



EMERGING TALENT LIFESTYLE PACK



the pathway to develop Irish football

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Coaches Guidelines for usage of Lifestyle Pack

The following points are some guidelines for all coaches in the usage of this document.

This Lifestyle document is devised for coaches to present to their players. This should then in turn lead to a more informed soccer player to all aspects of their athlete lifestyle

Each part of this Lifestyle document should be used in presentation form to your players. There should be an informed presentation to the players and they should then receive the specific worksheets/handouts in relation to that presentation

This Lifestyle document should be strategically presented to your players. The presentation should be professional and informed. Please do not overload your players with all of the information at one presentation. This document is devised to be presented over the course of a season or seasons. It is envisaged that presentations will be strategically spread throughout the season

Through continued research this document will further expand and new advanced ideas from around the world of elite performance will be produced and forwarded to you to add to your lifestyle pack.

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COACHES GUIDELINES FOR
USAGE OF LIFESTYLE PACK

Acknowledgements

The Football Association of Ireland Emerging Talent Lifestyle pack aims to produce a fundamental knowledge of the Social, Mental, Lifestyle and Physical capacities for players aged 10 to 16 and to help you, the coach, enable your players reach their maximum performance both on and off the field. This pack is based on knowledge from Exercise and Sport Science accompanied with current trends within the game of soccer. We hope you find this pack very practical, and that it gives you guidelines and specific tools that can be used in your coaching.

This pack is the culmination of work by many people whom we now wish to acknowledge gratefully.

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THANK YOU.

Introduction

The Football Association of Ireland have emphasised their commitment and determination in developing elite youth football through the establishment of the Emerging Talent Programme. The FAI Emerging Talent Programme is an integrated and structured coaching and development programme for the most talented young Irish players. This coaching and development programme overcomes the gaps in the system, thus allowing young players to fulfill their potential. There are currently 12 regional centres and 32 league centres. In the 2007-08 season there were 600 boys U-14 to U-16 within the regional centres. The FAI Emerging Talent Programme has currently a total of 99 staff. There are 72 coaches, 12 kit persons, 12 physiotherapists, 6 recruitment staff and 12 parent liaison officers. Coaches require a minimum coaching qualification of UEFA-B license.

Within the programme, a clear player development pathway is established. Technical, tactical, physical, mental, lifestyle and personal components are progressively addressed from the FUNdamental stage of involvement (6-9 years of age) through to retirement. The FAI makes use of the internationally recognised six phase model of long term player development designed by Dr. Istvan Balyi. This establishes the need to create clear pathways for athletes to progress in their chosen sport and adopts the philosophy that individuals should be exposed to specific types of training, depending on their stage of development. The U- 14's age group targeted in this research falls into the 'Training to Train' phase, in terms of player development.

1.0 International Programmes

Germany

Other variations of the FAI Emerging Talent Programme can be found from other football associations throughout the world from which the FAI can learn from and add to their structures. The German Football Association (DFB) have a similar programme but it is run on a much larger scale. It is referred to as the 'Extended Talent Promotion Programme' and it provides specialised training for 22,000 boys and girls aged 11-17 years. The training is implemented by 1,200 coaches at 390 places throughout Germany. The programme is organised by 29 full-time coordinators and it is run at a cost of €10 million a year. The number of players is restricted to 30 a group to keep the training effective. There are two distinct groups; U-14's to U-18's in one group and U-12's and U-13's in the other group. The U-14 to 18 group is intended to accommodate potential late developers. The aim of the programme is to offer in addition to regular club training a once-weekly training session that focuses on improving individual skills and tactical knowledge.

In short, this aim is achieved by the coordinators by identifying training bases and equipping those training bases with the necessary equipment, next part-time coaches (minimum UEFA-B licence coaching badge) implement the training and help to identify talent by building up a network with clubs, club coaches and players.

The USA

The U.S. Soccer Development Academy is also a talented player development programme from which the FAI could learn. However, this programme is different to the previously detailed programme as it is focused on a smaller group of elite players and the clubs implement the training. The clubs that are chosen to participate in the academy will only compete in academy programming. This is thought to increase the amount of time that is spent training and improve the quality of matches. The aim of the academies is player development and the academies provide players with the best possible opportunity to achieve their potential as elite football players. Academy teams are required to train at least 3 days and rest one day a week during the season. There are 64 academy clubs, producing a representative team from U-16 and 18 age groups and each team must have a minimum of 20 players. At each age group the academy clubs are divided into eight conferences of eight teams. Each team play 30 matches during an 8 month season with the winner from each conference participating in playoff finals.

1.1 Physiological Demands of Football

The physiological demands of football require players to be competent in several aspects of fitness, which include aerobic and anaerobic power, muscle strength, flexibility and agility. The most decisive skills, such as the ability to jump high and sprint fast in duels against opponents, are anaerobic and have a great impact on the outcome of a game. The match demands of football, as a multi-sprint sport, consist of periods of high-intensity exercise interspersed with periods of lower-intensity exercise. Match analysis can also provide information about work-to-rest ratios, number of physical contacts, time spent in possession of the ball, numbers of tackles and headers.

1.2 Aim and Areas Identified

It is very important to educate coaches, parents and players, in relevant sports science support as there is currently limited information available to them. This support has a major impact on the holistic development of the player. In order to produce players with a long term focus, it is important to consider all areas of their lives. Lack of preparation in areas other than technical and tactical development may hinder an athlete from performing at their optimal level. The areas identified as requiring further consideration include: injury prevention and management, nutrition, psychology; recovery strategies, lifestyle management and self monitoring.

The care of the players in terms of injury prevention and management is paramount to performance. Reducing the number and frequency of injuries in a team and providing an effective system to manage and monitor injury, will evidently improve the performance of the team and programme.

Nutrition is one of the most important factors affecting health and performance. Nutrition is also vital for growth and development in children and adolescents. Aside from the limits imposed by heredity and the physical improvements associated with training, no factor plays a bigger role in exercise performance than does nutrition.

The development of young footballers is a holistic process. Physical, technical, tactical and mental aspects must all be addressed to prevent the formation of significant deficiencies in the players' abilities. In comparison to other areas of development, the importance of a strong mental capacity is often dismissed or undermined due to a lack of knowledge or understanding. However, the possession of various mental skills and capabilities can have a profound effect on performance. Similar to physical characteristics, psychological components can be trained and optimised through the acquisition and/or development of various mental skills.

It is beneficial to utilise recovery strategies as part of the overall training programme of a football player that could help prepare a player for subsequent training or matches. It is likely that players taking part in the FAI Emerging Talent Programme are involved in a number of different teams or other sports. This continuous involvement takes players to the edge of exhaustion.

1.3 (A) Injury Prevention and Management

Remaining injury free is optimal in all sport. Injury takes valuable time from an athlete resulting in less time for optimal training and prevention of maximising their learning. For young players who are in the “training to train” phase, necessary time is lost in preparation for their prospective future in the sport which could otherwise be avoided. Players, parents, and coaches would receive information on basic treatment of an injury, rest, ice, compression and elevation. Players, parents and coaches should be made aware of the risk of head injury, guidelines on action to take and advice on how to avoid an incident.

Injury prevention and management requires knowledge of the incidence rates, location and type of injury most often sustained by young players. The lower extremity is significantly the location most injured, ranked as the upper leg, ankle and knee respectively. The types of injuries most often sustained are contusions, sprains and strains. The players’ technique and positioning of the lower extremity should be given attention at this age due to the chances of an overuse injury and to prevent injuries that are more prominent later in their career.

1.4 Action to take if you Hurt Yourself Playing Football

R. I. C. E.

Rest Ice Compression Elevation

Rest

It is important to rest so that you do not cause further damage and stop you from playing for longer.

Ice

- It is essential to get ice onto the area of the injury **immediately**, it will mean less pain, less swelling and help you get back to playing quicker!
- If you don't have an ice pack, put some ice into a bag or use a bag of peas from the freezer!
- Make sure there is always something between your skin and the ice pack, you don't want ice burn on top of your injury.
- Remember after using ice you have numbed the area, it is still injured even though you may not feel it. Don't do anything that might hurt it.

Compression

If you can, put a tubigrip on the area. It will help to decrease swelling.

Elevation

Keep the injured area up. Prop up the injured area with some cushions whilst lying down.

When you are hurt, for a full 24 hours:

1. Keep heat away from the injured area
2. Do not do anything moderate or intense
3. Do not get a vigorous massage

1.5 (B) The importance of nutrition

Nutrition is one of the most important factors affecting health. Poor nutrition can exacerbate the negative influences that heavy training has on immune function. Nutrition has an effect on child growth and development. It is imperative that players, coaches and parents are educated on the effects nutrition can have on performance and health. The aim of the nutritional support section is to review scientific research and compare best practice to develop practical nutritional advice.

The Food Pyramid

The food pyramid helps convert the guidelines for nutrient intake into actual food intake recommendations. The food pyramid is divided into 4 sections. The wide base of the pyramid is made up of breads, cereals, rice, pasta, high carbohydrate groups. Six to eleven servings of these food groups are recommended. Fruits and vegetables are next, recommended daily intake: five to nine portions. Milk, yogurt, cheese, meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts make up the third group. Two to three servings per day are recommended. The tip of the pyramid is made up of fats, oils, sweets, chocolate, cake etc. These foods should be consumed sparingly. Pre exercise meals should be consumed 3-4 hours before training/competition. Generally meals high in carbohydrate, low in fat and fibre and moderately low in protein are recommended. Athletes should stick to familiar foods to avoid gastrointestinal distress. Liquid meals can be very useful for athletes who are prone to gastrointestinal distress or get very nervous before competition.

