

KEEPING YOUR ATHLETE IN THE GAME

MVP PARENT

SUMMER 2021

\$4.95



SUPPORTING ATHLETIC SUCCESS

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ON RAISING
ATHLETES

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Mission

MVP PARENT is committed to providing a credible resource that educates and supports the parents of youth athletes. **MVP PARENT** gives parents the information they need to keep youth athletes performing at the highest level physically, mentally, and emotionally. **MVP PARENT** takes a holistic and evidence-based approach to injury prevention, skill development, nutrition, and sports psychology.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

BY RICHARD B. DUBIN



A GLIMMER AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

There is a slight sign that things are changing... We just dropped off my daughter off at Ithaca College. She is an incoming sophomore and will be playing on the basketball team. Unfortunately, like many kids today, she missed her entire first year of the college experience as well as the complete freshman season. She is excited to be on campus, although, there are now mask mandates due to COVID's Delta variant. As parents and fans, we will likely not be able to attend games, but we will be able to stream her games. At least she is back in the flow. Back on the court and in the gym!!

My second daughter starts High School and will start in person as we pay close attention to the number of COVID cases in our area. The past season, she was able to participate in the AAU basketball season and is looking forward to competing at the High School level. The Prep school that she attends requires 2 sports be played and she will be playing volleyball as well.

This last quarter has been crazy with things changing so quickly due to the Delta variant: one minute we are without masks and the next minute, we are wearing them again. I just have such empathy for these kids. They are anxious to get back in the gym and play again, and as a parent, I'm anxious for her to have a normal teen life

This issue is jam packed with content to help you and your child navigate this "new normal." Our cover story, written by Joshua Cupp, delves into the approach of Jim and Monique Brown raising two high level collegiate athletes. A "Hands-Off" parenting approach might be the best, especially when you are arguably the best football and lacrosse player of all time. That is something we could all consider. Follow that up with a piece from Amy Masters with iSport360 on what type of parent are you. I have been all five at different points. I would be interested to hear from you all on this one—how many have you been? I have learned and grown so much throughout the process of coaching and parenting my kid and I think the tips are crucial for all parents.

We have another great piece on making sure you are ready to be on the field or in the game. With injury prevention in mind, Justin Sacco, Alex Dicioccio and Dr. Peter Gorman offer six simple tests to ensure your athlete is ready. Then, check out the article from the National Athletic Trainers' Association on getting back into sports post-COVID and the importance of staying hydrated. In another article, Trainer Jay Vincent explains why more is NOT better when it comes to throwing practice and the prevention of rotator cuff injuries. Another great contribution from our sports psychologist, Linda Sterling, CMPC, LPC, focuses on parenting and how to help your athlete re-enter sport and prevent pressure. And when it comes to keeping your athlete well-fueled, check out Jill Lanes piece on pregame prep to postgame recovery.

We are always bringing you the best of evidenced-based, credible content that you can trust. Staying committed to keeping your athlete safe, prevent injury and improve training is why I am calling your attention to a new product, Orthelligent. This is a simple, easy, and effective way to use a wearable sensor to keep your athlete injury free and train better.

I am so grateful and excited to bring you this issue and am always open and available and would love to hear from you. ■

KEEPING A COOL HEAD

Getting Back to Sports in the Summer Post Covid-19

A WORD FROM THE NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION (NATA.ORG)

Summer 2021 is heating up with the excitement of returning to sports. While it can be a truly exhilarating time, it can also spell disaster for those who are not prepared for the summer heat and humidity.

As temperatures continue to rise in many regions, so does the chance of heat-related illnesses that can vary in severity from the inconvenience of heat cramps to heat stroke, which can be fatal. While not always preventable, even in the fairest of climates, exertional heat stroke can be 100% survivable if properly and quickly cooled down.

HERE ARE FIVE THINGS YOU SHOULD BE ASKING BEFORE YOUR ATHLETE'S TEAM STARTS SUMMER WORKOUTS:

1 What are your heat acclimatization guidelines?

All athletes need to become accustomed to exercising in the heat. This is even more critical if an athlete is returning to a sport after an extended time away. Heat acclimatization involves phasing in activity (duration and intensity) over 7 to 14 days to help the body physically adapt and cope with the added stress caused by the heat.

If they have had extended time away from their sport, remind your athlete to be patient with themselves during this process as they may expect to be immediately back to where they were before their time away.

2 Who monitors the weather and environmental conditions and what tools are used?

A medical professional, such as an athletic trainer, should monitor heat-stress conditions with equipment such as a Wet-Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) device, which measures ambient temperature, relative humidity, wind speed, and radiation from the sun. WBGT readings may require immediate adjustments to the team's practice such as changing work-to-rest ratios, increasing water breaks, modification to equipment (ie, removing excess clothing), change in length and/or intensity of activity, and moving practice times to a cooler part of the day.

Important to note, it doesn't have to be sunny for there to be conditions which require practice/game modifications.

3 What hydration is available for the athletes and how are hydration breaks determined?

Water should be freely available during any sports activities. As a rule of thumb, most athletes should consume 200 to 300 milliliters (7 – 10 ounces) of fluid every 15 minutes of exercise.

Hydrating before and after practice is important. If an athlete goes to practice dehydrated, they are already putting themselves at risk for heat-related issues. Tracking urine color can be a good indication of hydration. Pale yellow usually indicates proper hydration.

4 What is the emergency action plan in case exertional heat stroke is suspected? Do you have a cold-water immersion tub available?

Appropriate personnel (medical staff, coaching staff, and athletic administrators) should be familiar with and practice the emergency action plan for exertional heat illnesses. As every minute counts, they should be prepared to immediately activate the plan if an emergency occurs.

Once exertional heat stroke is suspected, decreasing the athlete's core body temperature to a normal range via cold-water immersion (approximately \$150 investment) within the first 30 minutes is critical. The risk of long-term or

permanent complications, and even death, is directly related to the number of minutes an individual remains hyperthermic. A cold-water immersion tub should be onsite and filled with water prior to the start of activity and ideally located in the shade or under a medical tent.

5 What medical personnel will be with the team during practices and games to ensure the safety of the athletes?

It is critical that a medical professional, such as an athletic trainer, is present at practices and games to monitor and inform coaching staff of potentially harmful conditions, prepare for emergencies, assess heat-related signs, and activate the emergency action plan if needed.

Visit National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) for a printable PDF on heat illness at nata.org. ■



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PREVENTING AND MANAGING ROTATOR CUFF INJURIES

If you or your child is involved in sports, either recreationally or competitively, or you are just an avid baseball fan, you are probably familiar with the term “rotator cuff.” This term is usually associated with an injury that is keeping an athlete out of the game. Athletes can drastically reduce the likelihood of suffering a rotator cuff injury with some very simple steps in the offseason through proper training and then managing the stress placed on the rotator cuff during the season.

