



The North Jersey Figure Skating Club, Inc.
www.northjerseyfsc.org

2009-2010 Season

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Overcoming Anxiety as a Figure Skater

One of the most significant mental or psychological disruptions for a figure skater is anxiety. There are several signs that anxiety may be affecting your skating. They include:

- Extreme nerves during testing/competition
- Lack of belief in yourself
- Great in training, but terrible in testing/competition
- Training hard but having a feeling that you are getting little payback
- Injuries occurring just before tests/competitions
- Slumps in form
- Concentration and technical problems
- Doubts, fears, worries and anxiety, worrying about what others (especially parents) think
- Inconsistency in competition performances
- Overly worrying about the "uncontrollable"
- Feeling sick on the day of the test/competition

The sport of figure skating lends itself to anxiety for a few different reasons but what's clear is that anxiety makes things worse. Certain types of athletes are more prone to feeling the effects of anxiety on performance. Amateur figure skaters are more likely to have anxiety interfere than experienced or professional figure skaters. This makes sense due to their relative lack of experience both in tests/competitions and in managing anxiety. Athletes who participate in

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Well Done: Eastern and Junior National Competitors!

Congratulations to Aaron Gillespie and Monika Chung for their 6th place finishes at the 2010 Eastern Sectional and congratulations to Ella Mizrahi and Fiona Kim for their performances at the US Junior National Figure Skating Championships!



Test Results

September 2009

Sydney Kaneshige - Pre Preliminary Freestyle
Kelly Shannon - Intermediate MIF

November 2009

Jacqueline Frey - Pre Preliminary MIF
Jenna McKlusky - Preliminary MIF
Kira Marshall - Preliminary MIF/Pre Pre FS
Nicoletta Tachtchouk - Preliminary MIF
Larry Loupolover - Juvenile FS
Abigail Durak - Junior MIF
Alanna Carragher - Junior FS
Jessica Reimertz - Senior MIF

Rachel Prosnitz -Senior MIF

December 2009

Maria DeSilva – Adult Fiesta Tango
Wendy Drake-Schneider – Dutch Waltz,
Canasta Tango, Rhythm Blues
Karen Humphreys – Adult Pre Bronze MIF& FS
Aaron Gillespie – Dutch Waltz, Canasta Tango,
Rhythm Blues, Cha Cha, Swing Dance,
Fiesta Tango, Juvenile Pairs
Zachary Narrett – Pre Preliminary MIF
Elizabeth Quinn – Novice MIF

Aaron Gillespie – Juvenile & Intermediate Pair Test

Ariel La Roche – Novice MIF
Joshua Lidberg – Juvenile MIF

January 2010

Paul Bellantuono – Viennese Waltz, Quickstep
Anna Farro – Pre Preliminary MIF/ Freestyle
Arielle Kim – Juvenile Freestyle
Joshua Lidberg - Juvenile Freestyle
Savannah Beck – Pre Juvenile MIF
Simona Zhukovski – Preliminary MIF

Results from 2009 Skylands Basic Skills Competition

GOLD MEDALS

Esther Pesochin – Pre Preliminary Freestyle,
Preliminary Showcase, Preliminary Spins
Veronica Held – Freeskate 3, Beginner Spins,
Freeskate 1-3 Jumps, Freeskate 3 Compulsories
Toni Foard – Freeskate 1
Riley Block – Basic 4, Basic 4 Compulsories
McKenna Holz – Basic 3, Basic 3 Compulsories

Jonathan Lai – Basic 3 Freeskate
Lauren Soga – Basic 8 Freeskate
Kenneth Lai – Basic 3 Compulsories
Vicky Finn – Adult No Test Compulsories
Beighley Berger – Pre Preliminary Freestyle
Joey Mitchell – Pre Preliminary Showcase

SILVER MEDALS

Farrah Way – No Test Freestyle
Eugene Osetskyy – No Test Freestyle
Jonathan Lai – Basic 3 Compulsories

Brianne Soga – Basic 8 Compulsories

Kenneth Lai – Basic 3 Freeskate
Esther Pesochin – Preliminary Jumps
Catherine Xu – Basic 7 Freeskate
Lauren Soga – Basic 8 Freeskate
Georgeanne Hess – Freeskate 1
Timmy Mitchell – Preliminary Showcase

BRONZE MEDALS

Brianne Soga – Basic 8

Good Luck to Johnny Weir and Ksenia Makarova

Good
Luck
In
Vancouver at the
2010 Olympic Games!



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individual sports have also been found to experience more anxiety than those who play team sports.

When the rush of adrenaline is interpreted as anxiety, and negative thoughts begin to swirl, it can have devastating effects on your ability to perform. The coordinated movement required for stroking, jumping, spinning and choreography becomes increasingly difficult when your body is in a tense state from the adrenaline "rush". A certain level of physical arousal is useful and prepares or helps a person for competition. But when the physical symptoms of anxiety (muscle tension, shortness of breath, racing heart, dry mouth, disorientation, etc.) are too severe, they may seriously interfere with your ability to test/compete. In some cases, it can escalate into a full-blown panic attack. Severe symptoms of anxiety such as negative thought patterns and expectations of failure can bring about a "self-fulfilling prophecy."

