

IN POTENTIAL ANXIETY OF DERAJAT FIGHTING ATHLETES BANDA ACEH CITY IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2025 PRA PORA

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ABSTRACT

In martial arts, particularly in tarung derajat, anxiety plays a crucial role in determining athlete performance. This psychological state arises as a natural response to the pressures of physical competition. While a certain level of anxiety can boost enthusiasm and competitive readiness, if not managed properly, it can hinder concentration, ability, and affect mental resilience. Therefore, managing anxiety is a crucial aspect of mental development so that athletes can perform optimally. Some athletes still experience excessive anxiety, especially as competition dates approach, which can lead to problems such as a lack of focus during performance tests, feeling the opponent is too tough, and often feeling less than optimal. Proper anxiety management will maintain emotional stability and

increase the chances of success in competition. This research aims to describe the anxiety of tarung derajat athletes in Banda Aceh City ahead of the Pre PORA. This research uses descriptive methods with qualitative analysis techniques. The population includes all 20 tarung Derajat athletes in Banda Aceh City preparing for the Pre PORA. Data collection was conducted using a closed-ended questionnaire. Data processing techniques used a level and percentage categorization formula. The results showed that most athletes experienced moderate levels of anxiety (75%), while 8% experienced high anxiety and 10% were in the low category. These findings indicate that the majority of athletes experienced moderate anxiety, which is psychologically adaptive and can play a positive role in increasing competitive alertness. However, anxiety that exceeds the optimal threshold has the potential to reduce focus and performance during the 2025 Pre PORA. Therefore, managing anxiety through a psychological coaching approach is an important aspect of maintaining stable performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Sport is a physical activity carried out consciously, structured, and continuously with the aim of improving health, building character, and developing individual abilities, both physically and mentally. This activity is not only limited to body movements, but

also involves interrelated psychological and social aspects. According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 11 (2022), sport is interpreted as "all activities that involve the mind, body, and soul in an integrated and systematic manner to encourage, foster, and develop physical, spiritual, social, and cultural potential." Sport is an activity that makes the human body healthy and is a competitive arena to discover one's talents. Yuliawan, (2023) said that "Exercising or doing regular physical activity can reduce the risk of chronic diseases, reduce stress and depression, improve emotional well-being, increase energy, build self-confidence and deep satisfaction with social activities."

Sport is also a means of character building, emphasizing not only physical strength but also the ability to think quickly, emotional stability, and mental toughness. A person joins a sports routine because of the desire to develop their talents. Tuti Sarwita (2017) states that talent is a person's basic ability to learn in a relatively short time compared to others, but the results are actually better. Talent is a potential that someone has been born with. In the world of competitive sports, athletes face tough challenges, both technically and psychologically. Athletes are required to perform optimally under the public spotlight, coach expectations, and increasingly fierce competition. Behind the intense physical preparation, hidden emotional pressures that are often invisible but have a significant impact on performance in competitive sports.

High-performance sports are a form of sporting activity that is carried out in a planned, structured manner, and oriented towards achieving maximum results through competition. These activities are carried out by individuals or groups with the goal of achieving the highest level of ability in a particular sport, whether at the regional, national, or international level. The main characteristics of high-performance sports are the ongoing effort through intensive training, regular performance evaluations, and support from various scientific aspects such as nutrition, psychology, and sports technology. Looking at the development of high-performance sports, pressure comes not only from competition on the field, but also from the high expectations placed on athletes by various parties, such as coaches, families, institutions, and even themselves. The need to consistently deliver perfect performance in every match triggers psychological pressure that can develop into anxiety.

Moreover, intense training and disciplined routines are often not accompanied by adequate mental training. Athletes are not only required to be technically proficient, but also to maintain emotional stability under competitive pressure. This situation encourages anxiety to become a determining factor in whether an athlete can perform to their full

potential or is hampered by mental stress. Anxiety in athletes can manifest in various forms, such as excessive restlessness, difficulty concentrating, and even disturbed sleep patterns before a match. David J Kupfer (2015) states that "anxiety refers to persistent, excessive worry that is difficult to control regarding various events or activities." This feeling is accompanied by physical symptoms (e.g., muscle tension, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, sleep disturbances) and causes clinical impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Nugraha (2020) considers anxiety itself often not a serious issue, depending on the individual's circumstances, but it's not a trivial matter either. Someone experiencing anxiety can experience a loss of concentration and less than optimal performance. Anxiety is characterized by physiological signs such as sweating, tension, and an increased heart rate, driven by doubts about the reality and nature of threats, as well as self-doubt about how to overcome them. Rohmansyah (2017) considers anxiety as a psychological factor that can affect a player's performance in a match. Very high levels of anxiety can negatively impact performance. A lack of mental preparedness, as well as a lack of control and perception skills regarding incoming stimuli, will disrupt a player's ability to unleash their physical abilities, preventing them from going all out.