Pre-exercise snack

Pre exercise snacks should be consumed 60 - 90 minutes before competition. They should consist mainly of carbohydrate, with minimal amounts of protein, fat and fibre. Again liquid snacks are recommended for athletes who suffer gastrointestinal distress.

1.5 (B) The importance of nutrition (continued)

Pre-exercise hydration

It is well documented that athletes usually do not consume enough fluid during and after exercise to match sweat losses. It is necessary to ensure athletes are hydrated prior to training/competition. Fluid on match day should be a continuation of optimal hydration strategies undertaken as part of the everyday life of an athlete. Athletes must make a special effort to drink enough fluids on match day. Recommendations are; drink 500ml or 6-8ml.kg.bw 2 hours before exercise and a further 200 - 400ml 5-10 minutes before exercise depending on tolerance.

Post-match nutrition

Carbohydrate is the most important macro nutrient (aside from water) in recovery from glycogen depleting sports such as football. Athletes should eat within 2 hours after exercise, especially when the next training session or match is less than eight hours away.

Conclusion

Insight into simple concepts such as the food pyramid will encourage the FAI's young athletes to grow healthily. Athletes are encouraged to eat lean red meat, poultry, green vegetables, fruit and breakfast cereals to ensure adequate micro nutrient intake. Fluid intake should be ~1-1.5 per calorie consumed. Exercise will increase fluid requirements. The food Pyramid should be used as a guide to healthy eating

1.6 Nutrition

Nutrition is very important for health and soccer performance. In fact the quality of your diet is the second biggest determinant of soccer performance, second only to soccer training.

The food pyramid



Half of your diet should be made up of bread, rolls, bagels, pasta, rice, cereals. These foods contain carbohydrate, the main source of energy your body uses while playing soccer. Make sure that around half of every meal is made up of the bottom of the pyramid. You should be eating at least 5 pieces of fruit and vegetables a day. These contain vitamins that help you produce energy during soccer. Fact. A glass of fruit juice counts as one piece of fruit. Milk, yogurt or cheese should be eaten 3 times a day. These foods contain protein and calcium, which helps build strong muscle and bone. Try eating a handful of nuts each day. Meat, chicken or fish should be eaten twice daily. Red meat should be eaten once or twice a week to make sure you get enough Iron. Iron helps carry oxygen in the blood. Oxygen is important for making energy. Chocolate/sweets/ice-cream etc should be eaten rarely. Instead eat an extra piece of fruit.

1.6 Nutrition (continued)

- When you are well hydrated (drink enough fluids) you can control your body temperature and can produce energy more efficiently. When you do not drink enough fluids your performance decreases.
- Carrying a bottle everywhere you go helps to increase fluid intake. Try to drink at least 2 and a half litres of fluid a day. Milk, juice, water etc. count towards your fluid intake.

Meals before training/matches

- Eating before a match or training is very important and effects how well you play.
- When playing soccer your body uses mostly carbohydrates for energy. Your body has a limited store of carbohydrate, which it keeps in the muscles. The more carbohydrate stores in your muscle the longer you can keep up sprinting/ jumping maximally and concentrating in training and matches.
- By eating pre-match meals you top up your carbohydrate stores helping you to out perform your opponents.
- Pre-match meals should be eaten 3-4 hours before kickoff. For examples of pre exercise meals see Table 1.
- There are certain foods that are best eaten before training and matches. A list of these foods can be seen in Table 2. Your pre-match meal should be based on these foods.
- If you find it difficult to eat before a match try eating liquid foods such as smoothies.
- Sample a few exercise meals and decide which ones are best for you

Snacks before training/matches

- You should try to eat a snack 60-90 minutes before kick-off. This further tops up your carbohydrate stores. For examples of pre match snacks see Table 1.
- When playing away games make sure to bring a snack with you.
- If you get stomach cramps or are uncomfortable eating so close to training/ matches, experiment with different eating times, and liquid snacks such as sports drinks.
- Foods from Table 2 are best but if unavailable choose foods from either table.

1.6 Nutrition (continued)

Hydration

- To make sure you are hydrated drink 500ml of fluid 2 hours before training/kick-off.
- Drink a further 200-400ml over the course of the last 10 minutes before training/kick-off.
- If it is uncomfortable or there is fluid sloshing around in you're your stomach stop drinking.
- During the match make sure to drink at least two full mouthfuls every 15-20 minutes, even if you don't feel thirsty. Thirst is a very bad indication of when your body needs water. Leave water bottles around the pitch for easy access and grab a drink whenever you can. Don't leave it until half time to start drinking.
- After the match or training it is important to restore the fluids you lost through sweating. If you do not do this it can affect your performance in the next match or training session.
- Weigh yourself before and after each training session and match (only wear a pair of shorts). When you sweat during exercise you lose water weight. This needs to be replaced. Drink 1.5 litres of fluid for each kilogram you have lost.
- Pee colour charts are useful guides that tell you when you need to drink some water. Stick up a copy of the pee chart (see Figure 1) in each toilet in the dressing rooms and follow the instructions. The main idea is your pee should be clear in colour. When it looks more yellow in colour, you should try and drink some fluids.

Sports Drinks

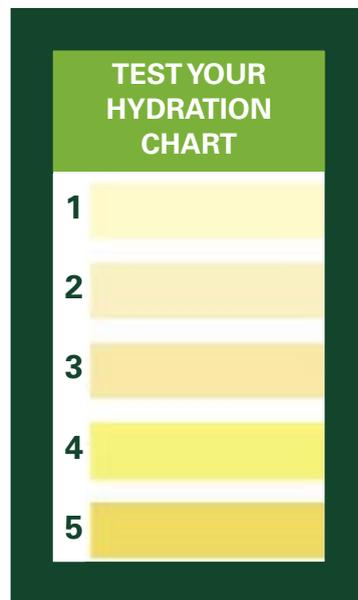
- Sports drinks contain carbohydrates and can help you maintain your performance throughout training or matches.
- Sports drinks should be used instead of water during training and matches.
- Homemade sports drinks are just as good if not better than commercial sports drinks.
- To make a homemade sports drink, mix equal amounts of fruit juice and water. Then add a pinch of salt (one pinch for every 500ml) and shake well. Make enough for the whole match and for afterwards (at least 2 litres).
- You can use fruit cordial instead just make sure the ratio of water to cordial to water is around 1:8. Remember the pinch of salt.
- Sports drinks, milk and water can all be used to replace sweat losses after training or a match.

1.6 Nutrition (continued)

Meals after training/matches

- It is important to eat early after training, within 2 hours. Eating early speeds up recovery and replaces your muscle carbohydrate stores.
- At least part of meals after training or matches should include foods from Table 3.
- If you do not feel like eating a lot straight after training or matches, eat snacks and try liquid snacks such as smoothies or yogurt drinks. Eat a meal as soon as you can.

Figure 1



This urine colour chart is a simple tool you can use to assess if you are drinking enough fluids throughout the day to stay hydrated.

If your urine matches the colours numbered **1, 2, or 3** you are **hydrated**.

If your urine matches the colours **4 or 5** you are **dehydrated** and need to drink more fluid.

Be Aware! If you are taking single vitamin supplements or a multivitamin supplement some of the vitamins in the supplements can change the colour of your urine for a few hours, making it bright yellow or discoloured.

Table 1

	Pre-match meals		Pre-match snacks
1	Spaghetti and sauce	1	Two pieces of fruit
	Banana		
	Glass of orange juice	2	Yogurt covered cereal bar
2	Beans (big tin) on toast (2 slices)	3	500ml sport drink
	Can fruit cocktail		
	Glass of apple juice	4	Slice of bread with honey
3	Bowl of Muesli	5	Glass of Juice
	Grapefruit		
	Toast/bread with jam (2 slices)		
4	Bowl of Noodles		
	Grapes (10-15)		
	Glass of Pineapple Juice		
	Yogurt		
5	Ham Sandwich (2 slices)		
	Bowl of Tomato Soup		
	Orange		
	Glass of Grapefruit Juice		

1.6 Nutrition (continued)

Table 2

Before Match Food List

<u>Breads</u>	<u>Nuts</u>	<u>Cereals</u>
Wheat Bread	Cashew Nuts	Muesli
Rye Bread	Peanuts	Yogurt covered cereal bar
<u>Dairy</u>	<u>Pasta and Beans</u>	<u>Fruit and Veg</u>
Yakult	Baked Beans	Banana
Skimmed Milk	Noodles	Kiwi
Yogurt	Spaghetti	Fruit Cocktail Canned
Yop	Brown Rice	Sweet Corn
	Macaroni	Apples
<u>Fruit Juice</u>		Grapefruit
Apple Juice		Grapes
Grapefruit Juice	<u>Miscellaneous</u>	Oranges
Orange Juice	Honey	Peaches
Pineapple Juice	Rich Tea Biscuits	Pears
Smoothie	Strawberry Jam	Plums
Tomato Juice		Carrots
	<u>Soups</u>	Peas
	Tomato Soup	Mangos
	Minestrone Soup	

Table 3

After Match Food List

<u>Breads</u>	<u>Crackers/Biscuits</u>	<u>Cereals</u>
Scones	Digestive Biscuits	Corn Flakes
Bagel	Cream Crackers	Porridge
Baguette	Rice Cakes	Rice Krispies
Burger Buns	Rye Crispbread	Shredded Wheat
		Weetabix
<u>Fruit and Veg</u>	<u>Drinks</u>	Cheerios
Pineapple	Orange Cordial	Bran Flakes
Raisins	Gatorade	Nutrigrain Bar
Sultanas	Cranberry Juice Drink	Crunchy Nut Cornflakes Bar
Dates	Milk	
Beetroot		<u>Other foods</u>
		Rice
		Potatoes
		Popcorn
		Jelly Beans

1.7

(C) Psychology

Awareness of the mental aspects of sport has become increasingly important in preparation and performance during competition. An insufficient mental capacity can lead to performance decrements, a higher susceptibility to injury or burnout and an inability to cope with the stresses associated with elite level sport. Many psychological components including confidence, concentration, motivation and anxiety control, shape our mental capacity. Similar to physical characteristics, these psychological components can be trained and optimised through the acquisition and/or development of various mental skills.

