

All Day Energy during Back to Back Competitions

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One of the most important times to be at the very top of your game, both physically and mentally is during the final period of a game or during the final game of an all-day tournament. Not having the right nutritional game plan in place leads to both mental and physical fatigue and can ultimately lead to decreased performance or injury.

When you are faced with multiple competitions in the same day, it is important to meal plan so that optimal energy needs are met. To do this, it is imperative that you start the day with a full tank of gas and use your breaks between games to refuel and rehydrate. Use the following tips to help you to be prepared on your competition day:

- Practice how you will fuel on game day prior to your tournament day. Training is not only a time to work on strength and conditioning your muscles but also a time to train your muscles how to use fuels. You do not want to try a new food on the day of your competition only to find out that it does not agree with you. If a food gives you an upset stomach, it is much better to find that out ahead of time.
- If you do not already have one, invest in a small insulated cooler and a few ice packs so that all of your foods and beverages can be packed and taken with you. This way you can be sure that you will have adequate foods and drinks to keep yourself well-fed and well hydrated if no other source of energy is available.
- Pay attention to your pre-competition meal! Make sure to eat a real breakfast no later than 1 ½ hours before your first game. This meal should be low fiber, low fat, and high carbohydrate with a little protein. Some examples include:
 - English muffin with 1 TBSP peanut butter, jelly or jam and 1 banana.
 - 2 slices raisin toast with jelly, 2 egg whites and 1 whole egg, ½ cup orange juice
 - 1 ½ cup cereal (lower fiber is typically better tolerated, corn flakes, rice krispies, cheerios) with 1 cup skim or 1% milk, 1 nectarine
 - Bagel with 1 Tbsp peanut butter, 1 cup skim or 1% milk

Remember, everyone's GI tract is different. Practice is an important part of food selection for game day.

- Before your first game and during the game, stick to liquids to stay hydrated and keep from feeling too full. Drink water initially, and then switch to a sports drink like Gatorade about 20 minutes before the game. Continue drinking sports drinks when possible during the game. If you know when your breaks will be, it is a great idea to schedule drink breaks. This helps you to remember to rehydrate. Staying hydrated not only keeps you energized but also keeps you mentally focused.
- Between games it is vital that you refuel and rehydrate. The quicker you can take in some carbohydrates after your first game, the more energized and recovered you will be for the upcoming events. If you only have ½ hour prior to your next event or competition, be sure to utilize sports drinks to obtain adequate carbohydrates. The last thing you want to do is start your next game with a stomach full of undigested food. If your next game is 2 hours away, than start eating solids. A carbohydrate rich meal will be your best success at obtaining more energy. You will want to switch back to liquids (Gatorade) as you get closer to the start of the game. Some examples of easily digested between meal foods are:

- 2 slices of bread with 2 slices turkey, banana
- Dried fruit
- Cereal with milk
- Yogurt with fruit
- Fig Newton with low-fat chocolate milk

●After the tournament, refuel your muscles and rehydrate your body! Eat a high carbohydrate snack that includes a little protein within 30 minutes of finishing your tournament. Even if you plan on going out to eat after your game, it is important to get carbohydrates and a little protein into your body within 30 minutes so that you can start the recovery process immediately. Some examples of easy snacks or beverages to meet this immediate need are:

- 1 cup chocolate milk
- Yogurt
- Sports drink with a 4:1 ratio carbohydrate to protein

●Within the next 1 ½ -2 hours, eat a full meal that including carbohydrates, protein and a little fat. If you have practice, games or a continuation of the competition on the following day, you may need to include an additional evening meal to assure adequate glycogen (stored carbohydrate) for the next day's events.