

If-Then Worksheet

When faced with anxiety-provoking situations or circumstances prior to performance, athletes may catastrophize. Catastrophizing is the amplifying of an issue or assuming the worst possible outcome will occur (Lukkahatai & Saligan, 2013). For example, an individual may think “If I don’t score a goal today, then I will be kicked off the team in no time” or “If I don’t perform this floor routine perfectly, I will really disappoint my coach.” Thoughts like this can lead to anxiety, but often these thoughts warrant no concern as the worst-case scenario an athlete thinks of is not usually the most likely outcome. Cognitive restructuring can help athletes recognize when they’re catastrophizing and guide them in altering their patterns of thought to be more helpful. Below is an activity that can help athletes identify more realistic outcomes.

The goal of this activity is to turn a negative thought into a helpful thought that can challenge the athlete, help them grow, and reduce anxiety over the consequences of a situation. *If, then* statements are a good way to break down athletes’ concerns so they can see their negative thinking patterns and alter them. You can find some examples of if, then statements provided in the table below.

Before		After	
If...	...Then	If...	...Then
<i>If I don't score a goal today...</i>	<i>...Then I will be kicked off the team in no time</i>	<i>If I don't score a goal today...</i>	<i>...Then I will work hard on my shooting accuracy next practice</i>
<i>If I try a new skill in practice...</i>	<i>...Then my teammates will laugh at me</i>	<i>If I try a new skill at practice...</i>	<i>...Then I will show my teammates I am trying to develop and I will be adding to my skillset</i>