

# *Sports Injury & Mental Health Awareness Webinar*

SafeStrongSport Organization

OUR  
BODY  
IS  
REMARKABLE,  
ADAPTABLE





## Mental

- Unyielding



## Competition

- Opportunity

Us



## Physical

- Discipline



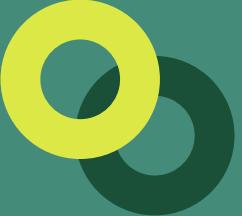
## Sports

- Passion





Striving for athletic success; **Without  
harming an  
athlete's health,  
Mentally and  
Physically**



# PHYSICAL

# ACUTE INJURY

## **Deliberating**

May Require  
Surgery/Physical  
Therapy



ACL Tears, Ankle  
Sprains, Fractures etc.

Immediate Pain,  
Swelling &  
Loss of Function

## **Symptoms**

Rest, Ice, Compress,  
Elevate

## **Immediate Action**

# OVERUSE INJURY

## Cumulative

Repetitive Stress on  
Muscles & Joints

Minor Discomfort in Joints  
(Wrists, Elbow, Ankle) ->  
Pain/Swelling

## Symptoms

## Silent but Deadly

Often take months to  
heal with chance to  
reoccur

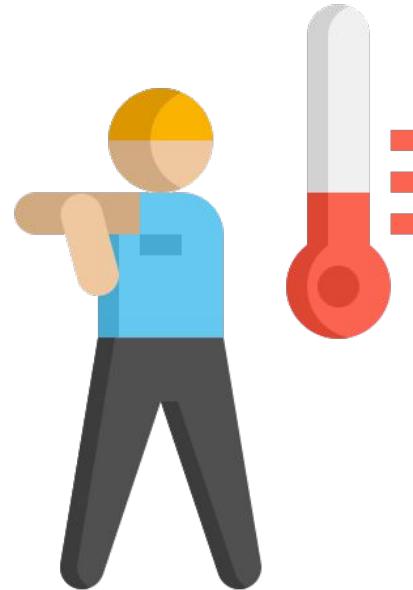
Good Communication  
with Coaches & Parents

## Proactive

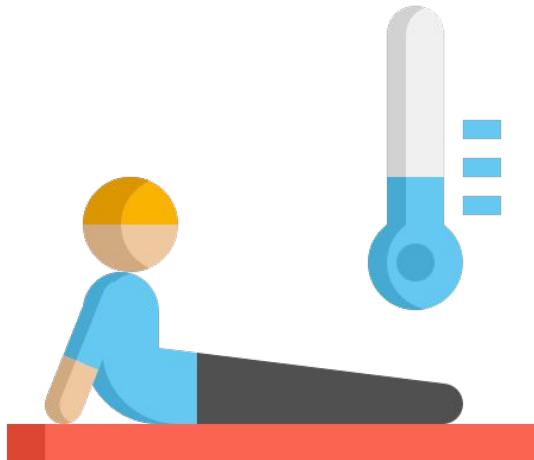


# Warm-up

- Increases blood flow
- Prevents Injury & promotes muscle connection
- Warm-up Exercises:
  - Side shuffles
  - High knees
  - Forward/Side lunges



# Cool-down



- 5-10 min after a hit
- Removes lactic acid from muscles
- Reduces Soreness
- Cool-down exercises:
  - Butterfly
  - Touch your toes
  - Child's Pose

# BASEBALL



## FORM MATTERS

- Lower chance of Injury
- Sustainability
- Improved Performance

## COMMON MISTAKES

- "Opening Up" Too Early (Pitching/Throwing)
- "Flying Open" with the Front Shoulder (Hitting)
- Poor Sliding Technique
- Over-Grip and Wrist "Rolling"

## DEVELOPING GOOD FORM

- Listening to Coaches
- Discipline
- Prioritize Big Muscles

# Common injuries

- ❖ Baseball injuries are often categorized by position (Pitchers vs. Position Players).
  - **The "Tommy John" Injury:** UCL (Ulnar Collateral Ligament) tears in the elbow due to repetitive high-torque throwing.
  - **Rotator Cuff & Labrum Tears:** Shoulder injuries from "over-arm" decelerating forces.
  - **Oblique Strains:** Muscle tears in the side of the abdomen caused by the high-torque rotation of hitting.
  - **Hamstring Pulls:** Occur during the sudden transition from standing still to sprinting to first base.
  - **Ankle Sprains/Fractures:** Often caused by improper sliding technique or catching a cleat in the dirt.



