

**Title:** Facilitating the Coping Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being of Student Rugby Players

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**Keywords:** Experiential-learning; first year student athletes; rugby performance

**Sport:** Rugby

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**Primary Theme:** Well-being and mental health

**Secondary Theme:** Characteristics of a dual career athlete.

**Aims:** The aim of this study was to assess the personal, academic and sporting needs of first year student rugby players. This study also aimed to assess the effectiveness of an experiential-learning intervention on the students' self-belief in their ability to cope with adversity (coping self-efficacy) and their psychological well-being. To explain, an experiential-learning intervention is one that assists an individual's learning experience through active participation, shared information, learning from others and a holistic focus on thoughts, feelings and behaviours. This type of intervention was chosen as it has been shown as effective in group settings and also has shown to develop a sense of belonging to the group – a quality that is advantageous in team sports.

**Method:** In this study, the intervention consisted of six, 1 hour sessions that covered: motivation, goal setting, time management, coping with injuries, emotion-focused coping and "getting into the zone". 76 first year student rugby players took part in the study. To begin, all the rugby players completed questionnaires on well-being and coping self-efficacy. They were then split equally into two groups, one group received the 6 session intervention and the other group did not. All the rugby players were then asked to complete the same two questionnaires again.

**Results and Practical Implications:** The results showed that scores on coping self-efficacy and well-being improved significantly more for the group that received the intervention, than the group that did not. This means that the group who received the experiential-learning intervention believed that they were better able to cope with adversity after the intervention. This also had a positive effect on their psychological well-being. These findings show promising results for an experiential-learning intervention in first year student rugby players. However, further research is still needed in other sports, the effect the intervention has on actual coping abilities (not just belief of coping abilities) and to investigate the effect over a longer period of time. An intervention like this could be used to support student athletes in coping with adversity in sport and in education.

TASS have produced this lay summary. The full article is available (permissions may apply):  
[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Heinrich\\_Grobbelaar/publication/274987574\\_Facilitating\\_the\\_coping\\_self-efficacy\\_and\\_psychological\\_well-being\\_of\\_student\\_rugby\\_players/links/55bf807608ae092e96669721.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Heinrich_Grobbelaar/publication/274987574_Facilitating_the_coping_self-efficacy_and_psychological_well-being_of_student_rugby_players/links/55bf807608ae092e96669721.pdf)