

Accepted Manuscript

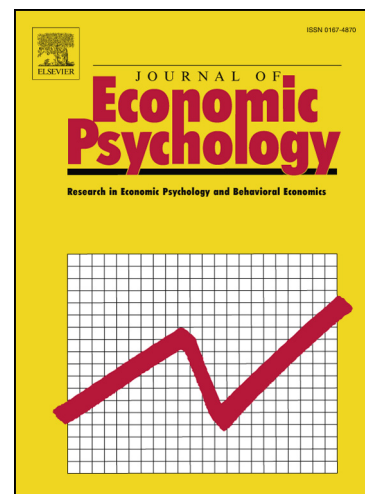
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PII: S0167-4870(16)30589-X
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2017.04.005>
Reference: JOEP 2005

To appear in: *Journal of Economic Psychology*

Received Date: 27 September 2016
Revised Date: 3 April 2017
Accepted Date: 3 April 2017



Please cite this article as: Cohen-Zada, D., Krumer, A., Rosenboim, M., Shapir, O.M., Choking Under Pressure and Gender: Evidence from Professional Tennis, *Journal of Economic Psychology* (2017), doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2017.04.005>

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Choking Under Pressure and Gender:

Evidence from Professional Tennis

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Abstract

We exploit a unique setting in which two professionals compete in a real-life tennis contest with high monetary rewards in order to assess how men and women respond to competitive pressure. Comparing their performance in low-stakes versus high-stakes situations, we find that men consistently choke under competitive pressure, but with regard to women the results are mixed. Furthermore, even if women show a drop in performance in the more crucial stages of the match, it is in any event about 50% smaller than that of men. These findings are robust to different specifications and estimation strategies.

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