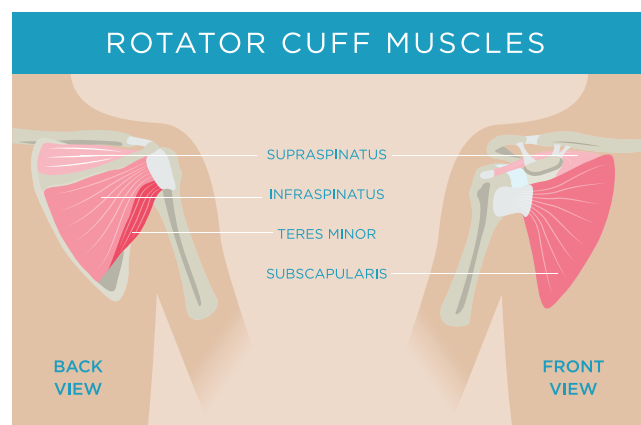
BY JAY VINCENT

The rotator cuff is a well-known term, but few people actually know the physiology behind the body part. The rotator cuff is a group of muscles that support the shoulder joint. These muscles include the Subscapularis, Infraspinatus, Supraspinatus, and Teres Minor. The 4 muscles and their supporting tendons surround the glenohumeral joint of the shoulder, which is a ball-and-socket type joint that allows for a wide range of motion. Unfortunately, a wide range of motion is often accompanied by a large amount of instability. This range is what makes this joint and its supporting musculature prone to injury.

The primary function of the rotator cuff is to stabilize the glenohumeral joint by compressing the humeral head (ball at top of upper arm) against the glenoid (socket on upper torso). The 4 muscles originate at the scapula (shoulder blade) and insert into the humerus (upper arm). The muscles also provide internal rotation of the arm, abduction of the arm, external rotation of the shoulder, and internal rotation of the shoulder.

Now that we understand the basic physiology of the joint and the muscles of the rotator cuff, we can identify the common cause of injury. The answer is simple: throwing.

The muscles are heavily involved in ANY type of throwing motion and



the glenohumeral joint is heavily stressed providing adequate range of motion for a throwing movement. As described earlier, the shoulder is a ball-and-socket type joint. During a throwing motion, the ball and socket structure moves around a fair amount and loses a large amount of stability. The high peak forces generated during a throwing movement are largely responsible for causing the multiple tendons and ligaments to fail. High peak forces in ANY movement make



ligaments and tendons prone to fail and tear, ultimately resulting in injury. Unfortunately, there is no way to perform a throwing movement effectively without generating high peak forces. This is why, over time, it is extremely likely that a rotator cuff injury will be sustained.

This doesn't have to be a self-sacrificing scenario. To achieve athletic-level throwing capabilities, there will be wear and tear on the glenohumeral joint that can result in rotator cuff injury. However, there ARE things we can do with our athletes to DRASTICALLY reduce both the chance of and severity of injury to this important joint.

1 Strength training using low impact methods.

a. Strength training will strengthen the muscles of the rotator cuff AND the supporting tendons and ligaments of the shoulder joint. Stronger muscles, tendons, and ligaments result in a reduction in likelihood of injury for ANY part of the body.

b. Using low impact training methods, such as a slow speed of movement while weight training or using static or isometric contractions, will allow the rotator cuff to grow stronger without producing wear and tear in the process. Since wear and tear is inevitable with sports, reducing wear and tear during training is CRUCIAL to the length of an athlete's career.

2 Limit practice time.

a. Obviously, practice is necessary to improve the skill of throwing in any sport. But many coaches have their athletes practice WAY too much. There is a point of diminishing returns with repetition and practice. Hypothetically, if 100 practice pitches in baseball improve the athletes skill by 10%, an additional 100 pitches might improve his or her skill by an additional 0.5%. In this case, it is NOT worth the additional wear and tear for an additional 0.5% in skill improvement. The athlete is better off stopping after 100 pitches, taking the rest of the day off to recover his or her body, and resuming practice the next day.

b. The athlete should use the offseason to recover his or her body and build strength.

i. They should reserve a period of time in the offseason where NO practice takes place to allow his or her body to recover.

ii. Then, once adequate recovery time has taken place, resume practice with a healthy body.

Western culture is indoctrinated into the "more is better" frame of thinking. The truth is, more is not better. There is always a point of diminishing returns and a point where too much of something produces adverse effects. Unfortunately, many of our coaches operate on superstition and folklore, which is leaving our athletes injured for life. Rather, they should be using critical thinking and following advice by the sports medicine community that relies on a proven evidence base and endorsed by such national organizations as the National Athletic Trainers' Association and the American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine. As a parent, if you implement the strategy explained in this article to your young athletes training and preparation regime, your young athlete will undoubtedly have a more fulfilling sports career with less pain, if any at all. ■

JAY VINCENT is an exercise expert and fitness entrepreneur with two training studios in Upstate New York. Jay's goal is to teach the proper science behind exercise to help people train more efficiently, safely, and effectively.

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PRESCRIPTION CUSTOM ORTHOTICS

BY DR. BOB WEIL

Hey Sports Parents & Coaches- Hard to believe that I've been prescribing custom orthotics for sports kids over the past 40 years (give or take a few weeks). Young boys & girls, from teenagers to others commonly under the age of 12, as young as 5 or 6 in all sports. Sports like soccer, baseball, football, basketball, tennis, figure skating, hockey, running, dance, etc. I often tell sports parents sitting with their young athlete, "Overuse injuries & problems are similar—all that changes is the uniform your kid's wearing—the sports they play!" Their concerns and challenges both physically and mentally are many times the same. Quite often their overuse problems or discomfort is related to their foot type or mechanics. Almost always the reasons were persistent or ongoing pain or discomfort, not an acute injury. Their feet hurt, heels hurt, ankles, shins or knees hurt. Especially with aggressive schedules and playing demands! More and more, however, especially in skating sports like figure skating & hockey, orthotics can improve balance, stability, edging and performance. This is exciting!

Orthotics in growing kids might be changed every year and a half to two years. Once their foot growth is over, (girls about 14 and boys about 16), they might use the same orthotics for the next ten years! Rarely is larger shoe or skate boot needed for these inserts.

We'll get more specific with foot type, foot mechanics and joint position and alignment later in this article.

Prescription in shoe orthotics, properly done, ideally by podiatry, but also by well qualified physical therapists & pedorthists have really proven to be a major weapon in the treatment and prevention of foot related ankle, lower leg, knee, hip and back overuse problems. Yup, like the song, *the foot bone is connected to the ankle bone is connected to the knee*

bone... All the way up the weight bearing chain. In running, jumping, skating sports—that's where it's at. The feet effect all areas above.

Orthotics are made from various materials. Often the demands and specifics of the sport can determine these materials. I have always liked flexible unbreakable polypropylene plastic for youth sport orthotics. Flexibility is determined by the athlete's weight and their sport.

Orthotics do much more than support the feet. They help properly position and align the foot, ankle and lower extremity. Optimal joint position is the goal as is structural integrity. Often the prescription is made using plaster cast molds, (messy but still I believe the best method), of the feet in non-weight bearing measured neutral positions. Orthotics have various uses and indications. Examples could be to redistribute weight away from painful areas, to control excessive or abnormal motion, or enhance alignment of the lower leg. Dissipating and reducing shock might be another important reason. A common misconception is that custom orthotics are arch supports. Although support is important, it is not the only function - proper alignment & joint positioning are also key. There are definitely uses and indications for over the counter inserts or supports— often I'll recommend them for temporary initial use while we're waiting for the custom orthotics. But these are generic inserts by shoe size, having not much effect on foot function or joint alignment correction.

