



# Player Welfare Mentor Programme

Presentation by:

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# Outline

- Introduction
- Role of Player Welfare Mentor
- Principles of Training
- Overtraining
- Injury Prevention and Management
- Nutrition and Hydration
- Life Skills
- Health and Well-being
- Next Steps

# Introduction

- Talented young players play on multiple teams at the same time
- Compete in several competitions
- Are expected to train fully with each team
- Problems include player eligibility, scheduling of competitions and competition formats
- However, lack of communication between management teams and a Mentor for players can also result in increased pressures
- Increased risk of overtraining, overuse injury and ultimately burnout



# Role of Player Welfare Mentor

- My Role

- A Mentor is “an experienced and trusted advisor”
- In 2015, a number of Counties will have Player Welfare Mentors as part of a pilot programme by the GAA
- Support and mentoring available for young players in County U16, U18, U21 and College/University Squads
- Monitor training and playing regimes (Minor Team only in 2015 using Smartabase)
- Accessible via phone and e-mail for issues

# Principles of Training

- The aim of training is to improve performance whilst adhering to the principles of training:
  - **Specificity** – best way to develop fitness is to train system required e.g. if you want stamina, do stamina runs, not short sprints. Training should be specific to different training abilities
  - **Overload** – Gradual increases allow the body to adapt to avoid injury. Training shouldn't increase by more than 10% per session
  - **Adaption** – Adaptation takes place gradually e.g. player will experience muscle soreness after new exercises
  - **Progression** – If training is increased too quickly, you will be unable to adapt and your body will break down
  - **Variation** – After training day for several days, you should train lightly to let your body recover

# Training Cycle for Fitness



## Initial baseline

- You always start at a baseline level of fitness



## Training

- Whilst training, your level of fitness decreases
- You end in a less fit state than when you began



## Recovery

- After training, your body enters a recovery period responding to the workout you engaged in
- During recovery, your level of fitness increases back up to the initial baseline fitness level



## Supercompensation

- This is when your body is at a level of fitness higher than when you started training
- This is your body's response and adaptation to the training stimulus so that it is able to perform more efficiently next time



# Role of Rest / Recovery

- During hard training, you will fatigue and your performance will drop
- This is a normal part of training
- Adequate time for recovery enables the body to prepare for the next bout of training
- As a rule of thumb, fatigue lasting for two weeks or more is not normal
- Engage with various recovery strategies to get the benefits from training – e.g. ice baths, massage, nutrition, hydration, sleep
- Short recovery periods results in you failing to recover from hard training
- Infections and injury occurs if you constantly train before recovering properly

# Overtraining

- Prolonged excessive training + insufficient recovery + other stress = Overtraining
- Signs
  - Chronic fatigue, decreased performance, lack of motivation, soreness of legs that does not resolve
- Risk factors
  - Consistently eliminating recovery periods, not adhering to principles of training, year round competition and training
- Prevalence
  - No scientific guidelines
  - Each player is different and requires different recovery times



# Recommendations for Players

- Limit weekly participation time
- Achieve optimal nutrition, hydration and sleep
- Treat overtraining with rest
- Reduced training may be sufficient for recovery in some cases of overreaching
- Recover fully from injury / illness before returning
- Engage with various forms of active recovery – ice baths, swimming, sleep
- Familiarise yourself with **Information Sheet on Principles of Training**

# Injury Prevention and Management

- Injury is a common aspect of sports participation
- Injuries may be acute (e.g. single event – hamstring tear) or overuse (e.g. more serious and develop over time – shin splints)
- From monitoring injury in Gaelic games as past 7 years, we know that:
  - 2 out of every 3 players on a team will get injured at least once in a season
  - Over 1/3 of players will have more than one injury per season
  - Up to 1/4 of injuries will be a recurrence of an old injury
  - Over half of injuries will be during a match whilst over 1/3 are sustained during training
  - Lower limb injuries remain the most prevalent (Football - 76.3%, Hurling – 69%)
  - 50-60% of injuries occur in the second half of play

# Risk factors for injury

## Intrinsic



- Previous injury
- Mechanics (The way we run, jump, land etc...)
- Level of conditioning
- Growth-related factors

## Extrinsic



- Training regimes
- Competition schedules
- Technique
- Equipment
- Playing surface
- Readiness for sport

# Recommendations for Players

- Warm-up, cool-down and stretch
- Acquire knowledge of risk factors
- Recover properly from exercise
- Replace fluids and energy
- When an overuse injury is diagnosed, it is essential to address the underlying cause. The player, parents, and coaches should be involved in reviewing all risk factors and developing a strategy to attempt to avoid recurrent injury
- Limit weekly and yearly participation time and have scheduled rest periods
- Familiarise yourself with **Information Sheet on Injury Prevention and Management**

