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Sports Stack

Trainers' Go-To Word Is 'Hydration'

Written by [kylestack](#) on 8/30/2011 11:09 AM

This is the time of year when athletic trainers and dietitians can probably be found repeating one word over and over to their athletes: Hydrate. Hydrate. Hydrate. From NFL training camps to MLB's late-season games – known as the dog days of summer partly for the weather – preventing athletes from becoming dehydrated is of the utmost concern. It's encouraging to see reporters enlightening the masses on this topic.

In a August 18th article for The Wall Street Journal, Reed Albergotti documented how the Houston Texans' training staff uses ice, coconut water, vegetables, salt-infused Gatorade and IV packs to keep players performing in Texas' searing 100-plus degree heat. The players' health is protected and they receive an education on nutrition for when they train on their own. The Texans aren't the only Lone Star State-based team protecting players from the heat.

ESPN reporter Buster Olney revealed a hydration nugget during Sunday's telecast between the Texas Rangers and Los Angeles Angels in Arlington. He noted that Rangers trainers dispense 6 to 10 IV bags for their players to use before games on hot Texas days. The team has even shifted Sunday home games from the afternoon to the evening the last several years to account for extreme day temperatures.

Tennis players usually face potential dehydration at the U.S. Open in New York City. High humidity combined with temperatures in the mid- to upper 90s often create a stifling environment. However, tennis players will get a respite this week as the Open commences; temperatures are predicted to remain in the high 70s and low 80s while the humidity should be manageable. (Proper hydration should still be practiced, particularly among adults.)

Kids and young adults should obviously be educated on the topic. Yet it's adults, specifically professional athletes, who might let competitiveness or pride get in the way staying hydrated. Sports leagues have drastically improved their distribution of water and sports drinks the last few years through increased hydration awareness. That's a good thing.

What's more worrisome is how some athletes push themselves to train in high temperatures. They think of it as a badge of honor to survive a workout in difficult weather. The smart move is to hydrate and, if the weather is too hot, sit out a training session and live to see another healthy day.

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