

HOW AFL PLAYERS PREPARE AND RECOVER PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY AFTER TRAINING OR GAMES

By Ryder Mantello

PREPARATION (PHYSICAL)

► Food and Fluids

► before a game a player is generally asked to eat foods that are high in carbohydrates and low in fat, this gives a player a high source of energy to then go out there and perform. The timing of when players eat is also important as they should give the food time to break down in their stomach. Take Sam Jacobs for example who is a ruckman for the GWS giants, he eats a lasagna the night before the game, this is a great meal because it is high in carbohydrates and it will give the body time to digest it and this will give him a good amount of energy before the game the next day. The day of the game he would eat a light breakfast, so he doesn't feel heavy going into a game, and then throughout the game he would eat a banana and some lollies just to give a boost of energy. Fluid intake is also very important for a player, before and throughout a game a player should drink fluids often to keep themselves hydrated and full of energy, water or Gatorade are good choices because they both restore electrolytes within the body.





RECOVERY (PHYSICAL)

► Muscle recovery and food/fluid intake

► Players after games and training generally are assigned a recovery plan, these generally involve a few cooldown exercises, these might include riding on an exercise bike, sitting in a hot or cold pool or if players want to target one particular spot or muscle, they can strap a bag of ice to it. Fluid is just as important after the game as it is during the game, experts say that for every kilo that you lose during the game you should drink 1.5 litres of water, just like before the game players usually choose to drink water or Gatorade.



MENTAL (PREPARATION)

- ▶ Mental preparation
- ▶ Mental preparation is probably just as important as the physical preparation, this is because if you prepare well mentally for a game, playing the game becomes a lot simpler and it gives you a clear mind to go out and execute your skills. One of the tactics that coaches use these days is the idea of goal setting is a great way to get athletes to commit to something, a goal for a player before a game might be to be physical and apply lots of pressure every time my opponent gets the ball. For most players they have a pre-game routine, this is probably the best way for a player to get in a good mindset before the game. Part of a player's pre-game routine might be to have a certain meal the night before a game or it might be listening to a certain song that gets them pumped up. I know for Mitch Robinson a wingman for the Brisbane Lions, he loves to watch a few clips of players crashing and bumping into each other, this is because it gets him into a mindset to really be physical and love the contact that comes his way. For a player to perform well they must have self-confidence in themselves that they will go out and perform to a high standard, coaches say that they have seen players go through form slumps just because they have no confidence in their game and no self-belief.



RECOVERY (MENTAL)

► Mental Recovery

► After the game players might have time to sit down and do some self/group reflection. This is great time for a player to look back on the game and give some feedback to how other people might have performed and how they performed. players might sit with the coach and have a bit of one on one session talking about what they could have improved on and what they did well, giving a player honest feedback is the best way for a player to improve. From the information I've gathered lots of players just enjoy having a quiet night and maybe going to a nice restaurant for dinner. On the other hand some players might enjoy a bit of a night out with a few of there teammates at a pub or dance club, all coaches say that everyone has a different way of mentally slowing down so if that means going out and partying or just going home and watching some television

REFLECTION 1 (FIRST 3 WEEKS)

At the start I was really set on the question I wanted to do, this really helped me start studying earlier and it got me on the right track earlier. I think the way I researched in the first few weeks was very affective and I feel like I got a lot done in that period of time. But I felt like I was still feel like I was struggling to find out how I was going to present it.

REFLECTION 2 (MIDDLE SECTION)

I felt like when covid-19 hit I was a little stuck and my mind went kind of blank, this was because I left a lot of my planning at school and I wasn't able to get the full help I was getting when I was at school, this stumped me for ideas and I was getting frustrated because I still had no idea how I was going to present my work.

REFLECTION 3 (LAST 2 WEEKS)

In the last couple of weeks I have felt really good about my project and I have been getting lots of stuff done in terms of finishing off my presentation. In the last few weeks I have loved studying my project and learning about something I love in the end I think IGNITE is a great way to get people researching something they're passionate about.