How Self-Confidence Affects Anxiety: Research shows that self-confidence plays a huge role in how you respond to symptoms of anxiety during athletic performance. People who are confident in their abilities have a positive reaction to arousal and anxiety and thrive on the challenge of competition. When confidence is strong, it tends to crowd the worry out of the mind. The short answer to overcoming anxiety is to [build self-confidence](#). That's the *best* preventive measure for reducing stress.

Tips for Managing Anxiety: There are also several strategies for managing anxiety. Here are 2 to consider:

#1: Visualize a Successful Performance: [Visualization](#) is the simple act of mentally imagining yourself performing at your peak level. Proponents of visualization believe this establishes a mental blueprint within the subconscious for your body to follow when you are competing. Visualization involves quieting your thoughts, relaxing your mind, and allowing [the video of your successful skating performance](#) run through your mind. It's seeing yourself locked into that fluid rhythm of your program.

One way people do this is by remembering specific instances when they were aware of skating at peak-level performance. Then, it's a matter of combining the memories of these instances into one unified visualization of how you will perform. Close your eyes and join all those segments together in your mind -- like putting together a jigsaw puzzle of film and video clips. Put them all together as one performance, and this is now the movie of you at your absolute best! Most people who incorporate visualization into the mental side of their training practice this discipline regularly.

#2: Practice Positive Self-Talk: The other day I was at the rink and a young member was having difficulty landing an axel. There was really nothing wrong with the jump, the problem may have been in the skaters thoughts. Humans think approximately 60,000 thoughts a day. Your thoughts are an internal dialogue with yourself and [play a critical role](#) in influencing your response to certain situations. Something happens, you mull it over internally, and then you respond with an action. The event in and of itself did not determine your response; it's your interpretation of the event that determined your response.

When you're mulling over a particular situation, your thoughts are either slanting in a positive or a negative direction. Research shows that your performance is affected by the nature and content of [self-talk](#) prior to and during competition. [Positive self-talk](#) can help enhance your performance. Negative self-talk is counterproductive, leads to self-doubt, and can cause poor performance.

How to Overcome Negative Thoughts: Let's say that you had a few days of tough training before a test/competition. You start thinking, "There is no way I'm going to be able to skate well." You fixate on the thought, anxiety escalates, and by the time you put your skates on, you are a nervous wreck and the physical anxiety symptoms are manifesting. You're defeated before you even start!

Or let's say during a competition you began thinking something like, "Hmm...I feel like I'm getting tired a lot earlier than normal today." So for the next minute, you continue to dwell on that thought. The result of that negative self-talk can begin to sap your body's energy by programming your mental state with the "I feel tired" program.

It's possible your mind may be in a quiet and relaxed state while you're competing. This would likely be a good sign, as this generally means that you are in that "zone" where you feel free and connected to the moment. Realistically however, most often your mind will chatter away to you while you are competing. Most of this is completely harmless -- *except* when it fixes itself upon a particular negative thought, such as a specific pain, tiredness, the level of difficulty you are experiencing with the particular segment you are on, etc. Then... it's "Houston we have a problem!"

You may not even be aware of your own self-talk, so the first step is awareness. What do you say when you talk to yourself? When it's time to train or test/compete, what thoughts pop into your mind? Being aware of negative self-talk is the first step toward changing it.

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NJFSC is the culmination of over 80 years of skating activities. Originally called the Figure Skating Club of Northern New Jersey, the Club was established as an unincorporated association in 1933. It incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1961 and moved to the Fritz Dietl Ice Arena in Westwood, New Jersey. Other partner ice rinks are Ice Vault Arena in Wayne, NJ and Skylands Ice World in Stockholm, NJ and Floyd Hall, Little Falls, NJ.

The club is a member of the United States Figure Skating Association, the governing body of competitive figure skating in the United States. Past club members have become Olympic, World, and National medalist and team members.

The club is governed by a Board of Directors and officers include President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. These are the key characteristics of our club:

Skating is for **ALL**. We believe the club is for both competitive and recreational skaters, young and old.

Service. The club is to serve the membership and the facilities in which they skate.

Volunteerism. It takes volunteers to run the club.

Sustainable. The club must be here for another 50 years and beyond. In order to accomplish this, it must be run in a fiscally sound manner.

Overcoming Anxiety as a Figure Skater (Continued from Page 3)

Consider developing your own personal "sport language." What would you say if you were coaching yourself through a competition? Rather than complete sentences, this language could include positive one-word affirmations or short phrases. Letting negative thoughts control your performance is a tough habit to break, but [with practice it can be done](#).

One of the best ways to overcome negative thoughts before a test/competition is to re-focus the mind onto something positive by using a short and simple affirmation. One technique is to simply repeat a few positive, powerful words over and over again for 5-10 minutes before an event. This does 2 things: it focuses the mind onto the positive, and it prevents negative thoughts being "programmed in" before your skate.

Every figure skater experiences a battle between self-confidence and mental resistance. A victory or a great time is a triumph of your self-confidence over doubt. Every athlete has their own wall of resistance they must personally scale before they can succeed and perform at their best. What will yours be?



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