

Saint Francis Wrestling

HANDBOOK
2011-2012



www.saintfranciswrestling.com

Hard Work – Discipline - Intensity

Saint Francis Wrestling

2011-2012

Welcome to Saint Francis High School Wrestling!

www.saintfranciswrestling.com

This is our team website. Please visit it often. It has many features and it is constantly updated year round, giving you the latest information on all tournaments, dual meets and current events.

School Information

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Go Lancers!

Saint Francis Wrestling

General Information

Saint Francis Wrestling is a *no cut* program that is an excellent opportunity for any boy who wishes to train at the highest level and participate in a competitive setting. Wrestling is unlike any other sport in that *every* boy participates in *every* phase of practice *every* day. In addition, *every* boy that wants to compete will have *several* opportunities to be “first string” in real competitions.

Philosophy:

The philosophy of the Saint Francis Wrestling program is one that parallels the philosophy of Saint Francis High School. While training to win is a component of the program, training boys to become hardworking, disciplined, and intense men is the ultimate goal of our program. This will certainly be a most challenging undertaking for any boy that accepts this test.

Hard Work builds Strong Bodies...

Discipline builds Strong Minds...

Intensity builds Strong Souls...

Our program strives to produce men that are focused on others more than themselves. While this is an individual sport it also very much a team sport. Each member is responsible for their teammates' development. By stressing the importance of working for others, Saint Francis Wrestlers will...

- 1. work for a cause bigger than themselves,**
- 2. accept responsibility for their actions,**
- 3. be courageous leaders,**
- 4. fight for justice on behalf of others,**
- 5. and have empathy for others in difficult situations.**

Practices:

Practices are split into two sessions: and early practice for our more novice wrestlers and a late practice for our more advanced wrestlers. This allows our coaching staff to give more attention to each of our athletes and allow them to grow as a wrestler at their own pace. All practices are mandatory, and athletes are responsible for letting the coaching staff know if there is a conflict. Absences are only excused for illness (when a student misses school) or a family emergency.

Competitions:

Lineups for competitions change as the season progresses. Wrestlers should be prepared to wrestle for any and all competitions. It is the goal of the program to give every wrestler the multiple opportunities to compete and improve. Wrestlers should keep themselves aware of when they are expected to wrestle for a given level (Frosh/JV/Second Man/Varsity).

The relationships you make here... you will always have them... for the rest of your life... the rest of your life.

- Francis Poggi

Practice Attire & Hygiene:

Clean shorts, clean t-shirts, and wrestling shoes must be worn at every practice. Headgear is required for all competitions. Wrestlers are expected to shower everyday, immediately after practice. Wrestling shorts, t-shirts, sweatshirts, pullovers, polo shirts, and headgear can be purchased through the team.

Injuries:

Anytime a wrestler sustains an injury he *must* see a coach first. A coach will decide how to best deal with the situation. Communication is must in these cases.

Paperwork:

All wrestlers must fill out an emergency form with HIPPA form, and a transportation form. All paperwork must be on file with the athletic office.

Weight Certification:

All wrestlers are required to pass a hydration test before they may compete in any competition. After passing a hydration test, each wrestler's body fat will be tested in order to determine the proper and safe weight class for each wrestler to compete at during the season.

Transportation:

Buses will drive our teams to each league dual meet. For tournaments, a combination of buses, school vans, and parent drivers will be employed to get our athletes to their desired locations.

Communication:

Communication is a must between the coaching staff, the wrestlers, and parents. Please feel free to communicate with us about your comments, questions and concerns about your sons, as this will help us be more successful as coaches.

Weight Classes:

The current weight classes are as follows:

106, 113, 120, 126, 132, 138, 145, 152, 160, 170, 182, 195, 215, 285.

ON January 15th, each weight class is increased by 2 pounds (growth allowance)

For many of the Frosh/Soph/JV tournaments that we attend, wrestlers are grouped according to their actual body weight and are not placed in exact weight classes

*There is a Destiny that makes us brothers;
None goes his way alone;
All that we send into the lives of others
comes back into our own.*

- Edwin Markham

God Bless!

*Saint Francis Wrestling
Coaching Staff*

Saint Francis Wrestling

Policies and Procedures

Saint Francis Wrestling is both a privilege and an integral part of the educational process in the life of participating student athletes.

