



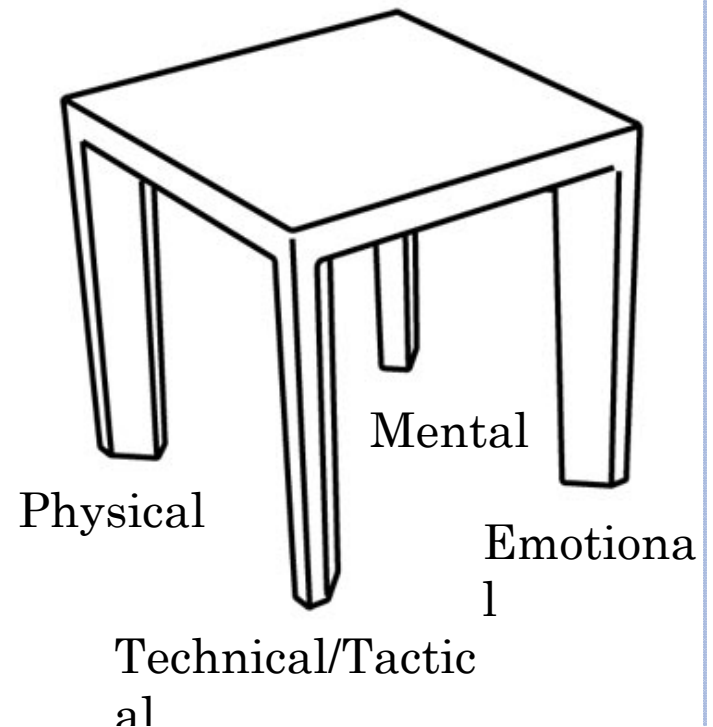
UNDERSTANDING PERFORMANCE ANXIETY IN SPORT

*Presented by Roxane Carrière, M. Sc., P.hD.
Candidate*

*Mental Performance Specialist,
Canadian Sport Psychology Association (CSPA),
Student member*

SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

- To facilitate the development of mental and emotional skills, techniques, attitudes, perspectives, and processes that lead to performance enhancement and positive personal development
- Physical : training, sleep, nutrition
- Tactical: strategies, systems of play
- Technical: motor execution, skills
- Mental : self-talk, imagery, goal setting
- Emotional -confidence, anxiety, fun



WHAT IS PERFORMANCE ANXIETY?

« A negative emotional state that occurs in the absence of real/obvious danger in response to a competitive stressor »

Anticipating a situation as a threat/failure



IT'S ALL ABOUT PERSPECTIVE

Situation

competition

Positive Perception

opportunity

Pleasant
emotions/thoughts
(confident, happy, positive)

Physical symptoms:
Relaxed, good coordination

**Negative
Perception**

threat

Unpleasant
emotions/thoughts
(nervous, doubtful,
negative)

Physical symptoms:
Muscles tension, fast
breathing, bad coordination

PERFORMANCE



EXERCISE

- *Rest your dominant forearm and hand palm down on a desk. Tense all the muscles in the hand and fingers and then try to alternatively tap the index and middle fingers back and forth as quickly as possible.*
- *Now relax all the muscles in the forearm and hand and repeat the exercise.*
- *Do you notice a difference?*



WHY DO ATHLETES GET ANXIOUS?

○ Internal

- Self-confidence
- Fear of failure
- Movement execution
- Internal discourse (self-talk)

○ External

- Importance of the event
- Fear of evaluation
- Expectations (parents/coaches/spectators)
- Distractions (opponents, time, weather)

