

## **Do Not Stress Over Your Competition**

By: Stan Popovich

Many athletes sometimes get anxious when they play against a tough opponent. They get nervous on who they are playing and they get so worked up that they lose focus on playing their game. 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 an athlete can use to help manage the stress of playing against the competition.

The first step is to learn as much as you can on your opponent. Although this may seem obvious some players 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 play. 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 the game. This will also help to reduce your worries about who and what you will be facing in your next game.

Do not assume anything about your competition whether they are stronger or weaker than you. Every player has his good and bad games and just because you may be facing a stronger opponent does not mean that you will lose. Remember that before you start playing, 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 next game.

\_Focus on how you can best strive for perfection in your own game instead of worrying about your opponent. For instance you are playing the number player in the tournament and you are nervous. Instead of focusing on how good your competition is, focus on how you can play your best game. Concentrate on how you can better play the game or how you can best improve on your problem areas. Focusing on your game will definitely help you when you are nervous in playing a stronger player.

\_Realize that you cannot win all of your games and that also includes your competition. You may be the best player in the world, however you will still lose eventually. No one player can win all of their games. Yes, they may have some winning streaks or win ninety percent of their games, but they will still lose some games. When facing a tough competitor, use this fact to your advantage. Even the best players will make some mistakes and lose.

It is not uncommon to get nervous when you play a better opponent. The key is not to psyche yourself out just because the competition gets tough. Remember that some games will be easy to play and some games will be more difficult. All you can do is to focus on your game and play 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/>