GCAS NEWS

GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

Issue 47,
Spring **2023**

Preparing pre-elite Gold Coast athletes for their journey to Olympic or higher-performance success through quality inclusive sport and life skill programs

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EDITORIAL From the Chair

from the Executive Director's desk

We have had such an exciting few months, particularly with the FIFA World Cup in our own backyard. Then I have also followed the World Track and Field Championships in Budapest where Australia had some amazing performances. Even if you never followed football or Track and Field before, all of a sudden you were swept up in the euphoria of the Matildas and the performances of some athletes.

Through all the backstories of the Matilda players we have learnt how important family is. The following article was something that was published in the Bulletin a short time ago. It is all about how parents can help their children in their sport. It is such a difficult time – young athletes have to navigate through a multitude of emotions – excitement, disappointment, hope and a lot of hard work. I thought it was worthwhile repeating this in the Academy newsletter.

In today's lifestyle, families are becoming increasingly time deprived, particularly parents when they are trying to make ends meet and still offer as many opportunities for their children as possible. With this in mind, I spoke to Fiona McCarthy who is a sport psychologist who has owned and operated Mind and Body Balance some 25 years ago. Fiona is a registered psychologist, specialising in the area of sport/performance psychology. As a member of the Australian Psychological Society and the Australian College of Sport and Exercise Psychologists she deals with many families.

It is important and special for parents to be there and be supportive of their children in sport. At the Academy we have parents who have asked how they can help to connect with their sporting child and help them reach their potential. The following is a simple guide to with tips to help sports parents stay connected with their child and help them enjoy sport for life and be happy.

Too often children participating in sport get overwhelmed, burnout, anxious and fail to reach their full potential. This can result in poor self identity, being unhappy and having a sense of not meeting certain expectations placed upon them, either by themself or others around them like, parents, coaches, teammates. Unfortunately, if the above concerns aren't addressed early many children may exit sport feeling frustrated, exhausted and confused about their self-worth. No parent wants this for their child. So how can parents foster and encourage a healthy connection with their child and their sporting pursuits?

Patient and Proud. All children develop at different rates, encourage your child to be patient with their progress. As a parent be proud of your child no matter what result they achieve in sport. Remember to praise their progress, hard work, effort and positive attitude.

Affirm and Accept. Giving your child a hug and affirming your love for them speaks volumes, especially when they have had a 'tough' day at school or on the sporting field. Accepting them for who they are rather than what they have achieved is important in connecting with their child and ensuring their confidence and self worth is high.

Role Model and Respect. Understanding the role you play in your child's sporting journey can help set boundaries, limit confusion and aid in positive communication. Discuss with your child how you can best support them (get their point of view) and what things they don't want you to do. Be a positive role model on and off the sporting field. Encourage your child to develop friendships as well as you establishing friendships with other parents. Respect the coaches, officials, other parents and competitors.

Engage and Enjoy. Allowing yourself to engage with and enjoy your child's whole sporting journey is invaluable. As parents it is a privilege to be able to sit back, relax and watch your child do something they love. Be in the moment and encourage them to do the same.

Notice and Non Verbal. Be mindful and notice any changes in your child's body language (non verbal communication), verbal communication, behaviour and attitudes towards sport and their school/work. Negative changes in the above may indicate something isn't quite right. Also ensure that as parents your verbal and non verbal communication channels are positive and open so as to provide support and a safe haven for your children to connect with you, especially if they are feeling lost and overwhelmed.

Time and Trust. The road to success and happiness is filled with ups and downs, all of which help develop us. Encourage and reassure yourself and your child that they have time to achieve their goals. One step at a time. Trusting the process and trusting oneself is an important check point to instil in our daily habits.

Independence and Identity. Inspire your child to be independent as they grow. Inspire them to develop a positive self-identity that doesn't depend on what they have or haven't achieved in sport and life in general. Having a strong positive self-worth and image, along with a sense of independence are great ingredients for building a happy, healthy, confident child.

Navigate and Nurture. Establishing a positive set of life values for your child to adhere to is a gift you can give them. Practicing the values yourself and letting them see and feel what such values look like is of immense benefit to your child. Eliminating excessive expectations (either from yourself or others) is a key component to allowing your child to feel nurtured, loved and valued. Thus, helping them navigate their way on their sporting journey.

Grow and Gauge. Learning how to 'grow' with your child is vital. As they grow mentally, physically and emotionally their needs and wants change. Parents need to allow this growth to happen and adjust their thoughts, attitudes and behaviours accordingly. Parents should regularly gauge how this is going and reassess how they are or aren't meeting their child's needs as they grow.

I hope that this P. A. R. E. N. T. I. N. G. guide has given parents and carers some simple direction on how they can help their sporting children, because without strong role models and backing the road is difficult.

Please remember if your child is struggling, please contact us to allow us to connect you with some support people. The Academy is blessed to have a number of sports psychologists who are more than willing to work through various scenarios to help your child's journey. The pressure placed on athletes nowadays is far more than there was 30 years ago.
With the onset of social media and high expectation these professionals can offer athletes various tools to help them work through situations.

The below image needs to be shown to every athlete or young person who has a dream they are chasing. To believe in yourself is the strongest mantra you can have.

