

**Searching for Flow: A Performance Optimization Intervention with a  
Professional Dart Thrower**

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**Abstract**

We report on a case study of an elite international-level dart thrower who reached out to the first author with hopes of decreasing his somatic anxiety symptoms and increasing his chances of experiencing flow during high-stakes competitions. Specifically, we described the intake, need analysis, case formulation, and intervention delivery process and evaluation. The intervention program helped the client improve his performance (i.e., average points per game), experience more micro-flows, and decrease his somatic anxiety (i.e., handshaking) symptoms. Proactive interventions and ongoing psychological skills training are recommended for professional athletes immersed in high-competitive settings.

**Keywords:** flow-feeling; somatic anxiety; psychological skills training; self-paced sports

## **Searching for Flow: A Performance Optimization Intervention with a Professional Dart Thrower**

Dart throwing is a self-paced sport that requires fine motor skills and precise hand-eye coordination (Filho et al., 2021). Hereafter, we describe a case study of an elite international level dart thrower that reached out to the first author asking for help with his performance anxiety. Specifically, the athlete reported experiencing somatic anxiety in important games; specifically, he said his hands would “shake a lot”, particularly when he was about to close (last three shots) a game. In what follows, we describe the consulting philosophy informing this case. Subsequently, we described the intake, need analysis, and case formulation process for this athlete. Next, we outline the intervention delivery and the evaluation. A reflexive summary is presented at the end.

### **Consulting Philosophy**

At the time of the intervention, the first author was completing a Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route (SEPAR) under the supervision of the second author, who took on a collaborative supervision approach. The two authors met at least once a month to discuss the case. The first author (hereafter Sport Psychology Consultant, SPC) perceives himself as an integrated scientist-practitioner (see Cutts, 2011), as he values different approaches to the work as long as they are grounded in empirical evidence. This said, he favors a pragmatic and cognitive-behavioral approach to the work with athletes (see Keegan, 2020). Moreover, as someone who has experienced several acculturation experiences, he embraces cross-cultural praxis perspectives when working with clients (see Ryba et al., 2013).

### **The Case: Intake, Need Analysis, and Case Formulation**

Intake, need analysis, and case formulation are interrelated rather than independent stages of a psychological skills training (PST) program (Keegan, 2020). As detailed below, it

took two sessions to understand that what the client needed and wanted was to experience flow as much as possible.

**Session one.** The first contact occurred via email. The dart thrower, hereafter referred to as Tom (a pseudonym) emailed the SPC. At the time of the study, Tom was 32 years old and had been playing darts professionally for seven years. An initial Skype call was scheduled, during which confidentially, consent, and boundaries of practice were addressed. Thus, from a mental training periodization standpoint, Tom was at the preparatory phase, which is a good place to start a mental training intervention (see Blumenstein & Orbach, 2020). As such, the client and the SPC planned to meet until his World Cup qualifying event (competitive phase), which was about four months away.

During the first session, which was informed by the performance interview guide (see Aoyagi, 2017), Tom shared his professional goals and performance issues. Specifically, he said that he was an excellent dart thrower from a technical point of view, but that his mind was getting in the way of him reaching his full potential. According to him, he should be a top-16 athlete in the world rankings. However, Tom also said he would exhibit big performance fluctuations and extreme somatic anxiety in matches that he was supposed to win (“easy matches”), as well as in crucial moments of big matches. Beyond his outcome goal of becoming a top-16 dart thrower in the world, the SPC helped him to come up with a performance goal, which Tom framed as “increase his game point average from 80-85 points to 95 points before the next world-championship qualifying”.

**Session two.** During the second session, the SPC proposed a performance profiling technique (see Bird et al., 2020), but Tom did not seem interested. Rather, Tom wanted to talk; there was a lot on his mind and thus the SPC “met the client where he was at”, with the hopes that this collaborative approach would strengthen the working relationship. Tom was upset that his performances have dropped over the past two years, and that his anxiety seems

to be at an all-time high. Based on understanding of the literature on the expert-novice paradigm (see Tenenbaum & Filho, 2015), the SPC purposefully asked Tom about his “best performance ever” he could vividly recall. A 2-min visualization exercise (adapted from Williams & Krane, 2020) followed, and then Tom shared the characteristics of his best performance: “I did not think about my technique...I only thought about how to get my target score. Mistakes did not bother me...It was easy to forget my mistakes. There was no hand-shaking or, if there was, I did not notice”. Tom also reflected that his worst performances were the exact opposite.

