

## ANXIETY



### CHOKING

Choking is an inability to perform up to a former standard. High anxiety is typically the major cause of choking and it leads directly to a decrease in performance. Each athlete's potential for choking depends on the player and the situation

(Scott & Pelliccioni, 1982).

Choking usually occurs when an player is overly concerned about what others (coach, teammates, or audience) might think about their performance. In addition, choking will occur when there is gap between the player's goal for the competition and the actual performance.

#### Reasons for choking

1. A player is outcome focused on winning. Due to the outcome focus, anxiety increases and the athlete is slow to react and loses focus and concentration
2. A player misses an easy shot/point and immediately throws his next boule as a means of 'correcting' the mistake and misses again. A player afraid of repeating the mistake next end will only make more errors and performance will suffer.
3. Loud support from the home audience may increase a players' self-attention. The result can be performance errors
4. Self-doubts regarding one's performance and a desire to impress others will create a high level of anxiety

Once choking occurs, the players' focus on the game is lost as is physical control of the performance.

(Schlenker, Phillips, Boniecki, & Schlenker, 1995).

#### Most players have the exact same reaction to a poor performance

- First, they become frustrated and a little angry
- Second, they lose their confidence, as they worry about getting worse
- Third, they tell themselves to 'get over' their loss of confidence put pressure on themselves to correct the problem

None of these reactions leads to consistent, skillful performance.

Performing under pressure in sport is a matter of emotional self-mastery in the key moments of competition.

### Ways to prevent choking

1. Teach players to perform for themselves rather than attempting to please others.
2. Set realistic goals that are attainable yet challenging.
3. Use imagery prior to competition to review strategy and technique.
4. Use positive self-talk prior to and during competition.
5. Practice deep muscle relaxation exercises or meditation prior to competition.
6. Use music prior to competition to help maintain focus by controlling negative thoughts.
7. Teach players to focus on basic technique and to focus on throwing of each boule

### Master the mental game

All players should learn the fundamentals before trying to work on their mental game.

<b><u>Advantages of mastering your mental game</u></b>	<b><u>How does this help?</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being able to eliminate "outcome anxiety"</li><li>• Knowing the secret to handling negative emotions and making them work FOR you, not against you Having deceptively simple ways to instantly bounce back from a poor performance</li><li>• Understanding what to focus on when you prepare to compete</li><li>• Internalizing the insider tips and tricks pros use to develop unshakeable confidence</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Players can play effortlessly and magnificently time after time</li><li>• Players can eliminate the emotional roller coaster of sport performance</li><li>• Prevents poor play from frustrating you; stops you from obsessing over your technique</li><li>• Enables players to simplify technique and trust their body and enjoy the experience</li></ul>

### Negative Emotions

Negative emotions affect player's performance and ability to function in a team. If players understand how to manage negative emotions, confidence can be restored quickly with minimal impact on the team.

## PETANQUE NEW ZEALAND

For example,

**(a)** Imagine a player start dropping his boule short of the target and not taking the point.

**(b)** Instantly, the player becomes upset, because they want to be more consistent and perform for their team.

Frustrated, the player changes their throwing style, to try to guide the boule more accurately, which interferes with their technique enough to erode their game.

**(c)** By having techniques to handle a player's frustration and anger rather than changing their technique in the middle of a game, can prevent further deterioration of performance and team functioning.

The aim is to get players 'emotional climate' constant so that they play even better after bad shots.

**(d)** As players get better at managing their negativity, they become more unflappable, more consistent under pressure, and more impressive to everyone

Steve was playing a round of golf with his friend Jesse, and the 10th hole was a simple 157 yard par 3.

157 yards is just a smooth 6 iron for Jesse, and he can hit semi-decent shots all day long from that distance, but here's the problem...

This hole required you to hit over a lake. 75% of the green was surrounded by water. He stepped up to the tee...held his breath and SMACKED it as hard as he could to make sure it cleared the water.

\*splash\*

His ball was wet, and he was red. He pulled out another ball and teed it up again. He was DETERMINED to get it over the water!

He proceeded to dump 3 more balls, and walked away with a 10 on that hole...and was fuming mad.

Now was it the water that confounded him? No, it was the fact that Jesse had a destructive reaction to a bad shot - one that over 97% of golfers will have. He did not know how to reverse his frustration, and his game quickly went downhill.

Sound familiar to your experience in Petanque?