Psychological Skills Training

Psychological Skills Training refers to the systematic and consistent practice of mental or psychological skills for the purpose of enhancing performance, increasing enjoyment, or achieving greater sport satisfaction. To facilitate the player development pathway of the Emerging Talent Program, progressive psychological skills training is ideal for improving mental capacities. More successful players differ from less successful ones in how developed their psychological skills are. Skill retention through practice can then be undertaken. Basic psychological skills include goal-setting, imagery, self-talk and relaxation.

Goal-Setting

Goal-setting is a widely used skill that can influence performance in a number of ways. It involves identifying what we want to achieve and developing strategies to fulfill our ambitions. Short-term and long-term goals provide unique methods of motivating an athlete. Short-term goals offer immediate incentives and feedback, and facilitate a feeling of mastery associated with boosting confidence. Long-term goals allow the athlete to embrace future larger-scale ambitions. These goal characteristics endorse the SMART approach to goal-setting (appendix 3.2) which would be appropriate for young athletes. Goal-setting can focus our attention, foster effort and commitment, promote persistence, build confidence and facilitate problem-solving.

Imagery

Imagery is a form of simulation. Visualising an action can affect how we subsequently perform such an action. Imagery involves creating or recreating an experience in your mind; using all the senses to make the image as vivid and detailed as possible. As a psychological skill, imagery needs to be practiced and training provides the ideal environment for practice. In imagery training, the athlete must aim to improve the quality, vividness and controllability of each image. Imagery can aid in injury rehabilitation, building confidence, improving concentration, reducing stress and increasing motivation.

1.7

(C) Psychology

Self-Talk

Self-Talk is the internal self-statements and dialogue that runs through the mind. Thought content and self-statements have been shown to affect our actions, with positive self-talk being consistently linked to improved performance. Introducing positive thoughts that are specific to certain game situations e.g. “I’ll get the next ball”, “I can score from here”, could strongly and positively affect performance. Positive self-talk can build confidence, help maintain or regain concentration, increase motivation and control anxiety.

Relaxation

Being relaxed can affect performance in a number of ways. Various relaxation techniques can help athletes to regulate arousal levels, manage stress and reduce the anxiety brought on by stress. Relaxation strategies have been found to be appropriate for football players on the premise that arousal control is important prior to and during performance. Both physical and mental strategies are employed to facilitate relaxation. An athlete may attempt to relax in stressful situations by consciously controlling their breathing or by addressing an inappropriate breathing technique that can accompany performance errors. Utilising specific cue words such as “relax” or “calm” can be effective in high pressure situations. For young athletes involved in team sports, it may be beneficial to ensure that they can get some alone time each day to escape the pressure of a team environment. Relaxation is important in the recovery process, to allow for physical and mental recuperation and prevent a predisposition to injury or burnout.

Confidence

Self-confidence is the belief that you can perform a desired behaviour. A related construct is that of self efficacy, which is a situation specific form of self-confidence – the perception of one’s ability to perform a specific task successfully. Fostering self-confidence and self-efficacy is important for athletes of all ages as it provides a variety of benefits. Self-confidence facilitates concentration, promotes more challenging and effective goal-setting, increases effort, arouses positive emotions and enables more ambitious game strategies. Experiencing success and achieving goals increases our self-confidence. Verbal persuasion from a credible and trustworthy source (coach, parent, peer etc.) can also be effective.

1.7 (C) Psychology (continued)

Motivation

Motivation is the “drive” to perform a particular behaviour. It is the reason why an athlete participates and competes. There are two distinct forms of motivation addressed in the literature i.e. intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Athletes who have intrinsic motivation strive inwardly to be competent and self-determining in their quest to master the task at hand. They enjoy the action and excitement of competition, and focus on having fun and wanting to learn. Athletes who have extrinsic motivation compete in sport as a means to an end or to obtain some form of external rewards e.g. beating an opponent, receiving praise from coach/parent/peer. Intrinsic motivation supports a more holistic approach to success; however, in the context of competitive sport, intrinsic motivation may be undermined due to the emphasis on competition. Coaches should emphasise the importance of enjoying sport and having fun in both training and competitive situations, especially in youth populations. Being highly motivated facilitates concentration, increases effort and persistence, creates expectancies for success, and leads to greater enjoyment and higher self-esteem. Both the athlete and coach have a role in increasing motivation levels. The athlete should set appropriate goals, use self-talk and motivational cue words, and practice motivational imagery. Staying energetic e.g. bouncing on the toes, taking a little jog before kick-off, increases arousal levels and facilitates motivation. Coaches should provide variety and alternative sequencing of practice drills to avoid loss of interest and create a positive motivational climate with an emphasis on mastering skills rather than personal achievement. Involving athletes in some form of decision-making can increase their perception of control, maintain interest and lead to feelings of personal accomplishment. The coach should provide rewards and verbal/non-verbal praise contingent on performance. Positive feedback, in the form of either praise or rewards, can increase intrinsic motivation through increasing perceived competence and relatedness. Rewards should be based on proper execution of play, good sporting behaviour, teamwork or mastering of new skills.

1.7

(C) Psychology (continued)

Concentration

Concentration is related to attention. It is the ability to focus the mind on what is important in any given situation. Staying focused for an entire game is often the key to victory. Attention in sport involves focusing on the relevant environmental cues, maintaining focus over time and having awareness of the situation. During a match, the environment changes rapidly and our attention focus must also adapt or shift. An unpredictable environment causes us to require greater concentration on the task. High levels of concentration have been strongly associated with peak performance. Athletes can deal with attention problems in numerous ways. Effective goal-setting can improve concentration in achieving specific tasks; self-encouragement through the use of positive self-talk and specific cue words can help maintain focus; relaxation techniques can allow us to “stay in the moment”. Athletes may also identify periods during play to be highly focused e.g. defending a set-piece, and periods where lesser focus is required e.g. a throw-in in the opposition’s half of the pitch. The sequencing and organisation of training can also aid in improving concentration e.g. a small-sided game with restricted space and little time on the ball forces the player to concentrate. Practicing technical drills when the players are fatigued challenges their ability to concentrate.

Managing Stress and Anxiety

Elite sport typically occurs in a highly stressful environment. Stress is a complex process. When confronted with a stressor, an athlete must appraise the situation and react accordingly. Anxiety is an emotional state resulting from a negative appraisal of stress. Conversely, arousal is a state of activation occurring through a positive appraisal of stress.

1.8 Psychology

Why is Psychology important?

- How many times have you seen players blame their poor performance on losing concentration or feeling low on confidence?
- The Mental side of the game has a major impact on performance.

Practicing Mental Skills can improve performance, increase enjoyment and allow for greater satisfaction.

Mental Training can:

- Build Confidence
- Increase Motivation
- Improve Concentration
- Help cope with Stress

Key Mental Skills:

1. Goal-Setting: a goal is something that we aim to achieve. Writing down our goals and keeping track of our progress can improve our performance in many ways. We should set training goals, short-term goals (1-4 wks.) and long-term goals (5-12 wks.).

2. Imagery: visualising different situations in soccer can improve our performance. By imagining ourselves winning or being successful, we can improve our confidence. By visualising what we want to achieve, we can motivate ourselves to reach our goals. Images should be clear and controlled. Use all of the senses e.g. notice the noises or smells around you; imagine how you feel. Imagery should be practiced and used before a match or training.

3. Self-Talk: “the little voice in your head”. The thoughts that run through our head can affect how we act/play. Self-talk can be positive (“I can do this”) or negative (“this isn’t going well”). Using positive Self-talk, we can master the Mental side of the game! Self-talk can help us build confidence, increase motivation, keep concentration and cope with stress.

4. Relaxation: being able to relax is important in dealing with the stresses of competition; being relaxed while playing a match can improve our performance. There are a number of ways in which to relax e.g. breathing exercises, relaxing music, relaxing imagery etc.

1.9 Building Confidence

What is Self-Confidence?

The belief that you can successfully perform some form of action or activity.

Benefits of Self-Confidence:

- Creates positive feelings
- Increases concentration
- Leads to the setting of more challenging and beneficial goals
- Increases effort
- Allows us to use more ambitious tactics

How can YOU improve your CONFIDENCE?

- 1. Goal-Setting:** set yourself challenging but realistic goals; you can improve your confidence by being successful and achieving challenging goals.
- 2. Self-Encouragement:** be positive; use self-talk or cue words such as “I’ll get the next one”, “you can score from this position”, “focused”, “speed” etc.
Think Confidently!
- 3. Use Imagery:** visualise yourself being skillful and successful in future matches; or use your imagination to replay a skill or action that you performed skillfully in a previous match.
- 4. Focus on What You Did Well:** review your match performances and focus on what you did well. Acknowledge your mistakes but don’t spend too long on them; see what can be improved and move on. Building confidence is much easier with positive rather than negative thinking!
- 5. Controlling Stress/Pressure:** become familiar with how you feel when under stress/pressure in a match e.g. fast heart beat, heavy breathing. Encourage yourself to overcome this stress; be confident that you can beat the pressure!
- 6. Acting Confidently:** acting confident can lift spirits and keep the opposition guessing.

