

Managing Injuries

By Gillian Dueza, Pro-Therapy Maroubra

The pre-season and first few matches of any sport is always a time when players are pre-disposed to injury. Whether it be traumatic injuries or biomechanical breakdown injuries there is a definite “new season” spike in the number of injured players we assess as the competitive sports seasons start.

A break over the Christmas period, over-zealous players and opponents, tough, dry training surfaces due to the hot weather over summer and a distinct lack of fitness compared to the end of last season can all contribute to injuries. So what can you do about them??

My main suggestion as a physiotherapist is not to ignore them nor push through them. Carrying an injury from the pre-season into the competitive season, and from the early season throughout the entire season, is a recipe for disaster. By not taking a little time out to treat an injury properly in the first place can result in carrying a niggle all season or even worse, blowing that injury out at some stage and missing the rest of the season. It is just not worth it!!

All athletes should all be aware of the R.I.C.E. principles when it comes to injury management, however resting an injury for a couple of weeks without a proper physiotherapy assessment and a graduated rehabilitation programme can mean that rest alone makes no difference when you return to sport. A lot of people will actually waste two weeks, thinking they are doing the right thing, then end up on the physio bed after they return to sport and find that their problem has not resolved. **Rest is not always the answer, physiotherapy always is!**

A lot of people ask whether stretching before a training session or a game will help prevent an injury. I suggest that the answer is “no” if it is just static stretching and “yes” if it is a combination of static and dynamic stretching. The benefits of static stretching are to focus the mind, to focus as a team and to increase body awareness. The added benefits of dynamic stretching are to warm the fluids in the joints and increase the blood flow to the muscles...very important for cold Sunday mornings at Centennial Park! Teams should be developing a stretching regimen now, combining both static and dynamic stretches, which can be consistently carried out over the 2013 season.

If you want to play and you want to play well then you need to look after your body and listen to what it is telling you. Pain is a message to your brain....don't ignore that message. As sponsors of the RCFC SMFL teams the staff at Pro-Therapy are here to help you look after your injuries and return you to the park sooner. After all, injuries are as much a part of the game as winning your matches and the esky full of beers afterwards.



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