# The "Kinetic Chain" of Throwing

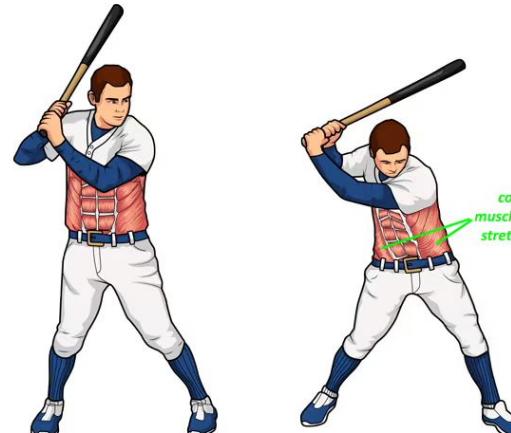
- ❖ Pitching is a whole-body movement; an "arm injury" often starts in the legs.
  - **Leg Drive:** Power should come from the glutes and quads. If the legs are weak, the arm "over-compensates" to generate speed.
  - **Hip-Shoulder Separation:** Proper timing of the torso rotation reduces the "whip" stress on the elbow.
  - **Deceleration:** Most shoulder injuries happen *after* the ball is released. A strong back is required to slow the arm down safely.

# The "Arm Care" Protocol

- ❖ Forget long-distance running; pitchers and fielders need specific "activation" work:
  - **J-Bands / Resistance Bands:** External and internal rotations to "wake up" the small rotator cuff muscles.
  - **Scapular Slides:** Ensuring the shoulder blade moves freely against the ribcage.
  - **Wrist Flips:** Low-intensity tosses to lubricate the elbow joint.
  - **Weighted Ball Work:** (Age-appropriate) to improve the "lay-back" flexibility of the shoulder.

# The Hitter's Core & Lower Body

- ❖ Hitting is an "anti-rotation" and "rotation" balance.
  - **Oblique Protection:** Strengthening the core to handle the violent "snap" of the swing.
  - **Hip Mobility:** Tight hips lead to lower back pain. Focus on "90/90" hip stretches.
  - **The "Soft" Landing:** When running to base or catching a fly ball, landing with bent knees reduces the impact on the shins and knees.



# Equipment Check

## Equipment & Field Safety

- ❖ **Cleat Selection:** Use metal spikes for traction on dirt/grass, but switch to molded cleats or turf shoes on artificial surfaces to prevent "turf toe."
- ❖ **Helmet Fit:** Ensure the ear flaps are snug and the helmet doesn't shift during a swing.
- ❖ **The "Sliding Mitt":** Using a protective mitt to prevent finger fractures and jammed wrists when diving back to a base.
- ❖ **Mouthguards:** Increasingly recommended for infielders to protect against "bad hops" that hit the jaw.



# Managing "Pitch Counts" & Load

The most effective injury prevention is knowing when to stop.

- ❖ **Pitch Count Guidelines:** Strict adherence to league-mandated pitch counts based on age.
- ❖ **The "Year-Round" Trap:** Avoid playing competitive baseball 12 months a year. The arm needs at least 2-3 months of "no-throw" time per year.
- ❖ **In-Game Re-Warming:** If an inning is long, outfielders should do "arm circles" and high-knees to keep their blood flowing.



