

# Sports and Psychology: Uncovering Superstitions in Sports

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## INTRODUCTION

- Superstitious beliefs are not and were never uncommon
- This study was meant to identify what helps lead to superstitions as well as what reinforces them

## SUPERSTITIONS

- Dual process model of cognition - two systems in brain that may or may not engage
- “Fast” thinking - instinctive, impulsive, and concise
- “Slow” thinking - rational, thought-out decisions and plans

## SUPERSTITIONS IN ATHLETES

- Dale Earnhardt’s and Austin Dillon’s lucky pennies
- Tiger Woods’ red polos
- Michael Jordan’s UNC Shorts
- Despite losing many times while carrying out superstitious rituals out, some of these athletes didn’t stop their rituals.

## SUPERSTITIONS IN FANS

- sitting in the same seat for each event, wearing a specific jersey, shirt, hat, or other piece of team-related clothing, swapping out those clothes if something bad happens to their team, using a special mug for coffee, etc.

## STUDY

- 197 people between the ages of 18 and 85 in ~10 countries participated in survey
- Fans were asked to provide their superstitious routines, sports they follow, and demographic information.

## FINDINGS/CONCLUSION

- No evidence that superstitious rituals have direct effects on performance and event outcomes
- There appears to be a desire by some fans and athletes alike to have any existing competitive edge in their or their team’s favor to influence the outcome of events.