Custom orthotics main role is usually controlling the positioning of the feet and lower leg during the different phases of gait. Basically, the foot has three jobs in walking and running—shock absorption when the heel hits the ground, ground accommodation or shaping to the ground, (imagine walking on the sand), and then pushing off the foot like a

spring lever. Each of these actions demands particular motions of the foot and rotational motions of the lower and upper legs, pelvis and spine. The terms used to describe these foot motions are pronation and supination. These are complex motions taking place in the joints of the foot and lower ankle, three motions in three directions simultaneously.

Hey—it's complicated! Only our hands are as complicated but we don't walk on our hands! (Mentioned that once in a talk I was giving to young gymnastics kids & their parents & coaches & one of them said, "yes we do!" I stood corrected).

Pronation and supination are normal motions. Problems can arise when the timing, velocity, or amounts of these motions are excessive or limited. Pushing off a loose hyper pronated foot is inefficient and can strain the supporting tendons and muscles.

Various inherited foot types and leg shapes create problems with these motions. Examples are flat feet, high arches, bowed legs, knock knees and leg length differences. Each of these imbalances (quite common), can cause excessive pronation or supination leading to overuse injuries, wear and tear and problems like arch and heel pain, shin splints, knee pain ETC. Yes—foot type and leg shapes are commonly inherited! Blame your parents and grandparents! National health statistics and surveys show that over 75% of us exhibit some minor to major foot or leg imbalances. It's not surprising then with so many young athletes "pushing the envelope" that so many overuse and repetitive motion injuries have exploded around youth sports! When these overuse problems become ongoing, repetitive and persistent, look at foot type and mechanics!

Many sports Parents will ask, "Does my son or daughter need orthotics?" Better questions are "would they benefit with them? Will my young athlete be less susceptible to overuse injuries? Will they help performance?" Often the answer is yes to all the above questions!

Once it is understood what the role of custom orthotics is—to capture the optimum alignment and functioning position of the feet and lower legs, to enhance the normal motion and position of the joints of the foot and ankle and that these devices are not crutches or arch supports—sports parents & coaches will pay lots more attention.

Although not a cure-all, custom orthotics are really a step up for both prevention of overuse injuries and enhancing sports performance—the two things we're all looking for! ■

DR. BOB WEIL is a sports podiatrist in private practice in Aurora, Illinois. He hosts "The Sports Doctor," a live weekly radio show on bbsradio.com. For more information, go to sportsdoctorradio.com.



DR. ROBERT WEIL & SHARKIE ZARTMAN



There are many tough decisions now for parents whose children want to participate in sports: how to choose the right program, how to help coach them, preventing injuries.

Dr. Robert Weil, an original New Yorker with an office in Aurora, IL, is a sports podiatrist that has helped many elite athletes and hosts the radio show "The Sports Doctor". His co- author Sharkie Zartman, is a former All-American volleyball player and former member of the U.S. National team. They have combined their expertise into one book designed to help parents navigate through youth sports programs.

#Hey Sports Parents is broken down in four Sections. The first section written by Sharkie, is *Sports Parenting 101* which includes choosing the right program, nutritional guidelines, college recruiting and stress management.

"In the next section," says Dr. Bob, "called *The Sports Doctor Is In*, I talk about overtraining, sports and drugs, the importance of the right shoes and orthotics, and the very real risks of contact football for kids. The third and fourth section highlight various experts in youth sports and parenting.

Dr. Bob and Sharkie met years ago when they both hosted shows for the same radio network. "We thought this book would be a great resource because of our different professional perspectives" says Sharkie.

You can find #Hey Sports Parents on Amazon, Kindle, and Ingram.

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TOP 5

SIDELINE PARENTS

Which one are YOU?

We have all been there before. Maybe you got a bit excited about your kid's soccer game. You enthusiastically were cheering...or maybe it was more like yelling, just a bit too much. We have all done it, got caught up in the moment of supporting your kid playing soccer at age 8. With NCAA Division I opportunities at your door (only kidding), you got caught up in the moment.

Well, the first step to recovery is to admit you have a problem.

For fun, we wanted to see which parent you are, so we came up with a list of parents we noticed on the sidelines. Did we miss any? We love our parents and all that they do, even their passion on the sidelines :-). They truly make sacrifices so we can keep playing.

BY AMY MASTERS



The Yeller



There are always a couple parents that yell the whole time. They are always yelling something, usually the wrong directions to their player. Sometimes they just yell at their player or at the coach or at the ref. In some cases, they yell at everyone if things don't go their kid's way.

The Hider



Are you the parent that hides from other parents? Ha! We caught you. Maybe you stand alone, maybe you just want to enjoy the game and not get caught up in the crazy world of youth sports. It is ok, hide away and just pat your player on the back when they are done, then grab some ice cream.

The "Coach"



"Pass the ball!" Are you the parent that feels the need to coach from the sideline? As a youth sports coach of field hockey, basketball, softball, and lacrosse, it was always a tough situation. Just remember that we are coaching too, and sometimes you may not have the whole picture of what is best for the team. Trust your coach and the process. Our goal is always to have your player in mind.

The Snack Provider



When my son was 5 years old, he played soccer. It was easy to sign up and it kept him running around for 2 hours. Well, he hated it, but I was mad: I had spent \$75 on the program and made him stick it out. His favorite part was snack time and usually there were grapes. If you are the snack parent, thank you for keeping the 10 minutes in the middle or end of practice and games for snacks. It made the 2 hours of practice less miserable (lol).



The Car Ride Home Parent

This parent can't wait to say something on the car ride home. There have been numerous articles about the ride home and the impact on players. Sometimes it is ok to say nothing. Or just wait until your player wants to talk. And sometimes ice cream helps everything. Make a new ritual of getting their favorite snack so every time they play, you have something fun to do after the game.

It IS all fun and games! ALL OF US AT iSPORT360 ARE YOUTH SPORTS PARENTS AND VOLUNTEER COACHES. WE HAVE SEEN IT ALL AND HAVE EVEN BEEN ONE OF THE PARENTS ABOVE. HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR PLAYER SO THEY FEEL CONFIDENT ON AND OFF THE FIELD?

- ✓ Your player will make mistakes during a game, just get over it
- ✓ Your player may not have a great game or tournament, they aren't robots, let it go
- ✓ Make it fun for your player, something little goes a long way
- ✓ Always say you are proud
- ✓ Don't tell them what to do, let the coaches coach
- ✓ Encourage your player to advocate for themselves



Do you have any other parents that you have noticed in the stands?

AMY MASTERS is head of marketing for iSport360, a sports mom forever, a youth sports coach for over 10 years and club owner. She has seen it all and is now helping others empower youth sports athletes.

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MVP EXCLUSIVE





SUPPORTING ATHLETIC SUCCESS

**WE TALKED WITH JIM AND MONIQUE BROWN
ABOUT HOW QUIET SUPPORT GAVE THEIR
YOUNG ATHLETES ROOM TO THRIVE**

BY JOSH CUPP

My first assignment for MVP Parent was interviewing Aiysha and Marcus Spears. The dream first assignment. Intelligent, articulate, fun, cooperative, and unassuming are all words I'd use to describe the couple I interviewed a few short months back. What was meant to be a work assignment felt like catching up with old friends two minutes into a Zoom call. Marcus's first belly laugh came at the :42 second mark, and Aiysha's wasn't far behind. What followed was an enjoyable discussion about our kids, athletics, time management and the tricky journey of youth sports. It was like going 1-1 in my first major league at bat and if I suffered a career ending injury, at least I'd retire batting a thousand.

