

## Information for Parents

The family plays an exceptionally important role in the life of a developing athlete. It has often been said that behind every successful athlete there is a parent who sacrifices time and effort, and provides financial support. The level of commitment, when it comes to raising an elite athlete, increases from the moment that a child enters a sport program through years of further competitive involvement. This journey may last roughly ten years, or 10,000 hours.

In our work with young athletes, we get to know their parents and discover how they react in a stressful competitive environment. Some of the parents are poised, some remove themselves from the competitive arena, and some misbehave. The same is true for the athletes who often learn these behaviors from their parents. The issue of stress is complex as it is sometimes hard to detect when someone is stressed; some hide it well (yet remain stressed) while others do not. Another issue is the subjective nature of stress: while some enjoy traveling on airplanes, for others flying can be their worst nightmare. What it comes down to is how parents and athletes embrace and regulate stress. For better or for worse, it forecasts athletic and competitive progress.

A body responds to stress with a release of hormones, which, if they frequently enter our system and stay for too long, become very damaging. From a wealth of scientific research we know that prolonged stress leads to cardiovascular diseases. In addition, stress has an impact on our immune system. If crippled, the immune system loses its capacity to fight diseases. In the case of an injured athlete, that also means a slower recovery. Stress doesn't only affect one's health. It affects how one learns and solves problems, which is important in sport skills acquisition and even more so in school.

The Hourglass Performance Institute takes sport psychology research and theory to another level: application. Assessing and teaching parents and athletes how to regulate competitive and general stress is one of the services we offer at Hourglass Performance Institute®. Our methodology, combined with equipment designed to record objective data, is used to monitor one's progress over time. Additionally, we offer seminars, workshops, and individual and group consulting.

The parents are an integral part of the athlete's support team and training together offers multiple benefits. The parents become familiar with the training, services become more affordable, and taught techniques are quickly reinforced. Most importantly, parents can provide us with additional feedback on how their child's training translates into functioning in sport, school, and in life in general. No one knows the child better than his/her parents. Traveling on a ten-year or 10,000 hours long journey brings its share of ups and downs through positive and negative stressors. That journey can be more efficient and more enjoyable if stress management is handled proactively.