Becoming a more complete footballer begins by building confidence and then, learning to maintain it after we make mistakes!!!

2.0 Increasing Motivation

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INCREASING MOTIVATION

What is Motivation?

- The “drive” to successfully perform an action or activity; it affects how hard we try in certain situations.
- What Motivates you to play soccer?... Enjoyment in taking part; being a member of a team; having potential and/or ability etc.

Being Highly Motivated:

- Creates positive feelings
- Increases concentration
- Builds confidence
- Increases effort
- Prevents us from “giving up”
- Allows us to expect success

How can YOU increase your MOTIVATION?

- 1. Goal-Setting:** setting realistic, challenging goals, motivates us to achieve them. By being successful and achieving our goals, we also become motivated to repeat our success.
- 2. Self-Encouragement:** use positive self-talk or cue words to stay motivated such as “I’m going to win the next ball”, “this match is ours”, “keep pushing”, “get there”, “energized” etc. Be Determined and Confident!
- 3. Use Imagery:** before a match or training, visualise what needs to be done or the way in which you’re going to play successfully. Imagining these situations, motivates us to perform such actions in the actual match. Additionally, visualise something that is energizing to you e.g. a sprinter bursting from the starting block. Feeling energetic can motivate us.
- 4. Act Energized:** stay motivated by being energetic e.g. take a little jog before the start of the match to “get rid of the butterflies”.
- 5. Try to Enjoy each situation:** enjoyment motivates us to compete. Think positively and stay upbeat when things get difficult; smile when you feel tense. If we maximise enjoyment, we can maximise motivation!

We should consider what motivates us to play soccer and, decide if we need to use methods of increasing our motivation in certain situations.

2.1

Improving Concentration

What is Concentration?

- Concentration = attention; it is the ability to focus the mind on what is important in any given situation.

Benefits of Improving or Maintaining Concentration:

- Concentration is so important in playing well. Staying focused for an entire match is often the key to victory.
- Many players mistakenly believe that keeping concentration is important only during matches. However, “practice makes perfect”! We should use and develop our concentration skills during training.

How can YOU improve your CONCENTRATION?

- 1. Goal-Setting:** writing down what we want to achieve keeps us focused or concentrated on reaching our goals.
- 2. Use Cue Words:** in training, uses cue words to focus on what is important when playing soccer e.g. “focus”, “switch on”, “watch the ball”, “pick your spot” etc.
- 3. Parking Thoughts:** put aside any thought that has nothing to do with soccer or playing well. Such thoughts should no longer be a distraction.
- 4. Self-Encouragement:** use positive self-talk to maintain focus or to refocus e.g. “I’ll get the next one”, “stay in the moment” etc.
- 5. Switching On and Off:** during a match or training, we chose times to “switch on” and times to “switch off”; be really focused during the “switch on” period and recover/rest during the “switch off” period. Saving energy in this way, can allow us to be highly focused during the most important parts of the match.
- 6. Use Imagery:** before a match or training, visualise what needs to be done or the way in which you’re going to play; mental rehearsal should focus our attention during the actual match.
- 7. Relax:** take deep controlled breaths and try to focus on the present; stay in the moment!

Use only 1 or 2 methods at a time; but try to find the method/s that work best for you.

2.2

Managing Stress

What is Stress?

- A demand that is placed on an individual; we must react to stress in order to cope with the situation.
- We can react positively or negatively to stress. For example, when we feel stress, a fast heart beat or shortness of breath may be encouraging to some people but unbearable to others.
- When we react negatively to stress, we become anxious. Anxiety is a negative emotion with feelings of nervousness and worry.

Sources of Stress:

- Distractions e.g. supporters; noise
- Expectations from others
- Coach i.e. lack of support or instruction
- The match itself
- Concerns about an injury
- Tiredness
- Negative thoughts e.g. a mistake we made earlier, what might happen if we lose

How can YOU manage STRESS and reduce ANXIETY?

- 1. Self-Instruction:** use special self-talk or cue words to help deal with stress e.g. "stay calm", "stay in the moment", "relax", "slow" etc.
- 2. Replacing Thoughts:** negative thoughts make us anxious; immediately replace negative thoughts with positive ones.

3. Relaxation Strategies:

- Muscular Relaxation: away from training/match, tensing and relaxing muscles can release stress. Tense each muscle individually; starting with the head/face and finishing with the toes. Tense for 10 secs., relax for 15 secs.
- Breathing: take a slow, deep breath to release stress; or focus on controlling slow, deep breaths one after another. When we are calm, confident and in control, our breathing is likely to be slow, smooth and deep.
- Personal Time: have some time alone each day to relax and unwind.

After training or a match, relaxation techniques are effective in reducing stress levels and allowing for the best Recovery.

2.3

The Role of the Coach

Needs Assessment:

Prior to commencing any psychological training program, it is important to undertake some form of assessment to identify mental strengths and weaknesses. This becomes the basis of a psychological training program.

Assessment Tools included:

- 1. Performance Profile** – provides the coach with analysis on the player's views regarding current ability and areas of importance in soccer. The analysis provides the player with a basis for goal-setting and may direct the future design of training.
- 2. Goal-Setting: SMART template** – ensures that all key elements of goal-setting are covered and is appropriate for young athletes.
- 3. Sports Imagery Questionnaire** – assessed imagery use and ability.
- 4. Self-Talk Questionnaire** – assesses the use of self-talk.
- 5. Recovery-Stress Questionnaire** - assesses general, emotional and social stress, and identifies issues such as fatigue, lack of energy and emotional exhaustion.

Player Development:

- Promote the practice of psychological skills and the development of mental capabilities through a variety of methods (as detailed earlier).
- Facilitate **Guided Discovery**: when a player makes a mistake, provide guidance towards the solution. Ask questions rather than stating the error i.e. ask the player what went wrong, and what he could have done differently; the player becomes more self-reliant.
- Give **Positive Feedback**: offer both verbal and non-verbal (e.g. hand gestures, pat on the back) feedback to increase motivation and confidence. When addressing mistakes, keep it constructive and guide the athlete towards the solution.
- Provide **Rewards** based on proper execution of play, good sporting behaviour, teamwork or mastering of new skills to increase motivation and confidence.
- Aid the player in setting appropriate, personal **Goals**; however it is important that the player feels that he has control over the goals being set. Encourage the players to set process or performance goals (e.g. improving aspects of technique) as well as achievement goals (e.g. winning a match/league; winning an award).

2.3

The Role of the Coach (continued)

- Involve the players in some form of **Decision-making**: increases the players' perception of control, maintain interest and lead to feelings of personal accomplishment.
- **Pre-Performance Routines**: introducing routines to various game situations can eliminate uncertainty or unpredictability and in turn build confidence, increase concentration and reduce anxiety. An example of a routine may be to perform the same warm-up prior to each game, or to arrange the defence in the same manner prior to each set piece.
- Provide **Variety** of practice drills to avoid loss of interest and create a positive motivational climate with an emphasis on mastering skills rather than personal achievement.
- The **Sequencing** and **Organisation** of training can aid in improving concentration e.g. a small-sided game with restricted space and little time on the ball, forces the player to concentrate; practicing technical drills when the players are fatigued, challenges their ability to concentrate.
- **Simulation Training**: immersing players in high pressure situations during training, allows them to practice controlling feelings of anxiety e.g. a small-sided game with restricted space and little time on the ball; practicing penalty kicks.

The most challenging barrier in supporting the mental development of young footballers may be in addressing attitudes towards sport psychology.

However, through diligent and disciplined application by coaches, the proposed mental techniques should yield a variety of benefits for young footballers.

2.4 Performance Profile

Player's Name: _____ **Date:** _____

List the key qualities needed to perform well in soccer i.e Mental, Physical, Technical & Tactical.

Examples: *Mental* – concentration, discipline etc.

Physical – power, speed etc.

Technical – shooting, dribbling etc.

Tactical – positioning, set-plays etc.

Answers are written in the wide columns below.

Then, rate each quality on how important they are in soccer. Rate on scale from 1-10:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all important *Very Important*

Ratings are written in the narrower columns next to each quality.

Mental		Physical		Technical		Tactical	

Player's Name: _____

2.4 Performance Profile (continued)

List the key **mental** qualities and give their meaning:

Quality	Meaning

2.4 Performance Profile (continued)

Performance Profile

Athlete's Name:

The chart is a circular radar chart with 20 radial segments and 10 concentric rings. The innermost ring is labeled with numbers 2 through 10, representing a scale of 1-10. The center of the chart is a solid light grey circle.

- 1. IN THE OUTSIDE CIRCLE** – Write in the 20 most important qualities (identified above) necessary to be a top level competitor in your sport.
- 2.** Use a coloured marker or pencil to indicate how important each quality is on a scale of 1-10.
- 3.** Now use a different coloured marker or pencil and indicate where you think you are on a scale of 1-10.

2.5 Goal-Setting

Practical Goal-Setting uses the SMART approach.

Goals should be:

- **Specific** – detailed and exact
- **Measurable** – important to see if we have achieved our goals. For example, getting 5 shots on target during training
- **Action-related** – our goals should be based on performing some type of activity
- **Realistic** – achievable yet challenging
- **Timeframed** – to be achieved within a set period of time. We should set training goals, short-term goals and long-term goals

Setting Goals:

It is important to set goals in all the major areas of our play i.e. physical, technical, mental & tactical. Make goals very specific and have a plan in place to help you achieve your goals.