Thursday 19th October

GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

AWARDS NIGHT

On this night all athletes who have been involved in sports programs will be recognised for their involvement. From each program there will be major awards of 'Athlete of the Year' and 'Encouragement Award'. Major awards will also be presented to athletes who have contributed to their sport other than just as an athlete – refereeing, setting up and pulling down, coaching etc. Athletes will also be recognised for their involvement in activities outside of sport which show their commitment to the community.

Families are invited to the evening to help celebrate with their children and the Academy. Invitations will be sent out to all athletes who need to register through the Eventbrite QR code. Should there be any queries, please do not hesitate to contact either Annaleise of myself.

Glynis Nunn OAM Oly
Executive Director

The Greatest Christmas Party

RACV Royal Pines Resort welcomes corporate and social guests to join us for the return of the Gold Coast's greatest annual Christmas Party and celebrate in a dazzling winter wonderland.

Enjoy the best live entertainment, arrival canapes, 3-course dinner including a decadent dessert buffet and 5-hour drinks package in the Royal Benowa Ballroom.

Date: Saturday 2nd December
Time: 6.30pm – 11.30pm
Price: $189 per person. Upgrade to include basic spirits $219 per person

Scan the QR code to book
or call 07 5597 8700

RACV Royal Pines Resort

Terms and conditions apply. Tickets are non-refundable. Seating is in shared tables of 10. If booking for a party of less than 10 people you may be seated with other groups. RACV/Auto Club/Seniors Card discounts not available as this is a special ticketed event. For more information please visit the booking page or contact 07 5597 8700.

Program Manager Report Spring 2023

Junior Netball

The junior netball program commenced on 28th April and followed the same format as the senior netball program conducted earlier in the year. 24 junior netballers from across various Gold Coast clubs were selected in the squad with Sheryl Burns as head coach with Chantrel Thrupp assisting. The program concluded in June with each session commencing with a presentation focusing on high-performance habits to support players' development. These sessions included professional presentations on Leadership and Culture, multiple Sports Psychology sessions on goal setting and how to deal with and perform under pressure, and female-specific Nutrition. They also learned tools and tips to maintain their body through Strength and Conditioning, and various recovery methods.

Following the presentations, the squads' on court sessions focused on enhancing the fundamental elements junior players need to improve their on-court performance. These included specific passing techniques, attacking and defensive tactics, and footwork.

The players had the opportunity to practice the skills taught at the end of each session through various match-play drills.

The program ended in mid-June ahead of the Junior Netball Stage Age Championships with the majority of players representing their association at the Championships. There were many fantastic achievements from our academy athletes at this Championship as they led their teams in some tough matches. Congratulations to all players who played in the championship.

Future Stars

The 6-month Future Stars program is nearing completion with the program finishing in September. The 17 participants involved in the program are from across sports including Taekwondo, Cricket, Volleyball, Gymnastics, Swimming, Soccer, Basketball, and more.

Throughout the program, the participants engage in a variety of presentations from professionals in their field. The sessions create a 'toolkit of knowledge' to support the participant's development as aspiring elite athletes.

Presentations that have been delivered included Leadership and Culture, numerous Sports Psychology sessions presented by Mathew Grey focusing on providing tangible tools to help the athletes with their goal setting, dealing with pressure, anxiety, and bullying in sports. Complimenting the psychology sessions, the group had Natasha Price speak to them about the challenges she has faces as a wheelchair athlete.

Other sessions have involved understanding the importance of Nutrition to fuel for performance followed by a session on recipe planning which involved making healthy snacks. Time Management, Social Media, and Branding, formation of a Sponsorship package, and Integrity in Sport have also been delivered.

AllSports Physiotherapy presented on body maintenance and recovery with the athletes engaging in a practical recovery session later in the program. The recovery session involved use of the Normatec recovery and hip boots, floss bands, foam rolling, trigger balling and resistant band work for mobility.

Various Strength and Conditioning sessions focusing on the importance of developing good foundational movement patterns and then how to build strength from basic exercises to agility and circuit training were delivered. Additional S&C sessions included reformer Pilates, mat Pilates, Yoga, and a pool session.

The final session will include a revision of athlete goals set out at the start of the program and include retesting of various fitness, agility, and strength components tested at the back in the first session.

Mid-Year Future Stars Program

In late July we kicked off the Mid-Year Future Stars program with 14 young

athletes looking to
take their performance to the next level in their respective sports. The program has a fantastic group of developing athletes from across Swimming, Cricket, Rugby League, Hockey, Athletics, Karate, BMX, and Basketball to name a few.

Like the 6-month future stars program, this young group's first session involved testing their agility, speed, reaction, and basic strength. Testing the athletes at the start of the program provides a baseline understanding of the development needs of the athletes and how best we can support them throughout the program. The first session following the testing involved a presentation on Leadership and Culture, understanding their leadership style and how they can positively contribute to a culture they are proud to be a part of in their sport. They also had an Exercise Physiologist from AllSports Physio, Emma, speak to them about Strength and Conditioning for injury prevention, enhanced performance, and faster recovery. Physio Darcy then presented on the importance of Body Maintenance and Recovery and spoke about various methods to complement their training and enhance performance.