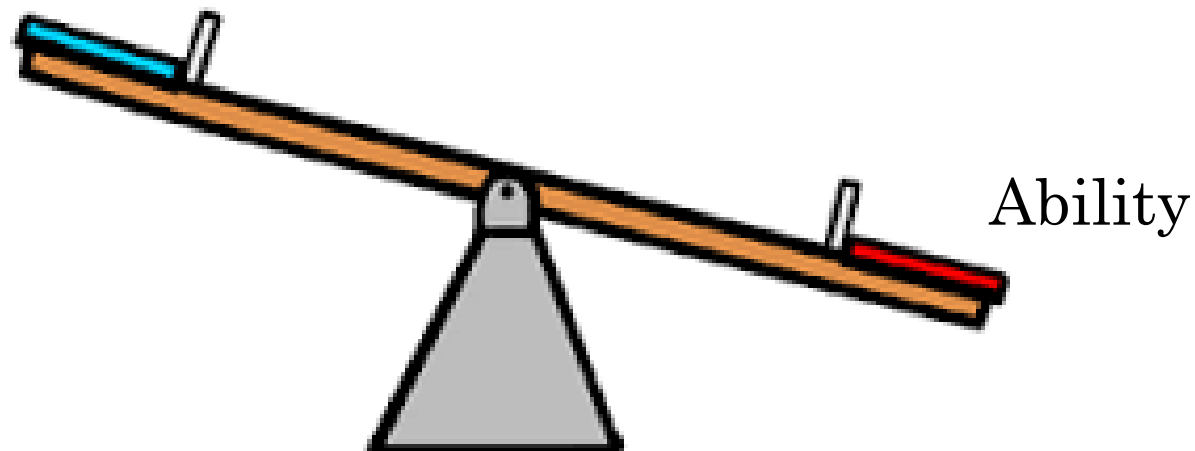


SELF-EFFICACY (CONFIDENCE)

Do I think I have the skills to meet the demands of the situation?

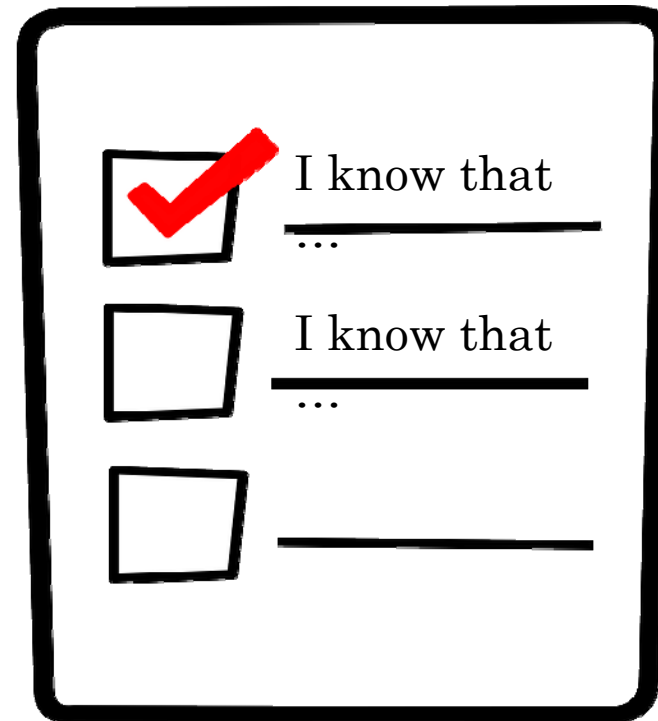
-Varies with importance of the event and past accomplishments in different situations

Challenge



BUILDING YOUR CONFIDENCE!

- Self-esteem list or Success list
- Reviewing an outstanding performance in your head or thinking about past accomplishments



