality (Isaksen, 2022), pertinent to critical realism, it is
12 important to acknowledge the diverse experiences of the research team and their contribution
13 to the study. Firstly, in relation to the research team's background, the first author had five
14 years' experience of coaching youth cricket and was undertaking a PhD. The second author is
15 an ex-international swimmer, the third author has experiences in junior club and county
16 cricket, and the fourth author is an experienced junior tennis player and coach. In addition,
17 the second and fourth authors are parents themselves. Finally, the second, third, and fourth
18 authors have over 30 combined years of qualitative research and applied experience,
19 exploring areas of parenting, resilience, and positive youth development.

20 In reference to their contributions to the study, the first author was responsible for
21 conducting the interviews and focus groups, and for leading the data analysis. The second,
22 third, and fourth authors acted as critical friends throughout the study, from refining the
23 research question, to developing the definition, and developing and refining key themes.

24 **Participants**

25 In selecting an appropriate sample for research, it is important to provide a well-

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 reasoned rationale for the selected sample for qualitative studies based on the nature (i.e.,
2 breadth and complexity) of the research question as well as the diversity in the data. In
3 adhering to these principles, purposive sampling was used for this research, targeting parents
4 with children representing county/regional teams within their sports as a minimum
5 requirement, specifically within a British setting. This competitive level was requested in an
6 attempt to recruit parents who were likely to be experiencing a level of challenge in meeting
7 the demands of their child's sport which in turn, would enable them to discuss parental
8 resilience and its components with the research team. As a research team, we also sought to
9 recruit a diverse sample of parents, with children who had competed across a range of sports,
10 across a range of different levels, and from a range of backgrounds. Fifty-nine parents (39
11 mothers, 20 fathers) from 57 households (range = 30-65 years, *Mage* = 49.0 years, *SD* = 6.2
12 years) with children participating at county/regional level or above from seven sports
13 participated in the study. Regarding the highest standard of sport their children competed in,
14 25 parents had children at county level, one at regional level, 29 at academy level, one at
15 international level, and two parents did not specify their children's highest standard of sport.
16 Sixteen households had one child involved in sport, while 30 had two, 10 had three, and one
17 household had five children involved in sport. Across the households, the main sports were
18 rugby (18), swimming (11), cricket (12), football (7), taekwondo (3), hockey (3), and
19 gymnastics (1). Two parents had children competing in multiple sports, with no preferred
20 sport suggested. Most parents were either married or living with their partner (n=47, 90%)
21 and most were of White British descent, and referred to their nationality as British (n=44,
22 86%). The remaining 14% of parents were of Asian Indian and other Asian background
23 descent. Furthermore, regarding their highest education qualification, three parents had
24 GCSEs, ten parents had A-levels/BTEC, 27 parents had Bachelor's degrees, four parents had
25 Master's degrees, three parents had Doctorates, and three parents had other higher education

1 qualifications¹. The remaining nine parents preferred not to answer. In terms of working
2 status, 40 parents worked full-time, ten parents worked part-time, two parents had retired, and
3 three parents selected 'Other'. The remaining four parents preferred not to answer. With
4 regards to income over the past year, three households received less than £15,000, two
5 between £15,000 and £25,000, eight between £25,000 and £50,000, ten between £50,000 and
6 £75,000, 16 between £75,000 and £100,000 and finally ten received more than £100,000. The
7 remaining eight parents chose not to provide income information.

8 **Procedure and Data Collection**

9 In developing sound definitions in the social sciences, it is important to address
10 literature that explains the key steps to generate a good definition. Drawing from Podsakoff et
11 al. (2016), prior to data collection, a literature review on previous resilience research took
12 place. This review enabled the research team to identify existing definitions of resilience in
13 sport and parental resilience, and to understand the consensus in conceptualizations within
14 both sport and developmental psychology. From this literature, the lead author was then able
15 to identify key issues with prior definitions and conceptualizations.

16 Following the literature review, and prior to study commencement, institutional ethical
17 approval was obtained by the lead author's university ethics board. Parents were then
18 recruited through social media and emails sent to gatekeepers (either coaches or sport
19 psychologists) asking them to share contact details with parents within their clubs/academy.
20 Any parent who was interested in participating contacted the lead author directly to arrange a
21 data collection slot – either a focus group or an individual interview. In total, 13 focus groups
22 comprising two and four parents and 25 individual interviews were completed. One parent

¹ For International readers, GCSEs, or General Certificates of Secondary Education, are academic qualifications taken by students in the UK, typically around the age of 16, marking the end of compulsory secondary education. All other qualifications mentioned are of a higher level than these. For more information please see the enclosed link which explains what the different qualification levels mean (<https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>)

1 who took part in a focus group subsequently requested a further follow-up discussion,
2 discussing experiences they felt uncomfortable sharing in a communal setting. Combining
3 individual interviews and focus groups provided key advantages, which include the ability to
4 gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, the ability to compare and contrast
5 participants' perspectives, and striving towards a comprehensive, shared reality of the
6 phenomenon (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008). Additionally, combining individual interviews and
7 focus groups enable the production of rich data, helping to draw out underpinning processes
8 that influence a parent's ability to manage stressors and adversity (Wagstaff et al., 2016).
9 Furthermore, a combination of homogenous and heterogenous focus groups can facilitate rich
10 discussions, with a wide range of perspectives (Acocella, 2012). All data collection occurred
11 via Microsoft Teams, thereby allowing parents from a wide geographical area to participate
12 whilst replicating face-to-face discussions (Archibald et al., 2019).

13 Prior to data collection, all parents were asked to complete an interview/focus group
14 date of availability form, through Microsoft Forms. When parents proposed the same date
15 and time, they then formed a focus group. However, if only one parent provided a date and
16 time, they then took part in an individual interview with the lead author. Prior to data
17 collection, all parents were provided with the questions to be asked to ensure they were aware
18 of the topics discussed (see Table. 1 for full details). During interviews/focus groups, parents
19 were asked introductory questions regarding what sports their children played, the level of
20 sport, and the stressors they encountered. For example, parents were asked "What
21 circumstances within your child's or children's sport/sports have caused you a sense of
22 stress?" The main questions focused on the psychosocial assets parents drew upon to manage
23 stressors (for example, "What qualities have helped you to deal with these sources of
24 stress?"), parents' interpretations of parental resilience (for example, "What does parental
25 resilience mean to you?"), and critiquing a current definition of parental resilience (Gavidia-

1 Payne et al., 2015). This definition was chosen as it was deemed to be the most suitable and
2 relevant to the parent population recruited for this study. For example, in viewing this
3 definition, parents were asked for their thoughts, and if any amendments were required,
4 referring back to their own experiences in sport. Finally, parents were asked how they
5 demonstrate high parental resilience, when faced with a stressor identified at the beginning of
6 the discussion. For example, the lead author recounted a stressor previously suggested at the
7 beginning of the interview/focus group, and subsequently asked parents “In dealing this
8 stressor, what would high parental resilience look like?” Interviews/focus groups ranged in
9 length from 47 to 96 minutes ($M = 79.2$ minutes, $SD = 9.97$ minutes).

10 **Transparency and Openness Statement**

11 This study was not preregistered but it adheres to the American Psychological
12 Association's Journal Article Reporting Standards for Qualitative Research (JARS-Q; Levitt
13 et al., 2018). To protect participant confidentiality, video and audio recordings of the
14 interviews and their transcripts are not publicly accessible. The interview guide used has been
15 provided within the manuscript (see Table 1).

