

## Controlling Tournament Nerves

By Terry Wunderle



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Once a tournament begins, most archers find that trying to get their nerves under control is like shutting the cage door after the guerilla gets out. Their mind becomes goal oriented as they view the event in terms of points or winning. By the time the first scoring end arrives, uncontrollable anxiety dominates the situation.

From the beginning, don't ever allow the point count or tournament rank to capture your attention until after you have released the last arrow of the competition. Instead, keep your entire focus on what is important, which is maintaining the good form you developed in practice. If you concentrate only on producing your best form, there will be no room for anxiety to build and control your destiny. If most archers would give form as much emphasis as they do achieving a top score, the results would be much more gratifying.

During your practice routine, simulate the start of an important tournament. Think about score and winning. Then force yourself to focus on creating an effective shot. Shooting every arrow from the conscious mind following a simple two-to-four step procedure will give your mind and body a pattern that can be repeated. The steps should be straightforward, such as 1) let the pin settle in on the dot, 2) execute pressure at the target with the bow arm, and 3) pull the bow apart. Talk yourself through the sequence and follow

your commands. Learn to trust your form and ignore over-aiming. In order for this procedure to work, the execution of every tournament and practice arrow has to follow the same format.

The most significant part of your archery game that you can control is your ability to produce the same form that you develop on the practice range. You cannot have power over your score, but if

you shoot the same good form that you rehearse regularly, the points will take care of themselves. Lock that gorilla in the cage before you go to your next tournament.

[For more tips on shooting and controlling tournament nerves see Terry's book, **Think and Shoot Like a Champion**, at [wunderlearchery.com](http://wunderlearchery.com). To schedule Terry for archery classes at your local range, call 217-482-3670.]

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