BASIC 8 HABITS FOR SUCCESS

- 1. SHOW UP,**
- 2. ON TIME,**
- 3. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS,**
- 4. START PROMPTLY,**
- 5. COMPLETE TASKS,**
- 6. GET ALONG WITH PEERS,**
- 7. GET ALONG WITH ADULTS,**
- 8. AND HAVE PROPER HYGIENE.**

Academics and Conduct:

- ❖ Student athletes in the Saint Francis Wrestling program are expected to strive to do their best academically. All wrestlers are expected to work hard toward their full potential. The coaches ask that wrestlers keep them informed regarding tests, papers, and other academic concerns. Coaches need to be informed as soon as any problems arise.
- ❖ Saint Francis Wrestlers are expected to be examples for the rest of the student body in their behavior and their appearance.

Out of School Conduct:

- ❖ Saint Francis Wrestlers are expected to be good citizens away from, as well as in school. Everyone in the program represents Saint Francis High School and the Saint Francis Wrestling Program. Being responsible is a full-time commitment.
- ❖ Saint Francis Wrestlers shall not use, attempt to use or aid in the use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages or any form of drug or substance other than those prescribed by a doctor.

Tournaments:

- ❖ Wrestlers will be given detailed information sheets for the itinerary of each tournament. The season schedule and all information sheets, are posted on the team website.
- ❖ Everyone is expected to be available to wrestle every tournament.
- ❖ If a wrestler misses more than 1 tournament they are subject to dismissal.
- ❖ Wrestlers will wear their warm-ups and wrestling gear with pride. Saint Francis wrestlers are to warm-up only in Saint Francis gear and are not to do anything to bring attention to themselves and away from the team.
- ❖ Wrestlers must inform the coaching staff in writing if they are not arriving or departing a tournament with the team.
- ❖ Everyone on the team must attend the WCAL league finals.

Dual Meets:

- ❖ Everyone on the team, whether they are wrestling or not, is expected to attend every dual meet.
- ❖ Junior Varsity wrestlers are required to stay for the Varsity dual in order to support their teammates. Freshmen may leave after the Junior Varsity dual if it is necessary.
- ❖ For away meets, Saint Francis Wrestlers will not talk from the time they leave Saint Francis High School until after the weigh-in. Talking is absolutely prohibited on the bus! Wrestlers will get off the bus in an orderly fashion and walk single file into the opposing team's gym to weigh-ins.
- ❖ Wrestlers will wear warm-ups, uniforms, or Saint Francis High School wrestling gear at all times during the duration of the dual meet. If injured, wrestlers must wear khaki pants and their collared polo shirts.
- ❖ Saint Francis wrestlers will sit on the team bench during their level's dual, before and after their individual match, actively supporting their teammates.
- ❖ All wrestlers are required to clean up the gym after home dual meets.

Matches and Sportsmanship:

- ❖ Any public display of temper can not be tolerated at any time whether verbal or nonverbal. Saint Francis wrestlers never dispute the judgment of the officials. Any disagreement will be handled by the coaches.
- ❖ Wrestlers will refrain from using profanity at all times.
- ❖ Wrestlers will always shake their opponents hand before and after each match as well as the opposing coach's hand at the end of the match.
- ❖ **Wrestlers will ALWAYS look to the coach in their corner before each round so that the coach can decide the choice of position.**
- ❖ **Saint Francis wrestlers will ALWAYS SPRINT back to the center of the mat after any break in the action. This is our trademark!**
- ❖ Wrestlers will NEVER pull down their singlet straps at the end of the mat!
- ❖ Wrestlers will NEVER throw their headgear.

Match Count:

- ❖ Wrestlers are limited to participating in 40 total matches prior to the WCAL tournament.

Sundays:

- ❖ Members of the Saint Francis wrestling program will not participate in any wrestling related activities on Sundays, during the wrestling season. Sunday is very important day of rest. Our athletes put a lot of wear and tear on their bodies and it is necessary that they have a day of rest for their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Start Dates:

- ❖ Varsity practice for all non-freshmen will start on November 2nd.
- ❖ Freshmen will not start wrestling until all freshmen level sports in the fall season have been completed.
- ❖ All activities conducted by members of the wrestling team prior to the official start date will be completely voluntary and will play no part in their status in the wrestling program.

Practices:

- ❖ Concentration, intensity, and hard work are necessary for the entire practice session.
- ❖ Wrestlers take off their shoes before entering the wrestling room.
- ❖ Saint Francis wrestlers are positive toward teammates and coaches.
- ❖ Wrestlers pay attention to details during instruction and remain alert.
- ❖ Wrestlers do their part to keep their wrestling room clean and safe by cleaning up their mess and by not leaving things on the wrestling mat.
- ❖ All practices during Winter Break are MANDATORY.