16 **Data analysis**

17 All discussions were transcribed verbatim, yielding 598 single spaced pages. Data were
18 analyzed through the six stages of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) in line
19 with the critical realism paradigm (Wiltshire, 2018). The first stage involved familiarization,
20 which involved the lead author transcribing, reading and re-reading the data and viewing the
21 original recordings. This enabled him to be ‘immersed’ in the data. Stage two involved
22 generating initial codes, where the lead author began to highlight and label specific data into
23 codes. The codes that referred to the definition were highlighted in one color, and codes
24 referring to the psychosocial assets were highlighted in another color. The following three
25 phases (searching for themes, assembling codes that relate to that theme, and developing and

1 refining themes) were completed on multiple occasions. The research team reviewed,
2 reflected, and engaged in critical discussion on the themes and codes developed,
3 understanding how parental resilience is defined and the psychosocial assets that characterize
4 it. For example, in identifying the psychosocial assets that characterized parental resilience,
5 the lead author initially had three subthemes within 'maintaining perspective in sport', (a)
6 'being realistic', (b) remembering what's important', and (c) 'valuing sport for its life skills'.
7 However, through extensive discussion, 'being realistic' was renamed to 'keeping sports in
8 context', which accurately reflected how parents understood the low likelihood of their
9 children making it to the professional level, along with understanding that their children will
10 make mistakes and underperform within their sports. Furthermore, 'valuing sport for its life
11 skills' was omitted as subtheme, as this was one factor within parents 'remembering what's
12 important' for their children in sport. Within stage three, all relevant codes with similar labels
13 were then collated and organized into themes, during which time the lead author developed a
14 thematic map (please see supplementary material). The thematic map helped the lead author
15 to understand the key definitional aspects of parental resilience.

16 Stages four and five involved critical friends, who assisted in reviewing and defining
17 themes. During this stage, and aligning with critical realism, the lead author was challenged
18 by the research team to ensure the quotes, coding, and themes accurately represented
19 participants' shared meaning of reality (Ryba et al., 2020). Theoretical validity enabled the
20 research team to understand how the psychosocial assets identified accurately helped to
21 explain real-world sport parenting events (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2021). Finally, stage six
22 involved producing a report of the findings. It is important to note that the data analysis
23 strategy was primarily inductive, with the definition and psychosocial assets primarily
24 generated from parental responses within interviews/focus groups. However, elements of
25 deductive analysis were utilized, drawing upon prior conceptualizations of resilience in sport

1 and developmental psychology (Bryan et al., 2019; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Gavidia-Payne
2 et al., 2015; Hill et al., 2018, 2025).

3 **Methodological rigor**

4 This research was guided by empirical adequacy and practical utility. Empirical
5 adequacy aligns with critical realism as it ensures that the most suitable participants have
6 been involved in the study, thereby guaranteeing that there is a greater understanding of
7 relevant participants' experiences. (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2021). Furthermore, drawing
8 from a diverse range of parents who had children completing in different sports and from
9 various stages of talent development, this ensured that the research team had collected
10 sufficient data to support our interpretations and explanations thereby achieving empirical
11 adequacy (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2021). Finally, a diverse sample could facilitate
12 transferability (Smith, 2018), as parents from different backgrounds and sports could apply
13 the findings within their own settings/contexts in relation to the definition and
14 characterization of parental resilience in youth sport.

15 Practical utility ensures the data and findings can be used as a means for helping the
16 world, it can help to understand the real reasons why events and experiences arise
17 (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2021). Practical utility was achieved by highlighting practical
18 applications from this the research, outlining how the definition and characterization of
19 parental resilience can help both parents and coaches, sport psychologists, and sporting
20 organizations. Additionally, the lead author met with research team regularly throughout the
21 data analysis process, and the research team acted as 'critical friends' to encourage reflexivity
22 by challenging each other's construction of knowledge (Smith & McGannon, 2018) and their
23 perceptions of a shared reality being captured accurately within the data.

24 **Results**

25 The results are presented in two parts. First, the definition of parental resilience is

1 presented, followed by the psychosocial assets which characterize parental resilience.

2 Regarding the psychosocial assets, four higher order themes were developed: 1) maintaining

3 perspective in sport, 2) the ability to perceive and utilize social support, 3) adaptability to

4 different circumstances in sport, and 4) maintaining optimism in sport. To maintain

5 anonymity, quotes are represented by the sport and unique identifier number for each parent.

6 **Definition of Parental Resilience**

7 From interviews and focus groups with 59 parents from several sports, parental

8 resilience in youth sport was defined as:

9 *A dynamic process in which parents draw on multiple psychosocial assets and*

10 *strategies to effectively manage their responsibilities and maintain psychological well-*

11 *being, when encountering a range of stressors.*

12 The “dynamic process” element within this definition suggests that resilience unfolds

13 and develops over time, as parents interact with their environment. Through this process,

14 parents continue to “learn...over time”, as they encounter the many “dips of highs and lows”

15 within competitive youth sport. Subsequently, parents learn “to support, [and] to guide (their

16 children)” more effectively. Additionally, through learning from their experiences, parents

17 explained how they developed their capability to manage stressors more effectively:

18 I was angry, frustrated...I was emailing for more feedback but I wasn't getting

19 anything...I've kind of learnt myself as part of this parental resilience thing. It's that not

20 only do your kids dig deep sometimes but you as a parent have to take a step back and

21 not get too emotional and let things pan out and so...let's say his journey so far in 6

22 years, the first 3 years I would say I was quite emotional, quite into it and since that

23 happened, I've learnt to kind of appreciate the system and acknowledge the process.

24 (Cricket 29)

25 The first outcome of resilience was a parent's capability to effectively manage their

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 responsibilities. When discussing their experiences, parents typically referred to encountering
2 a wide range of stressors, inducing different responsibilities that needed to be managed. For
3 example, parents discussed how they needed to manage multiple competing commitments, as
4 illustrated with "...you've just got so many things to juggle, haven't you? You've got to
5 work, other children, you've got your shopping to do, you're cooking and everything..."
6 (Swimming 36)

7 Furthermore, parents explained how they needed to manage excessive travel
8 commitments, as explained:

9 So it's a case of the resilience, (it is) financial and time. And it's tiring. You know
10 driving up to Motherwell. Driving down to London...to do these competitions. Driving
11 down to Coventry...Booking hotels and what nots. You know it takes up the weekend.

12 (Rugby 15)

13 The second outcome within this definition was a parent's ability to maintain their
14 psychological well-being. Parents explained how managing a range of stressors within their
15 child's sport can be all-consuming, and emphasized the need to rest, take some time for
16 themselves, and do tasks that they enjoy:

17 I need to be good. I need to be kind to myself. And no matter how good I am and how
18 elite I am, no matter how strong I am, it's the analogy of the motor vehicle. You know
19 if I'm driving down the motorway at 100mph in some posh sportscar, at some point I
20 need to stop I need to refuel. And I think it's really important to realise that, and reset.

21 (Swimming 5)

22 Furthermore, parents reinforced the importance of maintaining their psychological
23 well-being, as this will enable them to support their children more effectively:

24 ...if you don't have well-being you can't function...if your well-being's so shattered,
25 then you're not going to be able to do any of these things. I think it goes without

1 saying. You know competent parenting, you've got to put your well-being first. (Rugby
2 14)

3 **Psychosocial Assets**

4 Four psychosocial assets were developed from the analysis, each of which are discussed
5 below along with their subthemes.