In addition to the physical sessions, Sports Psychology Mat Grey spoke about goal setting and coping skills. Later in the program he will also lead a discussion on resilience, and mental toughness. Natasha Price and Adam Shepard will be present to the group on coping strategies and resilience when talking about life in a wheelchair and all the difficulties that go with this.

The athletes throughout the program develop a comprehensive toolkit of knowledge to support their development as aspiring elite athletes.

Future Stars Extension

The Extension program commenced in May and is a specialised program only

for athletes who have been involved in a previous 'Future stars' program. The tight knit group of 6 athletes has been working closely with Glynis to improve and enhance certain physical, social, and mental weaknesses. Delivered from the Southport Sharks Health and Fitness Centre, the physical sessions athletes have been involved in include Reformer Pilates, Yoga, cycle and Body Combat class, Cycling and also a recovery session. The athletes were given a membership to the Centre and have had access to the gym to undertake their personal strength and conditioning program discussed with Glynis at the start of the program.

Educational sessions delivered to further support their social and mental ability included multiple Sports Psychology sessions focusing on tools to support mental toughness when coming back from injury, mental resilience, and the controllable vs the uncontrollable. Additional presentations have included the development of a Sponsorship package, attitudes and behaviours for elite athletes, Integrity and Media training. Dietitian Samantha also delivered a session on meal planning and recipe development where they had the opportunity to make healthy smoothies and protein balls.

The athletes have also had the opportunity to listen to Olympic Water Polo Gold Medallist, Jo Clark who spoke about her triumphs, defeats, learning and journey as a water polo athlete and now Australian coach.

The extension program will conclude in early September with the final session wrapping up all the learnings and knowledge gained throughout the program and the next steps for each athlete to take in their sporting journey.

Girls U14/15 Basketball Program

The girls' Basketball program commenced back in March and recently concluded in mid-August. The 13 developing basketballers came together over a weekend once a month to further develop their skills as athletes both on and off the court. The on-court skills focused on enhancing passing, shooting, and ball-handling skills and progressively shifted to teaching and developing players' game awareness through one on one and team-based drills. The girls were able to put the monthly skills they had worked on into practice each weekend as they represented their various associations at the representative level each weekend.

Accompanying the on-court skill development were presentations that provided tangible resources to the players to support their performance needs. These included female-specific Nutrition, Strength and Conditioning to improve on-court performance and Leadership development to enhance player selection opportunities. Sports Psychologist Mathew also discussed with player's tools to deal with pressures in games and competition. Allsports Physio spoke to the girls about Body Maintenance to improve performance and recovery which would minimize common basketball injuries.

The academy wishes all players the best of luck as some finish off their current representative season and others prepare for their upcoming season.

Little Athletics Queensland - Psych Presentation

Little Athletics Queensland held their State Conference for key volunteers within their athletics centres in June at Seaworld where on of the Academy sports psychologist
Gabi presented.
She presented on 'Athlete Physical and Mental Health'. Gabi spoke about mental health in young people, particularly young athletes, and how as leaders and authority figures the volunteers could best help and support their mental health. Attendees had the opportunity to gain some hands-on experience where they practiced learned skills related to the most appropriate ways to approach and have constructive conversations about mental health with young athletes.

Sprint Clinics – June Holidays

During the school holidays, we delivered our second lot of sprint

clinics for the year for individuals wanting to learn the basics and correct techniques to improve their running.

The 13+ Clinic had 10 participants involved from across a range of sports including Rugby League, Rugby 7s, Cricket, and Athletics. This clinic included timing the participants on the first day which was followed up mid-way through the 2nd day to see if their time over 30m improved. Given that we had quite a few participants return from our previous clinic earlier in the year and from last year we used resistant harnesses and sleds to deliver some alternative drills to enhance their learning and technique.

The 9-12 Clinic was held on Thursday 29th June with 11 participants involved. It was great to have so many familiar faces with quite a few new participants attending.
Again, we had a variety of participants attend from Athletics, Soccer, Rugby League, and Union, and Basketball all wanting to up their skills and improve their running for their sports performance.

2-Day Basketball Clinic

During the June/July school holidays we held our annual 2-day Basketball clinic with Australian Basketball and NBL winning player and coach Phil Smyth. Held out of A.B. Paterson College, the clinic was available to only a small group of developing players wanting to develop their skills and learn from an Australian basketball legend. Phil also spoke about what it takes to be an elite Basketball player.

Day one on the court involved working with the players to improve their shooting, driving to the hoop, crossovers, defensive slide and player spacing in a game. Day two involved refining the player's jab step and shooting off the dribble and passing. The players were tested on their understanding and development of skills over the two days through various gameplay situations.

To support the players on-court learning and teaching from Phil, they were provided with tools from Sports psychologist Mat to use in games and competitions when they are put in pressure situations. Dietitian Samantha also spoke about game day and competition nutrition and the importance of fuelling appropriately to support the demands of Basketball. They also finished with a Pilates session from Chantelle as an alternative form of active recovery and additionally Strength and Conditioning.

