



# How to Cope With Performance Peaks and Valleys

“I was excellent today. Why can’t I do that every time?”

“What happened to me out there? Why am I so bad some days?”

Comments like these are common as athletes experience the ups and downs of athletic performance. Delivering consistent performances is one of the toughest challenges in sports. To help your children understand and cope with the performance roller coaster, you may need to give them a new perspective.



Here’s a fact worth sharing. Athletes never perform above average more than 50% of the time. In fact, every athlete performs below average 50% of the time. It’s a statistical reality! Each athlete has a level of performance that represents his or her average. Each athlete will perform better than that level half the time, and below that level half the time. Many athletes think they should perform at their highest level everyday. And some parents are disappointed when they don’t! The most significant question for an athlete is not, “Did I have a personal best today?” But instead, “Is my average gradually improving?”

Imagine the history of the Stock Market, with the entire history drawn on a wall. It appears to be an overall success story. But if you looked at a small portion of that story, like only one year, you would get a completely different impression. It looks erratic and depressing! But that’s only because you’re not seeing the whole story; you’re not seeing that one year in the context of the larger picture.

That’s how it is with your child’s performances. If you believe in your child’s overall success story, you can respond to a below average performance without panic or drama. It’s just part of the journey. And when your child has one of those days when a performance soars above average, react the same way – without drama. Treat it as a normal part of the journey. You’ll soon discover that the absence of drama of any kind helps an athlete become more consistent, with an average that is gradually improving every season.



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## Discussion Guide for Parent and Athlete

1

How can you respond to your child's performances in a way that indicates you see each one as part of a larger success story?

2

How can you demonstrate to your child after a super performance that while you're happy for her, your love is not attached to performance?