One of the competitive sports that often faces anxiety is tarung derajat. Tarung Derajat is a martial art that has its own unique characteristics and independence, such as a practical and effective quick-reaction self-defense system with realistic and rational body movements (Chairad, 2014). It is a logical and moral action that utilizes the combination of muscle, brain, and conscience motor power, especially for maintaining safety and health. Jurfanudi & Rahmat (2020) also support this theory by stating that tarung Derajat is a sporting art of self-defense that utilizes the combination of muscle, brain, and conscience motor power in a realistic and rational manner. This is applied in the learning process and training of movements in all parts of the body and other important parts, in order to implement the five elements of moral power: strength, speed, accuracy, courage, and tenacity.

In the sport of tarung derajat, which relies heavily on quick reactions, strategic attacks, and courage when facing an opponent head-on, mental states like anxiety can be extremely disruptive. Tarung Derajat is not just about strength and technique, but also about mental preparedness to face intense physical and emotional pressure. An anxious athlete tends to hesitate in making decisions, lose accuracy in their attacks, and easily lose control on the mat. Furthermore, tarung Derajat, as a direct contact sport, carries a high

risk of injury, which can be a trigger for anxiety in itself. The fear of injury, the fear of public defeat, and the sense of responsibility for the reputation of the team or institution all become persistent psychological burdens. If this burden is not addressed with the right mental strategies, it is possible for an athlete to experience a decline in performance, even if they have been optimally prepared technically.

External factors will influence an athlete's anxiety level. Social support from coaches, teammates, family, and the surrounding environment can be a protective factor that reduces anxiety levels. However, if expectations are set too high without being balanced with a healthy emotional approach, it will actually exacerbate the mental stress felt by athletes. Therefore, it is important for everyone involved in athlete development to understand that success in the competition arena is influenced not only by physical training and technique, but also by well-maintained mental preparedness. Anxiety experienced by athletes in facing a match does not appear suddenly. One important component that influences anxiety levels is also internal factors, namely everything that originates from within the athlete themselves. These factors include self-confidence, competition experience, physical condition, emotional regulation ability, motivation, and the athlete's way of thinking or perception of the competitive situation being faced.

Self-confidence is a key factor in managing psychological stress. Athletes who are confident in their abilities tend to be calmer and more focused in stressful situations. Conversely, a lack of confidence often leads to hesitation and increased anxiety, especially when facing opponents perceived as superior. In sports like martial arts, where physical duels are fast-paced and intense, hesitation due to anxiety can leave athletes losing momentum and vulnerable to attacks from their opponents. Furthermore, competitive experience also plays a significant role. Athletes who have competed frequently tend to be better able to manage stress because they are accustomed to the competitive atmosphere, both at the local and national levels. This experience makes them more mentally prepared and equipped to respond to unexpected situations on the field.

To achieve peak performance in a sport, selecting the right athlete is crucial. Athletes are a crucial factor in achieving success; they are both the subject and object of performance development activities (Irfandi & Zikrur Rahmat, 2020). New or inexperienced athletes are often more prone to panic, nervousness, or tension because they lack sufficient resources for managing emotions in challenging, real-world situations. Conversely, even experienced athletes experience anxiety, especially when competing at a higher level or representing a region or institution. Finally, the ability to manage emotions and mindset is

also crucial. Athletes who are able to recognize negative emotions such as fear, nervousness, or tension and develop techniques to calm them tend to be more psychologically stable. They typically employ strategies such as deep breathing, positive self-talk, or visualization to calm themselves. On the other hand, a pessimistic mindset, excessive focus on negative possibilities, or negative comparisons with opponents only exacerbates anxiety.