A great two days for all the players that attended and provided the opportunity to learn from Phil Smyth.

Gold Coast District Cricket

This year we linked with Gold Coast District Cricket to support the development of representative cricketers across the 12-16 age group and teach them about high-performance habits. The presentations delivered included Leadership and Culture and the impact this can have on selection at a high level and also understanding their personal and Social media brand and the ability to both negatively and positively influence their sporting careers now and in the future. These two sessions were delivered by academy staff member Annaleise with accredited dietitian Samantha speaking about fuelling to support player energy demands in training and competition.

In addition to the presentations, the cricketers were involved in running technique sessions with Glynis to learn how to run more efficiently to improve their performance on the pitch.

The first session involved getting an understanding of how the players run and areas that need to be worked on. Most players lacked arm drive and tended to point their toes when running which is quite common. These two elements were a big focus during the first session. Before shifting into any technique work the players were timed over a 30m distance. They were then timed on the second day after Glynis had worked with them all to improve various elements of their running to see if there was any improvement.

By the end of day two it was evident that all players were running better, and their speed had increased as they were all pushing from the ground whilst cycling their legs and moving their arms more efficiently.

A.B. Paterson – Presentations

The academy was fortunate enough to present to a group of 32 Track and Field students from A.B. Paterson across two days in June. Sports Psychologist Gabi delivered a presentation on Goal setting to enhance the students' performance outcomes and provided tools to support continuous goal development. Glynis delivered a presentation on the attitudes and behaviours of elite athletes. She spoke about the lessons sport teaches you and what makes an elite athlete, along with the importance of the coach's role. All of these are important to understand if individuals are wanting to achieve high-performance results in their sport.

Upper Coomera Future Stars

Term two at Upper Coomera has seen the following topics delivered on Nutrition, Integrity in sports and Biomechanics in Sports.

The year 7 students had Dietitian Samantha present to them on the importance of fuelling their body for performance and what each 'marco and micronutrient' does. Following the presentation, the students had the opportunity to use different ingredients to make a healthy smoothie. Ingredients such as spinach, dates, chai seeds, avocado and more were used to show the students how easy it is to make a healthy and tasty smoothie for a snack or post-training recovery.

The year 8 students had the Australian Integrity unit present to them on clean sport, specifically touching on antidoping, member protection, being a good sport and testing procedures involved with doping and match-fixing.

The year 9 students had AllSports Physiotherapist Dakota present to them on Biomechanics. The students learned about forces specifically summation, Newton's laws, Kinetics/ Kinematics, and the use of technology to analyse forces. He further explained the theory by incorporating practical elements that went through various biomechanical examples involving running, jumping, throwing, and kicking.

Term three saw the topics of Sports Injuries and strapping, Sports Psychology and Anatomy delivered. With one semester to go, the school has had some wonderful presentations to help young athletes understand more about sport and various aspects involved in improving performance.

Up Coming!

We have a range of programs and clinics still to come for the year and these include the September Sprint Clinics during the first week of the school holidays and Phase 2 of our Junior Netball program commencing in October. The annual BMX program will again be delivered over 3 weekends in an intensive style program to support riders heading into the BMX National championships at the end of October/ early November.

For open applications Scan the QR Code below of follow the link below.
https://goldsport.com.au/open-applications/

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Pride of The Gold Coast Academy of Sport

2023 Awards Night

Invitation to Awards night

DETAILS

Thursday 19th October	6pm for 6:30pm Start	RACV Royal Pines Resort, Ross St, Benowa

The evening will commence with refreshments in the meeting area on the ground floor outside the Ballroom

*Please ensure you RSVP by purchasing your free general admission ticket through Eventbrite using the **athlete's name**.*
Tickets close 5th October.
Max. 4 per Family

The Horse's Birthday

August 1 - The day Australian horses celebrate (although they tend to leave most of the party hats, cake and champagne to their owners) their birthday.

By some miracle are they are all born on that so often chilly winter day?

Well, no, of course not, but for many years now - from way back in 1860 in fact - the local thoroughbred has had a standardised birthday.

It makes everything easier - many races (thoroughbred), both small and big, are restricted to certain ages whilst others have weights allotted according to the age of the contestant. Imagine figuring out which horse was what age on any particular day - a logistical nightmare!

And it makes sense to judge all horses born in the same season on a level age footing - after a couple of years they are all maturing into racehorses so the actual date of birth is not all that relevant.

A two-year-old horse is considered the equivalent of a 13-year-old human - and when kids get to those first couple of years of high school nobody is concerned about which month they were born in!

A horse's actual date of birth is still recorded by the stud book and is printed in sales catalogues so we still know what time of year a horse arrived - whether it be an August born like Black Caviar or a December arrival like Lonhro.

Australian racing was still in its infancy in 1860. The first Melbourne Cup had not yet been run but a couple of decades earlier the Australian Racing Committee had been set up, leading to - in 1842 - the establishment of the first permanent racing body, the Australian Jockey Club.

It was this group of men who started to figure out the rules of racing including deciding that August 1 was the logical date for the horses' birthday. Spring - and thus the breeding season (when mares naturally being to cycle - stimulated by the increasing daylight hours) - approaching, foals appear.

