

## Anxiety on the Strip

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### Anxiety on the Strip : An Examination of Predictors of Precompetitive State Anxiety in Epee Fencers

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Research continues to look for the sources of state anxiety for individual athletes prior to competition. State anxiety is of particular interest to sport psychology consultants because it can be debilitating, especially for non-elite athletes (Gould, 1993; Gould, Horn & Spreeman, 1983). Previous research has shown non-elite athletes who are high trait anxious (possibly fear of failure) have higher levels of state anxiety than elite athletes (Conroy, 2002; Gould, Horn & Spreeman, 1983). Thus, fencers may be prone to elevated state anxiety. Unfortunately no research links these variables together in fencing. The purpose of the study is to examine fear of failure, experience, and competitive division as predictors of state anxiety for epee fencers immediately prior to competition. Participants were epee fencers (N = 145) who competed in the USFA Summer Nationals. They completed a demographics questionnaire, the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2R (Cox, Martens & Russell, 2003), and the Performance Fear Appraisal Inventory (Conroy, Willow, & Metzler, 2002). Multiple regression analyses revealed fear of failure as a predictor of cognitive anxiety ( $\beta = .44, p < .001$ ). Division I-A fencers are predictive of higher cognitive anxiety than Division I fencers ( $\beta = .20, p = .04$ ). None of the variables were significant predictors for somatic anxiety. Experience was not associated with either cognitive or somatic anxiety.