6 ***Maintaining Perspective in Sport***

7 Parents identified the ability to maintain perspective in sport as an integral component
8 of parental resilience, allowing them to effectively manage their responsibilities and maintain
9 their psychological well-being. Through maintaining perspective in sport, parents learned to
10 *keep sport in context*, recognising the low likelihood that their children will eventually
11 become professional sportspeople, and therefore encouraged children to pursue other hobbies
12 and interests:

13 I think that the hard truth through all of this is that no matter how much time and
14 energy they put into these sports, there's an extremely low percentage of kids that
15 actually make it...(so it is) always making sure therefore they've got that balance of
16 schoolwork, school life...and other interests outside of that. (Swimming 38)

17 Furthermore, through *keeping sport in context*, parents acknowledged from the outset
18 that their children are going to make mistakes and will underperform on occasions. In
19 reinforcing these messages to their children, *keeping sport in context* helped parents to
20 interact with their children more effectively:

21 You're going to get out. You're going to play bad shots. You're going to bowl bad
22 balls. You're going to drop catches...I think that's the biggest message I try and give
23 him. You're going to get out. (Cricket 27)

24 Furthermore, in *remembering what is important*, parents valued additional outcomes
25 they wished for their children in sport. Specifically, parents wanted their children to be

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 happy, healthy, and enjoying their sport, as explained, "...as long as they're happy and
2 enjoying it, sometimes they'll come out with 100 and sometimes they're out first ball."
3 (Cricket 48)

4 Finally, parents explained how it was important that their child to learn key
5 psychological skills as they progress within their sport:

6 Yeah it's a fantastic learning experience to fail. I mean they've learned to fail from a
7 very young age because they've played cricket...They've learnt how to lose, hopefully,
8 relatively well. Obviously they're mad inside, but generally I think the ones I know
9 here, they deal with it, and that's from failing...at a very young age and it's a fantastic
10 skill to have. (Cricket 49)

11 ***The Ability to Perceive and Utilize Social Support***

12 Parents described their ability to identify and utilize members of their support network
13 as important in helping them to demonstrate parental resilience. For instance, parents
14 discussed the value of *coaches providing increased emotional, esteem, and informational*
15 *support* to their children, reducing the need for parents to provide such support on occasions
16 and subsequently reducing the stressors they encountered:

17 But his coach is the national coach. So, they noticed that and they picked him up and
18 they started to help him progress further. And then when he got realized by the coach,
19 the coaches are amazing. So, they motivated him to actually push himself. And now I
20 don't need to do anything...he just needs me to pay for things and take him places.

21 (Laughs). (Swimming 28)

22 Another parent also shared how their child's coach provided emotional support
23 alongside the more traditional components of informational and esteem support. For parents,
24 the child's coach has added collective value to the family unit, allowing parents to feel more
25 able to manage themselves and meet their child's needs:

1 My eldest son had a coach for about 4 or 5 years...He's like a fundamental part of my
2 eldest son's life. They've got a relationship that is far beyond a coach-player
3 relationship...He has those football conversations with my son that I'm not in the
4 position to have. Because I don't have that technical knowledge of football...he's the
5 person that I know, when my son is having some difficulties, that he is somebody as
6 well as me and his dad that he will reach out to...So yeah he's a fundamental part of
7 sort of as a family of our coping mechanism around stuff. (Football 48)

8 Beyond the coach, parents (typically in two parent families) referenced the importance
9 of their *partner providing tangible support*. Parents discussed the importance of sharing
10 tasks, as explained, "I think it's helpful isn't it? Because you share the burden of the travel,
11 etc. So, you know you're not always tired...because you know you've got someone else who
12 can do bits for you." (Football 51).

13 Furthermore, through their *partner providing tangible support*, parents were able to
14 organize the following busy week of sport, thereby helping parents to effectively manage
15 their responsibilities:

16 Yeah so resilience in parenting...I've got my wife and it's teamwork. Yeah, now she is
17 Miss Organized, my missus. She'll get her diary out and her calendar out and we'll
18 have a section each of who needs to be where at what time...We have a blackboard
19 where everyone's sports are written on it and what time they're there. (Rugby 19)

20 Furthermore, with many parents within this study working full-time (n=40), they
21 regularly turned to *other parents' tangible support* to assist in lift sharing, allowing parents to
22 manage their dual responsibilities of working and their child's sporting commitments.
23 Subsequently, in reducing responsibilities, parents had greater autonomy over their time,
24 enabling them to maintain their psychological well-being, as explained, "Instead of getting up
25 at half 4 in the morning I might have just sent that text to my (child's) friend to say 'can you

1 take (child) today?’ and actually use that time for me” (Swimming 5)

2 Finally, parents also emphasized the importance of *other parents' informational*

3 *support*, which enabled parents to understand and prepare for the stressors they may

4 encounter in the future, should their children continue to progress within their sport:

5 Like with girls, you have to get them into this ridiculously expensive race suit, £300-

6 £400 worth of race suit that in a tiny changing room and you're under pressure because

7 there's a time constraint, just knowing from other parents how to do that is really

8 helpful...Yes, the older parents...are really good at helping our younger parents

9 understand a bit more about what's going on... (Swimming 35)

10 ***Adaptability to Different Circumstances in Sport***

11 To effectively manage their responsibilities, parents discussed how they needed to

12 remain adaptable to organizational and developmental stressors. This theme comprised of the

13 ability to *adapt to unpredictable circumstances in sport*, and *parents being aware of, and*

14 *being comfortable with their support role*.

15 When discussing being *adaptable to unpredictable circumstances in sport*, parents

16 understood how unpredictable their child's sport can be, with specific examples including last

17 minute changes to meeting times or locations on the day of the competition itself and

18 adjusting their routine to these demands immediately. In anticipating these demands, parents

19 learned to manage their time appropriately:

20 But training schedules. I mean the other unpredictability with sports is being picked for

21 the team. You know you never quite know. You may have 6 months' worth of games in

22 the calendar, and you don't actually know whether you're going to be going or not. You

23 know you sort of have to earmark all of those weekends off, whether you're going to go

24 or not. (Gymnastics 7)

25 Parents also discussed how they needed to adapt to changes in coaches as their child

1 moves through the different age groups:

2 The coach is probably different every year, so parents are then having to learn the traits
3 of a new coach, as are the kids, but as you say, with parental resilience, they've just got
4 to know someone and suddenly it gets handed over, and you've got to learn how
5 someone else deals with their kids. (Cricket 26)

6 As children progress within their sport, parents discussed the importance of *being*
7 *aware of, and comfortable with their support role*, letting their children take more
8 responsibility in managing relationships with their coach:

9 And I know that (child's) got to see these kinds of sessions out and whatever feedback
10 (child) gets (child) needs to take on board and then just get on but it's about [me] taking
11 that step back. The further (child) progresses, the more I take a step back emotionally.
12 I'll deal with the politics as and when it happens, but he'll deal with the cricket side of
13 things. (Cricket 29)

14 Furthermore, through an *awareness of, and being comfortable with their support role*,
15 parents were more able to effectively manage their responsibilities and maintain their
16 psychological well-being. Specifically, when their children first started playing, parents
17 understood their role as providing greater informational support in conjunction with the
18 much-needed tangible support. However, as children transitioned through the sport, parents
19 noted how they needed to provide tangible, emotional, and esteem support whilst the need for
20 informational support was reduced, as illustrated in the following conversation:

21 Rugby 10 - I think as (child) is going through this pathway the older he's getting the
22 more we're stepping back and doing what you said, that you're there to facilitate things
23 for him. You're there to support, you're there to provide things that (child) might need
24 or trips to here or there or whatever and to be that person who gives lifts...

