

Coaches.

Here is an article pertaining to nutrition and fluid intake that I thought you might be interested in.

Gordon

Eat, drink and be merry

By Paul Saffer

You are what you eat and drink: That is the message of sports nutrition expert Mark Hulse.

Dirent link

English Football Association (FA) exercise scientist Hulse argues there is a direct link between what and when players eat and drink in the build-up to a match, and the risk of injury and fatigue. Indeed, he has devised an hour-by-hour programme governing when a player should - or should not - refuel.

England's U21 side benefits from the Mark Hulse's expertise

Nutrition vital

Speaking at the recent Grass Roots Football Show in London, Hulse, who works closely with England's youth teams, said: "Half of all injuries occur in the last 15 minutes of a match, and 30 per cent of goals. And if you get nutrition right, the better you are in the last 15 minutes. The same pattern occurs from under-9 level to the [FIFA] World Cup. Eating and drinking with the right timings will make a difference."

Hulse believes players must keep liquid levels topped up

Swift rehydration

To demonstrate this, Hulse and his colleagues weigh players on every day they are at an England camp. Within three days of a recent U17 trip, most players put on 2kg in three days. "They come to us in a dehydrated state," Hulse said. "The extra weight is not all body fat. You need to build up carbohydrate stores in your legs. It suggests they are not at a decent state with their clubs. It takes a couple of days drinking to hydrate properly." Ensuring players resist peer pressure to drink too much alcohol and eat junk food is also part of Hulse's "education process".

Meal plan

Key to the building-up of players while at tournaments and training camps is a strict meal plan and tailored menus. This means players do not have to eat food they do not like, even if that means they take fruit through specially-prepared smoothies. Meanwhile, breakfast is essential.

Brain fuel

"A lot of players like a lie-in and want to get up just before training," Hulse said. "That is not the best preparation. No way can they perform without breakfast." Indeed, surveys in industry and schools show how much different breakfast makes to concentration levels. "Glucose is the brain's only fuel," Hulse pointed out.

Table manners

The other daily essentials are to eat every three hours and make sure all players stay at the table until everyone has finished eating. Hulse said: "It means they eat more, and helps with socializing for team spirit."

Drinking practice

As for during training and matches, liquid intake is essential, and something that needs to be practiced just like set-pieces. Hulse and his colleagues give each player a personalized bottle, with players encouraged to prepare their own drink - a mixture of fruit juice, water and a pinch of salt - and urged to imbibe at least a third of a litre every 20 minutes to get used to having liquid in their stomachs during matches. "If you don't get into habits during training, you won't be able to do it during games," Hulse said.

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Pre-match routine

On matchdays, the pre-game meal is eaten three hours before kick-off, though players can snack up to 60 minutes prior to the start. In the 40-minute warm-up a player must drink a full litre, with fluid replacement going on during the game. An hour after the final whistle, it is vital for a player to take on protein, often through widely-available milkshakes.

Supplements unnecessary

Legal supplements such as caffeine, meanwhile, are only used if a player is seriously deficient. "A balanced diet supplies 98 per cent of what your body needs," Hulse said.