



VOLLEYBALL BC

## TIPS FOR REFEREES

# HANDLING STRESS



### What is Stress?

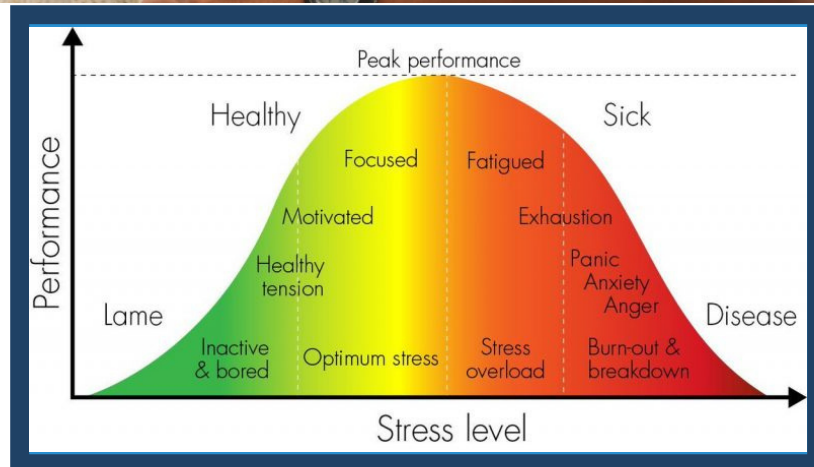
Stress is the subjective interpretation of an event by a person. In order to perceive something to be stressful you must:

- Perceive an event as threatening (to your physical, mental, or emotional well being) and,
- Perceive that you do not have the resources to cope with the event.

Some stress is useful. According to the Yerkes-Dodson Law (shown on right), an optimal level of stress (arousal) is needed in order to reach peak performance. The right amount of pressure can help you perform which, in turn, can support your well-being.

Too little stress can lead to under-activation (boredom, disinterest). However, too much stress which might mean you become tired, irritated and experience heightened anxiety and an overwhelming amount of stress can lead to “distress”. Distress or unmanageable levels of stress lead to higher risks of physical and mental injury and illness. Regardless of whether the stressors are real or imaginary, your body's reaction is similar.

Stress isn't a medical diagnosis but severe stress over a long period of time may lead to depression or anxiety. Therefore, recognising that you are stressed and acting early is important to your wellbeing.



### Causes of Stress

**Having an audience:** You can become self-aware of every call you make when you're on the court.

**High expectations:** Every referee wants to do their best, but internal self-talk may create stress when you set expectations that anything less than perfect is failure.

**The impact of others:** The external environment can be stressful. Poor behaviour or criticism from coaches, parents, or even other referees, can add to the pressure that you are feeling.

**Daily Life:** Outside refereeing, you might be feeling stressed as a result of day-to-day life (e.g. exams, relationships or work) or having to balance your refereeing with everything else you do.



## WHO DO I CONTACT FOR SUPPORT?

**Pre-match** - your personal mentor or the referee mentor on your set of courts.

**During the match** - your referee partner or the referee mentor on your set of courts.

**Post-match** - the referee mentor on your set of courts, the Head Referee, or the Assignor for the Tournament.

**VBC Contact:** [referee@volleyballbc.org](mailto:referee@volleyballbc.org)

## Tips for Handling Stress

- **Be organised:** e.g. plan your journey, leave on time, pack all the right referee gear – don't leave anything until the last minute.
- **Have a planned pre-match routine:** Visualise particular situations e.g. meeting the coaches pre-match, dealing with players wearing incorrect uniforms, jewellery and potential illegal equipment.
- **Have a 'what if' plan to help deal with potential stressors:** e.g. plan what you're going to say and do if you are verbally abused by a parent, or how you might deal with dissent from a coach.
- **Look after yourself:** e.g. eat the right food, get enough sleep, exercise regularly, breathing exercises.
- **Do something different:** Rather than focusing all your energies on refereeing, do something different and distracting, e.g. spend time with friends/family, engage in different activities.
- **'Control the controllables':** Accept that there are some things you can't change/influence and try not to worry about them.
- **Postpone your worries:** Rather than thinking constantly about things that are worrying you, write them down (in a 'Worry Diary') and deal with them at one point only for a fixed time period (e.g. for 15 minutes each evening).
- **Put things in perspective:** For most referees, it's a hobby. Also, don't be afraid to say 'no' if there are times that you want to take a break.
- **Self-talk:** Have a set phrase or set of words to help you through potentially stressful situations in a match and to help you remain positive – this could be something as simple as counting to 10.
- **Use association:** If you feel down or anxious pre-match, listen to some music that you associate with happiness to boost your mood.
- **During your break, focus on the positive and learning experiences.**
- **Turn off social media:** What are you really going to gain from knowing what people think post-game?

Sources

[www.thefa.com](http://www.thefa.com)

[www.thethirdteam.co.uk](http://www.thethirdteam.co.uk)



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