



# “What About Me”: IER On The Regulator in Dyad Sports

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## Abstract

Interpersonal Emotion Regulation, IER, is often used by athletes and when done effectively may positively relate to motivation, affect, team performance outcomes, sport commitment, and enjoyment (Tamminen & Crocker, 2013; Tamminen et al., 2016). Despite knowledge of numerous IER strategies athletes employ, minimal research has explored the impact of IER on the regulator, although findings from Foti et al. (2022) suggest there may be an interrelationship of providing IER between the regulator and target teammate, with the regulator’s emotions receiving more predominant impacts. However, emotions are subjective (Wagstaff & Tamminen, 2021) and the contextual and social factors that impact IER experiences must be interpreted. This study aims to (a) explain how the regulator’s emotions, ego depletion, and effort are impacted by providing IER, (b) explore how athletes perceive the receipt of IER to impact their emotions, (c) understand the relationships and team dynamics involved in IER, and (d) understand the factors that contribute to IER strategy selection and implementation. Multi-level descriptive interviews are being conducted with five dyads, 10 competitive adult beach volleyball and tennis athletes, from an interpretivist position focused on recognizing subjective meaning (Goldkuhl, 2012) within the athletes’ experiences. Results are anticipated in March/April 2023. The results will inform athletes’ utilization of IER resources in an effective manner both for themselves and their teammates. This will prompt the ability to conduct future experimental studies to determine causation between constructs for practitioners to use evidence-based practice to advocate for the most effective and least detrimental IER behaviors in sport.

## Results

- At present preliminary results and first impressions of the data have been recorded. However, complete inductive coding has not yet been completed due to ongoing data collection. However, the goal of this study is to interpret athletes descriptions of their experiences both providing IER as well as receiving it and to understand how the athletes’ relationship and the context and the situations within the match have an impact.
- Preliminary results and first impressions of the gathered data shows IER impacts both the regulator's and target teammate's emotions through shifts in intensity, duration, expression, and suppression, and cohesive play style, communication, and partner and personal performance relate to IER use and strategy selection.

## Methods

- This study will include 2 interviews. Participants will be from dyad teams and will complete one 1-hour interview together and each one 1-hour individual interview. The interviews will be audio recorded via voice memos and Quick Time Player for interviews in person, or via Zoom for those completed virtually.
- Athletes will send the researchers 2 video clips of them playing from their current season (one clip will depict a negative emotional experience they had and the other a positive experience). We are utilizing video recall in order to get athletes back into the competitive headspace and have them describe their experiences interacting with each other and how it impacts them.

## Conclusion

### Key findings:

- Current data shows that IER use has been described to relate to changes in both the target teammate and regulator’s emotions as well as some indication of performance and effort impacts.

### Project limitations:

- Some athletes found it difficult to identify their emotions and describe them which may have impacted some of the information we collected.

