

BACK ON THE FIELD: APPROACHING NUTRITION FOR RECOVERY FROM A TEAM SPORTS PERSPECTIVE



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Recovery nutrition is becoming increasingly important in high-performing athletes in an effort to reduce fatigue and improve performance. In the previous 5-10 years, there has been a significant increase in research examining the effects of recovery nutrition on performance in team sport athletes. There is no doubt that nutrition is the key to maintaining muscle mass and strength throughout a competitive season, however, every athlete is unique and requires different nutritional needs. Athletic Trainers are often tasked with post-game/post-practice fueling, therefore, this session will give ATs practical tips to help athletes with their recovery nutrition strategies.

OVERVIEW

- Team sport athletes face a vast number of challenges when it comes to recovery in season. Given the limited opportunities to recover between competitions and rigorous travel schedules for some sports, an athlete must be deliberate in their recovery strategy.
- This session will focus primarily on the 3 R's: Refuel, Repair, and Rehydrate and how an Athletic Trainer can tailor recommendations based upon the individual athlete's needs.
- Although nutrition is only one piece of the athlete recovery puzzle, research has shown that refueling with carbohydrate, repairing with protein, and rehydrating are important behaviors to support day-to-day recovery.
- Protein, carbohydrate, and fluid should be the foundational components emphasized throughout the season for home and away games.
- Addressing unique day-to-day physiological and nutritional needs will enhance team sport athlete recovery and readiness throughout the competitive season.

CARBOHYDRATES

- Daily intake requirements: 5-7 g/kg of carbohydrate per day (> 8hours between competition)
- Consume carbohydrate with meals and snacks with protein regularly throughout the day
- If players have <8h between the next competition, consume 1.0-1.2 g/kg of carbohydrate every hour for 4 hours to help replenish muscle and liver glycogen stores

FLUIDS

- Players should aim to consume 20-24oz of fluid for each 1lb of body mass deficit
- Consume beverages and/or snacks with sodium during the recovery period to help replace sodium lost in sweat and promote fluid retention

PROTEIN

- Consume 1.2-2.0 g/kg/day, in order to support recovery, including optimizing rates of muscle protein synthesis
- Protein is recommended on a per occasion basis for athletes at 0.25-31 g/kg, to be consumed every 3-4 hours in an effort to evenly spread protein intake throughout the day
- Consume 30-40 g of protein prior to sleep to promote recovery

Developed in collaboration with the Gatorade Sports Science Institute.

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