Equipment:

- ❖ Freshmen and Junior Varsity wrestlers will purchase their own singlets, and are responsible for washing them before each competition.
- ❖ Varsity wrestlers will be issued different singlets before each competition. They will be collected immediately after each competition and washed by the staff.
- ❖ Any lost singlets or warm-ups will be replaced by the wrestler.
- ❖ Wrestlers are responsible for buying their own shoes and head gear.

Boxers:

- ❖ Saint Francis wrestlers shall NOT wear “boxers” at any practice or competition.

Hygiene:

- ❖ All wrestlers should be showering immediately after practice, on campus!
- ❖ Wrestlers must have clean shorts, multiple t-shirts, socks, and a sweatshirt at each practice.
- ❖ Wrestlers must keep their hair short and manageable and fingernails trimmed.
- ❖ Wrestlers/parents should not treat skin conditions without consulting a coach.

Injuries and Illnesses:

- ❖ Anytime a wrestler sustains an injury he MUST see a coach first. A coach will decide how to best deal with the situation.
- ❖ Injured wrestlers are required to attend all practices while they are injured.
- ❖ If a wrestler is sick, but still able to attend school, he is expected to check in with a coach at the beginning of practice.

Selection of Lineups:

- ❖ The coaching staff will determine the lineups for each tournament and dual meet as soon as possible.
- ❖ Lineups will be determined by combination of factors including
 - Past performance
 - Attendance
 - Work ethic and attitude
 - Challenge matches
- ❖ Wrestlers shall be flexible and ready to fill a spot at a moment's notice.

Absences:

- ❖ If a wrestler continually misses practice or is removed from practice, he is subject to being removed from the team.
- ❖ Missing practice may jeopardize a wrestler's eligibility for competing that weekend → This includes the weeks of WCAL, CCS, and STATE.
- ❖ If a wrestler misses the WCAL league tournament, he will not get credit for wrestling that season.

Captains:

- ❖ Being a captain is a responsibility and an honor. It is not a right.
- ❖ Captains may be Seniors or Juniors that have previous varsity experience.
- ❖ Captains are expected to lead by example and be the model representatives of the wrestling program and Saint Francis athletics. They are leaders in the wrestling room, in competitions, in the classroom, and in the community.
- ❖ Captains have a great work ethic, a willingness to listen, a love of Saint Francis High School, and outstanding attendance.

Travel:

- ❖ The reason we travel as program is to seek competition not available in our area, to showcase our outstanding team, and to fulfill the mission and philosophy of Saint Francis High School.
- ❖ Wrestlers are expected to follow all rules and regulations for travel outlined on their permission slips.

Respect for Team and Teammates

- ❖ Wrestlers showing disrespect for their teammates, coaches, or opponents may be dismissed from the team.
- ❖ Wrestlers showing disrespect for the wrestling room and the school may be dismissed from the team.
- ❖ Wrestlers who consistently act in a way that puts themselves above the team may be dismissed from the team.
- ❖ Wrestlers who pose a physical danger to their teammates or themselves may be dismissed from the team.

Coach Danna's Suggestions

- ❖ *"Golden Rule"* – Do not do unto others, what you yourself despise.
- ❖ *"60 Minute Rule"* – Don't do anything you wouldn't do in front of a 60 Minutes Crew.
- ❖ *Moral Dilemma?* – Ask yourself, "Do I want to be a person who...?"
- ❖ *Responsibility* – Ask yourself, "Where would I be without responsibility?" and "What is the ONE thing I should be doing right now?"
- ❖ Speak clearly and confidently with eye contact.
- ❖ Seek compromises, try to understand others' feelings, and express appreciation and respect.
- ❖ *Goal Setting* – Write down your goals, make short-term goals needed to meet major goals, identify resources and plans to achieving your goals, and evaluate your process (what went well, what did not, what can you do better?).

Parental Support:

- ❖ The coaching staff appreciates the endless time and effort you as parents provide in getting your sons to and from practices and competitions. The sacrifices you make on behalf of your sons allow our program to be successful. Please become involved!
- ❖ Should you wish to discuss a concern regarding your son, please schedule a meeting with a coach at time when a quality conversation can be conducted.
- ❖ Please make every effort to positively support your son, his teammates, and the wrestling program.