For Example:

Training Goals:

Area	Specific Goal	Planning
1. Technical	- be able to successfully execute a through ball and create a goal during training	- focus during practice drills (Attacking) - visualise playing the through ball - watch match footage
2. Tactical (Positioning)	- to take up good positions and steal the ball during training	- switch 'on' when the ball comes in your area - visualise winning the ball

2.5 Goal-Setting (continued)

Short-term Goals:

Area	Specific Goal	Planning
1. Technical (Corners)	- to be able to deliver the ball to the back post at speed in 3 weeks time	- practicing corners for 15mins. after training - relaxing at the corner flag before taking the kick
2. Physical (Speed)	- to improve my speed over the next 4 weeks	- extra effort during sprinting drills - ask your coach about ways to increase your speed

Long-term Goals:

Area	Specific Goal	Planning
1. Mental (Discipline)	- Not to receive a yellow card over the course of the season	- no talking back to referees - control your temper, relaxation
2. Technical (Shooting)	- to score 15 goals over the course of the season	- focus during shooting drills - extra shooting practice after training - improve communication with fellow attackers

Writing Specific Goals (Questions to Consider):

1. Which area of play? Physical, Technical, Mental or Tactical
2. What do you want to achieve? e.g. I want to improve my...
3. Make your goal specific!!! e.g. to score 2 goals in the next 3 weeks
4. How do you plan to achieve your goal?

2.6 Training Goals (to be completed during training)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Goal No.: ____ Area: _____

What do you want to achieve? _____

Specific Goal: _____

How to achieve my goal: _____

Goal No.: ____ Area: _____

What do you want to achieve? _____

Specific Goal: _____

How to achieve my goal: _____

Remember Goals should be SMART:

Specific, Measurable, Action-related, Realistic, Timeframed

2.6 Short-Term Goals (to be completed in 1-4wks)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Goal No.: ____ Area: _____

What do you want to achieve? _____

Specific Goal: _____

How to achieve my goal: _____

Goal No.: ____ Area: _____

What do you want to achieve? _____

Specific Goal: _____

How to achieve my goal: _____

Remember Goals should be SMART:

Specific, Measurable, Action-related, Realistic, Timeframed

2.6 Long-Term Goals (to be completed in 5-12 wks)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Goal No.: ____ Area: _____

What do you want to achieve? _____

Specific Goal: _____

How to achieve my goal: _____

Goal No.: ____ Area: _____

What do you want to achieve? _____

Specific Goal: _____

How to achieve my goal: _____

Remember Goals should be SMART:

Specific, Measurable, Action-related, Realistic, Timeframed

2.7 Sports Imagery Questionnaire (SIQ)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Below are some statements which describe athletes' use of imagery or how they visualise aspects of football. Please read each statement carefully and indicate *how often* you use imagery.

Before or during training/match:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. I make up plans / strategies in my head	1	2	3	4	5
2. I imagine the atmosphere of winning a match / competition	1	2	3	4	5
3. I imagine giving 100%	1	2	3	4	5
4. I imagine the emotions I feel when playing football	1	2	3	4	5
5. I imagine my skills improving	1	2	3	4	5
6. I imagine other strategies in case my game plan fails	1	2	3	4	5
7. I imagine myself handling the excitement of football	1	2	3	4	5
8. I imagine myself appearing confident to my opposition	1	2	3	4	5
9. I imagine the disappointment I may feel if I lose	1	2	3	4	5
10. I imagine each aspect of play e.g. attacking, defending etc.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I imagine myself being in control in difficult situations	1	2	3	4	5
12. I imagine the stress and nervousness of competition	1	2	3	4	5
13. I imagine myself getting 'psyched' up	1	2	3	4	5

2.8 Scoring Key: Sports Imagery Questionnaire (SIQ)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Three functions of imagery are assessed by the SIQ: **Cognitive** (information processing), **Motivational & Arousal** (feeling/handling excitement or feeling worried/anxious). It also assesses clarity and ability to control imagery.

Write the score (1-5) for each Question in the box provided. Calculate the total score for each item.

Positive Imagery: Scores should be HIGH.

	Q1	Q6	Q10	Q14	Q19	Q20	Total Score
Cognitive (Problem-Solving)							/25

	Q2	Q3	Q5	Q8	Q11	Q14	Q17	Total Score
Motivational								/35

	Q4	Q7	Q13	Q16	Total Score
Arousal: Excitement					/20

Negative Imagery: Scores should be LOW.

	Q9	Q12	Q15	Q18	Total Score
Arousal: Worry/Anxiety					/20

Controllability of Imagery: Scores should be HIGH.

	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Total Score
Control						/25

Clarity of Imagery: Scores should be HIGH. ____ / 5

- **Positive Imagery (Problem-solving, Motivational & Arousal) should be practiced, with an emphasis on controlling the image and making it as clear as possible.**
- **Negative Imagery should be eliminated or replaced with positive images.**

2.9 Self-Talk Questionnaire (S-TQ)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Below are some statements which describe athletes' self-talk ("little voice in your head") during an important competition/match. Please read each statement carefully and indicate how often you have used self-talk.

When I complete:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. I talk to myself in order to concentrate fully	1	2	3	4	5
2. I talk to myself about the technical aspects of football	1	2	3	4	5
3. I talk to myself to give directions	1	2	3	4	5
4. I talk to myself to boost my confidence	1	2	3	4	5
5. I talk to myself to motivate myself	1	2	3	4	5
6. I talk to myself to increase my effort	1	2	3	4	5
7. I talk to myself to encourage myself	1	2	3	4	5
8. I talk to myself to strengthen positive thoughts	1	2	3	4	5
9. I talk to myself to stop negative thinking	1	2	3	4	5
10. I talk to myself in order to stay relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
11. I talk to myself to correct my mistakes	1	2	3	4	5

2.9 Self-Talk Questionnaire (S-TQ) (continued)

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Self-Talk Questionnaire provides information on the **Cognitive** (information processing) and **Motivational** use of self-talk.

Write the score (1-5) for each Question in the box provided. Calculate the total score for each function

(Cognitive & Motivational)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q11	Total Score
Cognitive Function (Problem-Solving)					/20

	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Total Score
Motivational								/35

Weaknesses should be addressed as follows:

Low Cognitive Score (≤ 12): The player should look to introduce more problem-solving self-talk into the psychological element of his game e.g. how to rectify mistakes; how to focus better etc.

Low Motivational Score (≤ 20): The player should look to introduce more motivational self-talk e.g. what words/phrases motivates him in certain situations.

Scoring identifies those players that are especially in need of training the psychological skill of Self-Talk.

Regardless of Self-Talk Score, all players can benefit from additional self-talk strategies.

3.0 (D) Recovery

Competitive football engages and places stress on many of the body's systems. The high frequency of training sessions places further stress on these systems. Recovery is the process that players go through so that they can return to a state of performance readiness. Recovery is needed as it helps players adapt faster to training, allows them to train and perform optimally and prevents overtraining and burnout. The recovery process allows for the restoration of energy stores, a return to normal physiological and psychological function and a reduction in muscle soreness.

Rationale and influences on recovery

It is likely that players taking part in the FAI Emerging Talent Programme are also involved in other squads and other sports. This may result in some of the players playing matches or training on nearly all days of the week and throughout the year. This continuous involvement takes players to the edge of exhaustion. If overtraining occurs, it is characterised by a decrease in performance in training and competition despite maintained or increased training and a failure to show progression.

Passive recovery and sleep

Passive recovery and sleep would be considered core components of planning recovery strategies into a training programme as well as being essential to everyday health. Adequate sleep of 9 hours a night can also help players to adjust to the physical and emotional stressors they experience throughout the day. At least one day a week should have minimal training or no training. This allows players to recover physically and psychologically and allows them to achieve a balanced lifestyle. Finally, if either rest or sleep is continually interfered with it may compromise the rebuilding process and lead to poor health, overtraining and burnout in football players.

3.0 (D) Recovery (continued)

Active recovery

Active recovery is another easily administered recovery strategy. Active recovery is seen as low intensity aerobic exercise of less than 60% of a player's maximum heart rate following training or competition. Active recovery is also referred to as warm-down or cool-down in the literature. While the duration of an active recovery training sessions differ slightly, 10 minutes is often given as a general guideline.

Stretching

Closely allied to an active recovery and which can also be included as part of an active recovery session is stretching. Developmental stretching should be done on a regular basis for the players in the FAI Emerging Talent Programme not just as a means of recovery but also to maintain flexibility. In accordance with the LTPD model recovery strategies can be introduced to players early in their development.

3.1 Recovery-Stress Questionnaire (REST-Q)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Rate how the following comments apply to you. Use the scale of 1-5, where **1=Never** and **5=Always**.

Over the last 3 days and nights...