A supportive training environment, a communicative coaching approach, and appropriate psychological coping strategies are crucial factors in helping athletes manage the mental stress they face before and during competitions. Given the importance of mental health in supporting Tarung Derajat athletes' performance, a sports psychology approach needs to be integrated into the training system. This includes regular psychological assessments, the application of relaxation techniques, and the development of self-confidence and a fighting spirit. Anxiety management cannot be achieved instantly; it requires ongoing understanding and expert guidance. By paying serious attention to athletes' psychological well-being, their potential can develop to its full potential without being hampered by emotional disturbances. A common problem for Tarung Derajat athletes in Banda Aceh is that they often feel their abilities are inferior to those of their seniors who will also be participating in the PRA PORA event. Athletes often assume that those who have competed in national championships will be formidable opponents.

Even though athletes have undergone intensive physical and technical training, some still experience anxiety, especially when they learn the exact date of a match or when facing a more formidable opponent. Anxiety can be described as an emotional response or a feeling of hopelessness and insecurity that overwhelms an athlete without a clear explanation as the competition approaches (Khoirunia et al., 2022). This anxiety manifests in various forms, ranging from restlessness and difficulty concentrating to a loss of confidence during performance tests. This condition is certainly a serious concern, considering that Tarung Derajat is a martial art that demands a balance of physical and mental preparation. In a match that relies on speed, precision, and striking power, even the slightest psychological disturbance can directly impact the outcome. This anxiety problem can stem from various factors, such as lack of competition experience, fear of injury, or pressure from the surrounding environment. In fact, some athletes experience anxiety due to fear of failing to meet the expectations of their coaches or the institutions that oversee them.

This phenomenon indicates that mental aspects, particularly competitive anxiety, remain a problem that has not been systematically addressed in the development of Tarung Derajat athletes. If this condition continues, it is possible that it will impact performance decline and even affect athletes' careers in the long term. Therefore, a more comprehensive and scientific approach is needed to identify and address anxiety issues experienced by athletes, so they can perform optimally without being burdened by excessive psychological pressure. Self-control training helps reduce athlete anxiety and has a positive effect on self-confidence levels, so that athletes with high activity levels show greater increases in cognitive or somatic awareness (Adi et al., 2023). Based on this, the author arose a strong desire to conduct research on the anxiety levels of Tarung Derajat athletes in Banda Aceh City in preparation for the 2025 PRA PORA.

RESEARCH METHODS

A research method is a systematic method or steps used by researchers to collect, analyze, and interpret data to answer research questions or achieve predetermined objectives. It aims to refine existing truths and to grasp new knowledge and findings or those previously researched on the same research material. This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Qualitative research is an alternative to enriching understanding and also aims to understand phenomena about what research subjects experience, such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, and so on. This qualitative research method emphasizes observation of phenomena and examines the substance of their meaning (Safarudin et al., 2023).

The researcher will only seek and describe data regarding the anxiety levels of Banda Aceh's Tarung Derajat athletes facing the 2025 PRA PORA, without any attempt to compare or connect. According to Harahap (2020), "this qualitative research begins with data, then utilizes existing theories as explanatory material, and ends with a theory." Qualitative research also provides a central reference point for the specific reality that is collectively designed and what is being explored is situational constraints or situational barriers that can influence a research. Qualitative research methods can be said to be a plan or tracking to investigate and analyze a central symptom. Researchers conduct interviews with research participants or partners by suggesting common and somewhat broad questions to understand the central behavior.

Sukmadinata (2017) stated that descriptive research is a research characteristic that can reveal or dissect various natural and social phenomena in society specifically.

According to the findings of Arikunto (2019:3), descriptive research is research aimed at tracing situations, conditions, or other things that have been revealed, the results of which are presented in the form of a summary of the search. According to (Tahsinia et al., 2022), descriptive research in education is a type of research that aims to provide detailed descriptions of various problems in education, both technical and non-technical aspects. Descriptive research is a research method carried out with the primary goal of creating a picture or description of a situation that occurs in society (Notoatmodjo, 2016). This study uses a literature approach to review related sources and finds that descriptive research plays a significant role in describing real conditions in the field of education.

This should be done like a person assembling a puzzle, where each piece must be carefully paired. This detailed step is done to determine the level of each assessment attribute, whether one attribute or more. The nature of this research is independent, that is, it stands alone without associating with other attributes being studied. Based on the definitions outlined by several experts above, the researcher concludes that this type of qualitative descriptive research is an approach that expresses a variety of words referring to data collection procedures and analysis of facts that are harmoniously obtained from natural situations. The population of this research is the entire research object and the object being studied (Anton Sarni Eka Putra, 2021). Furthermore, the population, which is the total number to be studied, in this study is all the tarung Derajat athletes in Banda Aceh City who are registered to participate in the 2025 Pra PORA championship, totaling 20 athletes, divided into 10 free-fighting athletes and 10 in the movement arts category.