It is if course the opposite in the northern hemisphere where January 1 is the standardized birthday - and has been since 1833 (although it was not until 1858 that the rule was accepted across England) courtesy of a ruling by The Jockey Club.

Until then May 1 was the accepted day as racing during the 1700's was conducted in the warmer months but as the length of the racing season increased an earlier date made more sense.

Changes occurred in the United States as well - the southern states liked May 1, the northern January 1 and it was not until the end of the Civil War (the winners get to choose the rules!) that the first day of the year was set in stone.

Other breeds have followed suit with show horses competing in age groups also requiring uniformity - as do standardbreds (trotters) although their birth dates have changed over the years, from September 1 to, just a couple of years ago, January 1.

Unite and Connect through Sport

Call for help and connection with businesses.

The Gold Coast Academy of Sport has partnered with WattleNest to stage a sporting luncheon on Wednesday 25th October at BOND University.

The WattleNest was born to empower, celebrate and connect elite athletes to help mitigate financial barriers and provide pathways for our most talented sportspersons. It is marketed as a community that connects business and sport to build stronger, healthier and an all inclusive communities. The Academy is proud to be associated with this event and we hope to raise funds to help continue our pursuit to promote the benefits of sport and how we can encourage positive choices and provide education for athletes to empower, inspire and engage.

On the day we will be having a panel of elite sporting people who will speaking about their journeys and dreams.
Held in the Hoog Antink Olympic room at Bond University, people attending will have the opportunity to view all Olympic torches from 1936 to the current time. Taking more than 12 years to put the collection together it is one of only a few full collections of the Summer Olympic torches in the world. Below is a view of the Lausanne's collection.

If you would like to attend, please register by logging in through the QR code on the following flyer. Take the opportunity to speak with some of our leading athletes and have your photo taken with some Olympic torches which will be available on the day (Barcelona '92, Atlanta '96 and Sydney 2000).

Money on the day will go to the WattleNest and the Academy to continue to create opportunities for up-and-coming athletes to pursue their dreams.

If there are any families / businesses who would like to donate prizes for the raffle on the day, please contact Glynis or Annaleise at the Academy.
We would welcome any involvement on the day.

Raffle prizes already donated are:

- Dinner vouchers at RACV Royal Pines and The Southport Sharks
- 3 beautiful hamper packs donated by Chempro
- Hamper pack donated by Laura Gerber (member for Currumbin QLD Parliament)
- Meat trays donated by Heitz butchers Beaudesert
- Wine box packs
- Merchandise packs from Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

AND MUCH MORE.

ALLSPORTS PHYSIOTHERAPY GROUP

Nurturing Peak Performance and Health:

Understanding RED-S from a Physiotherapist's Perspective

In the dynamic realm of sports, achieving peak performance isn't just about rigorous training and dedication; it's also heavily reliant on a balanced and nourishing approach to nutrition and overall well-being. Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S) is an intricate syndrome that demands attention from both athletes and healthcare professionals alike. As dedicated physiotherapists at Allsports Physiotherapy Helensvale and Pimpama, we comprehend the vital role of energy availability in fostering optimal performance and health.

At its core, RED-S is a syndrome characterized by a decline in athletic performance and general well-being. It stems from an inadequate energy intake that fails to meet the demands of an athlete's training regimen and daily activities. This energy deficit doesn't only compromise peak performance but also impacts various bodily functions, leading to an array of adverse effects.

One of the most common symptoms that lead athletes to seek our expertise is stress fractures. Stress fractures result from repetitive submaximal loading, causing bones to succumb to mechanical stress. These fractures are often attributed to factors such as sudden spikes in activity, bone insufficiency due to inadequate energy availability, poor conditioning, and flawed technique or equipment usage.

However, the repercussions of RED-S extend beyond fractures. Athletes may find themselves grappling with recurrent illnesses like colds and flu, irregular menstrual cycles, weight loss, subpar athletic performance, delayed growth, mood fluctuations, and nutritional deficiencies. These symptoms converge to undermine not only athletic endeavors but also overall quality of life.

The impairment RED-S inflicts upon athletic performance is profound. Muscles may dwindle in size and strength, muscular endurance may plummet, power generation could wane, injury susceptibility might soar, and concentration—both in sport and daily life—can falter. The aftermath also includes sluggish recovery and relentless fatigue, creating a domino effect that impedes an athlete's progression.

