



Athlete Health and Wellbeing

Sleep and Recovery

Angus Sullivan – Athlete Development Director

angussullivan.sc@gmail.com



Good afternoon coaches, parents and athletes and welcome to the first in a series of small reports about key issues and ideas in sports science. As an initiative of the club, these semi-regular updates will hopefully give you a very basic understanding of key issues in sports science and possibly provide some ideas to implement into your long-term development of an athlete.

It is not compulsory to read these articles nor will they be discussed at trainings, however, it does provide an opportunity to receive succinct information that may benefit you as an athlete and in your development, or by providing an avenue for further research if you find any topics of particular interest.

Today's topic is, in my opinion, one of the most crucial and often overlooked things in amateur and youth sport; recovery and in particular sleep. We all know when we are tired, we sleep, however, I challenge you to think about your sleep hygiene for a moment. Interesting research on sleep for developmental and high-performance athletes often comes from academy-based programs (such as the AIS in Canberra). The paper referenced below shows that there is a significant correlation between lack of sleep and injury in developmental athletes [1].

These researchers suggest a minimum 8 hours of sleep each night is necessary for adolescent athletes. For those of us unfortunately past our teenage years, chronic lack of sleep still shows correlation with decreased productiveness, poor mood and mental health as well as increased risk of injury and 7-9 hours each night is recommended. Circling back to the term sleep hygiene, blue light exposure, nutrition, mental health and physical preparedness all come into play. In summary, its important to make sure we are physically and mentally ready to sleep each night and plan enough time to have sufficient sleep. Remember, if you have a “bad” sleep, it is not the end of the world as all the conditions discussed above are under chronic lack of sleep, so shake it off and potentially reconsider your sleep hygiene.

[1] Milewski M.D., Skaggs D.L., Bishop G.A., Pace J.L., Ibrahim D.A., Wren T.A. & Barzdukas A. (2014), Chronic lack of sleep is associated with increased sports injuries in adolescent athletes, *Journal of Paediatric Orthopaedics*, 34(2) 129-133.