

**PLAY LIKE
A CHAMPION
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

Champion Coach Note

Educating and Forming Champion Coaches

Understanding Anxiety



Anxiety is a part of sports at every level. In fact, all athletes encounter this phenomenon, regardless of their ability or experience in a given sport. In order to maximize development and performance, it's important that coaches understand the different forms of anxiety, learn to identify them, and recognize how to manage anxiety effectively. [In the short video above](#), Dr. Carrie Hastings discusses the differences in good anxiety (*facilitative*) and negative anxiety (*debilitative*) while helping coaches to identify symptoms and manage anxiety effectively with their athletes. A college athlete herself, [Dr. Hastings](#) is a licensed clinical and sport psychologist, a nationally recognized speaker, and the team psychologist for the NFL's Los Angeles Rams. She also serves as a *Play Like a Champion* Trainer and Research Specialist.

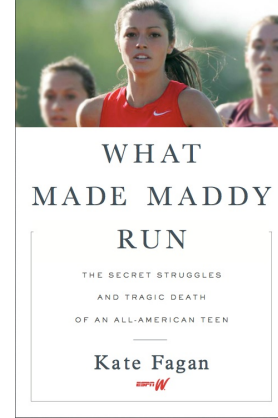
Coaches at all levels should consider the ways that anxiety affects their athletes and develop strategies to help promote resilience and clarity in these moments. Listen to what Dr. Hastings has to say and seek a better understanding of anxiety; doing so will maximize athletes' mental health and performance at all ages.

Scripture of the Week: *Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
~ Philippians 4: 6-7

What Made Maddy Run?

"In 2014, the American College Health Association surveyed nearly 20,000 student-athletes. Some 28% of female student-athletes and 21% of males reported feeling depressed, while 48% of female student-athletes and 31% of males reported feeling anxious. Approximately 14% said they had seriously considered suicide, with 6% saying they attempted it." (Fagan 85).

This research is explained in [What Made Maddy Run: The Secret Struggles and Tragic Death of an All-American Teen](#) by ESPN journalist Kate Fagan. Fagan tells the true story of Madison Holleran, an exceptional athlete and intelligent young woman who became a scholarship track athlete at the University of Pennsylvania. By all outward accounts, Maddy's life seemed perfect - her social media posts reflected the life of a successful and happy college freshman. In reality, Maddy experienced severe anxiety and depression that led to her committing suicide in January of her freshman year. This tragic story is a reminder that we should strive as coaches to recognize anxiety in our athletes, know the resources to get them help as well as work to decrease the pressure in our sport environment.



Anne Stricherz is a friend of *Play Like a Champion* and author of the exceptional [Sports and Spirituality Blog](#), with the mission of "using the lens of athletics to more fully understand the spiritual life." Anne created an excellent [Discussion Guide](#) on this book. We encourage you to gather your coaching staff to discuss this book and the important issue of mental health particularly as it relates to student-athletes. Thank you to Anne for sharing this valuable resource.

A Prayer for Coaches



Gracious God, I thank you for calling me to the ministry of coaching. Help me to answer that call with a generous spirit. Enable me to be a good coach, skilled, informed, fair-minded and caring. Let me see beyond the rules of sports and capture their spirit. Grant us the wisdom to see that athletics are not only about healthy bodies but healthy minds, that sports are not only about victory but enjoyment, that competition is not only about winning but building community.

Let the example of Christ inspire and guide my coaching so that I never lose sight of the dignity and worth of each and every person whom I coach. Help me to follow that example by coaching not only by instruction but by encouragement and love. Lord, keep me mindful of Your presence in my life and teach me and my athletes to be grateful for your many blessings. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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