

Recovery modalities in Football

Fatigue plays a huge role in players performance hence it is very important that players are always fresh for every session. Most players participate in very intense & competitive schedules, with each season entailing cycles of training and matches from one week to the next. Some players may even have additional commitments, such as inter-provincial tournaments, national team duties and other CAF/FIFA competitions. Studies have thus shown that repetitive nature of the competitive season, often combined with stress of travel, might even push the players beyond their physiological and psychological limits.

Most players are encountering more mental, emotional and social demands daily than yester year, with amongst others, pressure of personnel relationship, media demands, sponsor needs, more public interest and information overload.

Recovery from fatigue is fundamental in maximising the performance of players, therefore they are challenged to address the repeated imbalance between stress & recovery, with the basic assumption that a greater training load & growing stress necessitate increasing recovery.

The aim of the recovery process is to re-establish/regain full physiological, psychological, emotional and social components of the body. There is huge diversity of recovery modalities football. These are the few basic recovery modalities amongst others:-

- ✓ Cool down and static stretching
- ✓ Contrast temperature water immersion
- ✓ Rehydration and electrolytes replacement (e.g. water; Energade)
- ✓ Nutrition
- ✓ Sports massage therapy
- ✓ Sleep and resting
- ✓ Debriefing after a competitive match
- ✓ Socialise with family, friends and team mates
- ✓ Imaging and visualization
- ✓ Active recovery (Flushing out residual lactic acid, usually done the next day after a match)

Players perceive a variety of recovery modalities as important. Even within a team setting, the use of recovery modalities could be individualised. Different situations have different demands, and players should be educated in regard to protocols for physical, as well psychosocial recovery modalities. Gender should also be taken into consideration in planning for implementation of recovery strategies.