25 Rugby 4 - Yes, I agree, and I think when our son was young he looked towards us for

1 instruction, but now he looks for support. So, the instructive side has gone...But what
2 he does need is that support when he'll come in and say things like, "Dad am I doing
3 things right?" So, he needs that nurturing side still even at 16, he's still a boy, he's not a
4 man yet...

5 This conversation illustrated how parents were both aware and comfortable with their
6 responsibilities. Through being comfortable with these responsibilities, parents were able to
7 accept their roles in youth sport.

8 Furthermore, following an *awareness of, and being comfortable with their support role*,
9 a key strategy involved parents fostering some independence to children over their sporting
10 development, as they saw their children being more knowledgeable about their sport:

11 Yes I found that as (child) gets older, (child's) becoming a lot more wiser and (child's)
12 telling me a lot more information...I'm only just there to support (child)...I think it was
13 last year when (child) was just about to turn 15 I had to step back and just let him
14 develop...but now and again...I need to be there to give (child) mental support or just to
15 make sure that (child's) alright and (child's) confident of what (child's) going to do...

16 (Rugby 11)

17 ***Maintaining Optimism in Sport***

18 The final psychosocial asset was maintaining optimism, characterized by a parent's
19 ability to remain positive in their child's sporting ability and their psychological
20 characteristics, when faced with adverse circumstances. In some instances, parents'
21 confidence in their children representing their sport at the elite level resulted in them making
22 sacrifices to ensure this became a reality. For example, by *maintaining optimism in their*
23 *children's sporting abilities*, parents discussed how they were more comfortable in spending
24 money on expensive sports equipment:

25 So when they actually are in the competitions it is all down to the swimsuit, they've all

1 got to have the best of the best...I do like to make sure (child's) got the best goggles that
2 (child) likes. So, (a) part of you does sort of think I don't wanna be spending this
3 money but another part of me thinks I just want the best for (child)...'cause (child's) at
4 such a good level (of) swimming. (Swimming 36)

5 In maintaining optimism, this parent understood their support role and was more
6 motivated in effectively managing their responsibilities. Additionally, some parents also
7 discussed how they would travel long distances and raise funds to allow their children to
8 receive the best coaching and training opportunities within their sport:

9 We're doing lots of fundraising, you know. We like to help. And because I'm so
10 outgoing and you know I've got no shame. (Child's) got a talent that I couldn't allow
11 that to go to waste for my own pride...You know (child) was the one that got picked up
12 and you know scouted...So to drive to (club), like it was twice a week. Then it went to
13 three times a week. two hours to get there, two hours training, and an hour and a half
14 back. That's five and a half hours, like three times a week. (Football 50)

15 Through optimism in their child's footballing abilities, this parent worked to effectively
16 manage their responsibilities and cope with the lengthy commutes and practices.

17 Parents also discussed *maintaining optimism in their child's psychological*
18 *characteristics*, believing their children were able to manage the adversity they encountered
19 in sport. This belief reduced parents' concerns, primarily allowing them to maintain their
20 psychological well-being, for example, in regard to deselection one parent noted:

21 So, it's one of those where he was really upset, but he composed himself at the time and
22 just learned to deal with it...I myself was obviously upset, but knowing how he coped
23 with it made me feel kind of easier with what had happened. (Cricket 29)

Discussion

25 The purpose of this study was to define and characterize parental resilience in youth

1 sport. In building on existing sport definitions of resilience (Fasey et al., 2021; Fletcher &
2 Sarkar, 2012; Morgan et al., 2013), and definitions of parental resilience in developmental
3 psychology (Easterbrooks et al., 2011; Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015; Suzuki et al., 2013), the
4 current definition both extends and supports existing definitions of resilience in the literature
5 (Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015; Fasey et al., 2021; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Morgan et al.,
6 2013). Firstly, the current study supports the idea that parental resilience is a “dynamic
7 process”, suggesting that parental resilience develops over time as parents continue to interact
8 with the sports environment (Egeland et al., 1993; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). Recently, Hill et
9 al. (2025) highlighted that the term “dynamic” within the process conceptualization of
10 resilience has been a ‘buzzword’ and has often been oversimplified in the literature and
11 subsequently needs to be clearly defined and operationalized. Specifically, dynamics entail
12 how one state emerges from a previous state and subsequently determines possible future
13 states (Hill et al., 2025). Complementing this perspective, resilience has also been viewed as
14 a temporal process (Hill et al., 2018), whereby observable behaviour arrives as a result of
15 ongoing changes between the underlying interacting components. In drawing upon these
16 concepts, the “dynamic process” aspect within the current definition of parental resilience
17 highlights that through continuous interaction with youth sport, parents learn to refine or
18 develop pre-existing psychosocial assets and strategies, through a causal chain of events, to
19 become better equipped in managing the stressors they encounter in youth sport. In support of
20 previous definitions of individual resilience (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012) and team resilience
21 (Morgan et al., 2013) in athletes, reference to “a range of stressors” highlights the wide range
22 of stressors that parents have to potentially encounter, and deal with, in youth sport.
23 Notwithstanding this point, in line with our findings, and the “dynamic process”
24 conceptualization, parents may demonstrate resilience by deploying psychosocial assets to
25 one particular stressor at a specific timepoint or multiple stressors over time.

1 With previous research exploring resilience in elite sport environments, both individual
2 and team resilience definitions have focused more on performance (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012;
3 Morgan et al., 2013). Additionally, organizational resilience has focused more on sport
4 organizations successfully dealing with significant change as key outcomes of resilience
5 (Fasey et al., 2021). Within the current findings, the two outcomes, namely effectively
6 managing responsibilities and maintaining psychological well-being, have added parent-
7 specific dimensions to positive adaptation (cf. Gupta & McCarthy, 2022). The resilience in
8 sport literature advocates how protective factors buffer individuals and teams from the
9 potential negative effects of stressors (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Morgan et al., 2013).
10 However, within the current findings, “maintaining psychological well-being” provided a
11 more accurate representation of what parents discussed as an outcome of parental resilience
12 within interviews and focus groups. Secondly, the combination of these two outcomes
13 reinforces the importance of maintaining functioning whilst encountering stressors (Bryan et
14 al., 2019). Thirdly, the two outcomes of parental resilience in youth sport within the current
15 research go beyond the definition of Gavidia-Payne et al. (2015) in developmental
16 psychology, who suggested that ‘competent, quality parenting’ was the main outcome of
17 parental resilience.

