

Performing Your Best At The Big Meet

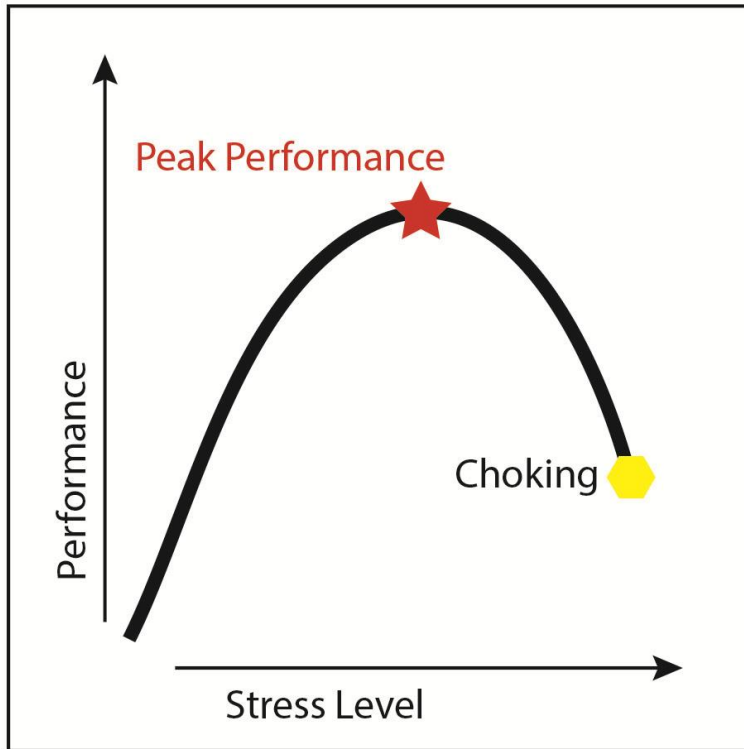
Mitch Crouser

What is a Big Meet?

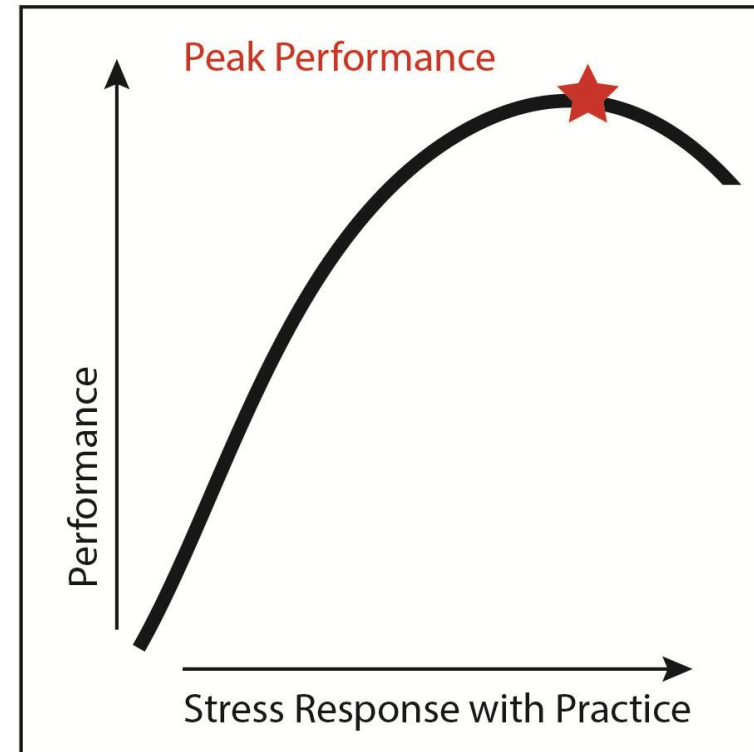
- District?
 - State?
 - NCAAs?
- USA Championships?
- World Championships?
 - Olympics?

Dealing with Pressure is a Learned Skill

Without Practice



With Practice



TRIVIA QUESTION:

Name the Track & Field Athletes Who
in a Single Event have

- Won 3 Olympic Gold Medals **AND**
- Won 3 World Championship Gold Medals **AND**
 - Have Set a World Record

ANSWER

- **Usain Bolt** 100m/200m
- **Ryan Crouser** Shot Put
- **Faith Kipyegon** 1500m
- **Anita Wlodarczyk** Hammer
 - **Jan Zelezny** Javelin

Performing well at the highest level consistently happens through higher levels of preparation.

