

## **Introduction**

The stressful nature of elite sport, and the competitive environment surrounding it, place many demands on participating athletes. (*Jones, 1995*).

Some researchers argue that performers, by the very nature of their profession, are affected by the “general stresses related to having to perform under conditions of high adrenalin flow, anxiety, fatigue, social pressure, and financial insecurity”

(*Lehrer et al,1990*)

There are positive features of anxiety .Anxiety acts as a warning signal for impending danger or harm. Anxiety can also induce motivation; some low anxiety is therefore adaptive. (*Cox & Endler, 1991*)

The examination of athlete’s behavioral, and emotional responses to such stressors has developed into a focal area of sport psychology with many researchers interested in assessing anxiety responses of athletes to competitive events (*Woodman & Hardy, 2001*).

Research has demonstrated that the ability to cope with intense anxiety is integral to success in competitive sport, particularly at the highest levels. (*Gould et al ,1992*)

Competitive Trait Anxiety is defined as: “A tendency to perceive competitive situations as threatening and to respond to these situations with feelings of apprehension and tension. ( *Martens Rainer et al ,1990*).

Competitive state-anxiety usually follows a pattern of subjective feelings of tension and inadequacy, combined with heightened arousal of the autonomic nervous system. The intensity and duration of the anxious state alternates according to; the amount of stressful stimuli the athlete encounters, and the period of subjective threat created by the stimuli. (*Hackfort & Schwenkmezger ,1989*).

Accordingly, even though anxiety is a negative emotion it does not necessarily have a negative effect on performance and athletes may recognize this. Furthermore, research has reported that a wide range of positive and negative emotions are associated with both facilitating and debilitating effects on performance (*Jones et al, 2000*).

Thus, positive emotions do not necessarily have a positive effect on performance, and negative emotions do not necessarily have a negative effect on performance.

The research in competitive trait anxiety highlights several areas for further investigation due to the relative neglect in sport psychology. (*Martens et al, 1990*)