The best performance exercise used during the session was based on a strength-based approach and aligned with the expert-novice paradigm (see Tenenbaum & Filho, 2015). Moreover, as Tom mentioned that he wanted to be “in flow” more often, the SPC thought his work with him would be mainly informed by the literature on peak performance experiences, which includes flow-feeling theory, the IZOF, and the Multi-Action Plan model, to name a few (for a review see Filho et al., 2021). To this extent, flow-feeling theory purports that there is a psychological state and experience—characterized by challenge and skill balance, autotelic motivation, clear goals, and optimal focus, among other factors—wherein individuals are more likely to perform optimally (see Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). The IZOF model purports that athletes’ have highly idiosyncratic psycho-bio-social states linked to optimal, moderate, and poor performance experiences (Ruiz et al., 2017). The MAP model is based on the notion that (a) sub-optimal and poor performance experiences are due to either distraction or hyper-focus (Type-3 and Type-4 performance); (b) functional/good performance is characterized by attention on core components of action; and (c) optimal performance state is characterized by optimal focus, or what athletes describe as “being in an automatic pilot” (see Bertollo et al., 2016; Bortoli et al., 2012).

**Intervention**

After the intake and need analysis, the next steps involved choosing, planning, and delivering the intervention (Keegan, 2020). Of note, Tom did not have any experience with sport psychology interventions. In what follows, we provide a chronological summary of the core topics discussed and key reflections for each session of the PST intervention. The overall aim of the intervention was to equip the athlete with mental and coping skills that would allow him to optimize his performance. Performance optimization interventions help athletes to identify (and modify with practice) the psycho-bio-social factors associated with poor, moderate, and optimal performance experiences (e.g., Donohue et al., 2018; Filho et al., 2023). In terms of the delivery, the sessions were conducted on Skype and lasted approximately one hour each.

**Session three.** During the third session, Tom continued to describe his performance anxiety issues. Somewhat of a breakthrough occurred when the SPC asked Tom something to the effect: “Why do you play darts? What is in it for you?”. The SPC asked these questions based on the notion that flow is an autotelic experience; that is, people are more likely to be in flow if they are doing something for the sake of it (see Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Tom shared that he started playing darts to connect more with his father, who was an avid dart player too. He said that he eventually fell in love with the sport, and that the practice and competition became more about his own game; he started playing because he became good at it and really enjoyed it. Tom went on to say that for a while he could not remember playing darts for fun or for the sake of it; it was now a business for him. He was now a professional athlete that needed to provide financially for his family. Losing games meant losing money and he also had an online podcast business about the sport and had responsibility with his various sponsors. At some point, the SPC mentioned to Tom that a key ingredient of flow is to have fun while performing. The SPC shared with Tom that being happy is not a condition

for being in flow or “in the zone”, but that generally intrinsic motivation and being happy help people to reach and sustain flow (see Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). The SPC also mentioned that self-regulation rather than external regulation is a cornerstone of PST, and that always playing for someone or something else could only take him so far in the sport, as this puts his performance outside his control. Together, Tom and the SPC reflected on “why he is playing darts right now”. Tom seemed unsure of his why and committed himself to try to find something he really enjoyed about the sport.

**Session four.** During the fourth session, we continued to talk about his performance anxiety and desire to reach and sustain flow. At some point, it became evident to the SPC that Tom had some irrational beliefs towards his performance. In particular, Tom believed that he should always be performing at peak level. The SPC challenged his beliefs that he needed to be perfect and always in flow, and mentioned to him that performance fluctuations are normal and that performers are not always performing at peak level. Rather, athletes exhibit “functional performance states” (see Hanin, 2000). The SPC told Tom that athletes that try too hard to get in flow end up not getting in flow at all (e.g., paradox of control in flow theory; see Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). The SPC also tried to normalize (without diminishing) the fact that it is okay and, indeed, common to have functional performance rather than peak performance experiences in sports (Bortoli et al., 2012; Filho et al., 2015; Hanin, 2000). Athletes often choke when they try to control everything (Mesagno & Beckmann, 2017), and thus the SPC shared with Tom the notion of core components of action, as purported by Bortoli et al. (2012). Tom came up with three core actions for his sport, namely *grip* (i.e., how to hold the dart properly), *follow-through* (i.e., keeping his gaze at the dart and the target after dart release), and *rhythm*, (i.e., “not playing fast, but not playing slow...thinking but not thinking too much before each throw”). The SPC asked Tom to try to redirect his attention to one of these core components of action when he perceived he

was underperforming or when his hands were shaking heavily. Tom mentioned he had a tournament over the weekend and would try to implement the strategies discussed during the session.

