

Study Guide #8

Dealing with Nervousness

Parent & Child Study Guides to Watching a Sports Event

*Association for the Advancement
of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP)*

Watching a sports event can be a valuable learning experience for young people. Within the sporting arena we see both good and poor examples of such topics as: setting and working towards goals, focusing attention, managing emotions, handling disappointment, relating to others, dealing with nervousness, etc.

In order to maximize this learning opportunity, AAASP has developed a series of study guides for parents and children to use while watching a sports event, either in person or on television. Each guide is brief and focused around a limited topic. It suggests certain observations and presents several questions for the parent and child to discuss. The study guide concludes with a brief summary of important facts regarding the topic.

We hope that these guides will promote a healthy dialogue between parents and their children about various issues that athletes face during sporting events, as well as in preparation for competition. Your child doesn't necessarily need to be an athlete to benefit from these discussions, since children experience most of these issues in daily life, such as in school. We hope that this information is helpful to you in promoting healthy ideas about sport, exercise, and human performance in general.

Discussion questions: Dealing With Nervousness

While you watch a sports event:

1. See if you can identify several athletes who seem to be nervous.
2. How can you tell that they are nervous?
3. How do you think they are thinking and feeling?
4. Do you think that this helps them perform well or does it get in the way?
5. Have you ever felt nervous before performing in a sporting event, acting in a play, or taking a test in school?
6. How do successful athletes deal with nervousness?
7. How do you deal with it?
8. Would it be helpful to learn how to control your nerves (not become nervous) better?

Lesson conclusion

Being nervous is common before a game or event when the outcome is really important to you. For many athletes, being a little nervous is a sign of being excited, which can be a good thing. It can motivate and energize you, and even help you pay attention. For most athletes, being a little nervous is a normal feeling before competing. However, being too nervous can get in the way of a good performance. This is sometimes called "stage fright" or "choking". Successful athletes practice many different ways to control their nerves. Some will think about, or visualize, playing

well. Others may take a deep breath just before starting. Sport psychology consultants can teach athletes and other performers how to relax under such pressure.

AAASP encourages parents to do their part in creating a supportive youth sport environment so their child will develop a life long interest in physical activity and playing sports. By teaching the fundamentals, you can help your child develop a winning attitude, not only in sports but also throughout his or her life.

About AAASP

Founded in 1986, the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP) promotes the ethical practice, science and advocacy of the psychology of sport, exercise and health. AAASP is the premier international, multidisciplinary sport and exercise psychology organization, and is the only professional organization in North America that offers certification to qualified professionals who practice sport, exercise, and health psychology. For more information on this and other topics, or to find a certified sport psychology consultant in your area, visit <http://www.aaasponline.org>.

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