

BUTLERSBRIDGE GFC



Player Welfare for Juvenile Players

Butlersbridge Juvenile GAA club is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the well being of its players, mentors and members. This short document deals with player welfare under the headings –nutrition, hydration and lifestyle.

PLAYER WELFARE

PLAYER WELFARE - NUTRITION

It is important to eat a healthy balanced diet day in, day out (see *food pyramid*). This way you will ensure that your body is getting the vitamins, minerals, nutrients and importantly, the energy, it needs stay healthy and meet the demands of training and matches.

A handy way to focus on the foods you should be eating is to remember why they are important for your performance. All the foods you eat should apply to the rules below:

- ✓ To provide energy to exercising muscles
- ✓ To help tissue (muscles) grow and repair
- ✓ To maintain a healthy immune system
- ✓ To refuel and hydrate between sessions



PLAYER WELFARE - HYDRATION

Your body is made up of two-thirds water and when you exercise much is lost through sweating, breathing and talking. In warm weather you lose even more! Losing fluid can cause dehydration which leads to premature fatigue and reduced performance. When you sweat you lose both fluid and body salts, which further impacts on your ability to play as well as you can.

The recommendation for daily fluid consumption are 2 litres or 8 glasses. This can come from a combination of water, milk juices, tea etc. For sports people it is important that you meet, if not exceed these recommendations.

Thirst is a poor indicator of dehydration—by this stage your performance could already be impaired

Eating for training/matches

Pre match meal

You should eat your pre-exercise meal between 2-4 hours before start time, to allow you to fuel appropriately. Your meal should be carbohydrate based to provide you with extra energy, include lean protein for muscle strength and contain little or no fat so that it is easily digested. You should include a drink too!

Examples include: pasta with tomato sauce; baked potato with beans; sandwiches with chicken/tuna/ ham; porridge with fruit; toast with jam; include a drink i.e. water

Pre warm-up / During training, matches

In the hour before start time, you should eat easily digestible carbohydrate snacks to help maximize your energy stores. You may choose to drink a sports drink as an alternative. It is vital that you are taking on fluids at this time, so have your water bottle handy.

Examples include: ripe bananas; oranges; jaffa cakes; jelly beans; sports drink.

Take on fluids as often as possible during exercise to replace those lost. Do not wait until you feel thirsty as you may well be dehydrated by this time.

Post-match/training

After you have played a match or have been training your energy stores will be very low. It is vital that you begin re-fuelling immediately. The body can refuel most quickly in the first 30 minutes after you have finished exercise. Players should pack recovery snacks with their kit to allow refuelling to begin.

Examples include: sandwiches with protein; fruit; yoghurt; yoghurt drink; cereal bars; sports drink.

PLAYER WELFARE – LIFESTYLE and TRAINING

A healthy balance between training/activity and rest/recovery/sleep is essential for every player. Players should '*listen to their bodies*'.

Parents, players and coaches all have a role to play to ensure that teams and individual players **avoid burnout**. Players should endeavour to prioritise training/playing with the team at their own age level. Training and games 'up a level' are at the discretion of the parents/players in question in consultation with the relevant coaches/mentors.

GOOD HABITS

Now that you understand the recommendations about eating well for Gaelic Games, the best thing to do is to get into the habit of practicing them. Here are a few tips to help you along the way:

- ✓ Always eat breakfast and never go to bed hungry
- ✓ Ensure you are eating a healthy diet to fuel your body for sport
- ✓ Get your own water bottle for daily use, training and matches
- ✓ Always pack a recovery snack to eat after exercise

For more information visit the Ulster GAA website www.ulster.gaa.ie