



**PREPARATION
& RECOVERY**

LESSON COMPANION

TrueSport®

Quick-Hitters

1

A PRE-GAME ROUTINE INCREASES OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS AND BUILDS CONFIDENCE.

2

A PLAN FOR POST-COMPETITION RECOVERY INCLUDES REST, NUTRITION, AND HYDRATION.

3

POSITIVE SELF-TALK AND MIND-SETS WILL OFTEN GUARANTEE GOOD RESULTS.

Coaches' Corner PREPARATION AND RECOVERY

- Preparation begins months before, when you develop patterns that connect your mind and body and allow you to focus on training and competition.
- Three main components to preparation are: 1) a pre-game routine, 2) visualizing the outcome, and 3) positive self-talk.
- A training session or competition does not end when you step off the field. Recovering properly after practice or a game is extremely important so that you have more energy, fresh muscles, and a focused mind for your next game.
- Recovery involves three primary concepts: 1) sleep, 2) refuel, and 3) perspective.

TrueSport Activities

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TRUESPORT CHALK TALK

Discuss how performance is enhanced with pre-game preparation and then follow up with the questions below:

Suggested Questions:

1. How do you prepare yourself before competition or a game?
2. Why do you think a pre-game routine is important to success?
3. Are there other techniques that you use before a game to better prepare yourself?
4. Can these preparation techniques be helpful in other areas of your life besides athletics?

TRUESPORT IN ACTION

"Line Up"

The goal of this activity is to demonstrate how preparation increases opportunities for success. Have the athletes separate into two equal groups - Group 1 and Group 2. It will be important that the groups stand far apart, as a different set of instructions will be provided to each group. Being careful that Group 2 cannot hear, give the following set of instructions to Group 1: "Line up according to your height (or another qualifier such as birth month) without using your voices".

Without giving the same level of specifics you gave to Group 1, give the following set of instructions to Group 2: "Line up the exact same way Group 1 is without using voices." Set a two-minute time frame for them to complete the task during which neither group is allowed to ask questions.

After the two-minutes, bring the whole group together and have Group 2 guess what Group 1's instructions were. After the discussion, reveal the full instructions and see if both groups were able to accomplish the goal. Debrief with the entire group and discuss the meaning of the activity and how it related to preparation.

Suggested Questions:

1. How did knowing the plan ahead of time help Group 1 accomplish the task?
2. Did Group 2 feel prepared to accomplish the task? Why or why not?
3. Why is having a pre-game routine, or knowing the plan ahead of time, so important for success?
4. Are you able to achieve success if the goal is unclear or not specified?



Look For...

Results of a lack of preparation:

- Increased stress levels
- Low focus and energy levels
- Negative self-talk
- Lack of confidence
- Confusion
- A slow start



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Day and weekend-long tournaments are a staple of modern youth sport. While these days may be fun for athletes, they also take a toll on their bodies, and the more an athlete plays in a fatigued state, the more vulnerable they are to injury.

Here are practical tips around muscle and mobility maintenance to share with your athletes to increase their recovery and reduce their risk of injury during sports tournaments.

////////// Muscle and Mobility Maintenance //////////

There's a fair amount of overlap between recovering the body from the last game and preparing for the next one. This is especially true for tournaments where the window between events is small.

While a good coach should walk athletes through a team cool down, there are also exercises athletes can do in their hotel room or back at home to help better recover for the next game:

Lacrosse Ball Massage



Take a lacrosse ball (can be purchased at most sporting goods stores — a tennis ball can work too), put it on the ground, and rub a foot on top of it while applying pressure. This loosens the tendons, ligaments, and muscles within the feet and ankles. The same ball can also be used to loosen up the shoulders, back, glutes, hips, forearms, and other muscles.

Lunge and Reach



Loosen up the core by stepping out into a forward lunge (bent front leg, straight back leg). Place the palm opposite the front leg (e.g., left leg forward, right palm) on the ground and raise the other palm toward the ceiling and look up. Hold for a few seconds, then switch sides.

Hamstring Stretch



Help your athlete loosen tight hamstrings by having them lay on their back with legs flat against the ground. Wrap a towel folded longways, elastic band, or similar around the arch of one of their feet. With legs remaining as straight as possible, have them raise the banded leg toward the ceiling while applying resistance with the band, also flexing the ankle so their toes are pointed at their face. Hold for 10-15 seconds, then switch legs.

Keep in mind that the time between games and events is for mental recovery, too.

Letting your athletes have some down time with friends or by themselves will allow them to play their best again when it comes time to re-focus.

To learn more about how to teach athletes how to properly **RECOVER**, check out [Learn.TrueSport.org](https://www.TrueSport.org) and [Teach.TrueSport.org](https://www.Teach.TrueSport.org) for insightful articles, videos, and additional resources full of recovery-related advice.

TrueSportCOACH Preparation



How well athletes perform is significantly connected to how well they prepare beforehand, both physically and mentally.

Many coaches understand the importance of physical preparation, including:

- **Sports nutrition and hydration**
- **Proper rest and recovery**
- **Proper equipment**
- **Warm ups and cool downs**

But coaches should not underestimate the impact good mental preparation can have on athletic performance.

The Benefits of Good Mental Preparation

Increased mental toughness

Developing mental toughness allows your athletes to perform at their full potential under pressure, while also remaining calm and being able to bounce back from mistakes. A great method for training mental toughness is to develop it in practice by repeatedly exposing athletes to challenging situations that they might face in a game or competition.

Better goal-setting

Setting goals provides direction for athletes' training. These goals should encompass both short and long-term milestones and be attainable, yet challenging.

Athletes achieving their personal goals in practice instills greater self-confidence in their minds on gameday.

Improved focus

Focus refers to your athlete's ability to concentrate and block out distractions. Strong focus is a form of mental toughness and keeps athletes performing at their best for longer periods of time.

Super self-efficacy

Believing in oneself means believing in your abilities. Self-efficacy is entwined with having self-confidence, being prepared for any situation, and having a passion to achieve your goals, all of which can be cultivated with healthy mental preparation.

Higher work ethic

Nothing great is achieved without hard work. Regardless of natural gifts and abilities, the work that athletes complete in the gym and in the classroom is paramount to success both in sports and life.

A combination of both physical and mental preparation will help ensure your athletes are able to excel in everything they do in their lives, both in and out of sport.

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