This issue's interview is with Jim and Monique Brown. Yes, THAT Jim Brown. Married since 1997, the couple share two children, Aris, a rising sophomore attending Hampton University playing men's lacrosse, and Morgan, an incoming freshman attending USC poised to star on the women's soccer team. Jim is not only regarded as arguably the best running back in NFL history, but perhaps also the finest lacrosse player ever to pick up a stick. Jim's style in both sports was speed and strength. He was glad to run over or through the opposition and this style led the sport of lacrosse to literally change the rules of the game.

While it cannot be overstated how dominant an athlete Jim Brown was (8x NFL rushing leader, 9x Pro Bowl selection), to speak about him exclusively as an athlete does his legacy a tremendous disservice. To touch on all the defining events of his life, or the civil rights causes he has championed, well, that's another article and interview that has immeasurable value. Honestly, that is the interview I WANTED to give. MVP Parent is a high quality family publication that encourages an environment and culture that creates dialogue and potential solutions in navigating the landscape of kids' athletics. That's why we're here, so I stuck with kids and athletics.



"SO MUCH OF SPORT IS INSTINCT, BUT I HAVE ALWAYS ENJOYED TEACHING THE MENTAL SIDE, WORK ETHIC, AND SHOWING UP READY TO GIVE SERIOUS EFFORT. ACADEMICS ARE BIG IN OUR HOUSE, AND I AM VERY PROUD OF THE STUDENTS AND NOT JUST ATHLETES THEY'VE BOTH BECOME."

- JIM BROWN

MVPP: Jim, how much of your love for athletics began at a very young age while still living in Georgia, and then your move to Long Island?

JB: I always remember being involved in athletics at a very, very young age. Unorganized sports before moving, but once I was in Long Island, all my new friends played sports and I was introduced to fine people that paved the way for my development.

MVPP: Monique, Jim isn't the only athletic parent here. Tell me about your relationship with athletics growing up in the Buffalo, NY area.

MB: I was the youngest of six children and we entertained ourselves playing neighborhood street sports as simple as footraces and such. My father played some professional basketball, so the atmosphere was there for participating and achieving. My parents were supportive but never pushy with our athletic journeys, and were much more into achieving in school/academics. Softball, basketball and cheerleading were my sports eventually.

MVPP: Jim, how big of a role did coaches and influencers play in your development in your teen years in Manhasset, NY?

JB: Ed Walsh introduced me to the game of football and was really my mentor and sort of surrogate father. Manhasset really had the best coaches and teachers and they all helped in my development in

athletics and in life. Quality of coaches and mentors is overwhelmingly important, especially when the kids might not have the positive energy and reinforcement at home for whatever reason.

MVPP: With Morgan excelling at soccer, was it more fun to watch your child play a sport that neither of you played growing up?

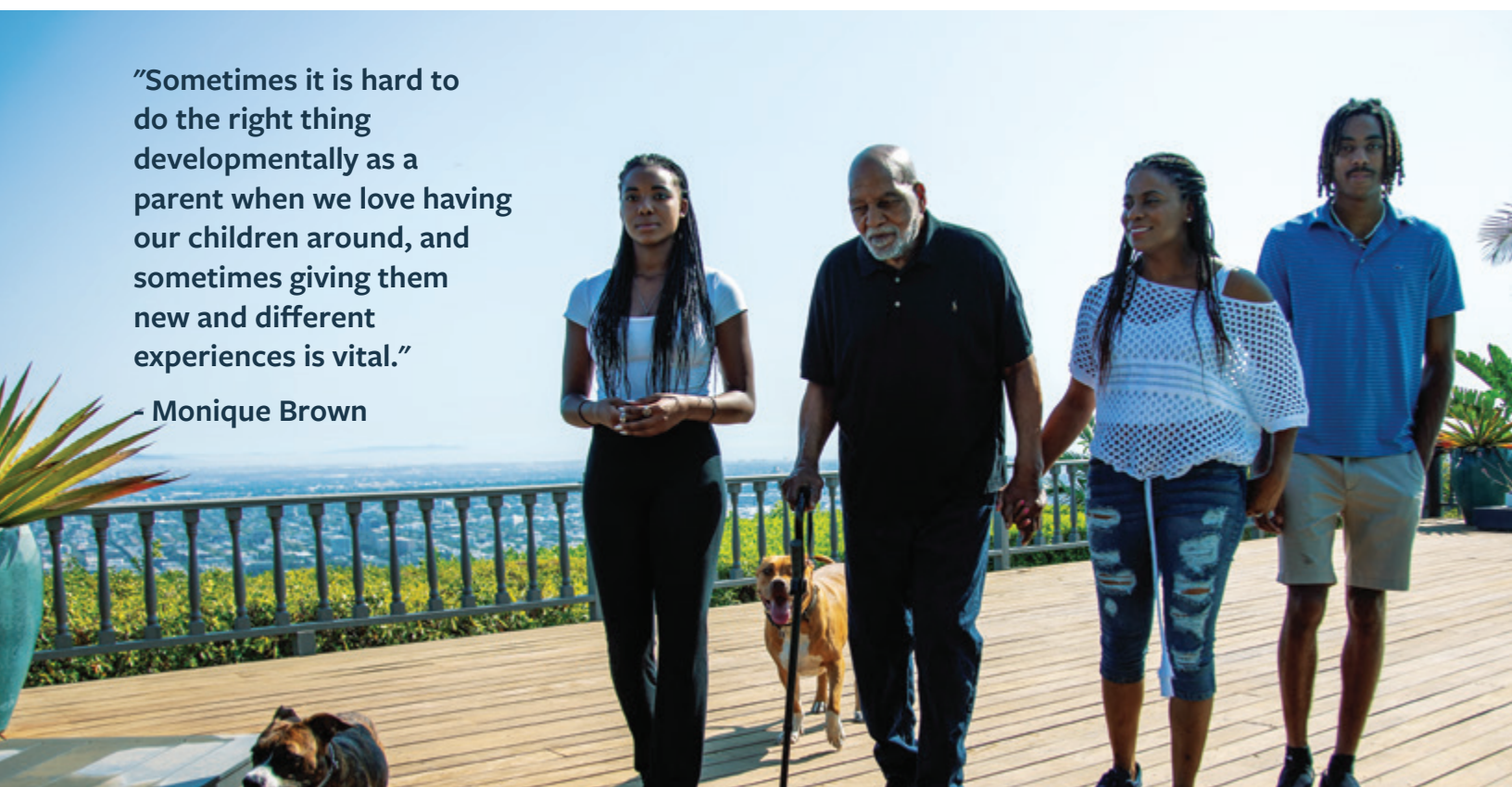
JB: It was different and refreshing for sure. I played four and sometimes five sports throughout high school at the varsity level. Soccer was NOT one of those. Oddly, my entire life I have enjoyed watching soccer, I just never played it. I always encouraged my kids to play/do anything they'd like, only rule has been to do what makes them happy.

MB: I definitely had to learn lacrosse and soccer. The learning process was half the fun. I went so far as to become a ref in those sports in order to learn the intricacies and rules better, I was committed. As a family we have always enjoyed the journey of athletics and the life lessons learned perhaps more than the achievements.

MVPP: Jim, I have to ask about instruction with Aris and his lacrosse. I imagine the game has changed infinitely since you played it competitively 60+ years ago. Is there a strong desire to help on the physical/technical portion or do you prefer to just chat about the mental side of the game?

