

# Triathletes' Retrospective Accounts of Past Clutch Performances: A Mixed-Methods Study

## BACKGROUND

- In recent years, sport psychology studies of being “clutch” – that is, giving a positive response to a pressure situation – have begun to gain traction

## OUR PURPOSE

- To advance our understanding of the psychological underpinnings of clutch performance by two new quantitative athlete assessments, as well as a qualitative inquiry

## OUR DATA

- 298 triathletes of a variety of backgrounds were recruited and asked to complete questionnaires online



Moderate Positive Relationship	
Intuitive Control and Positive Anxiety	
$r = .163$	$p = .001$

Positive Relationship	
Positive Anxiety and Traditional Anxiety	
$r = .441$	$p < .001$

Negative Relationship	
Traditional Anxiety and Intuitive Control	
$r = -.337$	$p < .001$



## Qualitative Results

Highest level of control + positive anxiety	Credited extensive mental and physical preparation for success
Moderate level of control + positive anxiety	Most likely to focus on the outcome of the performance
Lowest level of control + positive anxiety	More often mentioned pride in just completing the race

So, we suggest that conventional state anxiety (e.g., concern) may still benefit a clutch performance if accompanied by other, positive feelings (e.g., excitement)

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## METHODOLOGY

- The athletes were first asked to identify a past clutch performance, and then fill out these questionnaires retrospectively:
  - *Intuitive Control Inventory*
  - *Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-Positive (CSAI-P)*
  - *Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2R)*

## IMPLICATIONS

- Practitioners, coaches, and athletes may draw on these findings to capture future success under pressure conditions