Physical Training Program



Designed to Peak
Physically at the Big Meet

Athlete has to Trust the Process

12 weeks Out / Beginning of the School Year

Teach Techniques to Control Stress Levels

12 Weeks Out / Beginning of the School Year

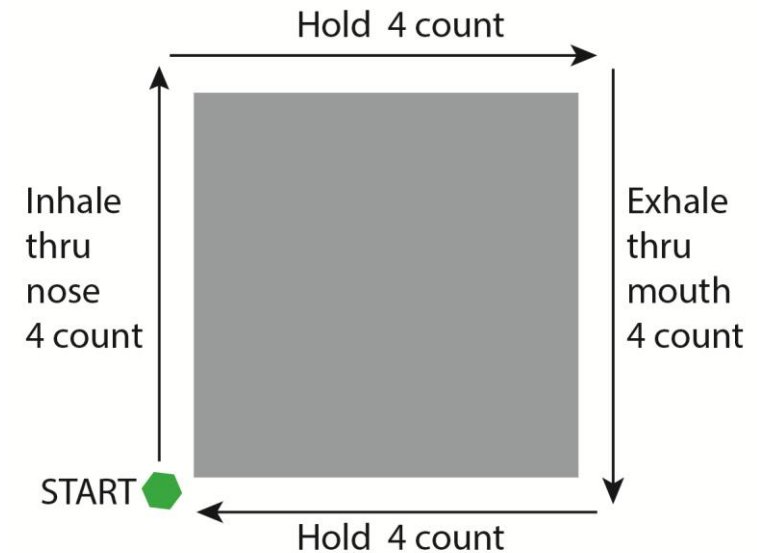
1. Breathing Exercises

Long Breathes

- Long inhale through the nose
- Inhale a little more
- Slow Exhale through the mouth

Start with 10 Reps

Box Breathing



Start with 10 Reps

2. Visualization

- Have Athlete visualize their perfect performance
- Bring in all senses and as many details as possible
- Try to visit the competition venue before competition
- Start with breathing exercises and then execute 10 perfect visualizations
- Daily practice becomes a habit

No bigger “bang for your buck” for helping performance at the Big Meet

3. Drill, Drill, Drill

Engrain Neuromuscular Movement

- At Highest Stress Levels Technical Basics Break Down
- Maintains Technique Under Higher Stress Levels
- Mirror Magnifies Proprioception

Goal: Engrain Technique to the point of being automatic

4. Introduce “Pressure Games” in Practice

- Start fun, lighthearted with little pressure
- 90% success / 10% failure
- Too hard does more harm than good

Know Your Athletes

5. Teach the Value of Quality Nutrition and Sleep

- ½ of Physical Improvement Comes from Nutrition and Sleep
- Get 3 Good Meals
 - Emphasize Quality
 - Nutrition Supplements Used to Supplement Meals, Not Replace Food
- Sleep
 - Optimum for High Schoolers 10 hours
 - High School Athletes are Growing = Additional Demand

5. Teach the Value of Quality Sleep and Nutrition

Poor Diet & Sleep Undermines Hard Work in Training

Getting Proper Nutrition & Sleep Requires Discipline,
But Payoffs are Enormous

6. Develop Specific Warm-ups

Specific Exercises, Repetitions, and Order of Exercises

12 Weeks Out / Beginning of the School Year

Meet Day Warm-up

- More Dynamic Movements
- No Static Stretching
- Know Length of Time of Warm-up
- Specific Meet Warm-up provides
 - Comfort and Familiarity
 - Reduces Anxiety at Big Meet

4 Weeks from the Big Meet

1. Simulate the Big Meet in Practice

- Test Day Notified in Advance
- Set-up Meet Scenarios

4 Weeks Out

2. Experiment in Practice with Nutrition & Hydration

- What to Eat
- When to Eat
- How Much to Eat
- Snacks
- Hydration & Electrolytes

Nutrition & Hydration are Keys to Performance

3. Coach Emphasizes More Positives in Practice

- Athlete Feeds Off Coach's Positivity
- Power of Coach's Positivity is Enormous

1 Week Out from the Big Meet

1. Detailed Written Time Schedule

- Time to Wake, Meals, Transportation, Start Warmups
 - Number of Warmups & Intensity of Warmups
- Big Meets have More Moving Parts
- Go Over Schedule with Athlete Beforehand

Written Schedule Reduces Stress and Increases Confidence

2. Detailed Checklist of Essentials

- Raingear, Towels Snacks, Hydration, Electrolytes, Tape, Chalk, Shoes, etc.
- All These Things are in Your Control
- Put as Many Things as Possible in Your Favor

3. Re-Emphasize the Importance of Quality Sleep & Nutrition

1 Week Out

4. Manage Expectations

- Talk with Your Athlete
- What Results are we Shooting for
- Be Realistic

The Sport of Track and Field is About Self-Improvement

Day of the Big Meet

1. Re-Emphasize the Importance of Nutrition & Hydration

- Critical to Performance the Day of the Meet
- Can Easily Ruin Performance

2. Have Athlete Stay Off Their Feet

- All Track & Field Events Depend on Legs
- Expect More Walking at Big Meets

3. Have Athlete Focus on Technical Execution

- High Adrenaline Levels
- Perceived Effort = “So Easy”

4. Athlete's Focus Should Be on THEIR OWN Performance

- Athlete CAN'T Control
 - Examples: Weather, Competitors, Officials
- Athlete CAN Control
 - Nutrition, Hydration, Checklist, Staying off Feet, Pre-Meet Warmup, Using Breath to Control Stress

5. Coach Contributes to Performance by Calmness & Positivity

- Athlete Feeds off Coach's Demeanor
 - "Everything is Going Exactly to Plan"
- Things Will Go Wrong
 - "It's Not That Big of Deal, We've Trained for This"
- Less Coaching is More the Day of the Meet

IF Any Coaching – 1 QUE

Day of the Big Meet

AFTER THE MEET

- Coach's appraisal of the meet is so important
- Regardless of Performance, Acknowledge Athlete's Dedication, Sacrifice, and Hard Work
- Emphasize Lessons Learned – These lessons are what the Athlete will take with them from the Sport of Track & Field

AFTER THE MEET - Continued

- Returning Athlete
 - What went good
 - What went bad
 - What do we change for next year
- Encourage Junior Olympics for Summer