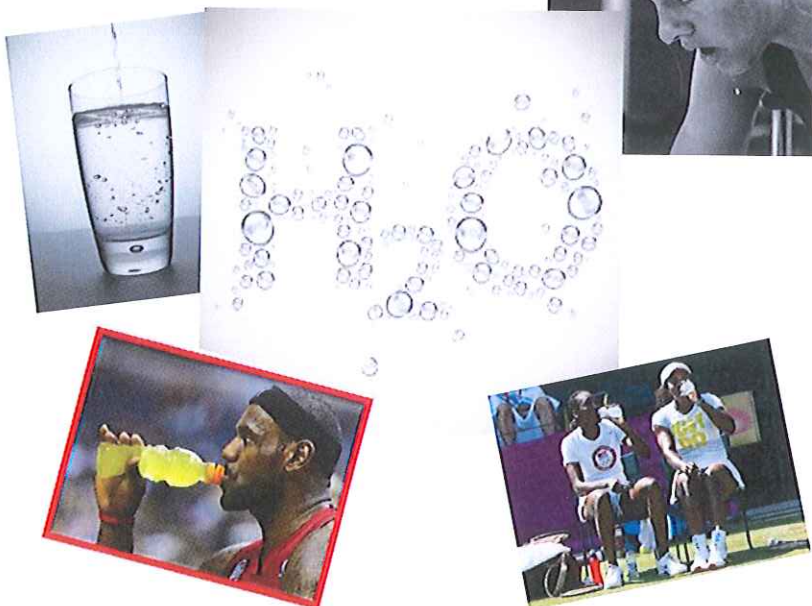


ABOVE AVERAGE: ATHLETE NUTRITION



H₂O or Na?

Does what you drink and when really matter?

H₂O OR NA? DOES **WHAT YOU DRINK AND WHEN REALLY MATTER?**

QUICK TIPS

Proper nutrition and peak athletic performance go hand in hand. For many athletes, especially those that compete on a professional level, nutrition is key to success. **To get the best results out of a workout, practice or game, you must consider the things you put into your body before, during, and after.** What you drink is equally as important as what you eat – proper hydration is key.

If there's one thing most athletes have in common, it's sweating. Sweating is a natural process the body uses to cool itself, tapping into its storage of fluids to do so. When you sweat, your body not only rids itself of toxins, but fluids and things like carbohydrates and other nutrients used to fuel your muscles and keep you performing at top levels. **Staying properly hydrated is a great way to replenish your body of the good things it loses.**

Improper hydration or dehydration, can lead to a variety of problems including headaches, muscle cramps, confusion, fatigue, injury and a decrease in overall performance. To avoid such instances, it's important to begin hydrating hours before your practice, game or workout, and maintain

proper levels of hydration during and after.

Proper hydration doesn't just mean consuming anything in liquid form. Things like coffee and tea dehydrate you and sugary drinks like juice or soda can have adverse effects on energy levels (spiking energy initially and soon after leading to a "crash") and can lead to an upset stomach.

As a simple rule of thumb, you can never go wrong with water. Drinks like Gatorade, however, are beneficial when consumed at the right times. Because of the higher levels of carbohydrates, sugars, sodium and electrolytes – essential nutrients lost during intense physical activity - Gatorade is best consumed during and immediately after a workout, practice or game.

Sports require athletes to be mentally sharp and physically ready for top performance. Water helps lubricate all of your muscles and joints and helps you to perform better, whether it be on the court or in the classroom.

Great athletes take care of themselves. Help fuel your mind and body. Stay hydrated!

Before you practice or play:

Proper hydration begins when you wake up and should continue throughout the day leading up to a workout, practice or game.

- Drink between 1 and 2 bottles of water one to two hours before activity

During your practice or game:

As you sweat, your body loses the water it needs to maintain energy levels, and lubricate its' joints and muscles.

- Depending on the length and intensity of your workout it would be good to drink at least one bottle or water or a sports drink during play.

After your practice or game:

As your body is in recovery mode, it needs all of the nutrients it can get.

- *Sipping on a bottle of water up until a healthy post-activity meal is a great option to replenish fluids.*

– Coach Ashley, NJ Lady Titans