"Sometimes it is hard to do the right thing developmentally as a parent when we love having our children around, and sometimes giving them new and different experiences is vital."

— Monique Brown





JB: Great question. The game HAS changed very much. I feel like so much of sport is instinct, but I have always enjoyed teaching the mental side, work ethic, and showing up ready to give serious effort. Academics are big in our house, and I am very proud of the students and not just athletes they've both become.

MVPP: I know USC is 30-45 minutes from the Brown residence so that is easy, but Aris headed out to the opposite coast at Hampton University to study and play lacrosse. Putting it bluntly, how difficult has that been?

MB: Yes, 30 minutes on an easy traffic day to USC so we love that! Aris and I are very close so that WAS a very difficult decision. I felt that we had to look at moving away as a necessary part of his development as a person, as an adult. One of the few positives of Covid was he did his first year from home, so we had him around for a little bonus time. Sometimes it is hard to do the right thing developmentally as a parent when we love having our children around, and sometimes giving them new and different experiences is vital.

MVPP (to Aris Brown): What was it like choosing lacrosse as your primary sport knowing your father was beyond a legend in the game? When you discovered the rules of the game were changed because of his raw athleticism?

AB: I knew when I was in 8th grade or so that lacrosse was going to be my main sport, it always felt more natural to me. It encompasses all the fundamentals of athletics...speed, power, but it also encourages creativity and there is more individual motion within a team sport so it is unique that way.

I began to discover my dad's impact on the game a year or two later. I've seen video and it's fun to watch - his movements were ahead of where the game was then. He played the modern game but played it 60 years ago. I never felt intimidated by learning how good he was. Most importantly, he never pressured me to play or play a certain way.

MVPP: Aris, what was the recruiting process like for you? Did being a HBCU (Historically Black College/University) play a role in your decision?

AB: Recruiting was all over the place at first. I felt like I was leaning more toward an NCAA DIII school so that the athletic requirements didn't detract from my academic pursuits. Once I got in touch with Hampton I started to feel differently. Being a HBCU was both consciously and unconsciously a very big thing for me. I felt an immediate bond with the coaching staff, there was a definite family feeling and it became obvious that Hampton was the right fit...the academic piece was huge. I really thought highly of their business program. I feel comfortable at Hampton, it was the right choice for me for a lot of reasons.

After promising Jim and Monique we'd be a half hour or 45 minutes tops for our phone interview, we were finally wrapping up an hour and a half plus later. The extra time was appreciated. I read and studied up on Jim's life a tremendous amount for this piece. I watched the Dirty Dozen twice, and I listened to about two dozen interviews he gave at all different stages of his life. I concluded that right or wrong, the theme of Jim's life has been that the closest distance between two points, well, it's a straight line. If you were an inside linebacker playing in the NFL in the late 50s and early 60s, you know this all too well.

Taking a hands off, almost minimalist approach to raising kids that are enamored with athletics has its place. When a decent portion of high profile sports pontificators consider you perhaps the best athlete ever to step on any playing field, that can potentially cause some serious hesitation and anxiety for your children to want to even pick up a ball. Quiet support was likely the best recipe for success for Aris and Morgan on the field and between the ears. It is evident that this path was a conscious choice for Monique and Jim. ■

JOSH CUPP is a former NCAA D1 student athlete, head coach, and has competed at golf's highest professional level. In addition to writing, he pitches never-ending batting practice to his best friend and son, Francisco, and peddles wine at the Thirsty Owl in Saratoga Springs, NY. He can be reached at joshuacupp@gmail.com.

TAKING A HANDS OFF, ALMOST MINIMALIST APPROACH TO RAISING KIDS THAT ARE ENAMORED WITH ATHLETICS HAS ITS PLACE. QUIET SUPPORT WAS LIKELY THE BEST RECIPE FOR SUCCESS FOR ARIS AND MORGAN ON THE FIELD AND BETWEEN THE EARS.



**ARE
YOU**

READY?

**SCHOOLS, PARKS,
AND BALL FIELDS
ARE ALL STEADILY
OPENING, AND THE
ATHLETES THIS
SUMMER ARE ONCE
AGAIN GETTING
READY TO PUT ON
A SHOW.**

**HERE ARE SIX
PHYSICAL TESTS
FOR OUR ATHLETES
TO MAKE SURE
THEY ARE READY
TO GET BACK ON
THE FIELD.**

**BY JUSTIN SACCO,
ALEX DICIOCCIO, AND
PETER GORMAN, DC**

1 BALANCE

Balance is the critical component of all movement. Practice standing on one leg. This gives you a simple understanding of balance control. The goal is balancing on each leg for 60 seconds.

1B PROPRIOCEPTION

Proprioception is known as the hidden factor. When an athlete plays, their eyes are on the game. It is their feet that read the ground. This understanding of where you are in space is known as proprioception. To test proprioception, an athlete will once again stand on one leg with their eyes open. When they feel ready, they will close their eyes and try to maintain balance for 30 seconds without moving. Practice balancing on one leg every day for 5 minutes with your eyes open and eyes closed to improve balance control and proprioception.

2 SOLEUS CHECK

The soleus muscle is nicknamed the second heart of the human body because of its ability to send blood back to the heart from the lower extremities. It is also a primary muscle of propulsion- pushing off, starting all movement. Last but not least, because of its attachment at the knee, it is also a protector of the anterior cruciate ligament, aka, the infamous ACL ligament.

To test, stand tall with your feet shoulder width apart and squat down to get your butt to the floor. If you have to lift your heel to allow your butt to go all the way down, we know there is some kind of contraction.

To reduce improper contraction as a means to prevent injury, we recommend foam rolling the calf area with a muscle recovery system. By finding trigger points (tender spots in the muscle) you can reduce them and restore proper muscle function.

3 CORE STRENGTH

Core strength is essential as it helps maintain proper pelvic alignment and aids in proper muscle function. To test core strength, stand tall, facing the wall with your toes touching the wall. With your hands behind your head and feet shoulder width apart, squat down and try to get your leg parallel to the floor. (Please have someone spotting you in case on your way down you end up falling backwards.) If your core is weak, you will fall backwards before reaching parallel.

Remember, strength cannot be built on an unstable foundation. Coaches and athletes should not add weight if the athlete cannot perform a front wall squat. Adding weight to an unstable foundation can lead to injury.

4 MARCH IN PLACE

This next test is called the Old Fukuda Test. Make note where you are standing and what direction you are facing. Close your eyes and march in place for 50 seconds. Your body should not move forward or backward and it should not rotate at all. Any movement is a sign of muscle imbalance and should be addressed by your coach or trainer.



5 UPPER BODY RANGE OF MOTION

Athletes must be able to externally and internally rotate their arm while holding their shoulder joint and elbow joint at 90 degrees. We can test this by standing with our back to the wall, putting our shoulder arm at 90 degrees and putting our forearm elbow at 90 degrees. The athlete should easily be able to put the back of their hand to the wall while maintaining the 90-degree angle. The athlete should also be able to put the palm of their hand to the wall at a 90-degree angle. Any reduction in this ability can be a sign of GIRD (Glenohumeral Internal Reduction Deficit) and should be addressed by the coach or trainer.