Population is the entire object of research consisting of humans, objects, animals, plants, symptoms, test scores, or events as data sources that have special characteristics in a study (Hardani et al, 2020). Population can also be defined as a generalization area that includes targets/subjects that prioritize certain levels and characteristics that are limited by investigators to be traced and then conclusions drawn. Meanwhile, sampling according to Handayani (2020) is "the process of selecting a number of elements from the population being studied to be used as samples, and understanding the various properties or characteristics of the subjects being sampled, which can then be generalized from the population elements. Samples are considered as delegates from the area whose conclusions represent all the observed indications. Samples must be selected carefully to be able to represent the population well.

The purpose of this sampling was to ensure accurate and precise representation of the region used as the research object. The sample in this study was 20 athletes using a

total sampling technique. Total sampling is a sampling technique where the sample size is equal to the population (Amin, N. F., Garancang, S., & Abunawas, 2023), which amounted to 20 athletes. The reason for taking total sampling was because the population size was less than 100, so the entire population was used as the research sample. The instrument or tool used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire. The closed-ended questionnaire was used to determine the level of anxiety of Tarung Derajat athletes facing the Pra PORA event. The starting point for compiling the questionnaire was the research variables designated for study. From these variables, operational definitions were provided, and then the indicators to be measured were determined. These indicators were then elaborated into questions or statements.

To facilitate the preparation of the instrument, it is necessary to use an instrument development matrix or instrument grid. There are 28 statements with answer options such as strongly agree, agree, undecided, somewhat agree, and disagree. Then, the data obtained will be analyzed using the level categorization formula, categorization is a process in which ideas and things are recognized, differentiated, and understood. The data will be categorized according to the level scale formula according to Sugiyono (2018) into three categories: low anxiety, moderate anxiety, and high anxiety. This classification will later describe the anxiety level of Banda Aceh's Tarung Derajat athletes in facing the Pra PORA event which will take place in 2025. The process of data collection and data analysis can be seen in the image below:



Picture 1. The process of data collection and data analysis

The data collection process was carried out by distributing questionnaires to athletes at the Tarung Derajat Ilie training unit, Banda Aceh. Data collection was carried out in August for 3 days, this was done because the training schedules for free fighting and movement arts athletes were different, so the questionnaires were filled out in stages. Furthermore, the data that had been obtained were analyzed using data reduction, data

presentation (display), and drawing conclusions (Rijali, 2018). Data analysis is "an effort to systematically search for and organize notes from observations, interviews, and others to increase the researcher's understanding of the case being studied and present it as findings for others. Meanwhile, to increase this understanding, the analysis needs to be continued by trying to find meaning.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

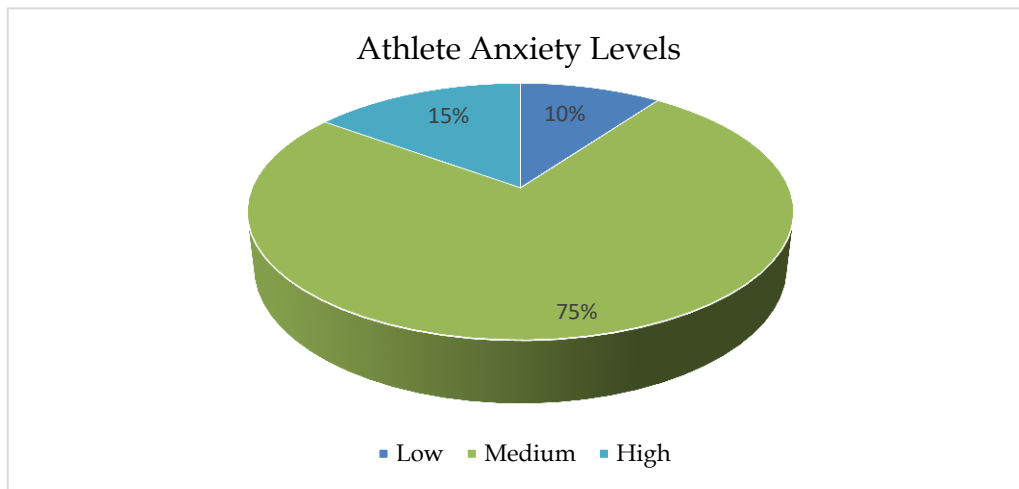
The results of this study, using data collection through a questionnaire regarding the level of anxiety felt by Tarung Derajat athletes facing the Pra PORA event which will take place at the end of 2025, were carried out by distributing a questionnaire, consisting of twenty-eight (28) statement items. The results of the study will answer the problem formulation, add to the body of knowledge, test existing theories, and develop existing facts. This study aims to understand in depth the level of anxiety experienced by athletes in the lead-up to the Pra-PORA (Aceh Sports Week) event. Through this study, researchers attempt to identify the most dominant anxiety-triggering factors, as well as how these psychological conditions can affect athletes' readiness and performance when competing. In addition, this study also aims to explore the strategies or approaches used by athletes and coaches in managing mental stress, so that it can provide constructive recommendations for improving athletes' mental resilience in the future.

