





**WHEN “GOOD” ISN’T
GOOD ENOUGH**

HELPING ATHLETES COPE WITH
OVERWHELMING EXPECTATIONS AND
ANXIETY

MATA Conference 

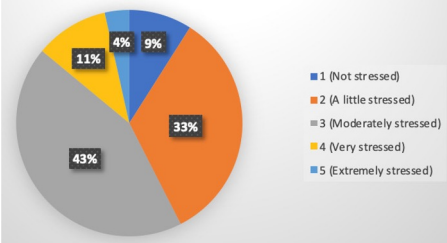
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Anxiety and Pressure to Perform

Stress in sport is almost guaranteed in high school athletes



91% reported experiencing stress related to sport

- 64% Fear of failure
- 65% Self-pressure
- 45% Fearing judgment from others
- 35% Impractical expectations of themselves
- 34% Coach pressure
- 21.5% Parental pressure



Stress Level	Percentage
1 (Not stressed)	43%
2 (A little stressed)	33%
3 (Moderately stressed)	11%
4 (Very stressed)	4%
5 (Extremely stressed)	9%

(Ward, Stead, Mangal & Ganti, 2023)



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Collegiate Athletes

Mental Health Concerns

(Percentage of Men's Sports Participants Who Endorsed "Constantly" or "Most Every Day")

	COVID-19 Well-Being Studies			Health and Wellness Study
	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	2022-23
Felt overwhelmed by all you had to do	31%	27%	25%	17%
Experienced sleep difficulties	31%	18%	19%	17%
Felt mentally exhausted	26%	21%	22%	16%
Felt overwhelming anxiety	14%	11%	12%	9%
Felt very lonely	22%	12%	11%	8%
Felt sad	17%	11%	11%	7%
Felt overwhelming anger	11%	6%	6%	6%
Felt a sense of loss	21%	8%	8%	5%
Felt things were hopeless	11%	10%	6%	4%
Felt so depressed it was difficult to function	7%	5%	6%	3%

(NCAA STUDENT-ATHLETE HEALTH AND WELLNESS STUDY, 2023)



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Collegiate Athletes

Mental Health Concerns

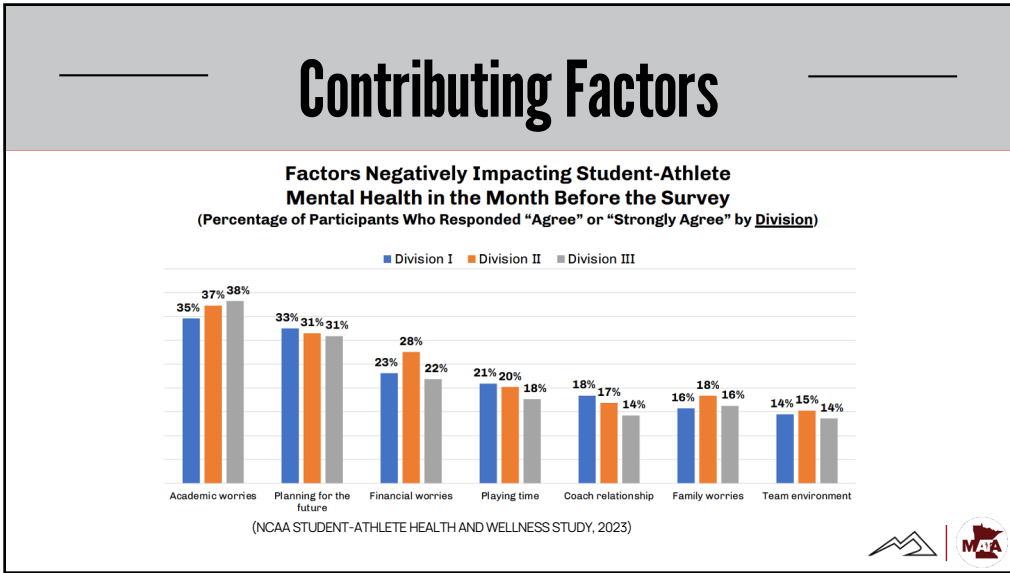
(Percentage of Women's Sports Participants Who Endorsed "Constantly" or "Most Every Day")

	COVID-19 Well-Being Studies			Health and Wellness Study
	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	2022-23
Felt overwhelmed by all you had to do	50%	51%	47%	44%
Experienced sleep difficulties	42%	28%	28%	28%
Felt mentally exhausted	39%	39%	38%	35%
Felt overwhelming anxiety	27%	29%	29%	29%
Felt very lonely	33%	21%	16%	13%
Felt sad	31%	22%	19%	17%
Felt overwhelming anger	11%	8%	8%	7%
Felt a sense of loss	31%	13%	11%	8%
Felt things were hopeless	16%	16%	10%	8%
Felt so depressed it was difficult to function	9%	9%	9%	7%