**Session five.** During the fifth session, Tom shared that he beat a higher ranked opponent during the weekend tournament and that he felt that he sometimes had trouble winning games because he “lacked the courage to win”. Based on this remark, the SPC introduced the technique of “cue words” as these can help athletes with confidence and facilitate more functional psycho-bio-social states (see Williams & Krane, 2020). The SPC borrowed Orlick’s (2015) TV analogy and told Tom that trigger words are used to “change channels in our minds”. Thus, Tom could use one trigger word to focus on a core component of action, another word to put his mind on a positive channel or “safe place”, and so forth. The SPC then invited Tom to think of a few cue words. Tom agreed to come up with a few trigger words before the next session.

During this session, Tom also mentioned that he focused on core components of action during his past match and that helped him with his somatic anxiety. He said he only used the core components of action technique when he was not in flow, and he also mentioned that he had “small flow” episodes. The SPC acknowledged his feelings and added that micro-flows and micro-choking episodes happen and that is why cue words, and knowledge of core components of action, can be helpful (see Bertollo et al., 2015; Bortoli et al., 2012; Wulf & Lewthwaite, 2010). At the end of the session, Tom invited the SPC to watch his next match and the SPC agreed to do so.

**Performance observation.** A brief chat took place before Tom started his warm-up. Tom explained the competition process to the SPC. Tom also mentioned that he liked the TV analogy discussed in the previous session and told the SPC that he came up with the cue word “change” to try to overcome a negative state (e.g., after a mistake) by engaging in some sort

of action (e.g., deep breath or dart grip) during the tournament. Furthermore, Tom mentioned that he struggled with warm-ups because if he did not do well during them, then he would feel less confident going into the actual competition. Based on these remarks, the SPC asked him whether he engaged in any pre-performance routine. Tom told the SPC that his routine was fluid and consisted of three steps: (a) on the drive to the competition he would listen to music; (b) upon arrival at the venue, he would talk small with the other athletes, which he felt helped him to relax; and (c) start his warm-up which was very specific and focused on practicing “closing the game”; that is, Tom practiced specific checkout sequences in the board, as well as bullseye finishes. Importantly, the SPC intentionally had no agenda or assumptions for the observation session. Rather, the SPC wanted to observe and learn more about the sport and Tom.

**Session six.** During the sixth session, Tom reported not feeling any additional pressure about presence of the SPC at his competition. Rather, he said he liked seeing that the SPC was involved in the process. The SPC shared with Tom that his body language after poor shots could be improved. A conversation on the idea of “letting it happen” (e.g., flow) and “making it happen” (see Swann et al., 2016), with respect to pre-performance routines that may trigger functional performance, followed. The SPC mentioned to Tom that changing how you behave (i.e., better body language) could change his feelings and thoughts, i.e., cognitive-affective-behavioral linkage (see Tenenbaum et al., 2013). Tom seemed to have taken this point on board as he tried to connect how a more positive body language could be incorporated in his pre-performance routine. Generally, Tom said he was comfortable with his pre-performance routine and did not want to make changes to it. He liked listening to music, chatting with people before the matches, and then moving on to practicing “closing the game”. Next, the SPC asked what type of music could be helpful in getting Tom to the right activation level and emotional level in order to facilitate “flow”. These questions,

inspired by research on the circumplex model of affect (see Russell, 1980), helped Tom to realize that he liked happy music and a moderate level of arousal to perform well. Tom shared that feeling happy was important for him to perform well, and he also said that he was starting to enjoy competing again. Furthermore, Tom said that he would give more thought to his playlist on his way to the competition grounds. At the end, the SPC suggested that Tom complete an adapted version of the affect grid for the following two weeks so that he could compute Tom's IZFOFs (see Kamata et al., 2002; Tenenbaum et al., 2013). Tom said he would do so during training and bring it to the next session.

**Session seven.** During the seventh session, Tom continued talking about routines, but rather than focusing on pre-performance routines, we talked about Tom's routines in-between points. Tom mentioned he could benefit from developing a routine following a bad sequence of shots. We discussed how having a re-set routine could help him move from a poor to a functional to, eventually, a peak performance state (see Orlick, 2015). Tom noted that he would use two cue words, namely "change" and "breath", and focus on a core component of action, namely the "hand grip of the dart". Tom also said he would like to take long and deep breaths. He wanted to know how many deep breaths he needed. Rather than providing Tom with a specific number, the SPC suggested: "Why don't you try this out until we meet again and we will take it from there".