18 In the current study, parents also discussed the need to “draw upon multiple
19 psychosocial assets and strategies”, which assisted them in demonstrating parental resilience.
20 In line with the “dynamic process” conceptualization within the current definition of parental
21 resilience, in most instances, parents drew upon multiple psychosocial assets to deal with a
22 particular stressor. In some other (rarer) instances, one psychosocial asset helped parents to
23 manage multiple stressors within their child’s sport. These psychosocial assets appeared to
24 influence parents’ appraisals of the stressors that they encountered in that drawing upon
25 psychosocial assets enabled parents to view stressors as a challenge rather than a threat. This

1 supports the notion that resilience is characterized by its influence on one's appraisal prior to
2 emotional and coping responses and by its positive, protective impact whereas coping is
3 characterized by its response to a stressful encounter and by its varying effectiveness in
4 resolving outstanding issues (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Drawing from resilience science,
5 assets are qualities that promote positive outcomes, with respect to specific criteria (Masten et
6 al., 2009). In characterizing parental resilience in youth sport, in this study, the specific
7 criteria (i.e., outcomes of resilience) include the parent's ability to effectively manage their
8 responsibilities and maintain their psychological well-being. Furthermore, "psychosocial
9 assets" represent the trait aspect within parental resilience. In this generated definition, the
10 trait aspect encompasses both inbuilt and developed aspects. The inbuilt aspects relate to the
11 parent's personality, and the developed aspects include the extent to which each parent
12 possesses each psychosocial asset, which can be enhanced over time. In addition, traits
13 comprise the degree to which parents both possess and utilize the psychosocial assets at their
14 disposal.

15 The first psychosocial asset parents discussed was their ability to maintain perspective
16 in sport. In the current study, maintaining perspective in sport was defined as parents being
17 aware of the broader circumstances within sport, specifically understanding the low
18 likelihood of their children becoming elite athletes and the recognition/acceptance that their
19 children will make mistakes within sport. Furthermore, parents understood that there are
20 similar chances for success and failure (Wiersma & Fifer, 2008). Subsequently, parents
21 ensured that their children concurrently pursued other hobbies and interests away from sport.
22 Additionally, through remembering what is important, parents were able to understand that
23 their children are gaining the wider benefits of sport, such as learning key life skills
24 (Harwood et al., 2015; Neely & Holt, 2014).

25 The identification of maintaining perspective as a psychosocial asset provides a novel

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 contribution to both the sport resilience and parental resilience research. For example, going
2 beyond what is currently understood within athlete resilience (Galli & Vealey, 2008), the
3 current findings illustrate how maintaining perspective in sport allowed parents to engage in
4 meta-cognitive processes (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). Additionally, although optimal
5 psychological well-being was identified as a factor in developmental psychology that
6 facilitated resilient parenting outcomes (Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015), the current study
7 highlighted how maintaining perspective, as a psychosocial asset, helped parents to maintain
8 their psychological well-being, enabling parents to provide greater support for their child. In
9 extending the sport parenting literature, maintaining perspective has now not only been
10 identified as a factor for optimal parental involvement (Clarke & Harwood, 2014; Knight &
11 Holt, 2014; Wiersma & Fifer, 2008), but also for facilitating parental resilience.

12 Another key psychosocial asset that was identified within the current study was the
13 parent's ability to perceive and utilize social support. In extending previous sport resilience
14 literature (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014), the current study illustrated the
15 specific dimensions of social support from different social agents. Subsequently, through the
16 support of different social agents, parents were able to demonstrate parental resilience,
17 through effectively managing their responsibilities and maintaining their psychological well-
18 being. In supporting previous research, social support has been shown to help athlete and
19 parental resilience (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015). Furthermore, social
20 support has been shown to help sports parents in supporting their child, as well as their own
21 well-being (Sutcliffe et al., 2024). Research has also demonstrated how parents utilize social
22 support as a coping strategy for sport-specific stressors (Burgess et al., 2016; Harwood et al.,
23 2019), specifically from their child's coach, their partner, and other parents within their
24 child's sport (Sutcliffe et al., 2024).

25 Within the current study, adaptability was defined as a parent's ability to cater for the

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 different demands and circumstances they encounter within their child's sport. This finding
2 extends what is currently understood about adaptability within the sport resilience and sport
3 parenting literature. Firstly, with adaptability being identified as a protective factor in
4 previous resilience research within elite sport environments (Fasey et al., 2021; Fletcher &
5 Sarkar, 2012; Morgan et al., 2013), the current research provided an alternative interpretation,
6 specifically focusing on a sports parenting context. Specifically, the findings showed how
7 adaptability allowed parents to manage the day-to-day responsibilities of their role and
8 demonstrate an awareness of, and be comfortable with their support role through their child's
9 stages of athletic development (cf. Côté, 1999). For example, parents within the current study
10 highlighted how they had to change their support role, at times, from providing informational
11 support to emotional support. Furthermore, whilst the position paper (Harwood &
12 Knight, 2015) and the grounded theory of optimal parental involvement in youth tennis
13 (Knight and Holt, 2014) highlighted the need for parents to adapt their support as their
14 children mature, the key finding here is that parents need to be comfortable with their
15 changing support role, along with the responsibilities emanating from this role. Through
16 being secure, relaxed and understanding about what their responsibilities entail and the
17 changing nature of their role, this helped parents to demonstrate resilience for themselves
18 (and their children).

19 The final psychosocial asset parents discussed was their ability to maintain optimism.
20 Specifically, parents believed in their children's sporting abilities and their psychological
21 characteristics, which motivated them to support their children in sport, and have fewer
22 concerns when adverse circumstances arose (e.g., their child's deselection). Whilst optimism
23 has been identified as a protective factor in athlete/individual resilience research (Galli &
24 Gonzalez, 2015; Gupta & McCarthy, 2022), the current research highlighted that optimism
25 also assisted in parental resilience. Additionally, in adding to our understanding of resilience,

1 maintaining optimism increased a parent's motivation to support their child, and enabled
2 them to show fewer concerns that their child will react negatively to adverse circumstances.
3 Subsequently, optimism allowed parents to effectively manage their responsibilities and
4 maintain their psychological well-being. Maintaining optimism also extends our
5 understanding of sport parenting, with limited research showing the benefits of optimism
6 within sports parenting research. Whilst De Beaudrap et al. (2017) found that parents develop
7 athlete's optimism by being supportive, providing feedback and giving athletes the choice
8 over the sports they want to play, the current research has illustrated the importance of
9 parents themselves maintaining a sense of optimism, aiding in the capacity to demonstrate
10 resilience.

11 **Strengths, Limitations and Future Research**

12 This study comprised a large purposefully recruited sample of parents with children
13 playing at county/state level and above. Consequently, the definition and psychosocial assets
14 were drawn from a broad range of sport parenting contexts. With a diverse population, the
15 definition and characterization of parental resilience in youth sport can be transferred to
16 multiple sports and with parents of differing socio-economic backgrounds (Smith, 2018).
17 However, this study is not without its limitations. Firstly, all parents were recruited within a
18 British setting, and most parents were of White British descent. Therefore, the current
19 research does not account for alternative cultural interpretations of parental resilience within
20 sport. Furthermore, although we purposefully drew upon the perspectives of a diverse sample
21 of parents from a range of backgrounds and sports, the findings are related to parents with
22 children at county/regional stage and above. Therefore, the findings may not be applicable to
23 parents who have children competing/participating in sport at lower levels (e.g., recreational
24 and grassroots). Additionally, the majority of parents within this research were either married
25 or living with their partners, meaning they were able to share the responsibilities within their

1 child's sport. More research needs to be conducted at either end of the family structure
2 continuum to include single parent families, blended families, and those who live with and/or
3 have support of wider/extended families, as this may account for alternative stressors,
4 barriers, and psychosocial assets that affect a parent's ability to demonstrate resilience
5 (Somerset & Hoare, 2018).