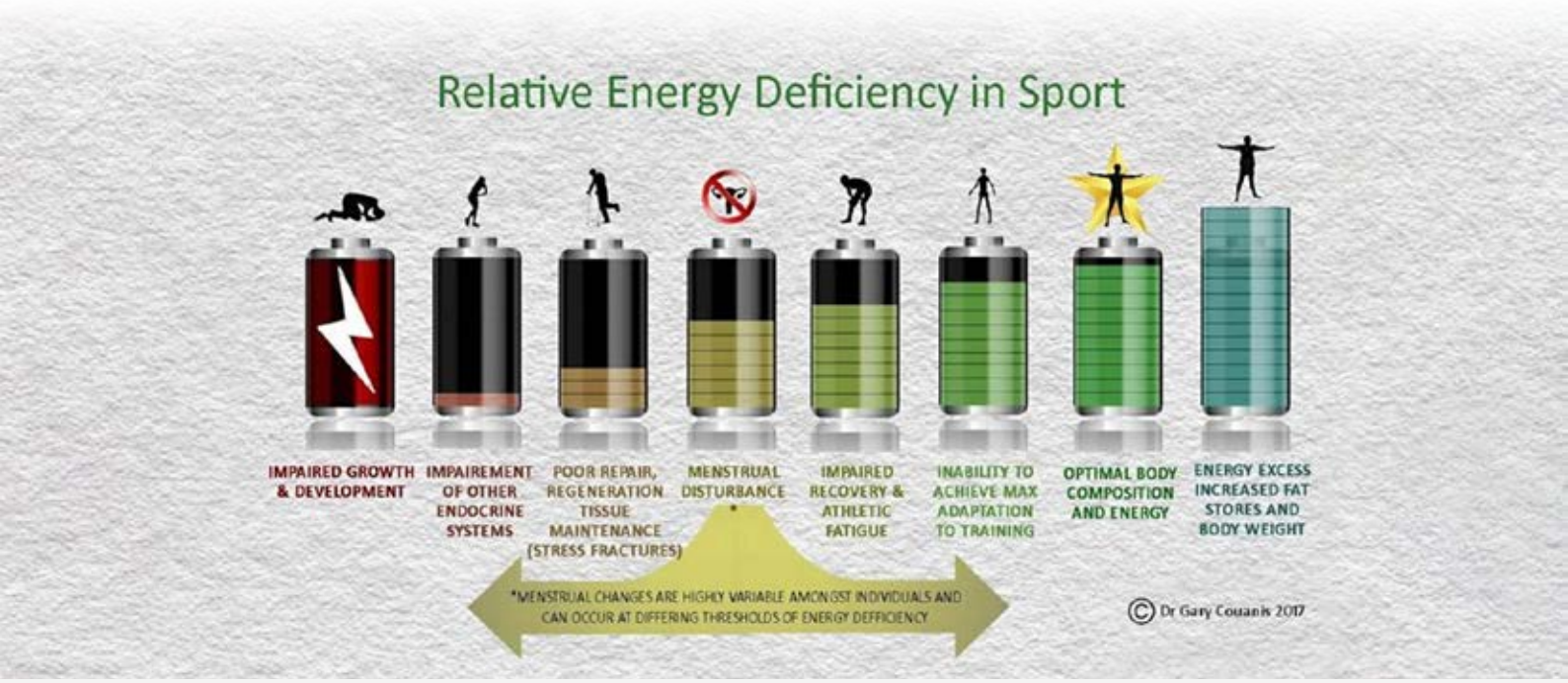
Addressing RED-S necessitates a tailored and comprehensive approach. With each athlete exhibiting unique symptoms, a personalized treatment plan is paramount. A multi-disciplinary strategy, involving the collaboration of various health professionals, emerges as a cornerstone in managing this complex condition.

From our standpoint as physiotherapists, we play a pivotal role in treating underlying injuries while facilitating a seamless return to sport. Our expertise in biomechanics, movement analysis, and rehabilitation proves invaluable in this regard. By devising specialized exercises, we contribute to restoring strength, mobility, and functionality, thereby enabling athletes to regain their prowess.

Simultaneously, the involvement of a registered dietitian is essential in rectifying the energy imbalance and enhancing energy availability. Educating athletes about the profound impact of proper nutrition on performance and recovery is pivotal. Understanding how food serves as fuel can be transformative, enabling athletes to make informed dietary choices that propel them towards their goals.

In conclusion, the intricate web of RED-S underscores the irrefutable connection between nutrition, health, and performance. As physiotherapists at Allsports Physiotherapy Helensvale and Pimpama, we recognize the multifaceted challenges athletes face, and we're committed to providing holistic care that integrates injury management and prevention with nutrition education. By fostering collaboration among various health professionals, we empower athletes to surmount the hurdles of RED-S and reach new heights of excellence in their athletic journey.

Written by Nikaila Hartley – Physiotherapist
Allsports Physio Helensvale and Pimpama



Tips on how parents can help their child manage success and disappointment

To follow up my editorial, please find here another article on how we, as parents and coaches can help children with competition pressures.
Tips on how parents can help their child manage success and disappointment. Success and disappointment happens at all levels of sport and it can be a very stressful time for coaches, parents, officials and athletes. So how can parents help their child navigate the emotions associated with the above.

A focus on winning or outcome is not a healthy way to look at sport. We need to develop an appropriate outlook on sport, which includes changing the focus from outcome to performance.

Children and parents who focus on outcome judge their success on wins and losses, not on how they played/performed. They focus on ability rather than effort, so that they see failure as a lack of ability.

Parents need to explain to their child that being successful means achieving personal goals, or having a performance that is more than they did the last time rather than winning the game. Parents can help their child develop specific realistic goals. They will then feel successful if they have achieved some, or all of their goals, even if the outcome is not what they set out to do.

