

# *Sports Injury & Mental Health Awareness Webinar*

SafeStrongSport Organization

OUR  
BODY  
IS  
REMARKABLE,  
ADAPTABLE





## Mental

- Unyielding



## Competition

- Opportunity

Us



## Physical

- Discipline



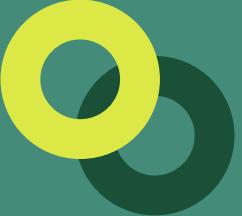
## Sports

- 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

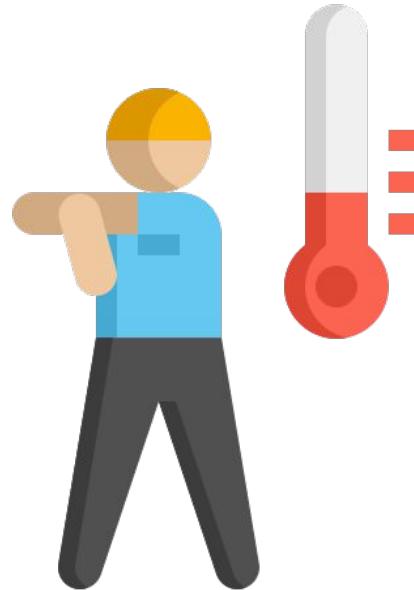
Good Communication  
with Coaches & Parents

## Proactive

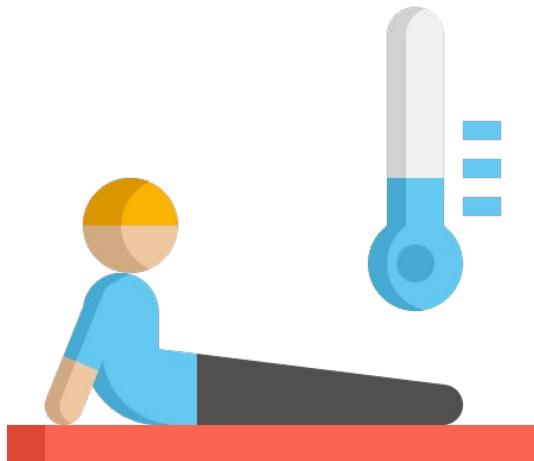


# Warm-up

- 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

# FENCING



## FORM MATTERS

- Lower chance of Injury
- Sustainability
- Improved Performance

## COMMON MISTAKES

- The "Locked" Back Leg in the Lunge
- Front Knee Over-Extension (Caving In)
- "Death Grip" on the Weapon

## DEVELOPING GOOD FORM

- Listening to Coaches
- Discipline
- Prioritize Big Muscles

# Common Injuries

- ❖ Fencing injuries are often asymmetric, affecting the dominant side more, and a mix of acute and overuse.
  - **Knee Injuries:** Ligament sprains (MCL/ACL) from lunges and patellar tendonitis (Jumper's Knee) from repetitive push-offs.
  - **Ankle Sprains:** From awkward landings after lunges or footwork drills.
  - **Dominant Shoulder/Elbow:** Tendonitis from repetitive weapon movements (e.g., epicondylitis).
  - **Groin/Hamstring Strains:** From explosive lunges and lateral movements.
  - **Lower Back Pain:** Due to the asymmetrical stance and forward lean.



# Stance & Footwork

- ❖ Your athletic stance is your first line of defense.
  - **Balanced En Garde:** Maintain a wide, stable base with weight evenly distributed. Avoid over-rotating the back foot or locking the front knee.
  - **The Lunge:** Focus on pushing from the back leg, landing with the front knee tracking over the second toe, and ensuring the back knee remains bent, not locked.
  - **Recovery:** Emphasize bringing the front foot back with control, rather than snapping it back, to protect the hamstring and groin.



# Blade Sharpening warm up

- ❖ Before you pick up a foil, epee, or saber, activate your body with a dynamic routine:
  - **Linear & Lateral Shuffles:** To prime the lower body for forward/backward and side-to-side movements.
  - **Arm Swings & Circles:** Especially for the dominant arm, preparing the shoulder and elbow joints.
  - **Light Shadow Footwork:** Performing basic advances, retreats, and lunges without the weapon to engage muscle memory.
  - **Hip Openers:** Dynamic stretches like leg swings (front-to-back and side-to-side) to prepare the hips for the open stance.



# Unilateral Strength & Core Control

- ❖ Because fencing is so one-sided, focused strength training is key.
  - **Single-Leg Exercises:** Pistol squats, single-leg Romanian deadlifts (RDLs) to build stability in the dominant leg.
  - **Rotational Core:** Cable rotations or medicine ball twists to strengthen the oblique muscles that stabilize the spine during weapon movements.
  - **Glute Medius Activation:** Lateral band walks to keep the hips stable and prevent knee collapse during lunges.
  - **Scapular Stability:** Resistance band pull-aparts and face pulls to protect the shoulder joint.



# Equipment Check

## Equipment & Court Safety

- ❖ **Well-Fitting Shoes:** Fencing shoes offer specific lateral support and a rounded heel for smooth footwork. Running shoes lack this.
- ❖ **Weapon Maintenance:** Ensure blades are straight, guards are secure, and tips are functioning properly. A poorly maintained weapon can break or cause unintended injuries.
- ❖ **Floor Check:** Inspect the piste (fencing strip) for uneven spots, loose mats, or debris that could cause slips or trips.
- ❖ **Mask & Jacket:** Ensure your mask fits snugly and your jacket provides full coverage and freedom of movement.



# Recovery

- ❖ **Cool Down:** 5–10 minutes of static stretching, especially for the hamstrings, hip flexors, and shoulders.
- ❖ **Active Recovery:** Light cardio (e.g., cycling) on off-days to promote blood flow and reduce muscle soreness.
- ❖ **Listen to the Body:** Persistent pain in the knee or shoulder is a signal, not a challenge. Consult a coach or medical professional.
- ❖ **Nutrition & Hydration:** Fueling muscle repair and maintaining fluid balance is vital for tissue health.



# 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