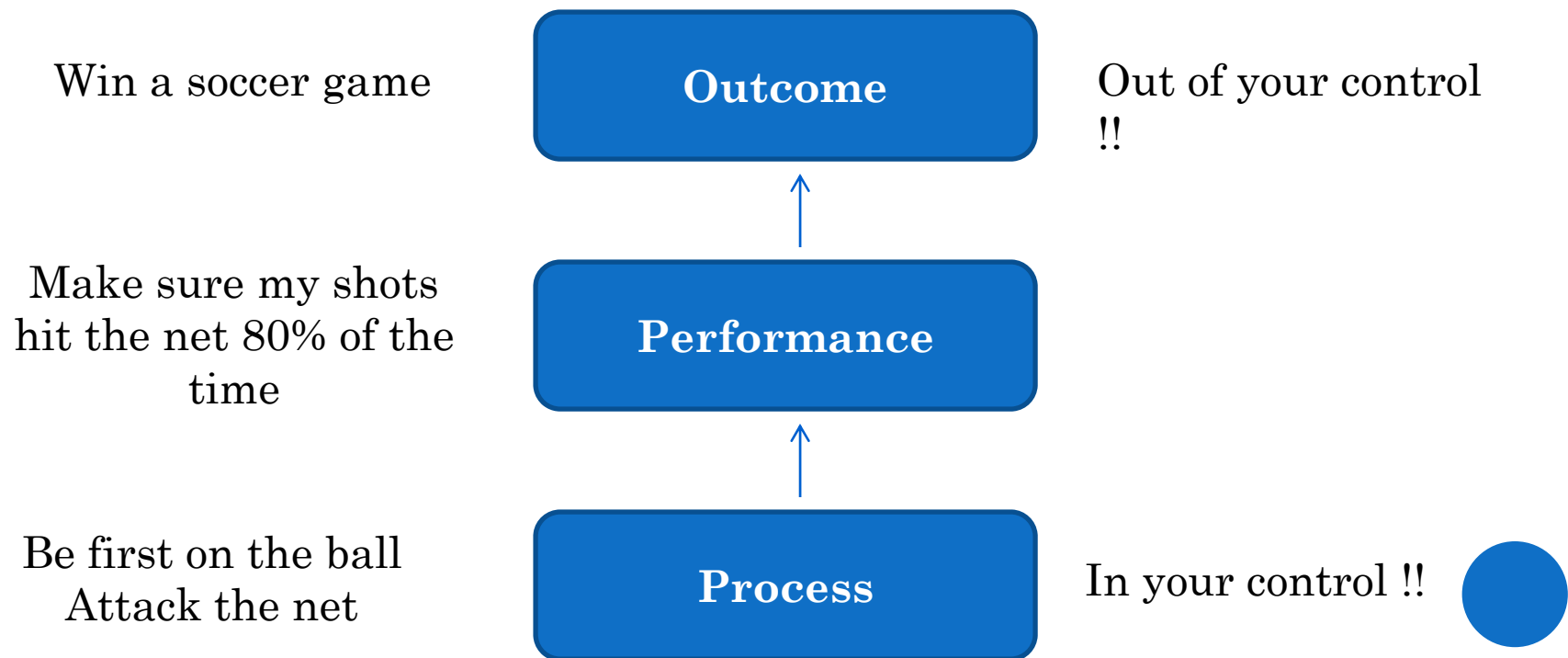
I know that

I know that



FEAR OF FAILURE

- How do you define success and failure?
- Keeping your focus on the process, will most likely lead to a positive outcome



WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

- Goal orientation

- **Task Orientation:** focus on mastery of a skill and improving personal standards
- **Ego Orientation:** focus on demonstrating superior competence compared to others



Having ego oriented goals can lead to increased anxiety!

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

“Athletic ability can be developed with practice”

“Good athletes are born that way“

	Task orientation	Ego orientation
Competence	Developed with effort	Innate ability
Purpose	Performing at one's best (personal improvement)	Being better than others (social comparison)
Success	Mastering a skill (self-referenced)	Superior performance to others (other-referenced)
Challenges	Embrace challenges (opportunity to learn)	Avoid challenges (threat to competence)

Reference: Mindset, the new psychology of success, by Dr. Carol S. Dweck

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS



- ***Self-talk***: thoughts that you say to yourself in your head
- Athletes need to develop a habit of thinking more positively
- Strategies to think “positive”
 - Changing a negative thought to a positive one (e.g. figure skating)
 - Using a trigger for every negative self-statement (e.g. paper clips)
 - Reframing – changing your perspective on a situation (e.g. waterpolo)



IDENTIFYING IRRATIONAL THOUGHTS

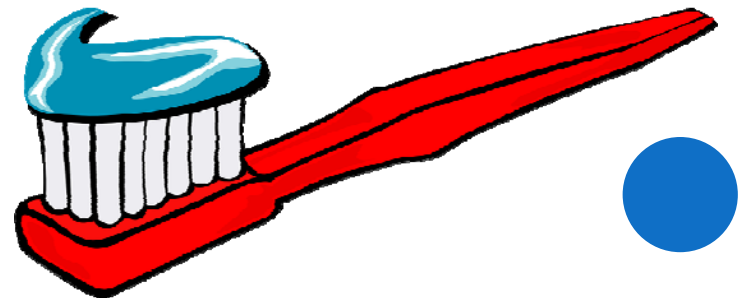
- “I’m not good enough” or “I am not ready for a competition”
- L – Is it logical?
- U – Is it useful to my performance?
- V – Is it true?

If the answer is NO to these questions, you may need to think more objectively about the situation.



MOVEMENT EXECUTION

- “Paralysis by over analysis”
- Explicitly deconstructing movements that are automatic
- Interferes with the automaticity of movement (e.g. brushing your teeth)
- Using cue words or images to focus on good movement execution
 - Pointe de pizza
 - Hand in the cookie jar
 - Pieds sur du beton chaud
 - Easy speed



EXTERNAL DISTRACTIONS

- Unfamiliar setting, spectators, weather, racing lane, time of competition, quality of the water
- Controlling the Controllables (CTC)
 - Focusing on factors that are within your control instead of directing your attention on factors that you cannot control
 - What can you control in your sport?
 - Step #1: Identify the type of stressor
 - Step #2: Can you control the stressor or get information to control it
 - Step #3: If you cannot control the stressor, redirect your attention