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
1. I did not sleep enough	1	2	3	4	5
2. I finished important tasks	1	2	3	4	5
3. I wasn't able to concentrate well	1	2	3	4	5
4. Everything bothered me	1	2	3	4	5
5. I laughed	1	2	3	4	5
6. I was in a bad mood	1	2	3	4	5
7. I worried about solving problems	1	2	3	4	5
8. I had a good time with friends	1	2	3	4	5
9. I was tired at school	1	2	3	4	5
10. I had some good ideas	1	2	3	4	5
11. I couldn't switch my mind off	1	2	3	4	5
12. I fell asleep happy and relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
13. I was annoyed by others	1	2	3	4	5
14. I felt down	1	2	3	4	5
15. I had fun	1	2	3	4	5

3.1 Recovery-Stress Questionnaire (REST-Q) (continued)

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
16. I was fed up with everything	1	2	3	4	5
17. I was over-tired	1	2	3	4	5
18. I was upset	1	2	3	4	5
19. I slept peacefully	1	2	3	4	5
20. I was annoyed	1	2	3	4	5
21. Everything was too much for me	1	2	3	4	5
22. I was very lazy	1	2	3	4	5
23. I felt I had to perform well in front of others	1	2	3	4	5
24. I was in a good mood	1	2	3	4	5
25. My sleep was uninterrupted	1	2	3	4	5
26. I was angry with someone	1	2	3	4	5
27. I put off making decisions	1	2	3	4	5
28. I made important decisions	1	2	3	4	5
29. I felt happy	1	2	3	4	5
30. I didn't get a rest during the day	1	2	3	4	5
31. I felt satisfied	1	2	3	4	5
32. I was certain that I could achieve my goals	1	2	3	4	5
33. I felt mentally drained from playing soccer	1	2	3	4	5
34. I achieved many worthwhile things in soccer	1	2	3	4	5

3.1 Recovery-Stress Questionnaire (REST-Q) (continued)

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
35. I prepared myself mentally for matches	1	2	3	4	5
36. I felt that there were too few breaks in the days	1	2	3	4	5
37. I was convinced that I performed well	1	2	3	4	5
38. I helped out my teammates	1	2	3	4	5
39. I pushed myself during training/match	1	2	3	4	5
40. I felt I wanted to quit soccer	1	2	3	4	5
41. I didn't get breaks at the right time	1	2	3	4	5
42. I was convinced I had trained well	1	2	3	4	5
43. I set specific goals for myself	1	2	3	4	5
44. I felt frustrated by soccer	1	2	3	4	5
45. I understood how my teammates felt about things	1	2	3	4	5

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RECOVERY-STRESS QUESTIONNAIRE (REST-Q)

3.2 Scoring Key for REST-Q

Write the score for each of the numbered Questions in the space provided. Find the Sum & Average score for each Item.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Item	Q	Q	Q	Sum	Mean
General Stress	14 =	16 =	21 =		
Emotional Stress	4 =	6 =	20 =		
Social Stress	13 =	18 =	26 =		
Pressure	7 =	11 =	23 =		
Fatigue	1 =	9 =	17 =		
Lack of Energy	3 =	22 =	27 =		
Success	2 =	10 =	28 =		
Social Relaxation	5 =	8 =	15 =		
General Well-Being	24 =	29 =	31 =		
Sleep Quality	12 =	19 =	25 =		
Lack of Rest	30 =	36 =	41 =		
Emotional Exhaustion	33 =	40 =	44 =		
Personal Accomplishment	34 =	38 =	45 =		
Self-Confidence	32 =	37 =	42 =		
Self-Regulation	35 =	39 =	43 =		

3.3 Scoring Chart

Place an X in the box corresponding to the Mean Score for each of the Items above.

Items in grey are negative; therefore Mean Score should be LOW.

Items clear are positive; therefore Mean Score should be HIGH.

Mean Score	1	2	3	4	5
General Stress					
Emotional Stress					
Social Stress					
Pressure					
Fatigue					
Lack of Energy					
Success					
Social Relaxation					
General Well-Being					
Sleep Quality					
Lack of Rest					
Emotional Exhaustion					
Personal Accomplishment					
Self-Confidence					
Self-Regulation					

3.4 (E) Self monitoring and the 24 hour athlete lifestyle

Frequently, coaches will spend the majority of time planning and focusing on training sessions and underestimate the significant role lifestyle factors such as sleep, nutrition, recovery strategies, and psychological elements have on players.

“Smart training + Smart living = Best Performance”

Resting Heart Rate

Resting heart rate is to be recorded upon waking up while still in bed. The pulse is measured by placing the index and middle finger on the inside of the wrist near where the thumb joins the wrist and count for 60seconds.

Body Weight

Body weight is to be recorded each morning before eating and after going to the toilet. Poor recovery from previous training sessions and/or dehydration can lead to rapid decreases in body weight and should be investigated immediately.

Sleep

Sleep is important for good health and especially important for athletes, as they require more recovery.

Hydration and Nutrition

Good hydration is essential in ensuring all cells of the body are ready to repair and grow and anabolic hormones are functioning. Urination should occur approximately once every 3 hours and roughly 3 litres of fluid should be taken in every day.

A clear, odourless colour indicates an individual is hydrated and a heavy dark colour indicates dehydration.

Energy levels

Energy levels should be high prior to training, but can be impacted negatively by poor sleep, mood and nutrition. Poor energy levels may also indicate that there is a need for recovery.

Mood

Players in a bad mood, feeling flat, negative and angry are often revealing signs of overtraining. However, at this emotionally challenging age, other external stressors should be explored as to the cause of poor mood.

Exercise and illness

Exercise generally has positive effects on the immune system with moderate exercise providing a temporary boost after each session. However more strenuous sessions (particularly of longer duration) predisposes players to infection. The general advice about training while ill is that if the symptoms are above the neck and there is no fever it is safe to train although the intensity of the session should be reduced. Otherwise it is advised not to train at all as it may prolong and increase the severity of the illness.

3.4 (E) Self monitoring and the 24 hour athlete lifestyle (continued)

Conclusions

The Self monitoring sheets are particularly adept at diagnosing overtraining. Before overtraining can be implicated, other possible causes of fatigue and subsequent decrease in performance should be discounted. These could include illness, injury, inadequate sleep, dietary intake, dehydration, emotional upset, dehydration and menstruation

Lifestyle:

“Smart training + Smart living = Best Performance”

Out of the 24 hours in a player’s day, training will on average only take up 2 hours. To get the benefits from training and become a better player, the other 22 hours have to be made up of a complimentary lifestyle. Lifestyle is a broad term that is defined by a player’s personal choices about nutrition, physical fitness, recovery, injury management and psychological elements such as mood.

The self monitoring sheets provide a quick, reliable method of making sure that the player’s lifestyle is complimenting training. Learning to listen to one’s body and recognise relevant signs and symptoms is the most important skill an athlete can have.

Players should record the three essential markers every morning: 1/morning resting heart rate, 2/morning body weight and 3/sleep. Well being markers such as hydration status, physical difficulty of sessions, appetite, energy levels, mood and muscle soreness are also measured but at the end of the day. The player will need to take on the responsibility of ensuring they successfully monitor themselves with support from their coach in interpreting results.

These markers help the player and coach to identify changes from normal values that may show how well the player is responding to training and adjust training sessions accordingly. It also helps in finding out the cause of poor performances if they are occurring.

The Self monitoring sheets are very good at detecting overtraining. This is where the volume and intensity of a players training exceeds their recovery ability. It is important to remember that intense training carried out by players will be accompanied by some level of fatigue. However, the self monitoring records will enable reviewers to differentiate between abnormal and normal responses.

Explanation of each markers monitored on the self monitoring sheet

Poor values in one of the self monitoring markers may lead to functional disturbances in the body with an increased risk of injuries, infections and recovery ability.

3.4 (E) Self monitoring and the 24 hour athlete lifestyle (continued)

Resting Heart Rate: Resting heart rate is to be recorded upon waking up while still in bed. The pulse is measured by placing the index and middle finger on the inside of the wrist near where the thumb joins the wrist and count for 60 seconds. It is not possible to give a figure for the normal resting heart rate as it is a very individual measurement.

When a player stops exercising the body begins to recover and the heart keeps working at a rate above resting heart rate. This is in order to remove waste products that have been generated through exercise and supply nutrients needed for repair and growth. If measurement of the resting heart rate the morning after strenuous exercise (either due to a match or training session) is elevated, it is an indication that the body is still in repair and recovery mode. The general guidelines are that if resting heart rate is:

- Less than 20% above normal =** ok to train
- 20-40% above normal =** light training only
- More than 40% above normal =** no training

This is assuming the player is not suddenly woken up (e.g. their dog jumps on them) which causes an instant increase in heart rate. If it is elevated for a few days in a row, more rest days or specific recovery work should be included into the player's training program. If the resting heart rate decreases it is a sign that the player is responding well to training. This is because as a player gets fitter the heart is able to pump more blood per beat and therefore doesn't have to beat as fast to pump the same amount of blood around the body.

Body weight: is to be recorded each morning before eating and after going to the toilet. Poor recovery from previous training sessions and/or dehydration can lead to rapid decreases in body weight and should be investigated immediately. Similar to resting heart rate, average body weight is a very individual thing and will vary between players mainly depending on what stage of puberty they are at. Increase in body weight is to be expected in this age group as they are growing. As long as the increase in weight is due to enlargement of the musculoskeletal system and not excess fat there is no problem. Small fluctuations in weight are not a cause for concern as they may be due to bowel movement, but unexplained weight loss over a period of time may indicate overtraining.

3.4 (E) Self monitoring and the 24 hour athlete lifestyle (continued)

Sleep: is important for good health and especially important for athletes, who require more recovery. After a physically demanding match or training, players often find it difficult to sleep as their body is still working to repair and rebuild itself. It therefore stays in a constantly active state. Increases in volume and intensity may result in the player requiring more sleep. Sleep disturbances are defined as an increase or decrease in sleep by 2 hours for more than 2 days. Other self monitoring markers should be assessed for possible causes of the disturbance E.g. intensity of session/match. The recommended amount of sleep for an adolescent is 9 hours. Afternoon power naps of 45mins duration are also recommended if players are training twice a day as they assist in the recovery process.