**Session eight.** At session number eight, Tom mentioned that he lost an "easy game" because he was not present; he was already thinking about the next match that was supposed to be "the difficult one". He also brought up the notion of mindfulness. Tom said he had read a lot about the concept of mindfulness and that he knew about the importance of being in the here and now and being non-judgmental. Following this, the SPC explained in non-jargon terminology the notion of cognitive diffusion, as opposed to cognitive fusion (e.g., William & Krane, 2020; Zorn et al., 2021). Notably, talking about mindfulness, particularly the non-

judgmental facet of it, opened another door: self-talk. Tom reported that he was not good at self-talk. He acknowledged that he was too hard and negative on himself. Hence, the SPC asked Tom to engage in think aloud by recording his thoughts during his next week of training (see Eccles & Arsal, 2017; Stephenson et al., 2020). The SPC explained to Tom that doing so would bring some awareness to his self-talk and that the knowledge gained through this think aloud exercise could be helpful to his process.

**Session nine.** During the ninth session, Tom disclosed that he had seen a clinical psychologist because his self-talk was really negative not only in sport, but across other areas of his life. The SPC told Tom that PST can reveal well-being and clinical issues that require referral to another professional (Gorczyński et al., 2020; Muir & Munroe-Chandler, 2020). Furthermore, the SPC validated Tom's choice to seek another professional and told him that it was up to him to decide how to proceed, as some people find it difficult to work with two consultants at the same time. The SPC told Tom to reflect on that and let him know, and Tom agreed to do so. The SPC connected Tom's self-talk issues to the notion of challenge and threat mindsets (see Uphill et al., 2019). Furthermore, the SPC and Tom talked about how embracing the pressure and seeing competition as a challenge could help Tom get into his desired state of "flow", given that positivity and optimal challenge-skill balance are essential to flow in sports (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999).

Tom also mentioned that he was practicing extra hard so to feel prepared to the upcoming World Cup qualifier. He seemed to believe that quantity was more important than quality when it comes to practice. For this reason, the SPC introduced the ideas of deliberate practice, recovery-stress balance, and mental fatigue (e.g., Kellmann et al., 2018, Ericsson, 2020; Penna et al., 2018); Specifically, the SPC told Tom about passive, active, and proactive recovery strategies (see Kallus & Kellmann, 2016; Kellmann et al., 2018). Tom reasoned that

he engaged in few active and proactive recovery strategies, and said he would continue to reflect on what he does to recover so not to feel burned out before his big event.

**Session ten.** In our tenth session, Tom mentioned that he was going to see the clinical psychologist one more time and that he expected that visit to be his last. He said it was a short four-session intervention that helped him to be more accepting of himself. He said it was good to have the clinical psychologist and a SPC because the clinical psychologist helped him to get out some emotions so to help him to accept himself more. He was only able to articulate, or only wanted to share, that the clinical psychologist helped him to be more accepting of himself. He said that with the SPC, he felt he was understanding more performance and “science” things.

Tom then shifted the conversation, by stating that he was watching the Netflix documentary “The Last Dance” and noted that the notion of “winning mentality” really resonated with him. As a result, he wanted to talk about confidence, especially because his big competition was approaching. Tom circled back to when he and the SPC talked about how his warm-up could hurt his confidence, particularly when he did not execute it well. In line with Bandura’s (1997) self-efficacy, the SPC told Tom that confidence comes primarily from past successful performance experiences. The SPC encouraged Tom to share some of his major achievements and he was happy to do that. The SPC added that self-efficacy/self-confidence can fluctuate and that Tom now had a collection of skills, including a pre-performance routine, to recover from less-than-optimal performances, cue words, core components of action, approaching competition as a challenge, and more. The SPC recalled the TV analogy and reminded Tom that he was adding more and more channels to his TV. The SPC told him that he might need to use different channels at different times during practice and competition. The SPC used motivational interviewing techniques, and really

tried to empower Tom, as research suggests that one should focus on the performers' strengths as an important competition nears (see Blumenstein & Orbach, 2020).