That Guy in the Glass

*When you get what you want in your struggle for self
and the world makes you kind for a day,
then go to the mirror and look at yourself
and see what the guy has to say.*

*For it isn't your mother, brother or friends
whose judgment you must pass.
The person whose verdict counts most in your life
is the one staring back in the glass.*

*You can go down the pathway of years
receiving pats on the back as you pass.
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears
if you cheated that guy in the glass*

- Anonymous

POINTS OF EMPHASIS FOR THE YEAR

#1 *Lancer Style*

#2 Mental Preparation – We must believe:

- a. We can and will improve
- b. We can meet our goals
- c. We can go beyond what others think is possible.
- d. Nobody is unbeatable.

#3 Being Good Partners.

- a. Each wrestler is responsible for how much their partner improves
- b. Good Partners drill hard and push one another

#4 We should identify ourselves as WRESTLERS, not just team members

#5 Team unity across all levels. This is a brotherhood: we all have a role in our TEAM's success.

#6 Dedication: HARD WORK PAYS OFF

Lancer Style

Our technique and conditioning will prevail!

Shorten the match

CHAIN WRESTLE

Wrestle on the mat

****Run back to center****

Be Physical

Lift and return whenever possible

Out-work your opponent

Your Goal is to BREAK your opponent's Spirit

Work for the FALL

NEVER GIVE UP!!!



Media Information – Things to Remember

The following is information for our coaches and student athletes when dealing with the media.

- Always remember that the media can be a great marketing tool for our school and our programs- Many reporters call with needed information on tight deadlines. Please email or call back within 24 hours.
- Remember that you are always on the record – in today’s day and age, any comment, picture, or video can be uploaded and be damaging to the school’s, the program’s or your reputation. (example: Michael Phelps, Matt Leinart)
- Always take the high road – in talking with the media, always take the high road in any comments you make. Never criticize the other team, school, coaches or fans. Make sure all your comments are positive.
- Always give credit to other members of your team – deflect the praise to others. (example: if talking with the quarterback about a great game, praise the offensive line and the blocking that gave you time to pass)
- You do not need to answer every question you are asked – just because a reporter asks you a question, do not feel obligated to answer it. If you feel they are trying to box you in or get you to say something that you do not want to, talk about something else positive.
- Never discuss player’s injuries with the media – this is confidential information.
- Do not be afraid to tell a reporter something you want to talk about in regards to the team or a situation.
- If unsure how to answer a question, ask the reporter to repeat the question again to allow you to gather your thoughts.

The following is taken from the “Pocket Guide to Media Success” as copyrighted by Sports Media Challenge of Charlotte, NC:

- Be Yourself

Don’t stiffen up. Relax and share your enjoyment in the sport. Be human.

- 20 second rule

Make your point in 20 seconds or less. Elaborate if there’s time, interest or need.

- Be Precise

Avoid generalities. Use specific examples that clarify and make people care about your view

- Don’t Be Baited

Remain calm at all costs

- Don’t Use Jargon

Use words that the general public can understand. It builds audiences and fans in the stands

- Don’t Forget: You’re Always On

If you can see a microphone, camera or reporter’s notebook, assume that your words and actions are being recorded

General Nutrition

The dietetic food regimen required to lose excess weight (fat), improve and maintain a fair amount of muscular integrity is not only strenuous but for the most part fanatically dull. According to an article published by the American Health Association 1996, there are two important factors determinant in weight loss. The first, consists of reducing a persons daily caloric intake (eat less during the day, eat smaller meals, eat every few hours, etc). The second involves **increasing** an individual daily exercise routine (running, biking and walking, etc.)

Before we begin discussing the specifics about weight loss it is important to understand some things about the human body. To start with, the body stores fat as a means to survive in times of famine (starvation) and surviving through long periods without food. Another function of fat is to keep the body warm in the winter. Therefore it is essential that one understand the role that fat plays; so a person can cater their diet accordingly. As previously stated, there are several ways to reduce the daily caloric intake and fat build up.

The first is to eat smaller proportional meals throughout the day. According to a study by the U.S. Olympic Committee, a person should eat "several small meals throughout the day"; which in turn would promote the burning of fat and speed up that individual's metabolism. Another important way to reduce fat is to avoid eating late at night. It is recommended that nothing be eaten after 7:00pm. According to research by the Olympic Committee, food eaten late in the evening generally promoted stored calories; which in turn increased the fat percentages of individuals.

