



Hydration for Rugby

Creating a tailored hydration strategy for rugby players involves considering the sport's demands, the playing environment, and individual athlete needs. Rugby, a high-intensity sport requiring endurance, strength, speed, and agility, often takes place under various weather conditions. Thus, optimal hydration is essential for maintaining performance and aiding recovery. Here is a structured approach:

Pre-Game Hydration

- **Hydration Baseline:** Players are advised to begin games well-hydrated by consuming a balanced diet and adequate fluids in the days prior. Urine color, aimed to be a pale straw color, is a simple indicator of hydration status.
- **Pre-Game Hydration:** Athletes should drink approximately 500-600 ml (17-20 oz) of water or a sports drink 2-3 hours before the game to ensure fluid absorption and excretion of any excess.

During the Game

- **Small, Frequent Sips:** Given that rugby halves last about 40 minutes and breaks are short, players should take small sips of water or an isotonic sports drink during play stoppages, targeting 150-300 ml (5-10 oz) every 15-20 minutes.
- **Isotonic Sports Drinks:** These drinks are valuable not only for hydration but also for supplying energy through carbohydrates and replacing electrolytes lost in sweat.

Post-Game Recovery

- **Rehydration:** Players should aim to replenish 150% of the fluid lost to sweat within 2-4 hours post-game, accurately measured by weighing athletes before and after the game. The difference in weight will give you a good estimate of how much fluid you've lost. It's important to do this without clothes or in minimal clothing since sweat can also be absorbed by your clothing, affecting the weight measurement. For every pound (about 0.45 kg) of body weight lost during exercise, you should consume approximately 16-24 ounces (about 473-710 ml) of water or a sports drink to rehydrate effectively. This range accounts for differences in sweat rates and the need to replenish electrolytes lost through sweat, especially during long-duration or high-intensity workouts.
- **Electrolyte Replacement:** Post-game beverages or snacks containing sodium aid rehydration by encouraging thirst and fluid retention.

Monitor and Adjust

- Continuous monitoring of hydration through body weight and urine color allows for individual strategy adjustments.



Environmental Considerations

- Hot and Humid Conditions: Increase fluid intake due to higher sweat rates, and opt for sports drinks with higher sodium content to compensate for increased electrolyte loss.
- Cold Conditions: Regular fluid intake should be encouraged based on a schedule, not just thirst.

Individual Needs

- Sweat Rate Assessment: Conducting individual sweat rate tests can help tailor hydration strategies.
- Preference and Tolerance: Adapting drink choices to individual preferences and gastrointestinal tolerance ensures adequate intake.

Monitoring and Adjustment

- Regularly review hydration strategies to align with fitness levels, environmental changes, and schedules.
- Educate players on dehydration signs and the importance of proactive hydration.

Implementing a tailored hydration strategy requires vigilant monitoring and adjustments based on training loads, environmental conditions, and individual responses. Collaborating with sports nutritionists and medical staff optimizes this strategy for rugby athletes' health and performance.

Questions or looking for more information contact us!!!

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