

Sports Injury & Mental Health Awareness Webinar

SafeStrongSport Organization

OUR
BODY
IS
REMARKABLE,
ADAPTABLE





Mental

- Unyielding



Competition

- Opportunity

Us



Physical

- Discipline



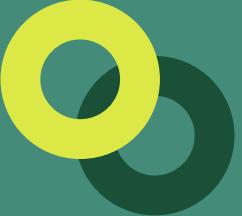
Sports

- 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

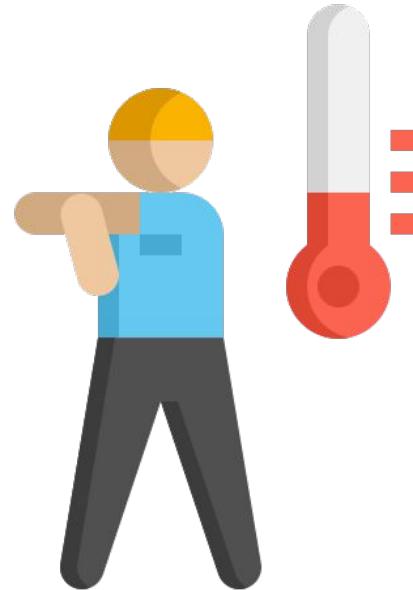
Good Communication
with Coaches & Parents

Proactive

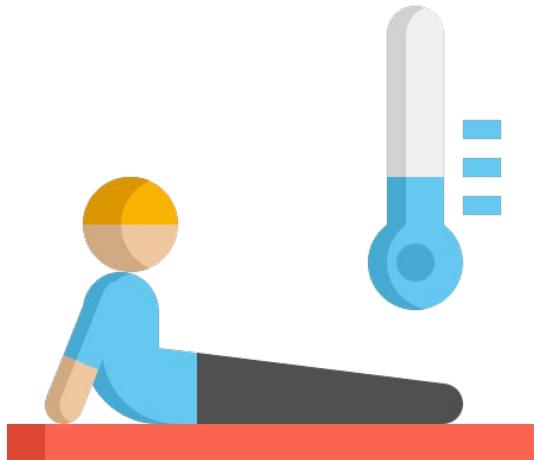


Warm-up

- 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

FOOTBALL



FORM MATTERS

- Lower chance of Injury
- Sustainability
- Improved Performance

COMMON MISTAKES

- "Dropping the Head" During a Tackle
- Improper "Cutting" and Deceleration
- Neglecting Neck and Trapezius Strength

DEVELOPING GOOD FORM

- Listening to Coaches
- Discipline
- Prioritize Big Muscles

Common Injuries

- ❖ In the context of "Football" (American Football), the sport involves high-velocity collisions, rapid changes of direction, and extreme physical demand. Because it is a collision sport, injury prevention focuses heavily on **protective equipment, neck strength, and tackling mechanics**.
 - **Concussions:** Caused by direct impact or rapid acceleration/deceleration of the head.
 - **Knee Ligament Tears (ACL/MCL):** Common in linemen (contact) and skill players (non-contact cutting).
 - **Shoulder Dislocations/Labrum Tears:** Often occur during tackling or falling on an outstretched arm.
 - **Hamstring & Groin Pulls:** Frequent in wide receivers and defensive backs during maximal sprints.
 - **Turf Toe:** Hyperextension of the big toe joint, common on artificial surfaces.

Tackling Technique & Head Safety

- ❖ The most important factor in preventing catastrophic injury is how a player initiates contact.
 - **"Check the Chin"**: Keep the head up. Impact with the crown of the helmet (spearing) is the leading cause of cervical spine injuries.
 - **Shoulder-Led Tackling**: Transitioning to "Rugby-style" tackling where the shoulder makes initial contact rather than the head.
 - **Neck Strengthening**: A strong neck helps the head "ride" the impact, significantly reducing the brain's acceleration inside the skull (concussion mitigation).



Strengthen muscle

- ❖ Football players need "Functional Armor"—muscle that protects joints.
 - **Posterior Chain (Glutes/Hamstrings):** Essential for explosive power and protecting the ACL.
 - **The "Box" (Core Stability):** A strong core allows a player to absorb a hit from a defender without the spine twisting dangerously.
 - **Ankle & Hip Mobility:** Tight hips often lead to knee injuries. Focus on deep lunges and lateral hip openers.
 - **Eccentric Loading:** Exercises like Nordic Curls to prepare hamstrings for the "braking" force of sudden stops.



Warm Up

- ❖ Static stretching reduces "pop" in the muscles. Use a high-intensity dynamic warm-up:
 - **Linear Movements:** High knees, A-skips, and power bounds.
 - **Lateral Prep:** Lateral lunges and "Carioca" to prime the adductors.
 - **Neural Activation:** Short 5-yard "burst" starts to sync the mind and muscles.
 - **Position Specific:** Linemen doing hand-fighting drills; Skill players doing light route-running.



Equipment Check

Equipment: Your First Line of Defense

- ❖ **Helmet Fit:** A helmet is only effective if the air bladders are properly inflated and the chin strap is tight. It should not shift when the head moves.
- ❖ **Mouthguards:** Crucial not just for teeth, but for absorbing shock that would otherwise travel to the jaw and skull.
- ❖ **Cleat Selection:** Use longer studs for natural grass/mud and shorter, multi-directional cleats for turf to prevent the foot from "snagging."
- ❖ **Knee Bracing:** Proactive bracing for offensive linemen to prevent MCL valgus injuries from "roll-ups."

Heat Illness & Hydration

Because of heavy pads and helmets, football players are at the highest risk for heat stroke.

- ❖ **Acclimatization:** Gradually increasing padded practice time during "Hell Week" or summer camp.
- ❖ **The "Weight In/Weight Out" Rule:** Players should track weight before and after practice to ensure they replace lost fluid (16oz of water for every 1lb lost).
- ❖ **Cooling Stations:** Frequent "hats off" breaks and access to shaded areas and ice towels.



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



WIN

It lies

LOSS

on a thought

RECREATIONAL

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

COMPETITIVE

- 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

