

Background

- “Load” is experienced physiologically and psychological
- Physiological (external load): is physical work performed by the athlete in training, competition, schoolwork, and daily life (Gazzano, Gabbett 2018)
- Psychological (internal load): the response to external load combined with daily stressors, mental, emotional, and cognitive (Mellalieu et al., 2021)
- Load management is critical to student-athlete performance and well-being
 - Optimize performance, prevent injuries, and support overall athlete well-being by balancing the demands placed on the body and mind with adequate training and recovery
 - Load management aims to strike the right balance between training stimulus and recovery to enhance athletic performance and promote long-term health and well-being in athletes
 - Measuring internal load includes objective measures, such as heart rate perceived effort, and the overall perceived difficulty
 - External load can be measured by the number of sprints, weight lifted, total distance, hours studied, and assignments done

Measuring Load

- How to spot warning signs: Monitoring changes in physical performance, such as decreased speed, strength, or endurance (jump mat, sprint times)
- Be able to notice obvious signs and symptoms
- Open communication and regular check-ins between coaches and athletes (surveys)
- Signs and Symptoms: Increased stress and anxiety, burnout, depression, sleep disturbance, decreased motivation, lack of focus, decreased self-esteem, decrease in performance, steady decline in jump and sprint times



Outcomes

- Excessive training loads can lead to burnout, increased stress levels, and decreased motivation among athletes and students
- By implementing effective load management strategies, athletes can not only enhance their physical performance but also safeguard their mental well-being
- Coaches, athletes, and support staff should prioritize open communication, monitor mental health indicators, and promote self-care practices to ensure a comprehensive approach to performance optimization



Tips

To build confidence:

- 1) Identify 3 strengths that make you successful
- 2) Visualize them daily
- 3) Practice daily
- 4) Find one role model per skill and study how they do it
- 5) Positive self-talk

- Mindfulness practices, such as meditation or deep breathing exercises, reduce stress and enhance mental well-being
- Ensuring adequate sleep, nutrition, and hydration is essential for recovery and overall performance
- Regular rest days or active recovery sessions can help prevent burnout and allow the body and mind to recharge

Recovery

- Adequate rest and sleep
- Relaxation techniques
- Proper nutrition
- Active recovery
- Social support
- Mind-body practices
- Psychological recovery strategies