6 With the current research using one-off data collection strategies, the interviews and
7 focus groups were limited in depth as to what could be explored. Furthermore, parents were
8 spoken to at specific times of the season, only being able to fully explain recent experiences
9 they encountered and relying on critical incidents when providing retrospective accounts
10 (Côté et al., 2005). Future research could utilize a longitudinal qualitative design, with
11 multiple interviews and focus groups over time (see Fasey et al., 2022; Sarkar & Hilton,
12 2020). Collecting data at specific time-periods would help researchers to understand key
13 stressors parents experience within a sports season, aligning with the dynamic, interaction-
14 dominant concepts of resilience (Bonnano, 2021; Egeland et al., 1993; Hill et al., 2025).

15 Subsequently, future research could then explore whether a matching effect exists between
16 psychosocial assets and stressors; that is whether particular psychosocial assets match best
17 with certain parental stressors (cf. Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). Finally, future research could
18 look to understand the resources that allow parents to develop and refine psychosocial assets
19 over time, thereby increasing our understanding of the development of parental resilience.

20 **Practical Implications**

21 In achieving practical utility, sport clubs and coaches could benefit from the current
22 findings. Specifically, sports clubs could encourage parents to build a parent community,
23 where parents can work together to provide different types of social support. Furthermore,
24 parents and coaches could work on communicating shared goals, values, and expectations for
25 each other (O'Donnell et al., 2022). Coaches may also want to discuss with parents about

1 how they support their children's sports development at home and provide parents with
2 reassurance over their children's progression.

3 In addition, sport organizations, national governing bodies, and sport psychologists,
4 could educate and provide parents with tools to effectively manage the stressors they
5 encounter through a resilience training intervention. Typically, sport parenting interventions
6 aim to provide an appropriate avenue to facilitate healthy involvement and enhance positive
7 parental support for youth athletes (Burke et al., 2024), thereby not directly and explicitly
8 accounting for the impact youth sport can have on parents themselves. However, within a
9 parental resilience training intervention programme, sport psychologists could provide
10 parents with methods to develop the various psychosocial assets identified in this current
11 study. For example, through maintaining perspective, parents will be better able to
12 understand and accept that their children will underperform on occasions. Furthermore, sport
13 psychologists could ask parents to write down reasons as to why they wanted their children to
14 participate in sport, and the key outcomes they wish for their children. This could help to
15 reinforce the importance of their children being happy, healthy, enjoying their sport, and the
16 goal of positive youth development (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Jones & Lavallee, 2009).
17 With regards to increasing the ability of parents to perceive and utilize social support, sport
18 psychology practitioners could pose situations that parents typically encounter within youth
19 sport, and parents could discuss suggesting solutions to effectively manage these situations.
20 Through collaborating in finding solutions to difficult situations, parents would have the
21 opportunity to work together and support each other effectively. With regards to enhancing
22 optimism in sport, sport psychology practitioners could encourage parents to note down their
23 children's past achievements within youth sport. Subsequently, when adversity arises, parents
24 can refer back to these achievements, which will help them to remain optimistic that both
25 themselves and their children can overcome this setback. Finally, with regards to developing

1 adaptability, sport psychology practitioners could encourage parents to keep a diary of
2 “pressure points”, noting their children’s school, training, and competition schedule. Through
3 keeping a diary, and being proactively aware of their children’s commitments (both in and
4 out of sport), parents can better adapt and manage these pressures more effectively.
5 Ultimately, it is hoped that the study’s findings can provide sport organizations and sport
6 psychology practitioners with a framework to profile the psychosocial assets of parents when
7 encountering stressors. In turn, this could facilitate the design of parent-based resilience
8 training interventions for parents operating in youth sport.

9 **Conclusion**

10 In conclusion, this study defined and characterized parental resilience in youth sport.
11 Parental resilience in youth sport is defined as “a dynamic process in which parents draw
12 upon multiple psychosocial assets and strategies to effectively manage their responsibilities
13 and maintain their psychological well-being, when encountering a range of stressors”. The
14 psychosocial assets that characterized parental resilience included maintaining perspective in
15 sport, perceiving and utilizing social support, adaptability to different circumstances in sport,
16 and maintaining optimism in sport. Future research should look to understand which
17 particular psychosocial assets are relevant for certain stressors, along with how these
18 psychosocial assets are developed.

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

References

2 Acocella, I. (2012). The focus groups in social research: advantages and
3 disadvantages. *Quality & Quantity*, 46, 1125-1136.

4 Archer, M. (2010). Critical realism and relational sociology: Complementarity and
5 synergy. *Journal of Critical Realism*, 9(2), 199-207.

6 Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using zoom
7 videoconferencing for qualitative data collection: perceptions and experiences of
8 researchers and parents. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18(1), 1-8

9 Arnold, R., Brown, D. J., & McLoughlin, E. (2024). An examination of the relationship
10 between sport performers' organizational stressor dimensions, physical health, and
11 well-being. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 42(11), 1050-1060.

12 Arnold, R., Collington, S., Manley, H., Rees, S., Soanes, J., & Williams, M. (2019). "The
13 team behind the team": Exploring the organizational stressor experiences of sport
14 science and management staff in elite sport. *Journal of Applied Sport
15 Psychology*, 31(1), 7-26.

16 Arnold, R., Fletcher, D., & Daniels, K. (2017). Organisational stressors, coping, and
17 outcomes in competitive sport. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 35(7), 694-703.

18 Bean, C. N., Fortier, M., Post, C., & Chima, K. (2014). Understanding how organized youth
19 sport may be harming individual players within the family unit: A literature
20 review. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 11(10),
21 10226-10268.

22 Benoot, C., Hannes, K., & Bilsen, J. (2016). The use of purposeful sampling in a qualitative
23 evidence synthesis: A worked example on sexual adjustment to a cancer
24 trajectory. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 16, 1-12.

25 Bhaskar, R. (1979). The Possibility of Naturalism. Sussex, UK. Harvester Press

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 Bhaskar, R. (2020). Critical realism and the ontology of persons. *Journal of Critical Realism*,
2 19(2), 113-120.

3 Bonanno, G. A. (2021). The resilience paradox. *European Journal of*
4 *Psychotraumatology*, 12(1).

5 Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative*
6 *Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589-597.

7 Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research*
8 *in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

9 Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in
10 (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 328-352.

11 Bryan, C., O'Shea, D., & MacIntyre, T. (2019). Stressing the relevance of resilience: A
12 systematic review of resilience across the domains of sport and work. *International*
13 *Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 12(1), 70-111.

14 Burgess, N. S., Knight, C. J., & Mellalieu, S. D. (2016). Parental stress and coping in elite
15 youth gymnastics: an interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in*
16 *Sport, Exercise and Health*, 8(3), 237-256.

17 Burke, S., Sharp, L. A., Woods, D., & Paradis, K. F. (2024). Enhancing parental support
18 through parent-education programs in youth sport: A systematic review. *International*
19 *Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 17(1), 208-235.

20 Camiré, M., & Santos, F. (2019). Promoting positive youth development and life skills in
21 youth sport: Challenges and opportunities amidst increased professionalization. *Journal*
22 *of Sport Pedagogy and Research*, 5(1), 27-34.

23 Clarke, V., and V. Braun. (2014). Thematic analysis. In A.C. Michalos (Ed) *Encyclopaedia of*
24 *quality of life and well-being research*, (pp. 6626–28). Dordrecht, Netherlands:
25 Springer.

1 Côté, J. (1999). The influence of the family in the development of talent in sport. *The Sport*
2 *Psychologist*, 13(4), 395-417.

