



#BetterThanYesterday

Episode 006: Let's Talk About Gridiron

Gridiron is very much a “stop-start” style of sport, including periods of heavy contact that all present unique challenges for an athlete. Here we have summarised some of the most common questions and concerns and provided our answers to ensure you minimise your injury risks, and reach your peak performance.

Methods to decrease injury risk

1. **Keep moving:** Muscles are elastic, and become suppler with additional blood flow and heat produced by movement. In between periods when you aren't on field, ideas such as keeping a stationary cycle on the sidelines or walking around the field will avoid that moment when your muscles become stiff and rigid as you cool off. This increases the risks of muscular tears and strains.
2. **Stay hydrated:** As we have detailed in other podcasts, hydration can negatively impact your concentration and focus. Consequently, taking a big hit from your opposition that you should have seen coming, or stepping in a divot in the field and rolling your ankle become far more likely. This is even more important in hot, humid conditions where sweat rates can soar, however don't discount hydration needs on cooler days. The vast amount of protective equipment required for gridiron will increase sweat rates and fluid losses, increasing dehydration risks.
3. **Understand concussion:** Concussion occurs when the head sustains impact forceful enough to make the brain (encapsulated in a fluid filled cushion with the skull) collide with the skull. Symptoms can be extremely subtle, therefore extreme caution should be exhibited whenever an athlete sustains impact to the head as the risks of brain injury are significant. Concussion can cause the following:
 - **Cognitive deficits:** Inability to think clearly or remember.
 - **Physical deficits:** Impaired vision, balance, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, fatigue.
 - **Mood and sleep alterations:** Mood swings, sleeping more or less than usual.

If you sustain a head injury, it is extremely important to seek the guidance and undergo an assessment with your local doctor or team medical officer to ensure no detriments to short term or long term health.

Be sure to post any questions about this Podcast on social media using the hashtag #BetterThanYesterday.

Jason Varoxis

BHlthSc (Nutr&Diet) Hons, APD, AN, ASD

ISAK Accredited Sports Dietitian

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