DEALING WITH WINNING- A Parent's Guide

- Keep winning in perspective, praise your child on the win, but encourage them to point out specific parts of the performance that contributed to the win.
- Take the focus off winning, comment on how they played/ performed, and the goals they achieved, rather than just on a "good win". This reinforces that winning isn't the most important aspect.
- Encourage good sportsmanship, encourage your child to discuss the other team's efforts without allowing them to put down other players.
- Don't ask for perfection, after a win, don't comment on things your child could have done better. This will only make them feel as though nothing they do will please you.

DEALING WITH LOSING/DISAPPOINTMENT

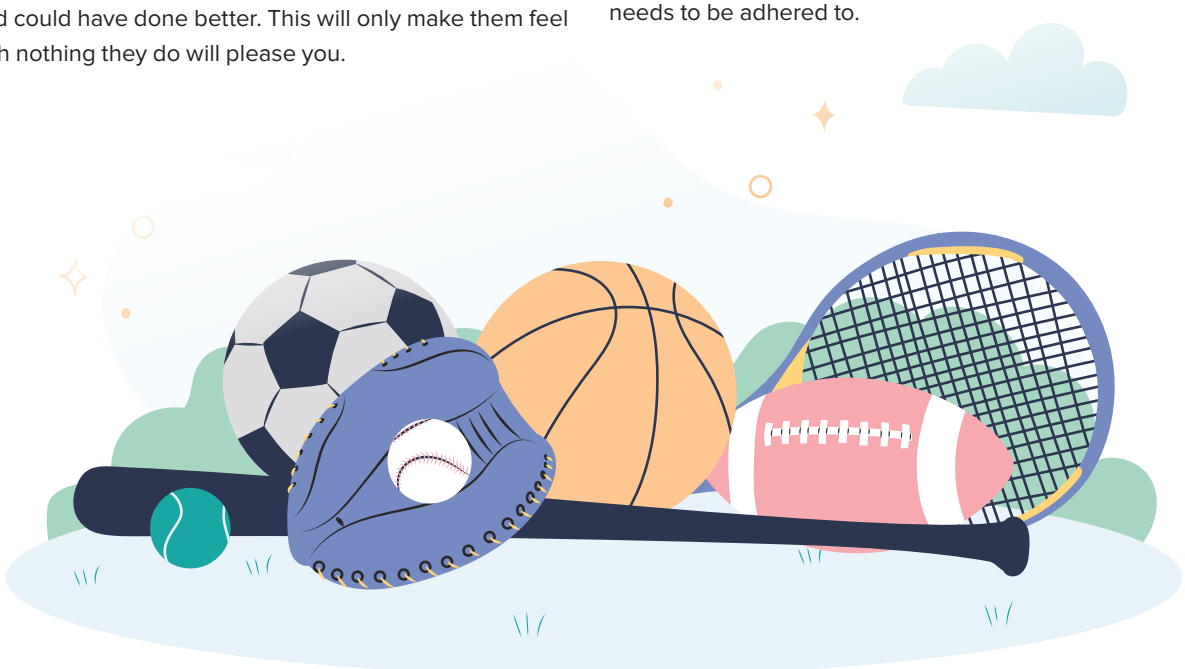
- Remind your child that every player/athlete loses at some time, even the most successful players. There are many high profile athletes/ players you can use as examples.
- Teach your child that a defeat is never a failure because they can learn something from every performance they do.
- Congratulate your child on specific goals they achieved, and encourage them to evaluate the goals that they didn't attain so that they might work towards them in the next competition.
- Encourage your child to find something positive they did during the performance, but don't allow them to compare themselves to others. If they are having trouble finding something positive provide them with something you saw.

OVERALL APPROACH TO COMPETITION

Reward all your child's attempts, as the more encouragement they receive the less likely they are to fear failure, and the more likely they are to try it again in the future. Try to minimise criticism, let the coach evaluate their performance.

Clubs and organisations can assist parents with the above by further supporting the ideas discussed by means of resources and/ or information sessions. Also providing them with information on how selection processes will take place and how team schedules will work is very important. Accurate, specific information prior to the selection or season will create clarity and limit assumptions for all involved. For those athletes/players who don't make selection it may be worthwhile for clubs/organisation to offer a feedback session for coaches, players and parents so as to allow learning and future planning and goal setting to occur.

Clubs/organisations also need to work with parents and players to ensure that the environment, values and 'culture' of the team they are involved in is positive, inclusive and does not tolerate bullying or negativity from peers or others involved. A clear understanding of these guidelines not only needs to be understood by all but also needs to be adhered to.



Preparing for Competition

One of the benefits I have from working with many professionals and athletes at all levels is that I get experiences to draw information back on.

When I was a young athlete (many years ago) I met Mac Wilkins. He was a champion discus thrower from the 80's. I can remember meeting Mac as a 16 year old in the late 70's and the impact this man mountain had on me - confident, easy to speak to and huge was impacting!

The following information offers some sound advice on how to prepare for major competitions. I recently had reason to search for help as an athlete I have started to work with gets extremely nervous prior to competition. Having never had this situation to such an extreme before I wanted to search for some answers. When an athlete becomes physically sick and emotionally out of control prior to competition the coach and family need to try different approaches to offset or control it somehow.

