

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Skills, mind, nutrition. What makes a strong soccer player? A knowledgeable soccer enthusiast may choose among a variety of appropriate answers. Good foot skills. Aggression. Speed. Athleticism. Although all of these physical abilities strengthen a player's performance on the field, many players and coaches pay little attention to the importance of the mental aspects of the game and most importantly nutrition.

In order to achieve optimal performance from your players they must be consuming the right quality foods before, during and after training, games, and tournaments.

Players should be well hydrated. They should be encouraged to DRINK WATER. As much water as they can throughout the day, not only to stay hydrated but to balance fluid loss and avoid heat exhaustion. Not only is athletic performance affected by nutrition so is recovery. This is achieved by consuming the right carbohydrates, protein, and essential fats.

The importance of carbohydrates is to replenish glycogen stores (pre game glycogen storage is crucial). Adequate amounts of protein are important for rebuilding and repairing tissue and essential fats for energy. Nutrition not only nourishes the body it also nourishes the mind.

Not having the ability to focus, the player will not be able to achieve optimal performance. Every learning experience, every motion and every moment of contact with the ball begins with the mind.

Therefore, for the coaches who want to optimize their player's performance they need to encourage their players to follow a good nutrition program, hydration practices and prepare them mentally for the next game.

Night before game

Dinner a carbohydrate meal

Pasta with vegetables

Rice with vegetables

Chicken pita wrap

Vegetarian pizza whole grain base

Before bed

Bagel/peanut butter

 Cream cheese

 Jam

 Almond butter

Morning of the game

Carb breakfast

Bagel sandwich

Eggs 2 whole grain toast with organic butter

If not a lot of time in between games

Have a fruit salad to replenish glycogen storage or have yogurt with fruit, or even yogurt with granola.

Vegetables with dip is also great.

If it's a 1 ½ hrs to 2 hrs in-between games

Have a carb meal for lunch look at dinner options.

During game ½ time could have oranges to replenish glycogen stores

Remember to drink lots of WATER, sports drinks are not necessary for soccer.

1st meal after the game

After the tournament it is best to again have a fruit salad (right after) then for dinner 1-2 hours after the game the player should have a protein meal for building and repairing.

Chicken with vegetables
Fish with vegetables

It would also be beneficial to the player to take an Epson salt bath to relax muscles. Plain water bath will do.

Night snack same as above.
Bagels with a topping
Fruit salad
Vegetables with dip

After the tournament for the next couple of days feed your players protein for building and repairing with salads, vegetables, rice, pasta.

FEED THE BODY
FEED THE MIND

Play Hard
Play Smart