**Session eleven.** In our eleventh session, Tom had lots to share. This was the last session before his World Cup qualifier event. The SPC had initially agreed to 10 sessions, but Tom asked for one more to help prepare him for his big tournament. Tom did most of the talking during this session. He said he felt really invested in his mental game and told the SPC that he now had four cue words: “change”, for when his head is full of thoughts so that he could change the channel to a more relaxed and quiet one; “adapt”, for when he is not playing well so that he does not give up the game; “reset”, for right after he makes a mistake; and “enjoy”, so that he remembers to have fun during the game. The SPC praised Tom's hard work on his mental game and emphasized the importance of him believing that he could adapt no matter what happened (see Sarkar, 2017). Tom also stated that he was now listening to happy samba as part of his pre-performance routine, and that he was consistently using the core components of action technique. He planned on doing the same before the competition. Tom shared something else: he had figured out that what he called a two-two breathing (a long inhale followed by a long exhale, two times in a row) helped him to refocus. He also said that he bought and finished reading the book “Peak” by Anders Ericsson within two weeks. That led to a natural conversation between Tom and the SPC about the importance of quality practice before the competition and recovery-stress balance in sports. Tom said he was less worried about losing now and that had to be with his increased self-acceptance, improved self-talk, and challenge rather than threat approach to competition. The SPC felt that this was a productive and positive session before Tom's big event.

### **Evaluation of Work**

Our evaluation session was about one week after Tom's qualifying tournament. The SPC had two goals for the session: get Tom's thoughts on the intervention process a whole,

and engage in some post-World Cup reflection (see Chow & Luzzi, 2019). The evaluation process involved a semi-structured interview approach with two broad guiding questions: (a) Has the PST helped you in your goal of getting into flow more often?; and (b) Has your goal of increasing your average point per game been reached?

To the first question, Tom said he was trusting the process, seeing how important mental training is, and acknowledged that it takes continuous work to be strong mentally. He said he was experiencing more micro-flow events. When he was not in flow, he would use some of the techniques discussed in the sessions with the SPC. He also said that his hands were no longer shaking but that he could not tell whether this was from the core components of action, breathing, use of cue words, mindfully accepting his thoughts, or another reason. To his performance goal, Tom said he was now averaging 90-95 points and averaged 93 points at the World Cup Qualifier. He said that, although this was his average, he still experienced some fluctuations; the SPC again revisited the notion that fluctuations are part of the game and mental training is an ongoing process.

Tom recalled to the SPC that he started the qualifying event nervous because he was playing a “big name” in the sport, but that slowly his feelings settled, and he found his game. He said anxiety kicked back at times and that he felt “a strong internal battle”, especially because his opponent engaged in trash-talk, something Tom said is not common in his experience in dart throwing. He added that focusing on his “two-two breathing” between the points helped him to regain composure but that he would like to talk more about how to deal with trash-talk. The SPC noticed that Tom was able to adapt and that shows how much his resilience is growing as he continues “adding channels to his mental game”. Tom also mentioned that he did not try to push “a flow bottom”, but rather focused on being present during the match, and that his cue word “reset” helped him after mistakes. He noticed his self-talk and self-acceptance after mistakes was better during the match.

Tom beat an opponent ranked in the top-32 in the world. He lost the next match though, and he said it was disappointing because he was, in theory, better than the player he lost too. He said maybe he was too excited from the previous big win and did not focus as he was supposed to on the subsequent match. The SPC reframed this by talking about a learning approach (“you learned something”) and by emphasizing that experts are not born winners, but that rather they learn to win. At the end of the session, Tom noted that he wanted a break after the competition and agreed to get back in touch with the SPC when he felt the need for it.

### **Reflective Account and Concluding Summary**

We choose to report on this case because Tom was one of the best athletes that the first author has ever worked with. From a critical reflexive standpoint (see Anderson et al., 2004), working with Tom reinforced the first author’s integrated approach to applied work. Tom wanted to experience less anxiety and more flow, and, to this end, the first author discussed with Tom different techniques and mental training concepts, which are all underpinned by different theories. In other words, in this case, the first author was a fallibilist in the sense that they withheld a final case-conceptualization or “diagnostic”. The end state of flow is linked to goal setting, motivation, mindfulness, recovery-stress balance, and much more.