Mac claims successful preparation is a major factor in reducing fears and doubts. The combination of preparation, relaxation and enjoyment yields maximum results.

He stated: "Confidence is the key to maximum performance is any endeavour. Everyone strives for the ability to perform in a relaxed, skilful and uninhibited manner. Confidence is merely the ability to limit nervousness, adrenalin, self doubts and distractions to manageable levels, thus allowing for a relaxed performance."

"To have confidence is to know what to expect. This can be accomplished by eliminating the unknown elements as much as possible. It is the surprise of the unexpected, magnified to paralysing proportions by the stress of competition, that causes athletes to freeze of choke. Thorough preparation is the best way to avoid the unexpected."

"There are several related factors that work together to build mental security. Basically, it comes down to two questions. Have I done everything possible to prepare myself? Have I prepared correctly and with 100% effort? These questions must be asked constantly, not just the day of the competition, but weeks and months beforehand. If you can answer yes to both of these questions you have taken a big step towards eliminating distractions and performing with confidence."

"A sound training program is of course vital to a top performance. Incorrect or over training is difficult to overcome. If proper technique isn't learnt in training, it won't magically appear in competition. A consistent level of skill must be developed through repetition in training. Consistency brings confidence. The training program must also be properly designed to put you in peak condition for the big game. This is a major part of establishing competitive confidence."

"Competitive experience teaches you what to expect in big conditions. It helps to know that even though nervousness can be unbearable before the start, it immediately drops to a tolerable level after you begin to compete. Know this and the tensions and self doubts won't be so fearful. Everyone learns these lessons at their own pace, but only experience can be the teacher."

"Visualisation and confidence go hand in hand. The greater the clarity with which you can visualise your performance, the greater your confidence and chances of success will be. Play the game in your mind beforehand again and again. Know what to expect and see it happen. Cover all possibilities! See yourself performing, see the arena, the crowd, experience as much as possible in your mind's eye. Use this tool regularly to improve your performance."

"Enjoy the competition. To be dedicated enough to prepare correctly there must be a basic love of the activity, of competition or performing. Don't forget this pleasure and enjoyment. Have fun, look forward to the fears and nervousness. Anticipate the adrenalin high and the challenge of the competition. Savour the satisfaction of your performance. By increasing your awareness of your love for the sport will be less distracting and can allow you to focus more. The increased concentration will improve your performance and satisfaction."

"Successful preparation is the major factor in reducing fears and doubts. When you know you are ready its easier to relax and enjoy competing. The combination of preparation, relaxation and enjoyment yields maximum results. Maximum performance, by the way, builds confidence in quantum leaps. Nothing breeds success like success."

"Make a time schedule for the day of competition. Know exactly when you'll get out of bed and what and when you'll eat. Schedule time for packing everything, travelling to the competition and when you will start your warm up. The important thing is to plan ahead so you aren't rushed. Nothing is more terrifying than a broken shoelace at the last minute or rushing a 50 minute warm up into 10 minutes because you were stuck in traffic. These unexpected things become major traumas if you are not prepared. Adrenalin and fear control can distort your thinking, destroy confidence and technique and ultimately, performance.

BE PREPARED TO CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLES."

"Concentrate only on your performance. Don't worry about things out of your control. The weather, the crowd, the judges, traffic delays and other such things - they are all potential distractions. Concentration turns them into meaningless events outside your control and concern. You are ready to compete and nothing else matters."

"Be calm and relaxed. All optimum athletic performances are characterised by relaxation. There is no wasted energy. Tension and distractions are greatly reduced, allowing increased concentration. Practicing relaxation techniques as part of a daily routine helps overcome the stress of training and prepares you for the competition."

"Finally you are ready for the competition to begin. By now your daily training success has helped to establish a high level of confidence. You are well prepared. You know what to expect. There is nothing to worry about, everything is in its proper place and at is optimum level. YOU ARE READY!"

This is great insight for the coach and athlete from the lips of a leading athlete who has been there and done that at the highest level over many, many years.

I had the opportunity to speak to my personal squad not so long ago about disappointment and competition.

Apart from a couple, who have 'belief' issues, everyone responded confidently. I would love to share their responses with you in relation to competition, how to prepare and how they move on. This is a reflection on their approach to competition, their preparation and their expectation.

Some responses include:

- Accept what has happened, reflect, plan for the future - make a positive action plan.
- Be persistent, don't give into nervousness. From being very nervous, make the decision to compete more frequently and can now approach competition more like training (becomes a routine). Diminish nervousness as it resembles training.
- Used to like playing team sport but made the decision to compete individually. I can only blame myself now if something does not go to plan.
- Remember why I am doing the sport - for enjoyment and fun.
- Use feedback from the coach to process how to improve.
- Use the disappointment as motivation to train harder and prove I can do better.
- I get physical - not with people, with objects. Once this is done then I use the determination that it will never happen again if I can help it.
- Learn from any mistakes that might have happened. Write down things so I can see them and then make a plan.
- Remember that I love to run and know that if I stick with the program improvement will come.
- Competition makes me very determined - it is a disciplined approach to everything I do.
- Love the competitive feeling that comes with the sport - the adrenalin is like an addiction.

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