

Table 3. Key data extracted from athlete interviews, presenting general dimensions, categories, themes, the number of participants who commented against the themes (P), the incidence of theme (I) and exemplars of meaning units.

General Dimensions	Categories	Themes	P	I	Meaning Unit Examples
Symptoms	Physical symptoms	Stomach cramps/abdominal pain	12	27	<i>"In the first day it's always quite bad, like [for example] I'll get a really sore stomach"</i> <i>"Sometimes a tiny bit of cramp, but nothing major."</i>
		Energy levels	8	14	<i>"...the build-up before it the week before, like [for example] I'm really tired, I can't lift much in the gym compared to after it, so I just get really fatigued."</i>
		Flooding	8	8	<i>"Yeah, ehm, I'd probably say like 50% of the time."</i>
		Discomfort	5	6	<i>"You're just uncomfortable the whole time."</i>
		Bloated	2	2	<i>"I do feel a little bloated"</i>
		Nausea	2	3	<i>"On the really bad days any form of training will make me wretch or feel sick."</i>
		Appetite	2	3	<i>"I just get real hungry"</i> <i>"On the first two days I generally lose my appetite and eat less."</i>
		Upset stomach	2	4	<i>"I get quite an upset stomach so I don't massively like training"</i>
		Coordination	1	1	<i>"if I was playing tennis, sometimes your coordination, very, very slightly within that 24 hour window, is off, [it] is not exactly bang on the money [fully accurate]."</i>
		Back pain	1	1	<i>"I just sometimes get a sore back"</i>

General Dimensions	Categories	Themes	P	I	Meaning Unit Examples
	Psychological symptoms	Worry	9	12	<i>"I was quite worried about it because I didn't expect it to come"</i>
		Distracted	9	12	<i>"[It] would be the worse thing if you know [as you might understand] I'm in the scrum, that would be the worse thing, if my pants got pulled down or whatever, it would just be horrific"</i>
		Emotional	4	6	<i>"I'll get very touchy, emotional, the kind of smallest thing upsets me, [it] more upsets me than makes me angry I would say"</i>
		Moody	3	3	<i>"So I'll know my periods coming, cause I'll be a bit like grumpy and a bit bleugh [unwell]"</i>
		Decreased motivation	2	4	<i>"...less motivated to want to train kind of thing [if you understand where I am coming from], just [be]cause you know what's going on [happening]"</i>
		Agitated	1	1	<i>"I can be quite moody and agitated, and can be quite [agitated] before my period"</i>
Impact	Training	Negative	10	14	<i>"Just the period in general makes training more difficult, [be]cause you're always conscious of it. You're just uncomfortable the whole time."</i> <i>"Last period I went for a run before work but had to stop my session mid-way through due to pain and went home. [I] had to lay in bed for a wee bit [short time] before getting ready to let the pain settle".</i>
		Neutral	6	8	<i>"No I wouldn't say it has a huge impact on me once I've actually started training I kind of forget about it."</i>

General Dimensions	Categories	Themes	P	I	Meaning Unit Examples
		Positive	3	3	<i>"Usually the week before I'm on [my period], I'll eh I'll not enjoy the gym, but I'll feel strong in the gym."</i>
	Competition	Negative	8	10	<i>"I remember [prior to] one game, thinking, having irrational thoughts like 'oh I'm not going to catch the ball, I'm not going to do this I'm not going to do that'"</i>
		Neutral	6	6	<i>"My period came literally when we were in the changing rooms before the match, but I hadn't expected it at all, I hadn't had any symptoms to suggest it was coming, so then it wasn't an issue"</i>
		Positive	0	0	
	Daily life	Negative	5	6	<i>"There's been times in high school when I didn't have any painkillers and neither did my friends, so the pain was so bad that I got sent home."</i>
		Neutral	3	3	<i>"I have to be much more aware of it like the first few days I have my period ehm, so to that kind of, I kind of get used to it though [be]cause I've always been that way"</i>
		Positive	0	0	
Resolution	Mentality	Adapt	6	9	<i>"I like pack ibuprofen and make sure I have that cause my only worry would be like in pain but it's so easy to like counter."</i>
		Accept	7	8	<i>"I got it one day in camp and felt awful, but we were training all day I just kinda [sort of] had to get on with it"</i>
	Management	Self-treatment	13	20	<i>"Ehm just sometimes I'll take painkillers. Like just paracetamol and ibuprofen."</i> <i>"On bad days I will move my training around to have my rest day on the first day of"</i>

General Dimensions	Categories	Themes	P	I	Meaning Unit Examples
					<i>my period when possible."</i>
		Expert treatment	6	9	<i>"I take, like, [for example] a tranexamic acid when I'm actually on my period"</i>
					<i>"I've taken before do you know the, the, I don't know what they're called; the pills that delay your period so you just take it for a couple of days? [...] I [have] done that before for games"</i>
Support	Medical	General Practitioner	10	13	<i>"I've got a really good GP [General Practitioner] along the road."</i>
		Sports Doctor	9	12	<i>"I'd rather [see someone] out with [from outside] rugby I think."</i>
					<i>"I would potentially speak to a Doctor"</i>
		Gynaecologist	1	1	<i>"I think it would probably depend on what it was ... I probably wouldn't bring the same concerns to them [Sports Doctors] that I'd bring to a [another type of] Doctor"</i>
					<i>"I had some issues probably about 2 years ago it started, I had to see a gynaecologist for it, so yeah I have got one"</i>
	Non-expert	Coach	9	11	<i>"Yeah I think if it was affecting how I was training then yeah."</i>
					<i>"I just think it would be a bit awkward for both parties, and just wouldn't bother."</i>

General Dimensions	Categories	Themes	P	I	Meaning Unit Examples
		Physio	6	6	<p><i>"Probably not my coach, no in fact definitely not I wouldn't speak to him."</i></p> <p><i>"The physio yeah, I think I would be happy if it was something that I thought that they could help with yeah."</i></p>
		Sister	2	3	<p><i>"Ehm eh, no, probably not, more so because I think it would make them feel uncomfortable."</i></p> <p><i>"I'd probably just speak to my sister to be honest if I had anything, if I had any concerns I'd probably just speak to her"</i></p>
		Mum	1	1	<i>"Yeah, so I live at home so I've got my mum"</i>
	Comfortability	No confidant	3	4	<i>"I suppose you could [go] to the Doctor but you just don't."</i>
		Male vs female	6	8	<p><i>"Previously it [the Doctor] was a woman, it is now a man, but I'm not really fussed personally, I don't really care ill just talk to, if he's a Doctor he's a Doctor so"</i></p> <p><i>"Last year in the Six Nations, the Doctor and physio (who were both female) got the group together and said that we could speak to them if we wanted to be on contraception during the 6 nations etc. I thought this made an environment where it was okay to talk about it etc. The Doctor and physio this year never done this and I felt really embarrassed about having to ask for sanitary products during camp. It would have been really helpful if they had (or if another female member of staff if the boys don't want to speak about it!)"</i></p>

P = the number of participants who commented against the themes; I = the incidence of theme