3 Côté, J., Ericsson, K. A., & Law, M. P. (2005). Tracing the development of athletes using
4 retrospective interview methods: A proposed interview and validation procedure for
5 reported information. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 17(1), 1-19.

6 Côté, J., Strachan, L., & Fraser-Thomas, J. (2007). Participation, personal development, and
7 performance through youth sport. In *Positive youth development through sport* (pp. 48-
8 60). Routledge.

9 Davydov, D. M., Stewart, R., Ritchie, K., & Chaudieu, I. (2010). Resilience and mental
10 health. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 30(5), 479-495.

11 De Beaudrap, H. L., Dunn, J. G., & Holt, N. L. (2017). Female varsity athletes' perceptions
12 of how they became optimistic in sport. *The Sport Psychologist*, 31(1), 30-41.

13 Dorsch, T. E., Wright, E., Eckardt, V. C., Elliott, S., Thrower, S. N., & Knight, C. J. (2021).
14 A history of parent involvement in organized youth sport: A scoping review. *Sport,*
15 *Exercise, and Performance Psychology*, 10(4), 536-557.

16 Easterbrooks, M. A., Chaudhuri, J. H., Bartlett, J. D., & Copeman, A. (2011). Resilience in
17 parenting among young mothers: Family and ecological risks and
18 opportunities. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(1), 42-50.

19 Egeland, B., Carlson, E., & Sroufe, L. A. (1993). Resilience as process. *Development and*
20 *Psychopathology*, 5(4), 517-528.

21 Elliott, S. K., & Drummond, M. J. (2017). Parents in youth sport: What happens after the
22 game? *Sport, Education and Society*, 22(3), 391-406.

23 Eltanamly, H., Leijten, P., Van Roekel, E., Mouton, B., Pluess, M., & Overbeek, G. (2023).
24 Strengthening parental self-efficacy and resilience: A within-subject experimental study
25 with refugee parents of adolescents. *Child Development*, 94(1), 187-201.

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 Fasey, K. J., Sarkar, M., Wagstaff, C. R., & Johnston, J. (2021). Defining and characterizing
2 organizational resilience in elite sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 52, 1-12

3 Fasey, K. J., Sarkar, M., Wagstaff, C. R., & Johnston, J. (2022). Understanding
4 organizational resilience in elite sport: An exploration of psychosocial
5 processes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 62, 1-12

6 Fletcher, D., & Sarkar, M. (2012). A grounded theory of psychological resilience in Olympic
7 champions. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 13(5), 669-678.

8 Fletcher, D., & Sarkar, M. (2013). Psychological Resilience. *European Psychologist*, 18(1),
9 1-33.

10 Fraser-Thomas, J. L., Côté, J., & Deakin, J. (2005). Youth sport programs: An avenue to
11 foster positive youth development. *Physical Education & Sport Pedagogy*, 10(1), 19-
12 40.

13 Galli, N., & Gonzalez, S. P. (2015). Psychological resilience in sport: A review of the
14 literature and implications for research and practice. *International Journal of Sport and
15 Exercise Psychology*, 13(3), 243-257.

16 Galli, N., & Vealey, R. S. (2008). "Bouncing back" from adversity: Athletes' experiences of
17 resilience. *The Sport Psychologist*, 22(3), 316-335.

18 Gavidia-Payne, S., Denny, B., Davis, K., Francis, A., & Jackson, M. (2015). Parental
19 resilience: A neglected construct in resilience research. *Clinical Psychologist*, 19(3),
20 111-121.

21 Gmuca, S., Xiao, R., Urquhart, A., Weiss, P. F., Gillham, J. E., Ginsburg, K. R., ... & Gerber,
22 J. S. (2019). The role of patient and parental resilience in adolescents with chronic
23 musculoskeletal pain. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 210, 118-126.

24 Gupta, S., & McCarthy, P. J. (2022). The sporting resilience model: A systematic review of
25 resilience in sport performers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1-18

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 Harwood, C. G., Barker, J. B., & Anderson, R. (2015). Psychosocial development in youth
2 soccer players: Assessing the effectiveness of the 5Cs intervention program. *The Sport
3 Psychologist*, 29(4), 319-334.

4 Harwood, C., Johnston, J., & Wachsmuth, S. (2024). Positive youth development and talent
5 development: Pursuing dual intentions in a multilayered environment. In *Positive youth
6 development through sport* (pp. 156-169). Routledge.

7 Harwood, C., & Knight, C. (2009). Stress in youth sport: A developmental investigation of
8 tennis parents. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 10(4), 447-456.

9 Harwood, C. G., & Knight, C. J. (2015). Parenting in youth sport: A position paper on
10 parenting expertise. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 16, 24-35.

11 Harwood, C. G., Thrower, S. N., Slater, M. J., Didymus, F. F., & Frearson, L. (2019).
12 Advancing our understanding of psychological stress and coping among parents in
13 organized youth sport. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 1-17.

14 Hayward, F. P., Knight, C. J., & Mellalieu, S. D. (2017). A longitudinal examination of
15 stressors, appraisals, and coping in youth swimming. *Psychology of Sport and
16 Exercise*, 29, 56-68.

17 Hertting, K., Wagnsson, S., & Grahn, K. (2020). Perceptions of stress of Swedish volunteer
18 youth soccer coaches. *Sports*, 8(11), 146.

19 Hill, Y., Den Hartigh, R. J. R., Meijer, R. R., De Jonge, P., & Van Yperen, N. W. (2018). The
20 temporal process of resilience. *Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology*, 7(4),
21 363-370.

22 Hill, Y., Dolezal, M. L., Nordbeck, P. C., Den Hartigh, R. J., Pincus, D., Kiefer, A. W., &
23 Ricca, B. P. (2025). Moving from traits to the dynamic process: The next steps in
24 research on human resilience. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 1-19.

25 Holt, N. L., Tamminen, K. A., Black, D. E., Mandigo, J. L., & Fox, K. R. (2009). Youth sport

1 parenting styles and practices. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 31(1), 37-59.

2 Isaksen, R. (2022). Judgemental rationality. *Journal of Critical Realism*, 21(5), 589-591.

3 Jones, M. I., & Lavallee, D. (2009). Exploring perceived life skills development and
4 participation in sport. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, 1(1), 36-50.

5 Kahlke, R. M. (2014). Generic qualitative approaches: Pitfalls and benefits of methodological
6 mixology. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 13(1), 37-52.

7 Knight, C. J., & Holt, N. L. (2014). Parenting in youth tennis: Understanding and enhancing
8 children's experiences. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 15(2), 155-164.

9 Lambert, S. D., & Loiselle, C. G. (2008). Combining individual interviews and focus groups
10 to enhance data richness. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(2), 228-237.

11 Lienhart, N., Nicaise, V., Knight, C. J., & Guillet-Descas, E. (2020). Understanding parent
12 stressors and coping experiences in elite sports contexts. *Sport, Exercise, and
13 Performance Psychology*, 9(3), 390-404.

14 Lim, J. H. (2011). Qualitative methods in adult development and learning: Theoretical
15 traditions, current practices, and emerging horizons. In C. Hoare (Ed.), *The Oxford
16 handbook of reciprocal adult development and learning* (2nd ed., pp. 39–60). New
17 York, NY: Oxford University Press.