Known factors



Unknown factors



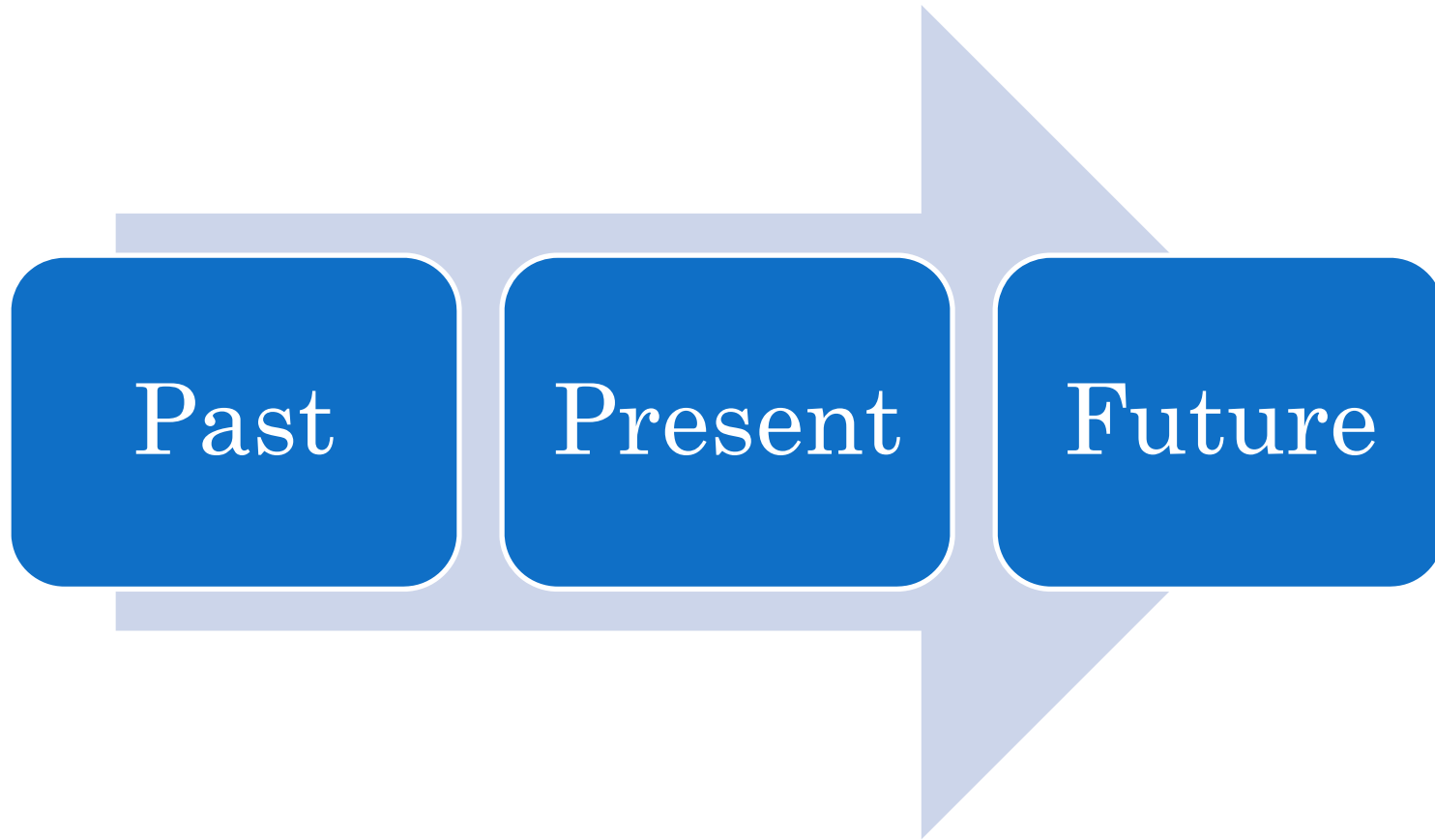
EXTERNAL DISTRACTIONS

- Having a distraction control plan
 - Identify all possible distractors that may arise during a competition
 - Identify your typical response
 - Choose a refocus strategy for the desired response

We are preventing or muting the influence of potential stressors.



STAYING IN THE PRESENT MOMENT




THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

For more questions or comments:



roxane.carriere@umontreal.ca

 *(514) 609-2407*

Feel free to come talk to me at the end of the presentation 😊



CONSULTATION SPORTIVE

SPORT CONSULTATION

Roxane Carriere

