Maximizing a Competitive Edge with Sports Nutrition

Crystal Zabka Belsky, MS, RD, CSSD, LMNT

Director, OMNI Behavioral Health Eating Disorder Program
Chair, Nebraska Board of Medical Nutrition Therapy
Certified Specialists in Sports Dietetics National Board
Commission on Dietetic Registration National Governing Panel
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutritionist</th>
<th>Registered Dietitian</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-no degree required</td>
<td>-minimum Bachelor’s level</td>
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<tr>
<td>-no formal training/education</td>
<td>-comprehensive training/clinicals</td>
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<tr>
<td>-no continuing education</td>
<td>-national licensure exam—RD</td>
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<tr>
<td>-no regulation of practice</td>
<td>-state licensure required—LMNT</td>
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<tr>
<td>-“self-proclaimed specialist”</td>
<td>-continuing education required</td>
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<td>-additional specialties regulated</td>
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Specialties

**Commission on Dietetic Registration**

- Pediatric Nutrition
- Renal Nutrition
- Gerontological Nutrition
- Oncology Nutrition
- Sports Dietetics
So what does it take to become specialized?

**Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics**

- Minimum of a Bachelor’s Degree in Nutrition/Dietetics/Exercise Science
- Completion on an accredited dietetic internship
- Must pass national board exam to become a Registered Dietitian and maintain licensure in good standing for a minimum of two years
- 1500 hours of specialty practice as a Registered Dietitian
- Must pass a national board exam to become a Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics
- 1000 hours of specialty practice each 5-year cycle, followed by retaking the board exam every 5 years
How do I interpret credentials?

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MS: Bachelor’s Degree in Dietetics
    Bachelor’s Degree in Exercise Science
    Master’s Degree in Nutrition & Exercise

RD: Registered Dietitian (national)

CSSD: Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (national)

LMNT: Licensed Medical Nutrition Therapist (state)
Do you currently utilize any sports nutrition services for your athletes?
Implications—Concerns

- The primary sources of nutrition information present significant variance in knowledge base and application
  - Athletic Trainers
  - Health Teacher
  - Written Resources

- A large percentage of coaches report no use of nutrition resources

- Supplement stores (ex: GNC, Complete Nutrition) continue to be a source of nutrition information despite lack of sensitivity to the potential for failed drug tests, supplements unapproved by FDA, etc
Implications—Potential Approaches

▪ Education provision for primary sources of nutrition information
  – live presentations, webinars, newsletters, discussion groups, consulting

▪ Recommendations for school-based curriculum
  – textbooks for health classes, science classes
  – subscriptions for evidence-based sports nutrition resources

▪ Collaboration with common treating physicians
What sports concerns do you see most often?
Implications—Concerns

- Inconsistent athlete patterns spread across hydration, nutrition and training regimens
- Chronic need to recondition athletes following off-season and when transitioning from sport to sport
- Weight management concerns potentially related to sport body stereotypes and multi-sport athlete demands
- Confusion between legal and illegal supplement availability and use
Implications—Potential Approaches

- Development of pattern recommendations for specific sports and multi-sport athletes to promote consistency
- Education and application demonstrations to connect nutrition and conditioning concepts
- Educational to normalize body size and composition differences within the same sport and across different sports
- Body composition testing with clinical processing
- Hands-on supplement education with potential outcomes
Which of the following best describes your athletes’ eating patterns?

- HOT MEALS AT SCHOOL
- PACKING COLD LUNCHES
- LEAVING SCHOOL TO EAT OUT
- PACKING SNACKS
- TEAM MEALS WITH TRAVEL
- CONCESSION STAND FOOD
- NONE OF THE ABOVE
Implications—Concerns

- Athletes are failing to take on personal responsibility with nutrition
- Education efforts must be generalized to food availability
- Risk for behavioral contagion with eating patterns
- Reduced accountability with athletes leaving school to eat
- Limited healthy options with common food sources

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Implications—Potential Approaches

▪ Team-based nutrition education and applications
  – live presentations, webinars, newsletters, daily emails, cooking classes, etc
▪ Challenge athletes to establish personalized eating plans
▪ Grocery store visits to educate athletes on healthy food options
▪ Team-based meals and snacks for both home and travel games
▪ Portion guides visible for consistent accountability
How would you define your athletes’ awareness of sports nutrition recommendations?

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Implications—Concerns

- Athletes who are unaware of nutritional needs aren’t able to make the best decisions for optimal performance
  - Total calorie needs, macronutrient needs, nutrient timing, etc
- Lack of awareness often leads to utilization of easy/cheap resources
  - Men’s Health, Bodybuilding magazines, GNC, Complete Nutrition, etc
- The absence of reliable resources leads to desperation in decisions
  - Supplement use, drug use, unhealthy weight management strategies
- Behavioral contagion often leads younger athletes to follow
Implications—Potential Approaches

▪ Team-based nutrition education and applications
  – live presentations, webinars, newsletters, daily emails, cooking classes, etc

▪ Sport-specific and position-specific athlete applications
  – Sprinter vs. Linebacker

▪ Rationalization of common nutrition myths/misconceptions

▪ Education on supplements—legality, safety and efficacy

▪ Challenge to captains and older team members to set the tone

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How would you define your athletes’ parents’ awareness of sports nutrition recommendations?
Implications—Concerns

- Parents who are unaware of their child’s nutritional needs aren’t equipped to provide the best support or resources
  - Food availability, meals, snacks, additional exercise
- Lack of awareness often leads to utilization of easy/cheap resources
- Conflict in relationships are more likely with limited knowledge
- Behavioral contagion often leads parents to mimic each other
- Poor supervision or direction in making supplement choices
Implications—Potential Approaches

- Team-based nutrition education and applications
  - live presentations, webinars, newsletters, daily emails, cooking classes, etc
- Sport-specific and position-specific athlete applications
  - Sprinter vs. Linebacker
- Rationalization of common nutrition myths/misconceptions
- Education on supplements—legality, safety and efficacy
- Grocery store visits to educate parents on healthy foods & budgeting
- Challenge parents to take turns providing team-based meals/snacks
What services would you be interested in having available for your athletes?

- On-campus group education with athletes, parents & coaches
- Webinar education with athletes, parents & coaches
- Off-campus group education with athletes, parents & coaches
- On-campus individual nutrition evaluation & counseling
- On-campus individual exercise evaluation & prescription
- None of the above
How do we put nutrition into play?

- Development of team or school-specific packages to include:
  - On-campus nutrition education presentations
  - Educational webinars focused on identified concerns
  - Periodic newsletters for proactive education
  - Daily nutrition tip emails to keep athletes/coaches/parents engaged
  - Conference call discussions to triage concerns
  - Grocery store visits to educated athletes/coaches/parents
  - Cooking classes to give hands-on exposure to healthy food preparation
  - Guidance for school-based nutrition-related curriculum and resources
Who would benefit from these services?

- Athletes
- Coaches
- Parents
- Athletic trainers
- Teachers
- School Foodservice
- Community Physicians
Which locations would you be willing to travel to?

OMAHA
LINCOLN
GRAND ISLAND
NORTH PLATTE
NORFOLK
SCOTTSBLUFF

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How can area schools collaborate?

- Combination of funding to expand nutrition service capability
  - Live educational presentations
  - Cooking classes

- Host schools can fund a nutrition service, then invite other schools to attend with an associated fee

- Schools could host a nutrition-based clinic as a fundraiser
What is the next step?

- Talk to your schools
- Talk to your athletes
- Talk to your parents

-Create a proposal for services and contact me!

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