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**POST TOURNAMENT
DEPRESSION EXPLAINED**



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PTD

Post Tournament Depression Explained

What is Post Tournament Depression?

It is a temporary state of desperation and near-depression that invades football fans after the sudden realisation that the World Cup is over.

In this state of mind, individuals behave as if they are mourning someone and believe that nothing will be able to make up for the “loss” of the World Cup and that they will be unable to find joy and meaning in anything else.

Why does it occur?

The tournament has a unprecedented capacity to provide followers with a uniquely meaningful experience, temporarily transforming people’s lives into a state of passion, adrenaline and euphoria that can rarely be achieved otherwise.

This state of “natural high” is not without negative consequences. When something becomes such a big part of people’s lives and then disappears it can have a negative effect on behaviour.

When does the onset of PTD occur?

It is likely to be manifested immediately after the end of the World Cup and may start with a nostalgic feeling of emptiness that highlights the stark contrast between the past feeling of excitement and the predicted feeling of boredom.

Early signs of PTD have been identified when one’s favourite team is eliminated: although individuals may initially retreat into a state of denial by choosing a second team to follow, experiencing the therapeutical benefits from watching them play.

How do I know if I have developed PTD?

Individuals affected by PTD will feel that there is nothing to look forward to, nothing capable of arousing them and providing a meaningful structure to their lives, and that no event will be a suitable replacement for the World Cup.

The more involved individuals were with the World Cup (the more excited they are by the event) the more they will be at risk of developing PTD.

Conversely, indifference or mild interest with the event will make people less vulnerable to PTD.

The World Cup Comedown

Psychologists Braced For Nationwide 'Post Tournament Depression'

Recent research from zavvi.com has shown that during the 2010 World Cup South Africa, the average British male thought about football 43 times a day, watched nearly 30 hours of the sport on TV and spent over £400 on World Cup merchandise and entertainment, causing psychologists to warn that up to 40% the UK's football fanatics are at risk of developing PTSD. This is underlined by additional findings from the football fan survey in which:

- 62% admitted that every social conversation they engaged in revolved around football.
- 36% lied to a partner or boss regarding their whereabouts to watch matches in the pub.
- 21% missed or turned up late for important appointments due to watching games on TV.
- 15% abstained from sex or cancelled a date to avoid not missing a key match.
- 6% experienced relationship breakdowns during the tournament.

After studying the behaviour of football fans and the survey findings, renowned Psychologist Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic has categorised the World Cup as a genuine addiction for many men and predicts a widespread emergence of men suffering from PTSD - a new psychological state associated with the 'come down' experience which follows the adrenaline-fuelled month of World Cup action.

Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic said: "We saw early signs of this within patients when England were first knocked out of the World Cup, but expect it to worsen now that the tournament has ended. One of the biggest issues is that many people won't recognise the Symptoms of PTSD, which can range from boredom to clinical depression, all dependent on the severity of one's addiction".

It has been estimated that around 8m football fans in the UK will experience PTSD in the weeks following the World Cup final. To help combat this, Dr. Chamorro-Premuzic has produced a free downloadable guide to PTSD which is hosted on the zavvi.com website. The guide identifies the symptoms of the PTSD and suggests a variety of ways to self-treat it. Visit www.zavvi.com/ptd

Dealing with PTD

1. Helplessness

Helplessness is one of the most common feelings in depression and consists of the belief that you can no longer change events in your favour. Thus, people who feel helpless have convinced themselves that nothing they do can make a difference. Helplessness is one of the core symptoms of PTD but, luckily, there are ways of overcoming it.

How to overcome:

Oscar Wilde famously said that “life imitates art”. In line, you can recreate the tournament with your friends by organising a 5-a-side football competition or by playing football-based video games. The big advantage of playing football yourself (whether on a pitch or a computer game) is that, unlike the real World Cup, you can influence the events of the match when you play a part in it. Of course, there are other advantages in this, like getting mentally and physically fit, spending time with friends, and, let's not forget, finding a form of entertainment that is comparable to watching the World Cup.

2. Obsessional rumination

Many anxiety disorders, as well as typical depression, see sufferers unable to control their thoughts. These thoughts are repetitive ideas or images, often called obsessional ruminations. With PTD individuals may find that they cannot “erase” the images of their teams crashing out or stop thinking about particular turning points in the tournament.

How to overcome:

Try a new hobby - that's right - there is more to life than football. In fact there are over 100 sports and most of them have their own World Cup or international tournaments. They also have rules, boring and exciting moments, and many more spectators than performers. So, whether it is a sport or not, maybe it's time to get geared up and begin taking part in other fun outdoor activities.

