

Case Vignette: Jake.

Background Information

Name: Jake

Age: 20 years old

Gender: Male

Sport: Professional Tennis

Level of Competition: Top 64 Player in the world.

Position: Singles player (ranked number 2 in the world for his age and ranked 15th best player from the USA irrespective of age)

Primary Goal: To win a major grand slam tournament.

Case Study.

Jake has been playing tennis since he was a child and has developed into a highly skilled athlete. At junior age range tennis (from ages 12-18), Jake was one of the very best players in the world and with discussion with his coach and parents, he decided to turn professional and there was a high expectation of success. Jake started his professional career very well and rose from ranking 366 in the world to rank 59 in just over a year. He is now ranked high enough to enter all of the major tournaments and to play against players who he idolised as a child. Jake vividly remembered his father saying, "you are in the big leagues now". However, in recent months, he has noticed a decline in his performance during crucial matches, especially when the stakes are high, such as during championship games or in closely contested sets. His coach and family have noticed a high percentage of unforced errors, particularly double faults at the serve, in close games. Jake has told his coach that he feels he chokes under pressure and feeling overwhelmed during intense moments. He has not told his parents these feelings as he thinks they will be disappointed as they provide Jake with a lot of emotional and financial support with his tennis. He experiences physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, sweaty palms, and shallow breathing during these crucial moments and feels that this interferes with his focus and ability to execute his skills consistently. This does not seem to happen in less important matches where he is playing against opposition lower ranked than himself. Jake is still as motivated as ever to achieve his goal and he still has a lot of time on his side. He prides himself as the fittest and most athletic player on the tennis circuit. However, these performance issues are making him doubt if he will ever attain his goal of winning a grand slam event, which once seemed like a certainty.