6 BREATHING

We have left this one for last because it affects ALL body functions. Proper breathing might be the most important thing an athlete has to do. If you don't believe me, try going a few minutes without it and see how it feels. Approximately 83% of people are breathing backwards. We must ensure as we breathe in, our stomach expands outward, and the chest does not rise. To test this, simply place a hand on the stomach and make sure the stomach is expanding upon inhalation. This simple technique will improve VO2 max, respiratory quotient, and tidal volume (all measures of cardiovascular fitness and aerobic endurance).

Obviously, there are many other imbalances of the body. However, this simple checkpoint system should be able to recognize many, if not all, imbalances so that proper efficient play can be had by all.

If there is any deficit in any of the 6 physical tests, the test becomes the training. Continue to practice these to ensure optimal performance.

Here's to a healthy and productive season. ■

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PETER GORMAN, DC, is the president of Microgate USA in Mahopac, New York, a developer of heart rate monitor technology and owns seven major patents in the United States and Canada.



Feeling the

PARENT PRESSURE

BY LINDA STERLING, CMPC, LPC



Sport parenting isn't for the weak. Sport parents get a lot of blame. *Did you hear the latest "crazy sport parent" story? Can you believe sport parents these days? They're just living through their kids.* While of course this happens, the majority of sport parents want what's best for their athletes, they just don't always know how to go about it.

As a sport parent watching your child on the field, you see an extension of you. A person you've loved since day one. When something happens to your athlete on the field, it's almost like it happens to you. Actually, it often feels worse. As a sport parent, you want to see your athlete achieve their goals. When they're disappointed about an error or a missed shot, you feel that too. When they fall short of the potential you know they have, you want so bad for them to realize it.

If you're a sporty sport parent (you played at a competitive level), you often have an extra level to navigate. You've had success in sport and you're likely to classify yourself as competitive. You like to win. No shame in that, but it can complicate things. Sport parents who describe themselves as competitive are more likely to get "sideline rage" or just plain fired up before, during, and after the contest.

Sport parents (even sporty sport parents) can have difficulty knowing how to navigate the competitive youth sports world. Advice changes frequently and varies dramatically. Parents are left with uncertainty. When do we switch from recreational leagues to competitive travel ball? How about recruiting? How do I help my athlete get noticed and earn a college scholarship? When should I push them and when should I let them figure it out on their own?

What your athlete internalizes: "I'm not good enough. They expect more from me."

The "feeling the financial burden" pressure. Casual comments about or overheard conversations about the financial or time investment you've made for your athlete to play their sport. This might include talking with other parents about giving up every weekend to be at the ballpark or joking about how "they better get a scholarship with all of the money we've spent on lessons, gear, and travel." You may be saying them in jest, but athletes often take this to heart.

What your athlete internalizes: "I have to make this happen. Mistakes are unacceptable. I'm letting them down."

The "my parent was a great athlete" pressure. Athletes of sporty sport parents have some advantages in that their parents often understand more about how sport works and can provide early opportunities and coaching. This can be undone though when the pressure to carry on the legacy becomes too much. As the parent, you may not be reliving the glory days, but they've for sure heard the stories about how great you were.

What your athlete internalizes: "There is no room for error. I have to prove my family proud. Everyone expects me to be an all-star. There's something wrong with me if I don't make it happen."



We know sport parenting is challenging. In our sport psychology practice, we do see some parents struggling to separate their own athletic career from that of their athlete, but we mostly notice sport parents who want their kids to enjoy sport while achieving goals. Many sport parents recognize the pressure of competitive sport participation and are actively seeking strategies to reduce the pressure influencing their athletes. While parents don't ask us how to put more pressure on their athletes, that doesn't mean they aren't adding it unintentionally. Unintentional pressure is still pressure.

POSSIBLE PARENT PRESSURE SITUATIONS

Your athlete feels the pressure, whether it was or wasn't intentional. Here are a few common scenarios we see in our practice.

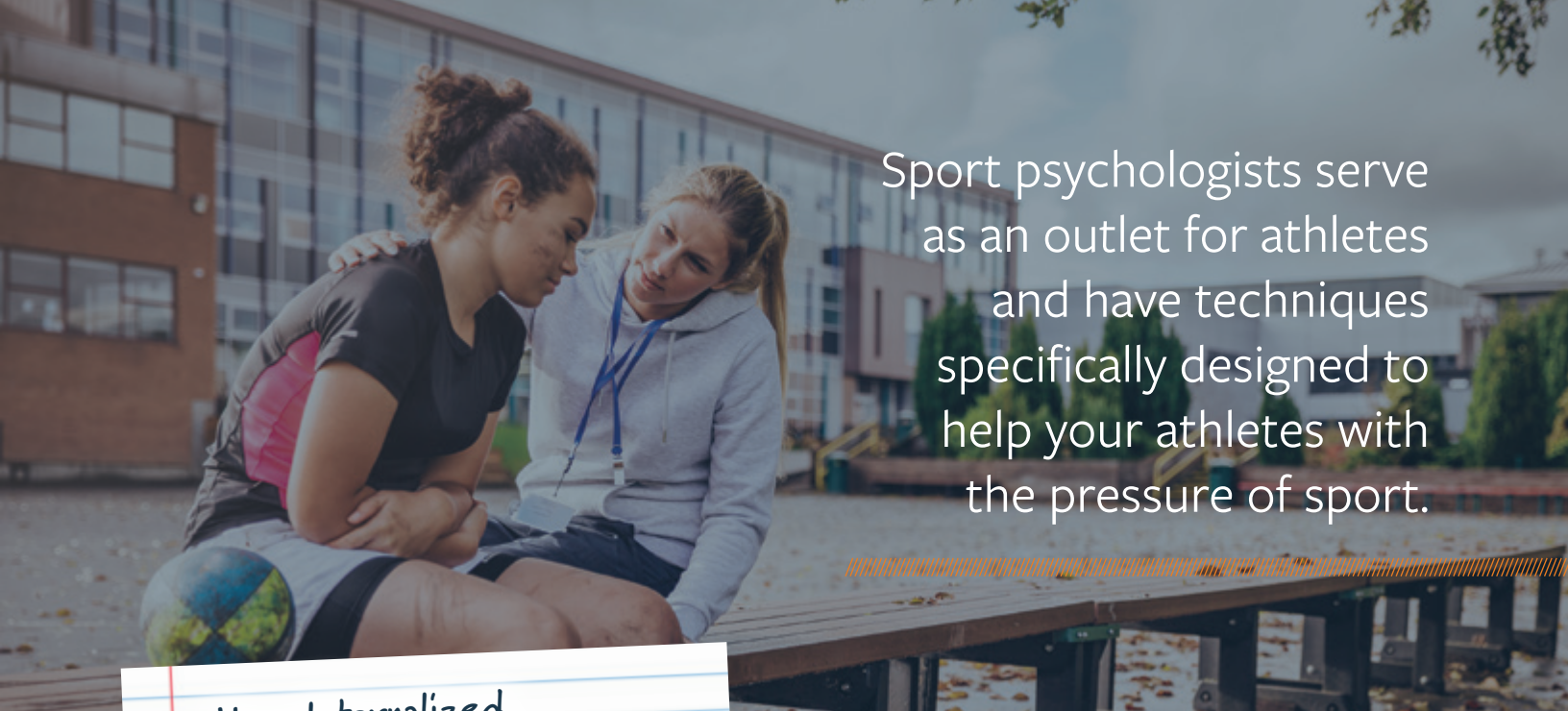
The "you have so much potential" pressure. This seems so innocent, supportive even. You see how much your athlete is capable of and you want them to see it too.

