

MENTAL HEALTH

Managing Competition Anxiety

Nerves are normal. Practical, athlete-tested tools for keeping competition anxiety in check.

Almost every athlete feels nervous before competing. The goal isn't to eliminate nerves — it's to keep them from taking over.

Breathe on purpose

Slow, controlled breathing calms the nervous system. A simple pattern — inhale for four, exhale for six — can settle you in under a minute.

Focus on process, not outcome

You can't control the score. You can control your next eight-count. Narrowing your focus to the task in front of you quiets the “what ifs.”

When to seek more support

If anxiety interferes with daily life or joy in the sport, talk to a parent, coach, or mental-health professional. Asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.