Hydration is essential in ensuring all cells of the body are ready to repair and grow. Urine should be a clear colour which indicates a player is hydrated and a heavy dark colour indicates dehydration and the player should be drinking more fluid. Urination should occur approximately once every 3 hours and roughly 3 litres of fluid should be taken in every day.

Nutrition should follow the recommendations outlined earlier in the handbook. A healthy appetite is expected to sustain the increase in metabolic demands from high levels of training.

Energy levels should be high prior to training, but can be impacted negatively by poor sleep, mood and nutrition. Poor energy levels may also indicate that there is a need for recovery.

Similarly, finding sessions continuously **physically difficult** (especially if not designed to be) is a cause for concern and should be explored.

Delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) is another indicator that recovery has not been adequate and should be monitored alongside energy levels.

Players in a bad mood, feeling flat, negative and angry are often revealing signs of over training. However, at this emotionally challenging age, other external stressors should be explored as to the cause of poor mood. Changes in training volume and intensity have been shown to affect mood states.

The self monitoring sheet while being inexpensive, time efficient, non invasive and simple has a number of potential limitations. Inaccurate recording by players and the need for interpretation by the reviewer are two areas where error can occur. Often players in a team setting are influenced by each others score which may require players to communicate their scores privately.

3.4 (E) Self monitoring and the 24 hour athlete lifestyle (continued)

The self monitoring sheet is a useful tool for monitoring adaptation to travel and subsequent environmental changes, which can affect the performance of players. This is especially so, for youth players.

Training loads vary according to the different phases of the season. Training loads are generally greatest in the pre season compared to the competition phase, where recovery between matches is emphasised. This would be expected when following a periodised training structure.

Benefits of self monitoring are usually not immediately obvious and require some patience. Prevention of wide spread abuse of athletic children in the name of their sports may be picked up through the self monitoring sheet. Some of the issues include imposition of training regimes suited for athletes, punishment, encouraging the development of eating disorders and psychological abuse from parents and coaches.

Exercise and illness

Exercise generally has positive effects on the immune system, with moderate exercise providing a temporary boost after each session. However more strenuous sessions (particularly of longer duration) predisposes people to infection.

Advice for avoiding infection includes:

- 1/distancing oneself from infected people,
- 2/recognising when one is susceptible to infection,
- 3/maintaining good hygiene – washing hands and brushing teeth regularly,
- 4/avoiding dehydration as saliva is important in fighting infection,
- 5/ensuring drinking water is safe

The general advice about training while ill is that if the symptoms are above the neck (e.g. blocked nose) and there is no fever it is safe to train, although the intensity of the session should be reduced. Otherwise it is advised not to train at all as it may prolong and increase the severity of the illness.

3.5 Recovery

A combined approach to the recovery and regeneration process is needed which includes specific nutritional, psychological, training and lifestyle strategies. The following recommendations are aimed at specific recovery training and lifestyle strategies. (Refer to relevant section for nutritional and psychological strategies)

1) Effective planning.

Over the course of a season effectively plan recovery into the overall training programme. Have an appropriate balance between recovery and training days in between matches. The process of recovery from a match is the first step towards preparation for the next match (Hulse et al, 200?). At least one day a week should have minimal training or no training at all.

2) Rest and Sleep

a) Things to do

- Develop good sleeping habits, going to bed and getting up at the same time each day. Ensure between 9 hours sleep each night.
- Go to bed only when you are tired.
- Take 'power naps' of less than 40 minutes if you are tired during the day time.
- Sleep in a dark ventilated quiet room with a comfortable bed.
- Go to the toilet before going to bed.
- Practice other forms rest and relaxation such as reading and listening to relaxing music. (For other relaxation techniques refer to psychological section).
- If you don't fall asleep within 30 minutes of turning out the light get up and do some relaxation work.

If you wake up during the night and can't go back to sleep within 30 minutes follow the previous point.

b) Things to avoid

- Avoid caffeine (e.g. coffee, tea, coke) chocolate, nicotine, alcohol, and a large meal before going to bed.
- Avoid playing computer games before going to bed and ensure mobile phone is turned off or on silent before going to sleep.
- Avoid thinking and worrying in bed, learn to switch off.

3.5 Recovery (continued)

3) Active Recovery and stretching

Begins with a cool-down or warm-down following a match or training session. A cool-down should be approximately 10 minutes and include a gradual decrease in intensity (e.g. running at 3/4 of maximum running pace, running at 1/2 maximum pace, slow jogging and a brisk walk) with stretching of the major muscle groups. Give a cool-down as much thought and concentration as you would a warm-up. Further stretching could also be performed in the evening and in the days following a match or training.

The day after a match and particularly during tournaments further low intensity recovery training sessions can be implemented. These recovery training sessions can also include low intensity cross-training (e.g. swimming, pool work, cycling) sessions if such facilities are assessable.

4) Hydrotherapies

Use contrast showers after training or a match.

How to use

Ensure hydration before, during and after use of contrast showers.
Shower before use to ensure clean skin.
Alternate: Cold (10-15°C) 10-30 seconds
Warm (36-40°C) 1-2 minutes
Repeat 3 times.
Begin and end with cold.

If accessible use a spa and plunge pool once a week.

How to use

Ensure hydration before, during and after use of contrast showers.
Shower before use to ensure clean skin.
Alternate: Cold (10-15°C) 30-60 seconds
Warm (36-40°C) 3-4 minutes
Repeat 3 times.
Begin and end with cold.
Safety: Keep head out of water and do not use with an acute injury or if you suffering from a virus or cold.

5) Massage

If accessible get a sports massage from a professional massage therapist once a week. Self-massage techniques can also be learned for the legs, chest, neck shoulders and arms while at home after training or a match or before going to bed.

Work Hard + Recover Well = Best Performance

Explanation Sheet

First of all write your name and date on the sheets in the section provided. The grey section is to be filled in every morning:

Resting Heart Rate (beats per minute)

>to be recorded upon waking up while still in bed. The pulse is measured by placing the index and middle finger on the inside of the wrist near where the thumb joins the wrist and count the number of beats felt for 60 seconds using a watch. Eg. 64bpm

Weight (kilograms)

>is to be recorded each morning before eating and after going to the toilet using a weighing scale. E.g. 52kg

Sleep (hours)

>number of hours slept is recorded e.g. if you slept between 10pm and 7.30am you would write 9½ hours

The white section is the well being section and is your own personal view of how you rate in each of the categories:

1 = very good **2** = good **3** = fair **4** = bad **5** = very bad

Quality of sleep

>how well did you sleep? was it undisturbed and peaceful or did you wake up a lot of times and stay awake?

Energy levels before session/match

>were you full of energy, active and lively or tired, drained and worn out?

Muscle soreness before session/match

>were your legs fresh, loose and powerful or heavy, tight and painful?

Personal Performance in session/match

>how well did you perform? Did you achieve your goals, and were you happy with how you played or were you disappointed and frustrated?

Mood

>how do you feel? Are you energetic and calm or tired and tense?

Food intake/Appetite

>have you eaten healthily and been hungry before meals or have you eaten unhealthily and not been hungry before meals?

Fluid Intake

>have you drank approx 3 litres of fluid and is your pee clear or have you drank very little and your pee been dark yellow

How did the session/match feel?

>did it require only a bit of effort or did it require maximal effort and feel exhausting and draining.

The comments section is to be completed at the end of the week and is for anything you think is important for the coach to know e.g. "had exams this week and was studying hard for them which was taking up alot of my time"

The questions below the comments section are to get you thinking about the answers in your self monitoring chart and whether action needs to be taken. The last section focuses on injury and illness. It is to be filled in whenever you have an injury e.g. knee pain or illness e.g. flu.

NAME: _____

1 = very good 2 = good

3 = fair

4 = bad

5 = very bad

Date beginning? Monday ...	Resting Heart Rate (bpm)	Weight (kg)	Sleep (hours)	Quality of sleep	Energy levels before session/match	Muscle soreness before session/match	Personal Performance in session/match	Mood	Food intake/ Appetite	Hydration status (look at graph below)	How did the session/ match feel? (1,2,3,4,5) 1= very easy 5=v. hard
Monday											
Tuesday											
Wednesday											
Thursday											
Friday											
Saturday											
Sunday											

Comments.....

To be completed at the end of the week:

If you are scoring more than 3 in any of the white section, ask yourself:

- Is it some thing that will affect my performance this week?
- Is it a recurring problem?
- Is it something I need to discuss with my coach or parents?

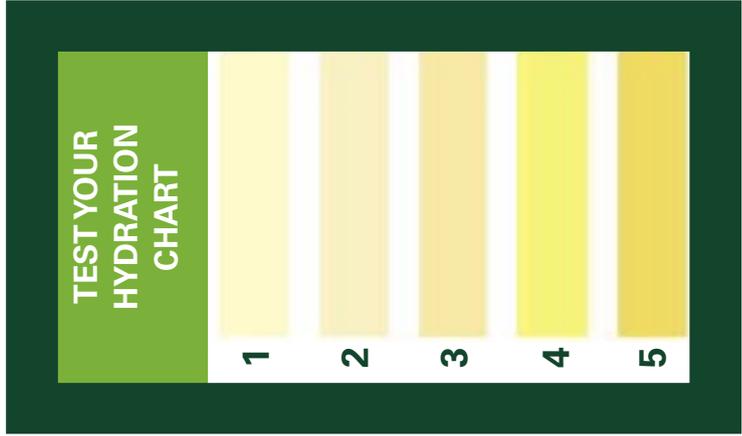
Do you have a cough/cold, runny nose, headache or sore throat? **Yes** **No**

Do you have any type of sickness/illness? **Yes** **No**

If so what do you have?

