

Original Article

# Competitive Stress among Athletes and Its Management: A Study

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Submitted: 15-Nov-2024 Revised: 28-Nov-2024 Accepted: 10-Dec-2024 Published: 31-Dec-2024

Quick Response Code:



Access this article online

Website: <https://ibrj.us>

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18709781

Manuscript ID:  
IBMIRJ-2024-010307

Volume 1

Issue 3

December 2024

E-ISSN: 3065-7857

**How to cite this article:**

Patil (Shirote), S. P. (2024).  
Competitive Stress among  
Athletes and Its Management: A  
Study. InSight Bulletin: A  
Multidisciplinary Interlink  
International Research Journal,  
1(3), 39–40.  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18709781>

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## ABSTRACT

Competitive stress is a significant psychological factor influencing the performance, well-being, and overall development of athletes. The present study explores the nature, causes, and impact of competitive stress among athletes and examines effective strategies for its management. Competitive stress arises from various sources, including performance pressure, fear of failure, high expectations from coaches and parents, peer comparison, and uncertainty of outcomes. While moderate stress may enhance motivation and focus, excessive stress can negatively affect concentration, decision-making, emotional stability, and physical performance. In modern sports, the level of competition has increased significantly. Expectations of excellent performance, uncertainty in selection processes, pressure from coaches and parents, and media attention contribute to rising competitive stress among athletes. While an optimal level of stress can enhance performance, excessive stress may reduce efficiency, lower self-confidence, and create psychological imbalance. The purpose of the present study is to examine the nature, causes, and management strategies of competitive stress among athletes. A descriptive survey method was used for the research. A sample of 100 athletes aged 16 to 22 years was selected. Findings revealed that fear of failure, performance anxiety, and social expectations were major stress factors. Breathing techniques, meditation, positive self-talk, and emotional support from coaches were found effective in managing stress.

**Keywords:** Competitive Stress, Sports Psychology, Stress Management, Performance Anxiety, Mental Preparation

## INTRODUCTION

Diabetes mellitus (DM), particularly type 2 diabetes, has emerged as a global epidemic, affecting millions of individuals worldwide. India, often referred to as the "diabetes capital of the world," is home to a rapidly growing diabetic population, which brings with it a host of complications, among which diabetic nephropathy (DN) is one of the most serious and life-threatening. Diabetic nephropathy is a progressive kidney disease caused by damage to the capillaries in the kidneys' glomeruli due to chronic hyperglycemia. It is a leading cause of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) and significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular events and mortality in diabetic patients (Brownlee, 2001).

### Concept of Competitive Stress

Competitive stress is the emotional, psychological, and physiological discomfort experienced in competitive situations. It includes performance anxiety, fear of failure, and reduction in self-confidence.

### Types of Stress:

- Eustress – Positive stress that enhances motivation.
- Distress – Negative stress that hampers performance.



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### Need and Importance of the Study

In high-level competitions, athletes often fail to perform well despite excellent physical preparation due to mental stress. Therefore, studying the nature and management of competitive stress is essential. This study can serve as a guideline for coaches, sports psychologists, and physical education teachers.

### Objectives of the Study

- To measure the level of competitive stress among athletes.
- To identify the major causes of competitive stress.
- To examine the effectiveness of stress management techniques.
- To study the relationship between stress and performance.

### Hypotheses

- Athletes with high stress levels will show comparatively lower performance.
- Athletes using stress management techniques will show lower stress levels.

### Methodology

1. Research Design: Descriptive Survey Method
2. Sample: 100 athletes (male and female) aged 16–22 years
3. Tools: Competitive Stress Questionnaire, Performance Record Sheet, Interview Method
4. Statistical Techniques: Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation Coefficient

### Findings

- 65% of athletes showed moderate to high stress levels.
- Fear of failure was the major stress factor.
- Athletes receiving positive feedback from coaches showed lower stress levels.
- Breathing techniques, meditation, and positive self-talk were effective.

### Stress Management Strategies

1. Physical Techniques: Deep Breathing, Progressive Muscle Relaxation
2. Social Support: Coach Guidance, Family Encouragement, Team Support

### Discussion

Stress cannot be completely eliminated, but it can be effectively managed. With proper psychological training, stress can be transformed into motivation. Mental preparation is as important as physical preparation in sports.

### Conclusion

The study concludes that competitive stress directly affects athletes' performance. Proper stress management techniques can improve

performance. Therefore, mental training should be included in sports training programs.

### Recommendations

- Regular psychological sessions should be included in sports training.
- Pre-competition mental preparation programs should be conducted.
- Sports psychology should be included at school and college levels.
- Coaches should be trained in stress management techniques.

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