The first author also took on a collaborative approach because they felt that Tom was very expressive and “liked to talk”. The first author shared this with the second author during supervision and in their community of practice because, at times, the first author felt they could have been more practitioner-led. Being more practitioner-led would have helped to evaluate their work by means of triangulation: questionnaire and performance profiling data, interview data, and objective performance data (i.e., average point per game). However, Tom did not engage with any request for objective data, namely the performance profiling, the

RESTQ-Sport, or the modified affect grid. In reflection, this might have been because Tom enjoyed talking and “feeling heard” about his athletic performance and perhaps the sessions were a recovery activity for him, akin to the notion of recovery-stress balance (see Kallus & Kellmann, 2016). Conversely, completing questionnaires about his performance and mental states could be perceived as less interesting, stressful, or tiring. Next time, the first author might emphasize the need for quantitative data to aid the intervention. For instance, collecting data on Tom’s activation and pleasantness states (modified affect grid) would have helped the SPC to develop a probabilistic IZOF curve and estimate in-out of the zone fluctuations (see Kamata et al., 2002). Using brief measures and observation protocols high in face validity are ways to gather objective data on perceived performance and psycho-bio-social states in sports (see Tenenbaum & Filho, 2015; 2018).

Notably, as this client was very expressive and talkative, the SPC had an opportunity to engage their counselling skills. In particular, they feel comfortable and confident with their active listening and validation skills, and their ability to ask open-ended questions grounded on sound theory. However, the SPC can continue to improve on their ability to ask questions and do less psycho-education. Another highlight of this learning experience pertains to the client seeking additional help from a clinical psychologist. Again, performance issues are not orthogonal to well-being issues (Gorczyński et al., 2020), and it was a challenge for the SPC to navigate the fact that the client wanted to work with two consultants at the same time. Having a community of practice and discussing this issue with the second author was helpful. The SPC reasoned that being part of a community of practice helps one to realize that, at times, there are many right answers to a given question; however, other questions have a more clear cut (best practice) answer.

In conclusion, the first author believes the intervention program helped the client to reach his goals, as the client improved his performance (i.e., average points per game),

reported experiencing more micro-flows, and seemed to have resolved his major somatic anxiety symptom (i.e., handshaking). However, his performance issues have not all been resolved (e.g., he still experiences performance fluctuations) and he can continue to strengthen his mental skills; as such, continuation of PST is warranted.

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**Table 1**

## Summary of the Session Topics and Main Takeaways

Session Topic	Main Takeaways
1. Intake	The athlete and the Sport Psychology Consultant (SPC) explored the athlete's professional goals and performance issues and strengths.
2. Peak Performance Experiences	The athlete engaged in an imagery exercise proposed by the SPC and then reflected on the psycho-bio-social states that might be associated with his optimal performance experiences.
3. Motivation	The athlete and the SPC explored the intrinsic and extrinsic motives for his past and current sport participation.
4. Perfectionism	The athlete and the SPC reflected on the so-called "paradox of control"; that is, how trying to control all aspects of performance may lead to a poor rather than optimal performance experience.
5. Core components of Action	The athlete and the SPC worked on identifying core components of action and cue words with hopes to help facilitate functional performance experiences.
6. Pre-Performance Routines	The athlete and the SPC worked on a pre-performance routine with aims to trigger functional performance experiences. They also discussed the notions of "making it happen" or "letting it happen" with regards to peak performance in sports.
7. Reset Routines	The athlete and the SPC worked on a re-set routine, which included somatic ("breath"), cognitive reframing ("change" the mental channel), and a re-focus cue directed at a core component of action ("hand grip of the dart").
8. Mindfulness and Self-Talk	The athlete brought up his interest in mindfulness and a discussion on the "being present" and "non-judgmental" facets of mindfulness followed. The athlete reflected that he believes his self-talk was often negative, so the SPC suggested the athlete engaged in think-aloud exercise in the next week of practice.
9. Self-Talk, Mindsets, and Recovery Strategies	The athlete and the SPC discussed referrals considering the athlete realization that his negative self-talk manifested beyond the sport setting. During the session, the SPC introduced the notion of challenge/threat mindset and the importance of identifying passive and active recovery strategies.
10. Self-Efficacy	The athlete and the SPC discussed how efficacy beliefs can fluctuate over time and the importance of continued mental skills training and on a strength-based focus as the competition neared.
11. Quality Practice and Recovery	The athlete and the SPC discussed the importance of quality practice and recovery-stress balance before the competition. The athlete reported he felt he had improved his self-talk, and he would approach the competition with a challenge rather than threat mindset.
12. Evaluation of the Work	The athlete and the SPC reflected on the effectiveness of the psychological skills training (increased average points per game, decreased somatic anxiety symptoms) as well as the areas for continued work (e.g., performance fluctuations during the game).