Are you injured? **Yes** **No**

If yes, give details.....



3.6 Player Activity Report

PLAYER NAME: _____

WEEK COMMENCING: _____

Please ensure you record all exercise which you participate in. This includes all sports, all training sessions, strength and conditioning work, all matches, and all P.E classes. Also include the age group, the sport, the school, the club, and Emerging Talent.

Day	Description of Activity – type of match, training session, game etc.	Duration of activity
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

3.7

Player Questionnaire

Player Questionnaire

1. List six strengths and six weaknesses that you believe you have as a player

Strengths

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____

Weaknesses

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____

3.7 Player Questionnaire (continued)

2. Write down every single item that you ate and drank yesterday

3. What is the average length of sleep you have got over the last three night's

4. Do you wake up yourself in the morning or do you have to be called to get out of bed

5. List the injuries you have had over the past twelve months that caused you to miss a training session or a game

6. When is the last time you practiced a soccer skill on your own away from a training session

3.7 Player Questionnaire (continued)

List the changes that you would make to your lifestyle and training habits if you were to be offered a professional soccer career in the next week

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

3.7 Player Questionnaire (continued)

List five areas of your game that you know you now need to work on immediately

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

3.8 Personal Reflection Form

1. As a player how did you perform today: _____

2. As a player what areas would you like to develop and improve: _____

3. As a player what areas concerned you: _____

3.9 Alcohol and the Soccer player

Alcohol can slow down the body's recovery process. The faster the body recovers the easier it is to perform at the same optimal levels on a day-to-day basis. Drinking alcohol after exercise or heavy exertion lasting at least 1 1/2 hours can slow this recovery. Alcohol calories are replacing the carbohydrate calories usually eaten. When you don't replace the carbohydrates burned during activity the person will have less energy.

Alcohol can cause increased swelling after an injury is sustained, even in moderate amounts. The alcohol also could mask the pain. For those who are familiar with injuries, the more swelling in an injured area, the longer it takes to recover and get back to optimal form. Also if someone is already taking anti-inflammatory medications or pain relievers, drinking alcohol can increase the risks of stomach irritation and internal bleeding.

All-in-all long term alcohol abuse can cause chronic alteration of brain and nerve function, weakening of heart muscle, testicular shrinkage, male breast enlargement, impotency, elevated triglycerides, fat deposits in the liver, vitamin deficiencies, and death.

Conclusion

Alcohol and sports performance do not mix. It inhibits every aspect of performance and losing body fat! The best choice someone can do is avoid alcohol altogether; however, just saying "no" is not a viable option when the majority of people want to say "yes"! Below are suggestions to minimize the effects of alcohol on performance.

3.9 Alcohol and the Soccer player (continued)

Suggestions:

- Avoid excessive drinking
- Agree to a limit before drinking
- Agree to a limit for the week
- Avoid drinking games
- Do not drink alcohol on an empty stomach
- Choose low alcoholic beverages
- For every serving of alcohol, drink 8-12oz of water, juice, or non-alcoholic beverage
- Continue to drink non-alcoholic beverages well after consuming alcohol.
~ 24-72oz of water if hydrated between each drink
- Avoid social drinking at least 72 hours before a practice/event
- After practice/event re-hydrate properly before consuming any alcohol.
- Before drinking any alcohol after a workout/event, consume at least 6-10g protein and 30-60g of carbohydrates within the first 30 minutes followed by a well balanced meal in the next 1 1/2 hours.
- Avoid drinking alcohol at least 24-36 hours after experiencing extreme soreness/aches/pains, noticeable bruising or injury.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking anti-inflammatory drugs
- Avoid alcohol!

4.0 Emerging Talent And Academic Education

The Football Association of Ireland Emerging Talent Programme strongly values and promotes the academic education of all young soccer players. We feel strongly that all young soccer players should give their academic education the utmost priority.

Of course, we do understand that all young soccer players dream of being a professional footballer and thus make a good living by participating in the sport we all love. However, the facts are that only a small number of people are granted this dream. Therefore, we see the holistic development of our young players as being essential. We will encourage all our players to fully immerse themselves in their academic education while at the same time continue to develop a healthy independent lifestyle through the medium of soccer.

In the Emerging Talent programme, we will encourage each player to attain their highest potential on the soccer fields. At the same time, we will endeavour to promote their academic education and therefore encourage young players to look further afield than just being a professional soccer player.

Thousands of players across Ireland today are playing soccer on a social basis, while still maintaining a quality lifestyle for themselves and their families through gainful employment. Hundreds of players across Ireland are playing at semi-professional level where they receive some compensation for showing their soccer skills but their real income is received from their "day job". Then, we have a small minority of soccer players playing in the Eircom League of Ireland, based in Ireland, who came through the Irish system, who are professional soccer players. Finally, there are the players who have moved to other countries in order to make a living playing football. For the most part, very few get this chance and when this chance does arise it can only last for 10-15 years because of the strains physically. Yes, those players are quite well paid but consider most of them are out of a job at forty years of age. The question then is "What will I do now"?

We hope that in the future our players will have a formal academic education to fall back onto. Our players must develop life skills, so if the dream of being a professional soccer player does not work out then we can advance with option two. This base of formal education will give all players an opportunity to succeed in a work environment. We will promote the holistic development of all young soccer players.

4.1 Overuse Injury- Information Sheet

Bones, joints, muscles, tendons and ligaments have to work during movement. The load on these tissues increases with an increasing level of work. For example, there is relatively little stress during walking, but relatively large stress during busy periods of a match.

During these periods of high stress there may be tiny areas of minor damage to any of the different tissues. However, the body is usually well able to cope with these. Repairs to the body are going on all the time, especially during rest periods, such as sleeping. You may only feel some minor muscle stiffness the following day or maybe nothing at all.

Overuse injuries occur when the relationship between periods of high stress and the repair process breaks down. This typically happens when the body is unprepared for the high stress, the stress occurs for too long, too frequent or there is inadequate rest periods.

The common signs of an overuse injury are pain or soreness that eases during the activity but may come back worse when you're finished. It may be difficult to remember when exactly you first felt the pain, and it may be difficult to relate the pain to any one incident. Symptoms may vary between individuals.

Typical overuse injuries in football occur at the groin, hamstrings, ankle and shin (shin splints). In adolescent boys there are other more specific types of overuse injuries, these include pain at the knee (Osgood Schlatters disease), the heel (Sever's disease) and the lower back (Pars deficit/ spondylolysis).

Treating these types of injury can be difficult and full recovery can be a slow process. It is best to avoid them altogether.

To help avoid overuse injuries,

- Always do an adequate warm-up before sport activities. Focus on areas that you feel maybe stiff or tight.
- If you feel sore in a particular area every time you train or play a match, get help early. Don't wait until the pain develops to a stage where it stops you from training and playing. Contact your physiotherapist or doctor early.
- Look after your body in between training sessions/ games. Stretch at home, work on your core stability, stay hydrated, eat the right foods and get plenty of rest.
- Don't over-train.
- Use footwear that suits your feet. Boots, shin guards, etc. should fit well and be comfortable.

4.2 Developmental Stretching Exercise Descriptions

Developmental Stretching Exercises for the FAI Emerging Talent Programme

Developmental Stretches are a group of exercises that help to improve flexibility, joint range of movement and muscle function. When this type of exercise is done regularly muscles and other soft tissues grow in length allowing the body's to move more freely. Regular use of these exercises will help the player to develop physically, and thereby achieve optimal performance and help avoid injury.

These exercises are designed to be done at home approximately four to five times a week. The developmental stretches shown in this document are not intended to be done as part of a warm up or cool down during training or a match.

4.2 Developmental Stretching Exercise Descriptions (continued)

Group 1

✓ Correct		✗ Incorrect
	<p>1. Hamstrings</p> <p>Feel a gentle stretch at the back of your thigh. Hold for 30 seconds.</p>	
	<p>2. Quadriceps</p> <p>Keep your knee in line with your standing leg. Feel the stretch at the front of your thigh. Hold for 30 seconds.</p>	
	<p>3. Hip Flexor / Groin (Pocket Muscle)</p> <p>Place one leg right out in front of you. Keep your trunk up-right. Feel a stretch in the front of your groin. Hold for 30 seconds.</p>	
	<p>4. Adductors / Groin</p> <p>Place your feet wide apart, pointing in the same direction. Keep your body up-right. Bend one leg and feel a stretch in the opposite inner thigh. Hold for 30 seconds.</p>	

This stretching programme should be performed at least four times per week.
Stretches compiled by Colin Dunlevy, PhD., MISC P and Philip Phelan, MSc., MISC P - Chartered Physiotherapists

4.2 Developmental Stretching Exercise Descriptions (continued)

Group 2

✓ Correct		✗ Incorrect
	<p>5. Hip Adductors / Groin Sitting with a straight back and holding your feet. Let your knees fall out to the side. Hold for 30 seconds.</p>	
	<p>6. Calf (Upper) Keep your feet pointing in the same direction. Keep your heels on the ground and your back knee straight. As you lean onto the front leg, feel a stretch in your upper calf. Hold for 30 seconds.</p>	
	<p>7. Calf (Lower) Bring your feet slightly closer together than above. Feet still pointing forward. Feel a stretch in your lower calf. Hold for 30 seconds.</p>	
	<p>8. Shoulder Stretch (Front) Hold your hands together behind and lift them off your back. Feel the stretch across the front of your shoulders.</p>	

This stretching programme should be performed at least four times per week
Stretches compiled by Colin Dunlevy, PhD., MISCP and Philip Phelan, MSc., MISCP - Chartered Physiotherapists



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