The "parent coaching from the sidelines" pressure. You're trying to give them tips. It's possible you see something that will help them. Maybe you doubt the coach's ability or disagree with their style. You may view it as helpful, additional information.

What your athlete internalizes: "I wish he wouldn't scream. It's embarrassing. My coach is going to be mad. Who am I supposed to listen to? This could affect my playing time. My dad doesn't think I know what I'm doing."

The "we expect to win" pressure. You might recognize these mottos. We put in the work in this family. We expect results from that work. We don't make a big deal about it when we achieve goals. Act like you've been there.

What your athlete internalizes: "I can't ever be satisfied. It won't ever be enough. I don't deserve to celebrate. There's always more to achieve."



Sport psychologists serve as an outlet for athletes and have techniques specifically designed to help your athletes with the pressure of sport.

How Internalized Pressure Plays Out

- ✓ Unrealistic idea of perfection
- ✓ Negative self-talk
- ✓ Low self-confidence
- ✓ Performance anxiety
- ✓ Frustration/angry outbursts
- ✓ Confusion
- ✓ Looking for external validation
- ✓ Low motivation to play

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO PREVENT THE PRESSURE

Do your own thought work. You can't take the emotion out of sport. You're going to have thoughts about the game, your athlete's performance, the coach, the spectators, etc. Thinking you can just remove yourself from that won't work. Since you're going to have thoughts, you need to become aware of them and how they influence your emotions and actions.

Think of a scenario that either stresses you out or has you fired up. Write down your thought. Then write the feeling/emotion caused by that thought. When you think that thought and feel that way, write down how you show up. Then evaluate if that action is getting the results you hoped for. If it's not, then work to become aware of and change those thoughts to something more helpful for you and your athlete.

Take a moment before you speak or act. We're not always going to think the most positive or helpful thoughts, even when we work on

it. It's important to take a quick pause before giving feedback to your athlete. Ask why you want to say what you're thinking. Is it for you? Is it for them? Will it be received as intended?

Distract yourself as needed. Sport parenting is challenging because you care so much about your athlete. Know that it's okay to put some space between yourself and their athletic performance. Sit a little farther from the field. Take something to read between innings. Put in headphones so you're not taking in the game through all of your senses. Choose music you love or something that helps keep you calm.

Find someone you can talk to. Don't put it on your athlete. Speak with a counselor or a friend about what you're experiencing. I don't suggest talking with another parent from the team, that can have unintended negative effects for your athlete.

Have your athlete work with a sport psychologist or mental performance coach. It can be really tough to support your athlete through their sport experience, especially if they're having mindset challenges and may be feeling pressure to not let you down. Providing a qualified source of support for your athlete can be a game changer. Sport psychologists serve as an outlet for athletes and have techniques specifically designed to help your athletes with the pressure of sport. This lets you focus on being the parent and helps to maintain a positive sport family dynamic.

Sport can have everyone in the family feeling the pressure. Understanding how parent pressure plays out for athletes and implementing the techniques can change the game for the better. Sport parenting for the win! ■

LINDA STERLING, PHD, CMPC, a former collegiate softball player, has masters and doctoral degrees in Counseling Psychology and Sport Psychology and is a licensed professional counselor and Certified Mental Performance Consultant. To learn more about her approach, visit drindasterling.com.



STUDENT ATHLETE MEAL TIMING:

Pregame Prep to Postgame Recovery

BY JILL LANE

What should my student athlete eat pregame?" This is one of the questions I get asked the most! My answer? If you are depending on the pregame meal to prepare for competition, you may be behind.

START PREGAME PREP SOONER

On the Fueling Champions campus, pregame prep (or prep for any important tournament, meet or training) starts 48 hours out. Why? Because that can be how long it takes an under-hydrated (75% of student athlete population), under-fueled and under-recovered student athlete to 'catch up' and be ready to compete at an optimal level.

IF YOU ARE ONLY RELYING ON THE PREGAME MEAL, YOU MAY BE TOO LATE.

Pregame prep is not just about the pregame meal – hydration and adequate rest play critical roles in performance (as we've covered in past articles); widen your approach to optimally support health and enhance performance.

Pregame prep comes from adequate:

- ✓ Sleep
- ✓ Hydration
- ✓ Fuel

SLEEP

When student athletes in a well-known study lost 2 hours of sleep, every performance metric monitored got worse, and when they were allowed to 'sleep extended' (get more sleep) all the metrics got better. The data has been clear for more than a decade: Borrowing from sleep to study, game or scroll social media negatively impacts performance both mentally and physically. Prioritize sleep to enhance recovery and prepare for competition. Have your student athlete set reminders on their phone to shut down sooner on days leading up to competition.

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HYDRATION

Data has shown that up to 75% of student athletes arrive to training and competition already dehydrated! Most of the time these same athletes have been at school all day dehydrated. Dehydration is defined as a 2% loss in body weight. Even mild dehydration can negatively impact mental and physical performance. Prioritize hydration throughout the days leading up to competition. Have your athlete carry a refillable stainless steel or glass water bottle to keep track of how much water he/she is drinking.

Have your athlete carry a refillable stainless steel or glass water bottle to keep track of how much water he/she is drinking.

The primary source of hydration throughout the day should be from water as well as fruits and vegetables. Use urine color to help determine hydration status at home and while traveling. Urine should resemble light/bright yellow, like lemonade or lighter.

HIGH WATER CONTENT FOODS:

Fruits:

Watermelon
Pineapple
Oranges
Strawberries
Cantaloupe
Grapefruit

Veggies:

Cucumber
Celery
Tomatoes
Broccoli
Bell Peppers
Lettuce

FUEL

If an athlete is eating enough day-to-day, the pregame meal becomes less important to performance because their fuel/energy tanks are being addressed adequately on a regular basis. We focus on this at Fueling Champions, making sure that the day-to-day needs of an athlete are met, which makes the pregame meal just a 'top off'.

The pregame meal is often best eaten 2-3 hours before game time.

The makeup of a pregame meal depends on length of competition, intensity of performance and oftentimes most important, what the athlete can tolerate without getting a stomachache, cramps, gas or other digestive issues. The pregame meal is often best eaten 2-3 hours before game time. Student athletes are often warming up in the hour before competition, meaning they are using some of the stored energy from their pregame meal. If a sports drink is desired, a few gulps in the minutes post warm-up, before the game starts, can level off their fuel for game time.

The research shows that most pre-competition or training meals ideally should be dominant in the primary fuel source to the body, carbohydrates. I also like to include some amount of protein (how much again depends on how close to game time it is as well as the other variables we covered above, could be 0.5-1.0 grams of protein per pound body weight depending on meal timing). This is one meal where an athlete may get to pass on eating a load of high fiber veggies (you're welcome!). Think of easy to digest, high water content veggies like cucumber possibly, again digestive tolerance wins out here. How much carbohydrate depends on body weight as well as duration and intensity of sport: research shows pregame meals could be as much as 0.85-1.5 grams (or more) carbohydrate per pound body weight.

GOOD → **SEVERE DEHYDRATION**



Urine color chart for hydration assessment

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POST GAME

Recovery starts as soon as competition/training ends. Think of your student athlete as a dry sponge ready to soak up and refill the energy they just spent and the hydration they just lost. The sooner you can get in a meal with the primary macronutrient food groups, the sooner recovery kicks off.