18 Masten, A. S., Cutuli, J. J., Herbers, J. E., Reed M-G J. (2009). Resilience in Development.
19 In C. R. Snyder and S. J. Lopez (Eds.) *Oxford handbook of positive psychology*, 2nd
20 edition, 117-132. Oxford University Press.

21 McGlinchey, T. R., Saward, C., Healy, L. C., & Sarkar, M. (2022). “From everything to
22 nothing in a split second”: Elite youth players' experiences of release from professional
23 football academies. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 4, 1-15.

24 Morgan, P. B., Fletcher, D., & Sarkar, M. (2013). Defining and characterizing team resilience
25 in elite sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 14(4), 549-559.

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 Neely, K. C., & Holt, N. L. (2014). Parents' perspectives on the benefits of sport participation
2 for young children. *The Sport Psychologist*, 28(3), 255-268.

3 Neergaard, M. A., Olesen, F., Andersen, R. S., & Sondergaard, J. (2009). Qualitative
4 description – the poor cousin of health research? *BMC Medical Research Methodology*,
5 9(1), 52–56.

6 O'Donnell, K., Elliott, S. K., & Drummond, M. J. (2022). Exploring parent and coach
7 relationships in youth sport: A qualitative study. *Qualitative Research in Sport,
8 Exercise and Health*, 14(7), 1023-1044.

9 Pastor-Cerezuela, G., Fernández-Andrés, M. I., Tárraga-Mínguez, R., & Navarro-Peña, J. M.
10 (2016). Parental stress and ASD: Relationship with autism symptom severity, IQ, and
11 resilience. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 31(4), 300-311.

12 Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2016). Recommendations for
13 Creating Better Concept Definitions in the Organizational, Behavioral, and Social
14 Sciences. *Organizational Research Methods*, 19(2), 159-203.

15 Poucher, Z. A., Tamminen, K. A., Caron, J. G., & Sweet, S. N. (2020). Thinking through and
16 designing qualitative research studies: A focused mapping review of 30 years of
17 qualitative research in sport psychology. *International Review of Sport and Exercise
18 Psychology*, 13(1), 163-186.

19 Rajan, A. M., Srikrishna, G., & Romate, J. (2018). Resilience and locus of control of parents
20 having a child with intellectual disability. *Journal of Developmental and Physical
21 Disabilities*, 30, 297-306. Ronkainen, N. J., & Wiltshire, G. (2021). Rethinking validity
22 in qualitative sport and exercise psychology research: A realist
23 perspective. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 19(1), 13-28.

24 Ryba, T. V., Wiltshire, G., North, J., & Ronkainen, N. J. (2022). Developing mixed methods
25 research in sport and exercise psychology: Potential contributions of a critical realist

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 perspective. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 20(1), 147-167.

2 Sandelowski, M. (2000). Whatever happened to qualitative description? *Research in Nursing*
3 & Health, 23(4), 334-340.

4 Sandelowski, M. (2010). What's in a name? Qualitative description revisited. *Research in*
5 *Nursing & Health*, 33(1), 77-84.

6 Saner, E. (2020, November 24). I'm a survivor! How resilience became the quality we all
7 crave. *The Guardian*. Retrieved June 17, 2024, from
8 <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/nov/24/im-a-survivor-how-resilience-became-the-quality-we-all-crave>.

9

10 Sarkar, M., & Fletcher, D. (2014). Psychological resilience in sport performers: a review of
11 stressors and psychosocial assets. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 32(15), 1419-1434.

12 Sarkar, M., & Hilton, N. K. (2020). Psychological resilience in Olympic medal-winning
13 coaches: A longitudinal qualitative study. *International Sport Coaching Journal*, 7(2),
14 209-219.

15 Sapieja, K. M., Dunn, J. G., & Holt, N. L. (2011). Perfectionism and perceptions of parenting
16 styles in male youth soccer. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 33(1), 20-39.

17 Smith, B. (2018). Generalizability in qualitative research: Misunderstandings, opportunities
18 and recommendations for the sport and exercise sciences. *Qualitative Research in*
19 *Sport, Exercise and Health*, 10(1), 137-149.

20 Smith, B., & McGannon, K. R. (2018). Developing rigor in qualitative research: Problems
21 and opportunities within sport and exercise psychology. *International Review of Sport*
22 *and Exercise Psychology*, 11(1), 101-121.

23 Somerset, S., & Hoare, D. J. (2018). Barriers to voluntary participation in sport for children: a
24 systematic review. *BMC Paediatrics*, 18, 1-19.

25 Sorkkila, M., & Aunola, K. (2022). Resilience and parental burnout among Finnish parents

Running head: PARENTAL RESILIENCE IN YOUTH SPORT

1 during the COVID-19 pandemic: Variable and person-oriented approaches. *The Family*
2 *Journal*, 30(2), 139-147.

3 Sutcliffe, J. T., Fernandez, D. K., Kelly, P. J., & Vella, S. A. (2024). The parental experience
4 in youth sport: A systematic review and qualitative meta-study. *International Review of*
5 *Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 17(1), 236-263.

6 Sutcliffe, J. T., Kelly, P. J., & Vella, S. A. (2021). Youth sport participation and parental
7 mental health. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 52, 1-12.

8 Suzuki, K., Kobayashi, T., Moriyama, K., Kaga, M., & Inagaki, M. (2013). A framework for
9 resilience research in parents of children with developmental disorders. *Asian Journal*
10 *of Human Services*, 5 (0), 104-111

11 Wagstaff, C. R., Sarkar, M., Davidson, C. L., & Fletcher, D. (2016). Resilience in sport: a
12 critical review of psychological processes, sociocultural influences, and organizational
13 dynamics. In C. R. Wagstaff (Ed). *The organizational psychology of sport*, (pp.120-
14 149). London, UK: Routledge.

15 White, R. L., & Bennie, A. (2015). Resilience in youth sport: A qualitative investigation of
16 gymnastics coach and athlete perceptions. *International Journal of Sports Science &*
17 *Coaching*, 10, 379-393.

18 Wiersma, L. D., & Fifer, A. M. (2008). "The schedule has been tough but we think it's worth
19 it": The joys, challenges, and recommendations of youth sport parents. *Journal of*
20 *Leisure Research*, 40(4), 505-530.

21 Widyawati, Y., Otten, R., Kleemans, T., & Scholte, R. (2020). Parental resilience and the
22 quality of life of children with developmental disabilities in Indonesia. *International*
23 *Journal of Disability Development and Education*, 1-17.

24

25

1 Table 1. Defining and Characterizing Parental Resilience Interview Guide

	Interview questions	Participant probes
1.1	Could you tell me about some circumstances within your child's sport that have caused you a sense of stress?	How did these make you feel? Could you provide me with an example story?
1.2	What qualities have helped you to deal with some of the circumstances explained in the previous question?	Responses from previous parents taking part in study How have they helped? Could you explain a situation where you have seen an improvement when dealing with that circumstance on another occasion?
1.3	What do you think resilience means?	Responses from previous parents taking part in study Why? Referring back to parents' previous life experiences
1.4	What do you think parental resilience means?	Responses from previous parents taking part in study Why? Referring to previous parenting experiences
1.5	Do you agree with Gavidia-Payne's et al (2015) definition of parental resilience?	Responses from previous parents taking part in study If yes, why? If no, what aspects would you change, and why?
1.6	Going back to previous stressful circumstance discussed, in dealing with this circumstance, what would high parental resilience look like?	Responses from previous parents taking part in study Why? Responses from previous parents taking part in study

2

3

4

5