

MEET-DAY COACH COMMUNICATION GUIDE

Steady language for stressful competition moments



THE COACH'S JOB: ACKNOWLEDGE → DIRECT → SIMPLIFY

Use calm, brief language that helps the athlete return to the next useful action.

WHEN THE ATHLETE IS NERVOUS

"Your body is getting ready. Take one long exhale, then return to your cue."

Avoid promising that the nerves will disappear.

WHEN THE ATHLETE IS OVERTHINKING

"You do not need every correction right now. What is your one cue?"

Reduce information rather than adding more.

AFTER A MISTAKE

"That was disappointing. Take your reset, then we will prepare for what is next."

Acknowledge the moment without turning it into an identity judgment.

WHEN A SCORE IS DISAPPOINTING

"What information is useful? What can we release before the next event?"

Save the full evaluation for after the meet.

WHEN THE ATHLETE SEEKS CERTAINTY

"You do not need a guarantee. You need one breath, one cue, and commitment."

Reinforce action rather than promising an outcome.

REGULATE YOURSELF FIRST. THEN HELP THE ATHLETE REGULATE.

THE PRESSURE RESPONSE CHEAT SHEET

Help athletes understand what their minds and bodies are doing

NERVES ARE NOT THE ENEMY

The stress response is the body's attempt to prepare for an important demand. The goal is not to eliminate every sensation. The goal is to become regulated enough to reconnect to the task.

BODY MAY FEEL

- ☐ Racing heart
- ☐ Tight muscles
- ☐ Shallow breathing
- ☐ Butterflies or nausea
- ☐ Shaky, heavy, or restless

MIND MAY DO

- ☐ Jump into the future
- ☐ Focus on scores
- ☐ Search for certainty
- ☐ Overthink mechanics
- ☐ Treat thoughts as facts

BEHAVIOR MAY SHOW

- ☐ Rush or freeze
- ☐ Seek reassurance
- ☐ Watch competitors
- ☐ Withdraw from the team
- ☐ Change normal routines

THE 5-STEP REGULATION RESPONSE

1 NOTICE

Name the activation without judging it.

2 RELEASE

Drop unnecessary tension in the jaw, shoulders, or hands.

3 EXHALE

Use one slow, controlled exhale.

4 GROUND

Reconnect to feet, chalk, a visual target, or the coach's voice.

5 ACT

Choose the next physical action.

**THE GOAL IS NOT PERFECTLY CALM.
THE GOAL IS CALM ENOUGH TO CONNECT.**

POST-MEET REFLECTION SHEET

Debrief the response - not only the score



PSYCH ME UP
CONSULTING

ATHLETE _____

DATE _____

1. What did I handle well today?

2. Where did pressure affect my attention, body, or behavior?

3. Which Prepare, Perform, or Reset strategy helped most?

4. What did I learn from a mistake or difficult moment?

5. What will I practice before the next meet?

ONE RESPONSE I AM PROUD OF:
