

Golf Participation, Mindfulness, Emotion Regulation, and Perceived Stress: A Comparative Study of Golfers and Non-Golfers

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Abstract

Golf has increasingly been recognised as a sport associated with psychological wellbeing through mechanisms such as mindfulness, emotional regulation, and stress reduction. But little research has explored these connections between golfers and non-golfers, and taken into account the impact of demographic variables. The current study set out to investigate the relationship between golf participation, mindfulness, emotion regulation and perceived stress and to determine if there was any difference in these psychological variables tied to golf participation. A total of 48 participants (39 golfers and 9 non-golfers) met the inclusion criteria and completed the Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), State Mindfulness Scale (SMS), and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Welch's independent sample T tests, Mann-Whitney U tests, Pearson and Spearman correlations, and multiple linear regression analyses controlling for age. Initial analyses revealed significantly less perceived stress for golfers compared to non-golfers, although this was not the case when controlling for age which was the better predictor of perceived stress; no differences were found between golfers and non-golfers in emotion regulation, or state mindfulness. Within the golfer group, greater years of golfing experience were associated with lower perceived stress, whereas participation at a more competitive level was associated with higher perceived stress. Furthermore, mindfulness was positively associated with emotion regulation across the entire sample. Overall, the findings suggest that although golf participation alone may not directly improve mindfulness or emotion regulation, long term engagement and the context of participation may influence psychological well-being. Future research should employ larger, more demographically balanced samples to further investigate these relationships.

Keywords: Golf, Mindfulness, Emotion Regulation, Perceived Stress, Psychological Wellbeing, Sports Psychology