

# The Relationship Between Mental Toughness, Emotional Intelligence, and Stress Coping With the Incidence of Unstable Ankle Injury in Athletes

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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the opening paragraph beginning with “In contemporary sport and performance psychology, mental toughness has emerged...”, the authors provide a strong conceptual overview; however, a clear operational definition aligned with the MTQ-48 framework used later would improve conceptual consistency.

The positive correlations between mental toughness and injury incidence warrant a brief cautionary note in the Results section to prevent misinterpretation before readers reach the Discussion.

The model explains 13% of the variance in injury incidence. While acceptable in psychological injury research, the authors should explicitly acknowledge this as a modest effect size and contextualize it within multifactorial injury models.

The interpretation of mental toughness as a “double-edged construct” is theoretically rich. However, the manuscript should clarify whether this interpretation is post-hoc or derived from an a priori hypothesis.

The paragraph stating “emotional intelligence did not demonstrate a significant relationship” would benefit from discussing potential measurement sensitivity issues or contextual constraints that may explain the null results.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

### 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The paragraph citing transcontextual applications of mental toughness (students, adolescents, clinical populations) is informative, but its direct relevance to sport injury incidence should be clarified with a brief bridging sentence linking these findings to injury vulnerability mechanisms.

In the paragraph discussing emotional intelligence, the manuscript implies conceptual overlap with mental toughness. I suggest explicitly stating whether emotional intelligence is treated as a parallel predictor, mediator, or complementary resource, as this distinction becomes important for interpreting the null findings.

The paragraph beginning “The role of mental toughness in injury-related outcomes has gained particular attention...” would be strengthened by referencing a specific stress–injury theoretical model to anchor the discussion more firmly in established injury psychology frameworks.

The manuscript lists task-, emotion-, and avoidance-oriented coping, but later treats “stress coping skills” as a single composite variable. The authors should justify this aggregation strategy or report subscale-level analyses.

In the paragraph reporting Kolmogorov–Smirnov results, exact p-values should be reported consistently for all variables rather than selectively, to enhance statistical transparency.

Table 1 reports means for “unstable ankle injury” variables, yet the scale range and interpretation of these means are not explained. Please clarify what a mean of 0.90 represents clinically or practically.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.