

DO NOT STRESS OVER THE COMPETITION

By Stanley Popovich

Many figure skaters sometimes get anxious when they skate against a tough opponent. They get nervous on who they are skating against and they get so worked up that they lose focus. In the end, they make mistakes and end up beating themselves up if they do not win. As a result, here is a list of techniques that a figure skater can use to help manage the stress of skating against the competition.

The first step is to learn as much as you can on your opponent. Although this may seem obvious some figure skaters may think they already know what they need to know. Remember there is always something to learn about your competition. Read the stats and reports about your opponent and watch him or her skate. Try to figure out an angle on how you can beat your competition. The more you know about your competition the better your chances are you will win. This will also help to reduce your worries about who and what you will be facing in your next event.

Do not assume anything about your competition whether they are stronger or weaker than you. Every skater has his good and bad days and just because you may be facing a stronger opponent does not mean that you will lose. Remember that before you start skating, you and your opponent both have an equal chance of winning. You are both starting from scratch. This should help you to give you confidence going into your event.

Focus on how you can best strive for perfection in your own skating instead of worrying about your opponent. For instance, let's say you are going against the number one player in the tournament and you are nervous. Instead of focusing on how good your competition is, focus on how you can skate.

Give yourself some pep talks during your skating to re-enforce encouragement to yourself. During your skating event take advantage of the breaks you get by giving yourself encouragement. For example, there is a break and you are making a lot of mistakes. During this time out, tell yourself that you need to settle down and remind yourself that you can do it and you just need to relax. This can help reduce your stress and anxiety.

View a particular skating event as a learning experience when things do not work out. For example, you are making many mistakes and you are losing. Instead of beating yourself up, try to figure out what you are doing wrong. The best time to improve on your skating is when you deal with adversity.

It is not uncommon to get nervous when you go against a better opponent. All you can do is to focus on your own skating and skate the best you can. This will help you in the long run and will help you to stop worrying whether you will win or lose.

BIOGRAPHY:

Stan Popovich is the author of "A Layman's Guide to Managing Fear Using Psychology, Christianity and Non Resistant Methods" - an easy to read book that presents a general overview of techniques that are effective in managing persistent fears and anxieties. For additional information go to: <http://www.managingfear.com/>