# Nutrition and Hydration

- The meal eaten in the hours after exercise can make a big difference to recovery
- Consume various nutrients after training/games for recovery
  - Protein – promote muscle growth and repair
  - Carbohydrate – refuelling
  - Fluids and electrolytes – rehydration
- Meals and snacks consumed after training or games should contain a source of protein and carbohydrate e.g. chicken salad roll
- Maintaining proper hydration before, during, and after activity reduces the amount of dehydration you will experience
  - Adequate fluid and food is important to ensure optimal recovery and preparation for the next game
  - Aim to drink between 2 -3 litres today
- For more information, read the **INDI Booklet for Sportspeople**

# Player Burnout

- Burnout is a withdrawal from sport noted by a reduced sense of accomplishment, devaluation/resentment of sport, and physical/psychological exhaustion
- Symptoms – disillusionment, impaired performance, absenteeism, exhaustion, sleep disturbances, feeling helpless, hostility
- Wide range of environmental (Competition schedules, coach demands) and personal (inability to say no, desire to do too much) risk factors
- Motivation is the primary difference between overtraining and burnout
  - Over-trained player – still motivated to compete
  - Burnt out player - demotivated
- Therefore, the overtrained athlete may begin with feelings of staleness, which in turn, may lead to burnout, which in turn, may ultimately lead to dropout

# Recommendations for Players

- The diagnosis of burnout can only be made by taking a thorough history and requires the recognition of varied symptoms in players.
- Burnout can be avoided by the avoidance of overscheduling and excessive time commitment to sport
- Emphasis should be placed on skill development over competition and winning at a young age
- Players should learn fundamental life skills such as communication, stress management and decision making using the resources on the official GAA website
- Training programmes should adhere to the principles of training and incorporate thoughtful periodisation
- Familiarise yourself with **Information Sheet on Player Burnout**

# Life Skills

- Players often have to overcome adversity, training setbacks, injury and personal tragedy
- Life skills help young players cope with demands of everyday life and enjoy playing sport
  - Goal-Setting
  - Decision Making
  - Communication Skills
  - Stress Management
  - Time Management
  - Networking
  - Managing Relationships
- Familiarise yourself with **Information Sheet on Life Skills**



# Recommendations for Players

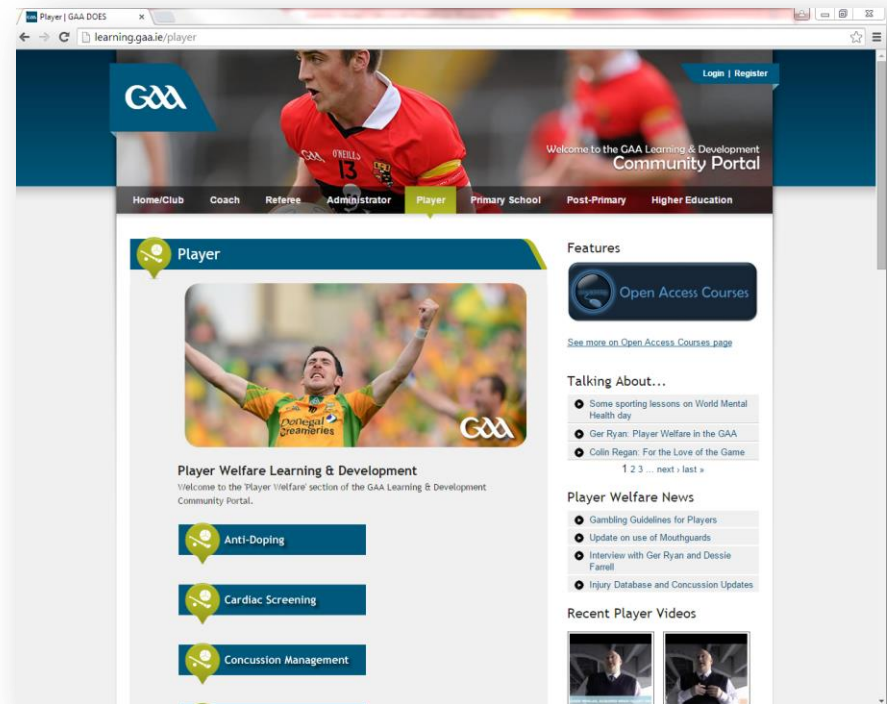
- Set both short- and long term-goals
- Follow a process to make key decisions
- Use SWOT to understand your strengths and weakness and to identify opportunities and threats
- Create and practice a 30 second introductory speech for networking
- Reduce stress by managing your time well, keeping physically active and listening to music
- Remember to keep enjoying what you are doing. Talk to coach/friends/mentor if you aren't enjoying it
- If relationships are affecting you, identify the reasons why and work on improving the negative aspect to benefit you

# Takeaway Messages

- Read the information sheets that you have been given
- Follow a process to make decisions
- Communicate with coaches and the Player Welfare Mentor on training and game workload
- Recognise importance of rest and recovery
- Focus on your long term career
- Let me know if you are having problems

# Useful Resources

- Official GAA Website  
(<http://www.gaa.ie/medical-and-player-welfare/>)
- Learning and Development Portal  
(<http://learning.gaa.ie/player>)



# Contact Details

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