Enhancing Recovery

COACHING INFORMATION

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael

Whenever a player trains or takes part in a game, energy is used, water is lost and microscopic damage occurs to muscles. All of these occur naturally. If the body recovers fully after each session, the training that is undertaken will result in improvements in performance. However, if the body does not adequately recover, the player will become fatigued quicker during the next session, and if this continues there will be a decrease in performance.

Remember, improvements due to training do not occur during training — they occur when the body can properly recover and adapt to the training stimulus.

The importance of adequate recovery from training and games cannot be overemphasised. Building periods for recovery into a training programme is as important as incorporating proper progression.

Recovery involves replacing fluids and energy, lessening of muscle soreness and reducing psychological symptoms of fatigue, such as anxiousness and irritability.

Adequate recovery begins long before the players leave the playing area or gym — it starts during the session. By trying to maintain proper hydration during training or games, players can reduce the amount of dehydration they will experience. Sipping 125 — 250ml of water or a sports drink every 15 — 20 minutes can keep fluid levels topped up during activity.

All training and games should finish with a proper cool down taking place over 10 — 20 minutes. The cool down must incorporate activity of a progressively lower intensity to help speed the removal of lactic acid from the muscles and blood. Stretching exercises are an important aspect of all cool downs.

Replacing the energy used during exercise and the fluids and electrolytes lost through sweating is important within the first 2 hours after completing training or a game. During the cool down and stretching, water, sports drinks and fruit should be available to players to begin this process.

Drinking 500ml of a sports drink immediately after training or a game will help replace lost fluids and also replenish used energy stores. A sports drink containing a source of vitamin C, vitamin E or protein is useful to repair muscle damage. If the sports drink does not contain protein eating a small snack, such as a chicken or turkey sandwich at this time will also be useful.

Cooling the muscles after exercise is a good way to reduce muscular damage and soreness, and has led to the use of alternate hot and cold showers and ice baths by many teams.

Care must be taken when using these, as some players may be very sensitive to extreme changes in temperature and may find the experience of going from a warm environment in the training area or dressing room into a cold shower or ice bath painful, or may go into shock. Always check how a player responds to cold before use. Careful monitoring of players at this time is advised.

The post training or game meal is a crucial component of adequate recovery. The meal should contain a good source of carbohydrate such as pasta, rice or potatoes as well as a source of protein, such as chicken, fish (such as tuna) or lean meat. Fruit should always be available for the players to snack on.

Many players do not feel like eating immediately after training or a match, so a recovery drink is a good alternative. The ideal drink should contain some carbohydrate (approximately 6 — 8% solution), some protein and vitamin C and E if possible.

Normally muscles recover quickly after activity. If after 48 hours players are suffering muscle soreness, protein is the essential building block to repair muscle, and should be a part of all meals. Chicken, turkey, lean meat and fish such as tuna are ideal sources.

It should be noted that getting adequate sleep is a major part of ensuring recovery. Some players require more than others, but players should be encouraged to report if they have difficulty sleeping.

Ensuring that players are properly recovered before undertaking the next training session or taking part in the next game requires careful monitoring. Providing players with a training log, such as the one below, and incorporating adequate hydration monitoring, will help to ensure that players are properly recovered. The training log will also help to identify early warning signs of under recovery.

*for more on hydration monitoring, see *Hydration is Key* fact sheet

The Training Log

The training log overleaf will assist you as a coach to monitor the recovery level of your players. Introducing recovery periods and making provision for nutrition and hydration at training and games will allow you to ensure that your players begin the recovery process before they leave the training ground..

The training log will assist you in monitoring your players recovery outside of training times. Through regular monitoring of your players training logs you will be able to adapt your training programme to their recovery, and identify players who may require additional recovery between sessions. It will also allow you to monitor the recovery of players who are part of a number of different squads.

Training Workload

Refers to the amount of and intensity of training undertaken by the player. They complete to amount of training under the relevant intensity.

Fatigue Index

Covers how fatigued a player feels that day. Persistent poor fatigue scores suggest that recovery is not complete. Players should not under go further training while fatigued.

Mood

Refers to the psychological well being of the player. Poor mood, irritability and anxiousness are symptoms of poor recovery.

Health

Refers to whether the player is injured, ill or lethargic. If a player does not feel any of these, they can leave this area blank. Persistent colds or illnesses suggest that players do not recover from sessions and their immune system is damaged.

Combining the training workload with the following days Fatigue, Mood and Health indices will provide an insight into how players recover from different training intensities, Monitoring these over time will allow you to make any adjustments required.

Resting Heart Rate

By measuring their Heart Rate first thing in the morning, before they get up, you can monitor whether the heart rate is elevated over after training/games or is generally high.

Urine Colour

Using the urine colour chart, players monitor the colour when they first pass urine that day. Colours 1 – 3 are the target colours, colours 4 and 5 suggest dehydration, colours 6 — 8 suggest severe dehydration.

Weight

Players weigh themselves early first thing in the morning, in as little clothes as possible. Changes in weight can indicate dehydration, or if prolonged, may indicate a recovery problem.

Thirst?

Refers to a player feeling persistent thirst. Thirst is a poor indicator of dehydration, as once a player feels this thirsty they are already dehydrated.

Through combining Weight, Urine Colour and Thirst (called WTU index), you can evaluate a players hydration status. Persistent thirst, greater than 1% loss of weight or urine colour of number 4 — 8 indicate possible dehydration. Any 2 of these factors suggest dehydration is likely, a player with all 3 of these factors present will very likely be dehydrated.

Print out and distribute the training log to your players. Each log covers one week. Monitoring each players log over a complete season will allow you to adjust your training programmes and recovery strategies.

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Week No:	Training Workload (Enter Total No of Minutes)					Fatigue Index			Mood			Health			Resting Heart Rate	Urine Colour	Weight			Thirst?
Day	Very Heavy	Heavy	Moderate	Light	Rest Day / Off	Feel Good	Feel Ok	Feel Tired / Sore	Feel Great	Ok	Not Good	Sick	Injured	Lethargic	(Measure in the Morning)	(Use Urine Colour Chart)	Yesterday Morning	This Morning	Difference	(Yes/No)
Mon																				
Tues																				
Weds																				
Thurs																				
Fri																				
Sat																				
Sun																				