The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for athletes, sports psychologists, and athlete development institutions in developing more effective and adaptive mental development programs. In this study, the authors used a closed questionnaire method that had been provided and had to be answered, namely strongly agree, agree, undecided, somewhat agree and disagree. Based on the results of the study, it was found that the minimum score obtained from all athlete answers was 85, the maximum score was 122, the mean score was 102.65, and the standard deviation was 8.53. After classifying the results using the level categorization formula, the low anxiety level was ≤ 94 , moderate interest 95-111, and high interest ≥ 112 . Next, the researchers used the percentage formula and obtained the following results:

Table 1. Recapitulation of Athlete Anxiety Levels

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	2	10%
2	Medium	15	75%
3	High	3	15%
	Total	100	100%

To make it clearer and easier to understand the data, it can be seen in the following diagram:



Picture 2. Athlete Anxiety Levels

The research results above show that 3 athletes (15%) experienced high anxiety, 15 athletes (75%) experienced moderate anxiety, and 2 athletes (10%) experienced low anxiety. In the world of sports, particularly martial arts like tarung derajat, an athlete's psychological state plays a crucial role. One mental aspect that often presents a significant challenge for athletes is anxiety. In the context of competition, anxiety can arise in response to competitive pressure, coach expectations, personal expectations, and fear of failure. In a sport as physically demanding and highly concentrated as tarung Derajat, unmanaged anxiety can potentially disrupt an athlete's focus, reflexes, and even overall performance on the mat.

As a sport that combines physical strength and mental acuity, Tarung Derajat always demands athletes to remain calm in stressful situations. Excessive anxiety can lead to impulsive decisions, uncoordinated movements, and even loss of emotional control during competition. Therefore, anxiety management is vital in the preparation and execution of matches. The Multidimensional Anxiety Theory proposed by Martens, Vealey, and Burton (1990) explains that anxiety has two main components: cognitive anxiety (in the form of negative thoughts or excessive worry) and somatic anxiety (physiological reactions such as increased heart rate, muscle tension, and sweating). In direct contact sports like Tarung Derajat, these two forms of anxiety can occur simultaneously and significantly impact performance.

Self-determination theory in relation to the *competitive anxiety* dan *athlete burnout* (Yang et al., 2024) Competitive anxiety was found to be associated with athlete

burnout, and this relationship was mediated by athletes' feelings of competence and autonomy. Therefore, when athletes feel competent and have control or autonomy in the training and preparation process, anxiety and the risk of burnout tend to be lower. In martial arts, training and preparation that strengthens a sense of skill competence and technical readiness and provides athletes with a sense of control can reduce anxiety. The findings indicate that 3 out of 20 athletes have high levels of anxiety. This condition is characterized by symptoms such as easily panicking during match simulations, the emergence of negative thoughts about match outcomes, and physiological reactions such as a racing heart, difficulty sleeping, and impaired focus during training.

The three athletes identified as having high levels of anxiety came from different age groups and training backgrounds. Interestingly, one of them, a senior athlete with considerable competition experience, still exhibited symptoms of severe anxiety leading up to the main selection. This suggests that experience does not always guarantee emotional stability, especially if it is not accompanied by consistent mental preparation and ongoing stress management training. Meanwhile, the other two athletes were relatively new participants, and their lack of competition experience and the pressure of qualifying for the PORA event were the main triggers for their anxiety. Some of them even expressed fear of disappointing their coaches and families, indicating external pressures contributing to their mental stress.

