

PRACTICAL HYDRATION SOLUTIONS FOR SPORTS AND THE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

FOOTBALL-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Every team sport is different, and factors such as rules of play, frequency of games, length of season and position-specific requirements alter the hydration plans. Football is classified as a strength and power team sport, in which most players do not cover large distances but rely on frequent short bursts of energy and must handle intense, repeated contact.

Key Considerations

- A key risk factor for football players is equipment, which increases physical demands and amplifies heat load by interfering with evaporative heat loss.
- Larger individuals typically have higher sweat losses, with football linemen exhibiting some of the highest recorded sweat rates. These losses of up to ~3L/h can cause significant disturbances in body fluid balance.
- Make hydration a priority when they have two-a-day practices during training camp, especially for teams located in hot, humid environments and when they are wearing helmets and pads.
- Teams based in cooler environments should plan for competitions in warmer locations with increased fluid replacement.
- When the weather is colder, athletes must realize they can still dehydrate if fluid intake is not adequate.

Sport	Availability of Fluid		Environment		Intensity		Dehydration Risk	
	Training	Competition	Training	Competition	Training	Competition	Training	Competition
Football	High	High	Mod	Mod	Mod	High	Mod	Mod

Availability of Fluid: High, the dynamics of the sport allow for multiple opportunities to consume fluid; **Moderate**, Fluid is only available during breaks in training, competition, or carried by the athlete; **Low**, Fluid is limited or not available due to time restrictions, rules or dynamics of the sport, and ability to carry. **Environment: High**, environmental conditions that are of great risk for dehydration; **Moderate**, the environment is variable ranging from cool to hot conditions that may pose risk for dehydration; **Low**, the environmental conditions are not a threat to dehydration. **Intensity: High**, exercise intensity in the sport is increased and likely to result in large sweat losses and dehydration; **Moderate**, exercise intensity in the sport varies from moderate to high and may result in large sweat losses and dehydration; **Low**, exercise intensity in the sport is low and less likely to result in large sweat losses and dehydration. **Dehydration Risk: High**, the risk for dehydration in the sport is high based on reported sweat losses, the availability of fluid, environmental conditions, and the intensity of exercise; **Moderate**, the risk for dehydration in the sport is moderate based on reported sweat losses, the availability of fluid, environmental conditions, and the intensity of exercise; **Low**, the risk for dehydration in the sport is low based on reported sweat losses, the availability of fluid, environmental conditions, and the intensity of exercise.

Note: These assessments are representative of typical situations encountered in these sports. Site-specific factors may differ from those presented here.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS:

- Ensure athletes get enough fluids to account for additional losses through equipment and extra clothing.
- When intensity is high, provide more water breaks to prevent hypohydration.
- Pay extra attention to warm weather practices and games, and adjust hydration breaks accordingly.
- Monitor acute changes in body mass during exercise bouts to determine sweat rate, adequacy of fluid replacement and fluid needs for recovery.





Adapted from Practical Hydration Solutions for Sports. 2018.

