Proper Eating Habits for a Soccer Match

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Many soccer players have trained properly and are in optimal shape for matches when game day arrives. The problem most athletes encounter has to do with improper nutrition before, during, and after games. A nutritionally deficient soccer player will use most of, if not all, their energy during the first half of a match; this is why they need a massive storage of glycogen. Glycogen is what the body makes with excess carbohydrate or sugar intake. Glycogen is the body's way of storing energy for a time when we have drained our primary energy units. Research has showed most soccer athletes have completely depleted their glycogen stores within the first 30 to 45 minutes of soccer related activity. Those players who do not replenish carbohydrates or sugar will have a dramatic decrease in physical and mental performance. With this in mind, there are a few ways soccer players are able to keep their glycogen stores at an advantageous level:

* Optimal level of 2,400-3,000 calories per day.
* Eat a meal of around 600 calories 2 hours before a game. 600 calories is the approximate amount of carbohydrate in 3 bananas and 2 slices of whole grain, gluten free bread.
* Drink 12-14 ounces of a sports drink, Gatorade / PowerAde / Vitamin Water, 10-15 minutes before matches begin.
* Drink 12-14 ounces of a sports drink, Gatorade / PowerAde / Vitamin Water, during halftime of each match.
* After matches, water intake is extremely important along with a 500 calorie meal. This meal should have a good balance of protein, carbohydrate, and fat content.

Source: 'Carbohydrate, Fluid, and Electrolyte Requirements of the Soccer Player: A Review,' International Journal of Sport Nutrition, vol. 4, pp. 221-236, 1994

About the Author;

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