Post-game focus:

- ✓ Refuel
- ✓ Rehydrate
- ✓ Recover

REFUEL

In the hours after competition food is being used to replace energy that was spent on performance. Depending on duration and intensity, this can take 2 or more meals to accomplish. Eating as soon as possible, and tolerated, helps to augment recovery and refill energy stores (called glycogen). This is especially important when competing or training multiple times per day or on back-to-back days.

Eating as soon as possible, and tolerated, helps to augment recovery and refill energy stores (called glycogen).

REHYDRATE

Replacing what was lost from sweat takes time and should be spaced out. Research suggested that for every pound of weight lost during competition and training, approximately 16 ounces fluid (ideally water) should be consumed in the hours after to replace it. If your athlete is a heavy or salty sweater, electrolyte replenishment should accompany the water replacement. Consider sodium and potassium rich foods like plantain chips (banana's savory cousin with added salt) or an electrolyte replacement powder (I like Hydration Complex by Designs for Sport).

If your athlete is a heavy or salty sweater, electrolyte replenishment should accompany the water replacement

RECOVER

Recovery includes food, sleep and hydration. We focus so much on modalities like foam rolling, massage, ice/heat therapy and/or stretching that we overlook the most important needs of refueling and rehydration - true recovery is multi-dimensional. Eat, sleep and hydrate to optimize growth and recovery.

True recovery is multi-dimensional. Eat, sleep and hydrate to optimize growth and recovery.



In summary, be consistent and have realistic expectations. We shouldn't expect a pregame meal to magically make up for a week's worth of under fueling and not enough rest or hydration. If your student athlete is eating well (enough of the right foods) most of the time, the pregame meal matters less. The overall goal of fueling should be focused on eating enough of the right foods daily to support optimal growth, development and performance to avoid RED-S (Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport) and low energy availability. You can read more about the two in "Sports Nutrition: Supporting Performance, Growth and Wellness in Student Athletes," in the Winter 2020 issue at mvpparent.com. For optimal pregame prep, focus on the trifecta of sleep, hydration and fuel for consistent performance.

To keep your athlete well (AKA healthy), it's important to understand RED-S: Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport. Simply put, symptoms of RED-S strike when not enough food is eaten to match the demands of training, recovery, growth, and maturation. It is why the number one sports nutrition basic to master is to eat enough food throughout the day. The peculiar thing about how we understand RED-S right now is that the body will use the incoming energy (food) to fuel training and competition first, leaving recovery, growth, and maturation with whatever is left. What if 'whatever is left' isn't enough? Below is list of potential symptoms of low energy intake or under-recovery.

BEWARE RED-S (RELATIVE ENERGY DEFICIENCY IN SPORT)

Does Your Athlete Regularly Experience:

- ✓ Persistent fatigue
- ✓ Disturbed digestive health
- ✓ Recurrent illness and/or injury
- ✓ Slow healing
- ✓ Sudden disinterest in sport
- ✓ Irritability
- ✓ Irregular menstrual cycle
- ✓ Poor growth and or slow maturation

Contact me for a list of the references used to support this article. ■

JILL LANE, mom of 3, founder of Fueling Champions® has been teaching nutrition and exercise science to pro-athletes, sports families, student athletes, coaches and health care practitioners for 20 years. Some of her current and past clients include coaches and players from the NFL, NBA, and MLB. As a former All-American, Olympic Development Team Member and Division I Scholarship Collegiate athlete herself, Jill has a clear understanding of what competitive athletes require to achieve and sustain their personal best.

Her mission to support the next generation of student athlete leaders (as well as those who lead them on a daily basis) comes full circle in Fueling Champions®.

Join us at www.FuelingChampions.org + Instagram @TeamFuelingChampions



WE SHOULDN'T EXPECT A PREGAME MEAL TO MAGICALLY MAKE UP FOR A WEEK'S WORTH OF UNDER FUELING AND NOT ENOUGH REST OR HYDRATION. IF YOUR STUDENT ATHLETE IS EATING WELL MOST OF THE TIME, THE PREGAME MEAL MATTERS LESS.

TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL!

WEARABLE SENSORS HELP PREVENT INJURIES, IMPROVE TRAINING

For many, daily exercise is priority number one to keep muscles toned and ready for any new challenge. For growing children, daily activity, such as team sports, keeps their bodies and minds healthy and developing properly.

Daily exercise allows for changes in training to meet new challenges—for example, an upcoming tournament—without having to carve out extra time. So, you've got the time, but what do you know about the efficiency of the training? Are there weak points that could be improved? And will the current level of training allow you to reach the next level? More importantly, will it allow you to prevent injuries?

Sometimes, small tweaks can make a big difference.

Identifying those needed tweaks has always been difficult without professional grade equipment. But wearable sensors are changing the world of home training. Orthelligent Prevention is a small sensor designed to have a big impact by diagnosing an athlete's weak points and providing rehabilitative guidance to prevent injuries.

The sensor, which feeds information to a smartphone- or tablet-based application, measures and monitors personal progression. Designed specifically to be worn on the lower leg, the sensor can be used to perform specific tests that compare an athlete's right and left sides. Coaches, parents, and even athletes themselves can access the graphical displays to check and monitor any imbalances that may be present and foretell potential injury. Once identified, the program provides a professionally developed training program to help correct imbalances that have been found.

The tests focus on 3 main areas: range of motion, coordination, and agility. Why is this combination of testing and training crucial for a successful sports career? Let's dive a bit deeper into the focused areas.

Range of motion: The range of motion of a joint is measured in degrees. In the case of the ankle, it is dorsiflexion and plantar flexion (see figure). These ranges of motion are important to ensure good quality when walking, running, sprinting, jumping, squatting, and doing squats. With insufficient dorsiflexion and plantar flexion, knee pain and hip pain are inevitable.



Coordination: In addition to strength, speed, and agility, coordination is a mandatory motor skill for performing sports at a high level. Without the coordinative skills, you cannot call up your full performance.

By Connexions - OpenStax College. Anatomy & Physiology, Connexions

Agility: To achieve maximum performance, agility—the ability to move quickly (speed) and easily (strength)—is of particular importance. If you tire too quickly, mistakes can occur that can lead to injury.

SET-UP IS FAST AND EASY

The test and training procedure can be set up very fast. To get started, attach the sensor to the leg to be measured. Start the app on the tablet or mobile phone, select the test, be active, and after a few seconds, the result will be displayed. Then, move the sensor and do the same test on the other side. The app will compare the data and the full overview of the results will show up in a graphical way on your device screen. Afterward, use the training program to improve your weak points and monitor your progress regularly. ■

KNOWING YOU WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR GAME IS CRITICAL TO IMPROVING YOUR PERFORMANCE. KNOWING HOW TO TRAIN TO THAT NEXT LEVEL CAN BE A GAME CHANGER.

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Test



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Train

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KEEPING YOUR ATHLETE IN THE GAME

MVP PARENT

MVP PARENT is committed to providing a credible resource that educates and supports the parents of youth athletes. **MVP PARENT** gives parents the information they need to keep youth athletes performing at the highest level physically, mentally, and emotionally. **MVP PARENT** takes a holistic and evidence-based approach to injury prevention, skill development, nutrition, and sports psychology.