3. Time wasting

Because of the loss of interest in any activity (other than watching the World Cup), individuals with PTD will find that they are making very inefficient use of time and that the days go by without achieving anything productive. This crisis is problematic because it interferes with people's studies or work, so individuals affected by PTD should be proactive to compensate for this symptom.

How to overcome:

Let's face it, too much football is not good for anyone who isn't a professional footballer, and watching football is no doubt a distraction from your job and any constructive or creative life plans. In the absence of the World Cup, you will be provided with a new opportunity to focus yourself and the chance to further develop your life skills, career, and hobbies. Start by booking yourself in some 'me-time' to decide what you want and where you want to go. Maybe kick start the new-you with a new wardrobe or grooming style.

Dealing with PTSD

4. Anti-social tendencies

PTSD may cause those affected by it to avoid any contact with others; these “anti-social” tendencies may hinder individuals’ relationships with colleagues, friends, family and partners.

How to overcome:

It may be good to spend some time on your own but psychological research shows that the best way to overcome any psychological disorder is with the support of friends and family (or those who love you). In fact, isolating yourself from your loved ones is not just unfair on you (and counter-productive for your symptoms), but also unfair on them - so go and seek support. Sometimes it’s good to do this away from the places that cause you to be stressed - like your living room or the pub! Get away from it all and do something completely different with them - maybe a relaxing spa day with a partner, a city break with the family or a lads action packed weekend away.

5. Loss of appetite

Like other forms of depression, PTSD can be characterised by mild to intense loss of appetite. This is because the subjective feeling of appetite can be distorted - and eventually eliminated - by the feelings of sadness and helplessness that are experienced during PTSD.

How to overcome:

The problem is not loss of appetite, but not eating. So long as you force yourself to eat you will be fine. Of course, you may not enjoy food as much if you lack appetite, but that may be a good cause to prioritise eating the foods you really love. Maybe tie this in with quality time spent with friends family or partners by cooking a special meal at home or booking a table at a nice restaurant and dining out! Make the most of your newly acquired free time.

6. Feeling low

A depressed mood - or feeling low - is the predominant mood state of any depression and PTSD is no exception. This affective state is characterised by both recurrent feelings of negative emotions (sadness, anxiety, anger) and the inability to experience positive emotions (joy and happiness). So, what can you do if you are feeling low?

How to overcome:

Mood states, even intense sadness, don’t last forever. The best thing you can do to overcome your negative mood states is to live them fully, that is, experience your sadness and frustration with as much intensity as possible and it will wear out sooner. This is an ancient recipe pioneered by the Greeks - to do catharsis is to suffer until you “clean your soul” from any painful emotions. And once you’ve dealt with your depression try something exhilarating that you’ve wanted to do for a long time... maybe it’s a trip to a Theme Park to jump on the rollercoasters, something completely wild like ski diving or bungee jumping or an activity a little more sedate like a hot air balloon trip.

Dealing with PTD

7. Denial

Although depression is a very unpleasant psychological state, it tends to only marginally distort reality. Thus people suffering from depression see the world in a slightly more pessimistic way and exaggerate the negative interpretation of events. With PTD this would be the case of “thinking that the world is over” just because the World Cup is over. A much more severe form of depression occurs if sufferers are truly in denial of events - with PTD, this would be the case of actually denying that the World Cup has finished.

How to overcome:

Unless your friends are also affected by severe PTD (and equally in denial), they will help you come to terms with the fact that the World Cup is over. This is because they will very soon stop talking about the World Cup. Indeed, even if they are all hardcore football fans they'll soon begin to talk about summer transfers, the premiership, and even the 2012 Olympics (not to mention the European Cup).

8. Weaning

Relive magical moments from this and previous tournaments by watching old highlights or World Cup DVDs. We all remember the “hand of god”, Zidane's head-butt on Materazzi, and Beckham's penalty against Argentina, and that is because when the tournament ends we can enjoy the benefit of having not only easy access to the best bits, but also the time to watch them. Try playing back these glorious moments to enjoy the magic of football without the tension and anxiety we experience while watching them live.

Dr Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic



- Dr Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic is a rising star of psychology and world-wide expert in personality, intelligence and psychometrics.

- He is a Senior Lecturer at Goldsmiths, a Research Fellow at UCL, and a Visiting Professor at NYU-London, and has previously taught at the London School of Economics.

- Despite his young age, Dr Tomas has already published more than 100 scientific articles and 5 books, covering a wide range of social and applied topics such as human intelligence and genius, human performance, musical preferences, creativity, and personality disorders.

- Dr Tomas is well respected by the UK media and has been the resident psychologist on Big Brother for the last 4 seasons.

- Dr Tomas was born in Buenos Aires and has lived in London for the past ten years.