

GAME PREPARATION CHECKLIST

There's little doubt that fuel & fluid reserves influence performance on the paddock. This is especially the case for guys playing a full game. However, few athletes realise that the fuel & fluid reserves you take into the game are influenced by training & diet in the previous few days, not just game day or at the pre-game meal. **Preparing optimally means starting early...at least from the day of Captains Run.**

Day Before Game...

- Check out your hydration status, either using a machine or a simple colour check. If you are dry, it'll give you at least a day to turn things around
- Increase your total fluid intake, with an extra emphasis on fluid intake at meals & snacks. The salt in your meals/ snacks helps keep fluid on board
- Allocate more of your plate 'real estate' to energy packed carbs like breads, cereals, pasta, rice, cous cous, starchy veggies, noodles, fruit & dairy snacks
- Moderate your intake of protein, allowing more room for the carbs on your plate while staying within your reduced energy budget.
- Don't use 'carbo loading' as an excuse for 'garbo loading'. Keeping your fat intake low allows more of your energy budget to be put towards fuel foods.

Game Day...

- Check your hydration status to confirm you're well hydrated. If you are dry, look to further increase fluid intake with breakfast. Add to this with more fluid during the morning, perhaps with an electrolyte supplement to promote better fluid retention
- Continue with an emphasis on carb rich meals from the day before
- Take your pre-game meal 3-4 hrs before kick-off. If you've optimised food & fluid intake the day before the game, you can focus more on gut comfort, using foods & fluids you've used before & tolerate well

During Game...

- Take 500-600 ml of iced sports drink in the 30 min window prior to the start of the game. This not only tops up your fuel reserves but also 'primes' your stomach so that any fluid consumed during the game gets into the system ASAP. If you are a big sweater or have issues with needing to pee during the game, consider using an electrolyte supplement with the sports drink to reduce urine output
- If you use caffeine, it's best taken in the window immediately prior to or following the warm-up. Remember, there's probably just as much of a kick from a small dose compared to a bigger hit but with much less potential for side effects
- Take advantage of all breaks to consume fluid, including formal & informal breaks. Remember, small regular hits are better than big hits occasionally
- Sports drinks should be your fluid of choice during a game, getting fuel to the muscles when they need it most. If you don't rate the sports drink, trial a gel at half-time or use a water chaser to clean out your mouth after a hit of sports drink

Post-Game...

- A good hit of protein like some lean meat or low fat dairy products will help kick start recovery but be sure to mix it with some carbs. They work best when taken together
- Start the rehydration process ASAP after the game. Liquid meal supplements like Rapid Growth, Nitrovol or Regenerator are a great hit of carbs & protein in a shake if your appetite leaves you after a game; same goes for a low fat flavoured milk.