This situation emphasizes the importance of a psychological approach in athlete development, not just physical and technical strengthening. In intensive training programs, the mental aspect often receives insufficient attention. Yet, unaddressed anxiety can develop into a serious obstacle to an athlete's performance and future career development. As a response, the coaching team collaborated to begin implementing a regular mental coaching approach. These sessions included mindfulness training, negative thought management, and the creation of a pre-match routine tailored to each athlete's needs. Athletes should also be given space to reflect on themselves, record their feelings before and after training, and write down short-term goals. Furthermore, the peer support system among athletes was strengthened.

Senior athletes with strong mental resilience were asked to mentor younger athletes, hoping to foster a more open, supportive, and non-judgmental team climate. Meanwhile, 15 athletes had moderate levels of anxiety. This anxiety condition is generally characterized by feelings of tension and worry that periodically arise,

especially as competition schedules or intense training sessions approach. While not as severe as high levels of anxiety, these symptoms can still affect athletes' concentration and emotional stability on the field. Athletes with moderate levels of anxiety are usually able to control their reactions, but persistent psychological stress can lead to decreased performance if not managed properly. Some athletes reported difficulty maintaining focus, easily feeling mentally exhausted, and feelings of self-doubt in competitive situations.

To help these athletes reduce the impact of anxiety and maintain consistent performance, several effective coping strategies can be implemented, including:

1. Strengthening mental exercise routines, such as light meditation and breathing techniques that help maintain mental stability and reduce tension.
2. Applying distraction techniques to the technical and tactical aspects of the match can help divert the mind from excessive worry.
3. 3. Developing positive self-talk, to use constructive internal dialogue, such as reminding yourself of your training successes and the progress you have made, to increase your self-confidence.
4. Providing constructive feedback, providing specific and motivating input, so that athletes feel supported and able to understand areas that need improvement without feeling burdened.
5. Regulating exercise load and rest is very important to prevent excessive stress which can worsen anxiety.

Two athletes out of 20 participated in the anxiety evaluation and demonstrated low levels of anxiety. Athletes in this category tend to maintain good composure when facing competitive pressure. They are able to maintain focus and emotional stability, thus not being easily distracted by stressful situations or the pressure of competition. Low levels of anxiety typically reflect mature mental preparedness and strong self-confidence. Athletes with this condition are generally better able to manage pressure effectively, make quick and accurate decisions, and maximize their technical abilities. However, it is important to maintain this positive mental state to prevent it from turning into overconfidence or a complacent attitude. By maintaining this mental balance, athletes have the potential to maintain consistent performance and approach competition with optimal preparedness.

This maintenance approach also plays a crucial role in building long-term mental resilience so athletes can continue to develop in the future. The negative

impact of competitive anxiety experienced by athletes will affect their cognitive abilities, emotions, and behavior (Khoirunia; Tira; Nugraha, 2022). Therefore, understanding and managing anxiety are crucial aspects in developing Tarung Derajat athletes. Psychological interventions such as mental training, relaxation techniques, and visualization need to be consistently implemented to enable athletes to perform optimally in various competitive situations. A stable psychological state helps athletes manage stress, increase focus, and maintain motivation during training and matches. A strong mental state also enables athletes to bounce back from failure and continue striving to achieve their goals. In other words, maintaining mental health is a crucial foundation for athletes' long-term success, ensuring they not only perform optimally during competitions but also maintain a balanced quality of life outside the sporting arena.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research results and discussion above, it shows that 3 athletes (15%) experienced high anxiety, 15 athletes (75%) experienced moderate anxiety, and 2 athletes (10%) experienced low anxiety. Moderate anxiety can motivate athletes to be more alert and improve physical readiness, but if excessive, it can actually disrupt concentration and lead to decreased performance. Poorly managed anxiety is often a major obstacle for martial arts athletes in optimizing mastered technical and strategic abilities. This can cause athletes to easily panic when facing high-pressure situations, leading to tactical errors or failure to control emotions during competition. Some symptoms of anxiety include athletes often feeling insecure, feeling that opponents they have competed with frequently are tough opponents, and many athletes lacking concentration during performance tests. Therefore, psychological approaches and mental strengthening are essential.

Suggestions for training units include regular mental training programs such as relaxation training, visualization, or mindfulness to help athletes manage stress before and during competitions. Suggestions for athletes to manage anxiety include breathing and relaxation exercises to calm the body and mind. Positive visualization will help build self-confidence, while support from a sports psychologist will provide appropriate coping strategies. Suggestions for the public to provide moral support, motivation, and positive appreciation for Tarung Derajat athletes, both during training and competitions. Positive

support can help reduce anxiety levels and increase athletes' confidence in facing competition.

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