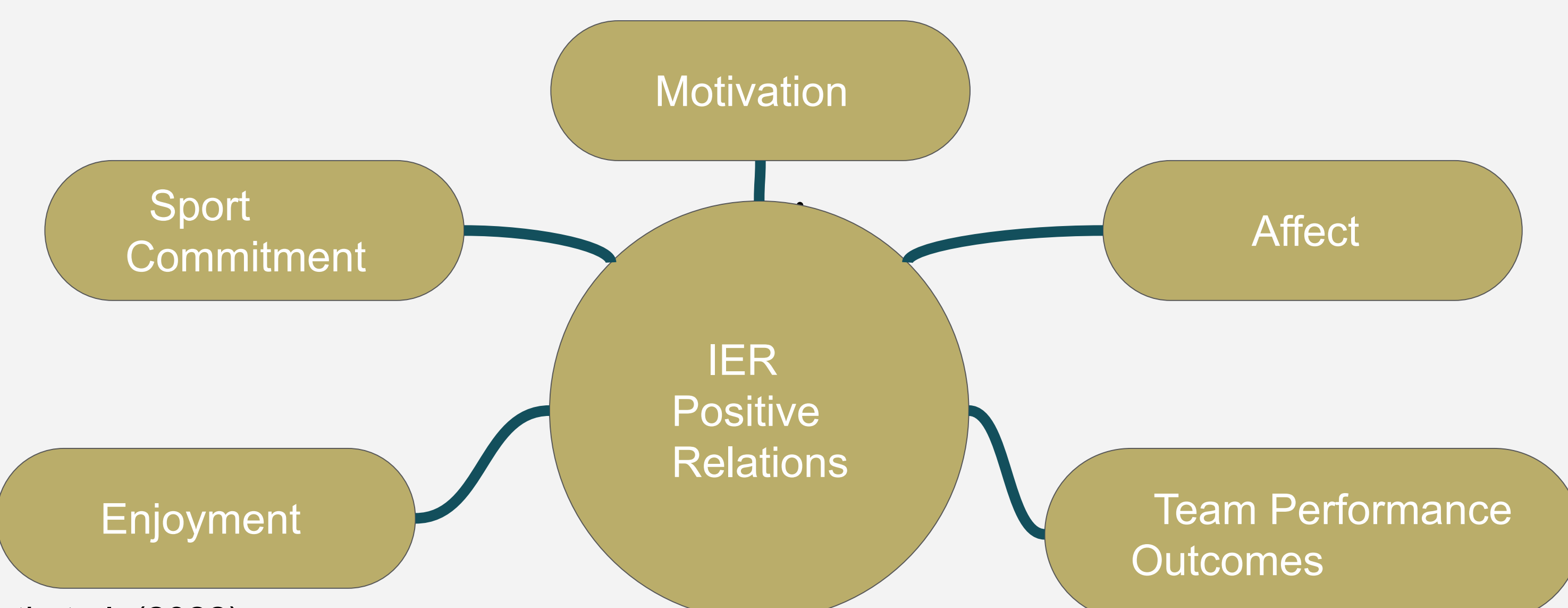
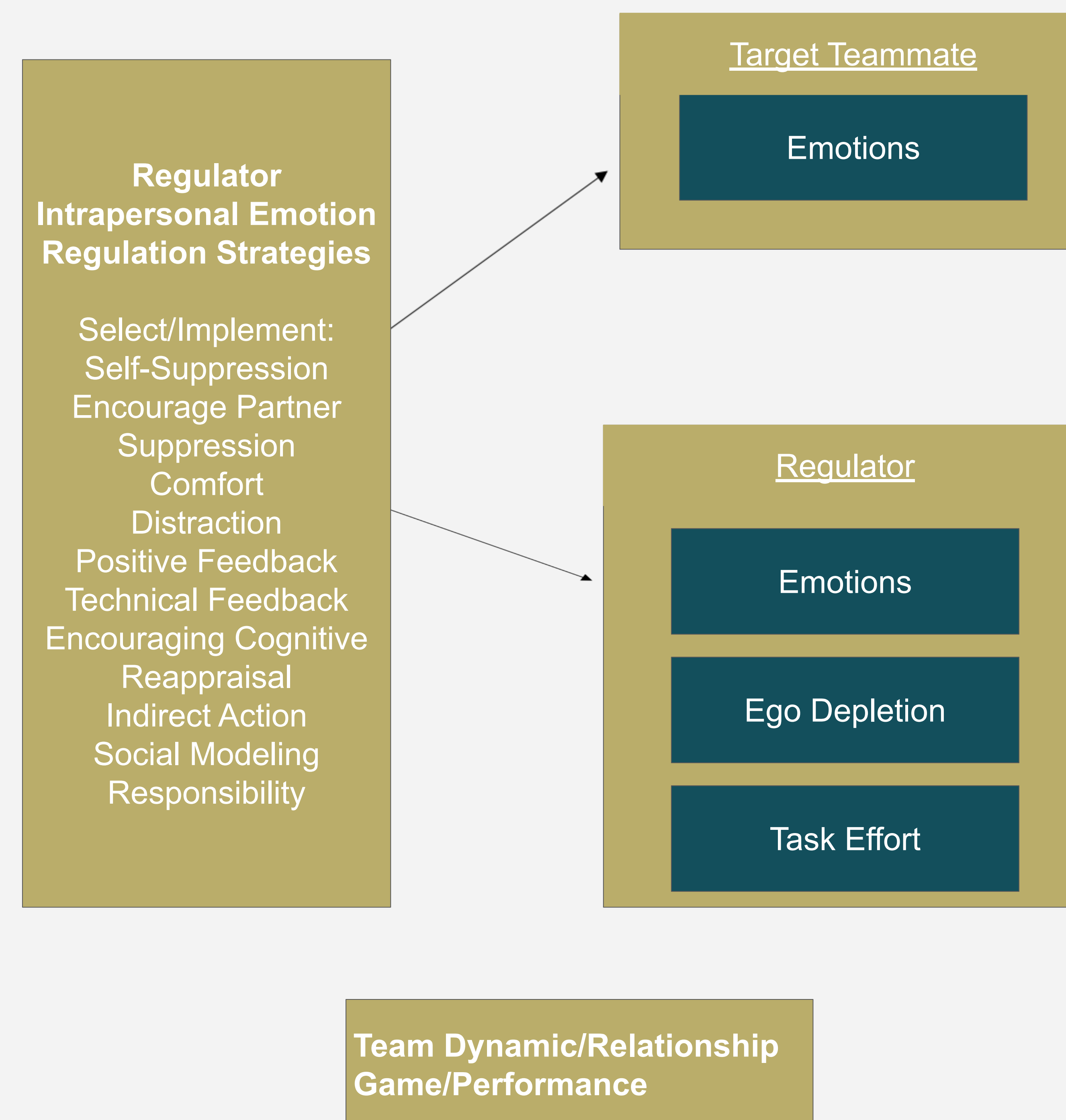
### Future studies

- This research allows for the opportunity to conduct future studies where practitioners can use evidence based practice to advocate for the most effective and least detrimental IER behaviors in sport.

## Background Information

- Interpersonal emotional regulation involves two individuals, the regulator or the individual altering the emotion of others, and the target teammate or the recipient. This process must be deliberate and conscious (Niven, 2017), meaning it is controllable, intentional, recognizable, and consumes processing resources that are limited (Bargh, 2008).
- Foti et al. (2022) found that the most common 10 used strategies are self suppression, encouraging partner suppression, cognitive reappraisal, comfort, distraction, indirect action, social modeling and taking responsibility, positive feedback and technical feedback.
- Researchers have found that improving others’ affect was correlated to improving an athlete’s own affect (Tamminen et al. 2016)" however impacts to specific emotions, effort and cognition of the regulator is still needed.

## Figures



## References

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