



Don't Wait Until You're Thirsty

By Dave Ellis

You sweat, you drink. It's a simple concept that is a fundamental for anyone who plays sports to understand. But often the cool, dry air in rinks leaves athletes underestimating how much they need to drink, especially the goalies.

Short benches and lots of pads in hockey can result in very significant fluid loss, potentially setting the stage for performance decline, slow post-game recovery and possibly heat injury.

- As little as a 2 percent sweat loss in a 100-pound athlete (2 pounds) can leave his or her reaction time and endurance on the sluggish side.

- Sweat loss in the 3 to 5 percent range in that same 100-pound athlete (3 to 5 pounds) is common in high-minute athletes and goalies, and must be replenished in a timely manner, especially if playing another game that day or heading out into the heat.

- When we see athletes lose more than 5 percent of their body weight during a competition, it could spell trouble that could require immediate cooling and IV interventions to prevent a very severe condition of muscle breakdown called rhabdomyolysis and organ failure (kidneys in particular).

We teach athletes to realize that their drive to drink falls well behind the rate that they sweat, so it's important to remember not to wait until you get thirsty to drink. We even have a pace that we are after for the athletes to drink water or sports drinks before and during activity to minimize net weight loss from setting in:

- Consume 17 to 20 fluid ounces water/sports drink two to three hours before exercise and 7 to 10 fluid ounces of water/sports drink 10-20 minutes before practice.

- The goal is to maintain hydration at less than 2 percent body-weight reduction. This generally requires 7 to 10 fluid ounces every 10 to 20 minutes.

- Increased sodium intake may be warranted when physical activity exceeds four hours, and during the first three to five days of activity exposure (camps or start of season), since the increased thermal strain and associated increased sweat rate increases the sodium lost in sweat.

Too much water and too little salt can actually cause water poisoning when sweat loss is extreme. Symptoms of water poisoning (hyponatremia) include puffiness, nausea, vomiting and headache.

Too little consumption of fluids can be identified by dry mouth, dry eyes, poor endurance, slow recovery of heart rate between shifts or by concentrated urine levels.

One more coaching point on this very important topic: When things are going well in a game, athletes drink more liberally, but when things are not going so great, they tend not to drink while brooding between shifts. By doing so, they often minimize their chances of winning the next puck battle that is coming when they go over the boards. Athletes need to be reminded to drink by the coaching staff on the bench and by parents before and after they get on the ice.

Dave Ellis is a sports dietitian and strength coach who has spent more than 25 years training collegiate, Olympic and professional athletes. More information about Dave and sports nutrition can be found at fuelingtactics.com.



COACH OF THE MONTH



Tony Paoli
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

→ For the past four years, Coach Tony Paoli has seen plenty of goals. They've gone top-shelf, scored on wrap-arounds and slipped through the five-hole.

One thing that's remained consistent, however, is that no matter how a goal is scored, when the players glide back to the bench, Coach Tony yells, "Who scored?" And the team responds, in unison, with, "We did!"

He is a father and a husband, board member and coach of both a Squirt and Peeewe team, not to mention a life-long hockey player. And he doesn't stop. Not even after an on-ice accident nearly cost him his life.

Two years ago, Tony collided with another player during an adult hockey game and he hit his head on the ice. He was airlifted to the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. He had multiple fractures in his skull. His right side was temporarily paralyzed.

But none of that, despite all the odds that might have mounted against him, could stop him from returning to the rink.

"It's the smell of the arena, the locker rooms, the camaraderie, all of those things — that is part of me," Tony says. "There was never a question of 'if;' it was always just 'when' I'd return. It's in my blood."



YOU MAKE THE CALL

After scoring a goal, the opposing team challenges the goal scorer's stick. If it is found to be illegal, does the goal still count?

The goal shall be allowed regardless of the outcome of the measurement. If it is found to be illegal, the offending player is assessed a two-minute minor penalty for illegal equipment, and the stick is removed from play for the duration of the game.