# NUTRITION



## CARBOHYDRATES

Break down into glucose, the body's main fuel source



## PROTEINS

Build hormones and enzymes and repairs muscles and bones, main contributor to growth



## FATS

Give the body energy through calories and help it absorb vitamin A, D, and E



## FIBERS

Carbohydrates that cannot be digested; improves digestive system and lowers blood cholesterol

# NUTRITION



This is a rough estimate of general intake, and percentages can vary depending on circumstance.



“In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.”

**—Anne Frank**

# MENTAL

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# WIN

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It lies

# LOSS

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on a thought

# RECREATIONAL

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- Participation & Inclusivity
- Few Competitive Opportunities
- Less Pressure to Improve

# COMPETITIVE

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- Build Discipline & Responsibility
  - Lead to burnout/Injury
- Pressure to Perform to a Standard

[Chinese Skateboarder Zheng Haohao]



[U.S. gymnast Hezly Rivera]



[U.S. Track Quincy Wilson]



# “ELITE”

“The context in which a young person trains and competes, rather than their performance.”

(Mountjoy, 2008)

1

performance outcomes > psychosocial development, enjoyment, participation

2

involvement in sports > psychosocial and educational experiences, non-sports relationships

3

explicit/implicit goal of progression to elite, collegiate, or professional sports

# CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- “free” time spent travelling/practicing
- schoolwork and other extracurriculars
- unnecessary pressure/expectations



# DEFINING BURNOUT

- Emotional and Physical exhaustion
- Reduced Level of Accomplishments
- Sport Devaluation

**Table 2 Representative Sample Items**

Variable	Sample item
Emotional/physical exhaustion	I feel emotionally drained from my swim team participation
Reduced athletic accomplishment	I am not performing up to my ability in swimming
Sport devaluation	I don't care as much about my swim performance as I used to
Swim commitment	Do you want to keep participating on a swim team?
Benefits	How rewarding is swim team participation?
Costs	To what extent have you experienced costs associated with swimming?
Enjoyment	How fun is swim team participation for you?
Personal investments	How much effort have you put into swimming?
Alternative attractiveness	Compared to swim team participation, there are other things I could do which would be more enjoyable
Social constraints	The people most important to me would be disappointed with me if I were to quit swim team participation
Swim identity	Swimming is the only thing important in my life
Perceived control	I have a say in what I do when participating in swimming

# ADVERSE EFFECTS

## PHYSICAL

Chronic fatigue, strength and stamina loss, and increased probability of injuries.

## AFFECTIVE

Low mood, lack of enthusiasm, and even hostility to the training environment

## COGNITIVE

Difficulty concentrating, decreased school performance, and poor sports performance.



THE ONLY  
TREATMENT TO  
BURNOUT IS  
REST



# “RESULTS > EFFORT”

- EXCEEDINGLY high expectations
- OVEREMPHASIS on results
- INAPPROPRIATE pressure to perform

PARENTS, YOU ARE YOUR  
CHILD'S BIGGEST  
SUPPORT!



# AFTER A LOSS...

- vulnerability
- empathy > logic
- active listening
- feedback with sensitivity



# INFLUENCE OF PEERS

## SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Psychological well-being
  - Enjoyment to sport
  - Self-worth

## HARMFUL EXPERIENCES

- Bullying
- Isolation
- Cyberbullying

## Universal Injury Prevention Checklist

- **Checklist for Athletes:**
  - Do I warm up and cool down every session?
  - Am I using proper technique?
  - Do I get enough rest?
  - Is my nutrition supporting my activity?
  - Am I wearing the right protective gear?
  - Do I communicate pain or discomfort to my coach/parent?

## General Principles of Injury Prevention (All Sports)

- **Warm-up & Cool-down:** Essential for all athletes to prepare muscles and prevent strains.
- **Proper Technique:** Reduces risk of both acute and overuse injuries.
- **Rest & Recovery:** Prevents burnout and chronic injuries.
- **Nutrition & Hydration:** Fuels performance and aids recovery.
- **Protective Equipment:** Helmets, pads, mouthguards, etc.
- **Communication:** Athletes, coaches, and parents should discuss pain or discomfort.

# THANK YOU

# Q&A

