

PERFORMANCE VOLLEYBALL CONDITIONING

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO IMPROVING VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS

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Volleyball Tournament Weekend: Creating a Nutrition Plan

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Her current position is at the University of South Alabama specializing in teaching undergraduate and graduate health education courses in areas such as nutrition and hunger. Over the past year and a half she has also worked with University of South Alabama athletes in nutrition and improving their performance.

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Now that the high school season is over, it is time to prepare for the club volleyball season which includes many weekend tournaments. Nutrition planning for these types of events is essential to individual as well as team success. Volleyball coaches should not underestimate the value that nutrition has on performance.

Pre-Competition Nutrition

A hearty breakfast is essential during tournament weekends. Ideally this large meal should take place 4-6 hours before competition. Two to three hours before competition a lighter meal should be consumed followed by a snack 30 minutes to an hour before competition. However, with early tournament start times a large meal might not be possible so a rich carbohydrate dinner the night before along with extra water consump-

tion the day before and a light meal (2 to 3 hours before) that consists of 200-400 calories on tournament morning is essential. An example of a light pre-tournament meal is 1 piece of whole wheat toast or 1 whole wheat bagel with jam (2 tsp) and 4 to 8oz of apple juice. If the athlete feels that this meal is not enough, they should consider getting up earlier and consuming a larger meal. Pre-exercise food choices should be low in fat (<30%), moderate in protein (10 to 15%) and rich in carbohydrates because fat and protein take longer to digest and absorb. Further, carbohydrates are going to be the athlete's main fuel source during competition. The idea of the pre-competition meal is to consume quality calories that are easy to digest. So avoid sweets 15 to 45 minutes before competition.

During Competition Nutrition

During competition meals pose somewhat of a challenge because it can be difficult to consume high quality foods. Some suggested items that can be made available during competition are sports drinks, diluted juices (1/2 strength), energy bars (high in carbohydrate content), fruit, hard candies, water and gels. Players should experiment with which foods and fluids work best for them in terms of performance and not irritating their gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Convenience is a factor, but also, consider the nutrition value as well.

Post Competition Nutrition

Upon completion of a volleyball match players need to re-hydrate their bodies. They also need to consume protein and carbohydrate in order to replenish what was lost during competition. It is important to note that carbohydrate consumption within 15 minutes after competition is critical to help replenish glycogen stores and it can take 24

to 48 hours after a match to replenish glycogen stores. An example of an effective post competition meal is a small bagel, 2 ounces of string cheese, 8 ounces of low fat yogurt and a sports drink.

Hydration

Another area of concern for volleyball players is maintaining hydration status on a daily basis. Players should be consuming enough fluid to urinate every 2-4 hours. Suggested pre-competition fluid guidelines are 16 to 24 ounces of fluid 2 hours before completion, 8 to 16 ounces of fluid 15 minutes before competition, 6 to 12 ounces every fifteen minutes during exercise and enough fluid after exercise to ensure their urine is pale. Water is an appropriate fluid choice for competition that is less than one hour in duration. For competition lasting longer than one hour water + carbohydrates (6-8% solution) are needed. Examples include sports drinks such as Gatorade or PowerAde (6-7% solution) and 100% fruit juices (6% solution) that are 1/2 diluted with water. Coaches should instruct their players to drink on a schedule, not just when they are thirsty. Volleyball players who wait to drink until they are thirsty are already dehydrated and performance is affected by being dehydrated by only 2-3%.

Sample Tournament Food/Snack List

Below is a sample list of food/snack items that coaches can email out to their parents the week before a tournament so they can sign up to bring one or more of the items. These items need to be available to players throughout the tournament day(s) to ensure they are meeting their energy needs for the rigor of a tournament day or weekend.

Mixed Food Choices
Pasta salad

- Granola or non-sugary cereals
- Low-Fat yogurt (flavors: vanilla and strawberry)
- String cheese
- Bagels or English muffins (cut into halves/ quarters) with cream cheese or peanut butter
- Lean meat (ham, turkey and roast beef) tortilla wraps cut into small sections
- Ham, turkey and roast beef sandwiches on 100% whole wheat bread cut into quarters

(With wraps and sandwiches: Keep the condiments on the side and have the players add their own)

Fruit

- Strawberries or chopped/ mixed Fruit
- Apples (red and green; sliced and whole)
- Grapes
- Oranges (quartered)

-Bananas

Cut Up Vegetables- Be careful with high fat dips.

- Carrots

- Celery
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Mushrooms

Light Snacks

- Granola bars or Power Bars
- Animal crackers or whole grain crackers
- Nuts (peanuts, walnuts, almonds)
- Lightly salted pretzels and baked chips

Drinks

- Small bottles of sports drinks, 100% fruit juices (Dilute with ½ water), chocolate milk (low fat)
- Bottled water

Nutrition Reminders

The first step in helping fuel volleyball players for a tournament is to establish the habit of eating small, frequent meals and drinking plenty of fluids throughout the tournament day(s). Second, players must learn, by trial and error, which foods promote their optimal performance without irritating their (GI) tract. Once players establish their per-

sonal food list, they will be able to duplicate this during club tournament weekends and during their high school season to ensure optimal performance. O

More Information Please! Contact Shelly at sbradford@usouthal.edu

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