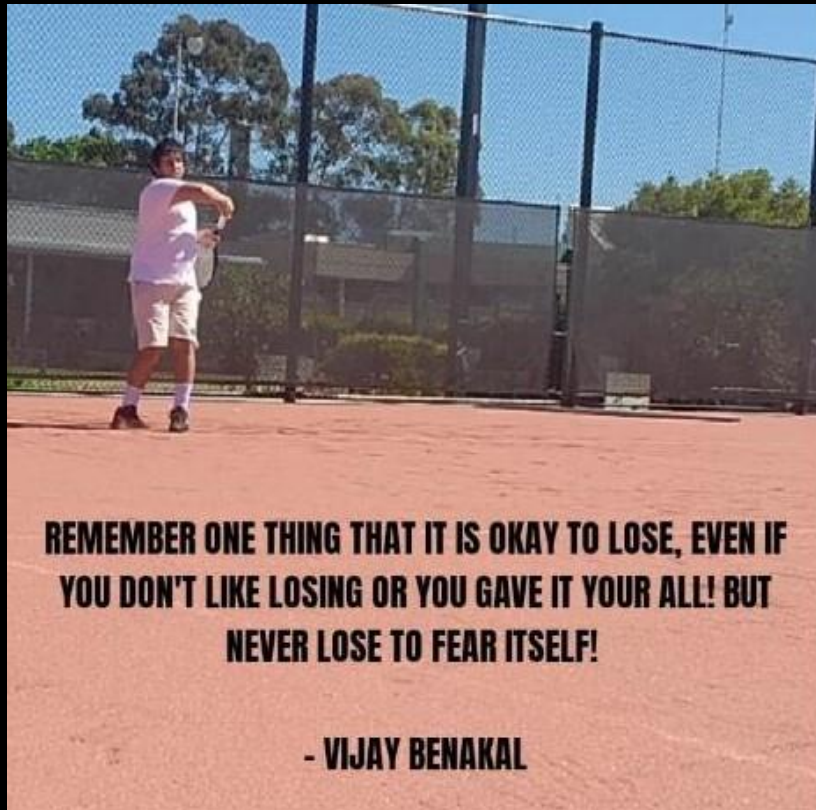


VIJAY'S TENNIS BLOGS

PERFORMANCE ANXIETY



**REMEMBER ONE THING THAT IT IS OKAY TO LOSE, EVEN IF
YOU DON'T LIKE LOSING OR YOU GAVE IT YOUR ALL! BUT
NEVER LOSE TO FEAR ITSELF!**

- VIJAY BENAKAL

Performance Anxiety is not always in the conversation for many Players playing Tennis in a competitive environment. Performance Anxiety is fearing your abilities to perform a task. Once this happens, the Player feels the fear of losing and failure. Symptoms of Performance Anxiety can be various from Player to Player. Players think they have lost control over the situation, lost concentration during the big points and have difficulty breathing or relaxing.

It is a struggle in today's game. I feel for all athletes who go through this problem, making it difficult for anyone to enjoy the sport, enjoy their progress or create success. We all feel this because we want to improve our lifestyle and achieve goals, to a point where we put high expectations on ourselves to do well! If anyone says 'I don't feel pressure', it is a lie because we all feel this. It can happen in our workplace, studying for the final exams, playing a final at a Grand Slam, etc.

There is no reason to feel ashamed or embarrassed, as Tennis can be an extremely challenging game due to the pressure it puts on a Player's psychology. Any match you and your Opponent play, both of you may have similar skills and physicality, so both of you know it comes down to small margins to decide the winner, one mistake at the wrong time can cost you or your Opponent the victory. That is how

Performance Anxiety can build up stress over time and can build from match to match as Tournaments progress.

Pressure comes within us when we care about something we want to achieve. If we didn't care about it, we would never feel a thing or be motivated enough to challenge ourselves, right? No guarantees aside, you won't feel 'no pressure', but you can certainly decrease your Performance Anxiety to a point where it is manageable. Here are some tips and ideas that I can challenge you to improve your pressure and increase your psychological performance:

- The term that everyone talks about is; Lower your Expectations! You need to set realistic expectations for yourself to give more room for growth. Don't expect in your first Tournament that you will win the first round or get to Quarter-Final in Main Draw. In this case, you need to have skilful and supportive people in your corner, such as a Parent or Coach, to help guide you to greatness. For expectations, try to think about the process and not the result.**
- When it comes to body language and posture, try keeping your head and shoulders upright. This will help you feel good and it all comes down to physiology, if your head and shoulders are down, then you will feel bad.**
- Develop good habits instead of bad habits! Some people can't stay on track to achieving their goals. It can be from not sticking to your diet, skipping your routines, not sleeping at the correct times, procrastination, lack of discipline within yourself, not practicing hard enough and more.**
- Improve your body to combat your Performance Anxiety. Try going to the Gym or participate in regular exercise, practicing on-court, off-court work, diet, sleep, managing your lifestyle, etc.**
- Try to promote breathing exercises to balance your relaxation, aiding you to be at ease when playing matches or Tournaments. You feel all the nervous tension in your belly and the way it feels is uncomfortable. Your brain and stomach work together, so implement breathing exercises, meditation or Yoga to combat the nervous tension in your stomach.**
- Stay in the present moment! Very easy to get ahead of yourself when you know it hasn't happened yet. Look at Novak Djokovic as an example, who had an opportunity of a lifetime in 2021 to create the Calendar Grand Slam. He made it to the final and played solid Tennis throughout the Tournament at the US Open. Unfortunately, he lost the Final and lost it himself! Why? He was too focused on creating history and not staying in the present moment of his match. Novak, I still love you!!!**

Of course, there are many ways to combat Performance Anxiety. These tips above are some of its principles to help combat them and help you enjoy the sport a little more. I can say that I am an emotional person, finding it difficult to cope while playing

Tournaments nationally. I was never a successful Tennis Player because of this reason and other things, but what if this can help you and shape yourself to another level of your game? Try some of these ideas, take ownership of what you do and tell yourself it is okay to make mistakes. Thank you so much for reading this blog.

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Vijay's Tennis - Founder and Director



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