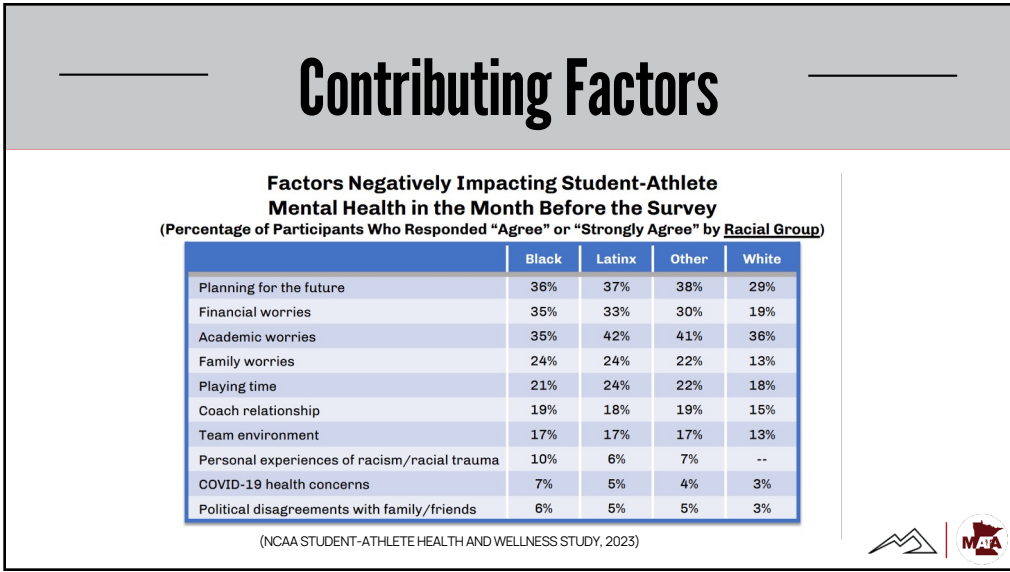
(NCAA STUDENT-ATHLETE HEALTH AND WELLNESS STUDY, 2023)



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Signs/Symptoms




Symptoms of **Stress** / Anxiety

- Feelings of apprehension or dread.
- Feeling tense, jumpy or irritable.
- *Anticipating the worst and being watchful for signs of danger.
- Pounding or racing heart and shortness of breath.
- Sweating, tremors and twitches.
- Headaches, fatigue and insomnia.
- Upset stomach, frequent urination and diarrhea.




You may observe

- Social withdrawal.
- Lack of present-mindedness.
- Frequent, rapid eye movements.
- Poor body language.
- Uncontrolled behavior during competition.
- Frequent trips to the bathroom for urination and diarrhea.



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Anxiety or Stress?




Anxiety

- ❖ Persistent, excessive worries, even in the absence of external factors
- ❖ Fear something negative might happen

EXAMPLES:

- ❖ Fear that a loved one may develop chronic illness
- ❖ Repeatedly thinking about the negative things that may happen if unable to juggle responsibilities




Stress

- ❖ Triggered by an external factor
- ❖ Response to something challenging that has happened

EXAMPLES:

- ❖ Taking care of a loved one with chronic illness
- ❖ Challenges of juggling school, sport, and relationships



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Supporting athletes




- 1 Emphasize self-care
- 2 Provide mental health education resources
- 3 Make it routine
 - Screen for it if possible
 - Ask about it consistently
 - Normalize it
- 4 Develop a plan for those who need it
 - Talk through potential strategies and how/when they will be used




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Coping Tools



Talk it through




Diaphragmatic breathing



Dive Reflex

Hold your breath for 30 seconds while applying cold water or ice to your face



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Don't Forget to...


Take
GOOD
CARE
of yourself



Co-regulation helps athletes

Put on your "oxygen mask" first

You deserve to be well, too!

Feel free to take the **Mindset Assessment-Staff** for a self-assessment and tips to improve your wellness and performance.





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REFERENCES

NCAA STUDENT-ATHLETE HEALTH AND WELLNESS STUDY (2023, DECEMBER). CURRENT FINDINGS ON STUDENT-ATHLETE MENTAL HEALTH. [HTTPS://NCAAORG.S3.AMAZONAWS.COM/RESEARCH/WELLNESS/DEC2023RES_JHW-MENTAL-HEALTH-RELEASE.PDF](https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/research/wellness/dec2023res_jhw-mental-health-release.pdf)

WARD, T., STEAD, T., MANGAL, R., & GANTI, L. (2023). PREVALENCE OF STRESS AMONGST HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES (V2). HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH, 11, 70167. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.52965/001C.7016](https://doi.org/10.52965/001C.7016)

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THANK YOU!


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