The other important variable needed to promote weight loss is increasing the level of exercise. This translates into extra running, biking and walking. However, it is important to note that during the first 20 minutes of exercise a person is only losing water weight. In a study by the Olympic Committee, it was shown that in order to burn fat a person needed to workout vigorously for well above 20 minutes in order to lose fat. An ideal plan would be to run for a specified time and then ride the bike for about 30 to 45 minutes afterwards. This could be done late at night after dinner in order to give your body ample time to recover from a previous hard workout. Now we will discuss some specifics about what foods should be eaten and at what times these foods generate the best amount of energy for athletes.

An ideal diet should consist of foods high in "carbohydrates" and low in fat. Carbohydrates are foods that consist of sugars and starches in vegetables, fruits and whole grain products. Other grains are foods like cereals, pastas, potatoes, and rice. These, carbohydrates supply the necessary energy to work out and feel good. On the otherhand, fat compromise low levels of carbohydrates and give a person a high short-term level of energy. Which for a sport like wrestling where energy is needed for long periods of time that is **not** optimal. The other important requirement of an ideal diet is protein. What is Protein? The principal role of protein is to build and repair body tissues, build muscles, strengthen ligaments and tendons after vigorous exercise. Protein can be found in foods like meat, eggs and cheeses. According to recent research, by the Gatorade Sports Science Institute, the human body does **not need large amounts** of protein to build muscle. In past years, it was believed that in order to fully build muscle the body required large amounts of protein. In fact, it depends on your weight, the minimum requirement for protein ranges anywhere between 50 to 80 grams of protein a day. To understand how little this is, a regular egg carries about 20 grams of protein. Lets now take a look at a sample menu that focuses on high carbohydrates and low fat with the necessary protein levels.

Lastly, it is best if your diet can consist of basically the same foods day in and day out. In other words, if you can eat the same types of foods at relatively the same time on a daily basis it is more beneficial to your body. In a study conducted by the American Health Association, it was concluded that persons with a monotonous diet were overall healthier.

Sample Menu

7:00AM	1 Bagel w/eggs	1 bagel 1 cup oatmeal, 2 eggs. Throw out the yellow and nuke the egg whites in small dish(cover to prevent a mess) place egg whites in between bagel and make a sandwich.
10:00AM Snack	1-2 potatoes sweat potatoes	Bake in oven for 45-60 minutes or nuke in paper bag for 10-15 minutes. Place in zip lock baggy bring to school.
1:00PM Lunch	1 cup pasta 1 piece of bread	Cook pasta/spaghetti, low on the sauce. Place in Tupperware dish bring to school.
5:00PM Snack	1 fruit	Grapefruit, orange, banana strawberries etc. Eat fruit by itself, don't combine w/ other foods. EX. Banana and orange>no! Eat one or two pieces of fruit by themselves. *See note.
7:00PM Dinner	1-2 cups of rice & beans. 1-2 servings of meat 1 cup of salad	Eat the rice & beans together good combo. Combine your rice with your salad. Salad goes well with meat as well.

If you notice this menu advocates that meats be eaten preferably in the evening, because various meats tend to be harder for the body to digest and cause most people to **feel sluggish**. It is important to avoid the consumption of syrup, ketchup and salad dressing. These have high levels of fat and sugar. A good **substitute** is Tabasco sauce or Spanish salsa. One last thing, read food labels carefully lots of food labels state they are low in fat but redistribute the sugar content of their products to make up for the taste; thus you are still getting the same thing.

Good luck,

*There's research that shows that fruits digest more easily if they are eaten **by themselves** or in conjunction with other fruits. In other words, fruit should not be eaten with (non fruit) foods. Fruits do not combine with starches, proteins and vegetables!

Sources:

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U.S. Olympic Committee. 1987. *Weight Loss and Sports Performance*. Sports Medicine Council And the Swanson Center for Nutrition.

Pre-Competition or Work-out Meals

Key Points

- It can take one to four hours for food to be processed by the stomach and emptied into the small intestine.
- Foods that are mainly carbohydrate, like grain products, fruits, and vegetables, take the least amount of time to digest.
- Foods that contain protein, like milk products and lean meats, take a little longer.
- Foods that are mainly fats, like mayonnaise, gravies, and salad dressings, take the longest to digest.
- A pre-competition meal of high carbohydrate food should be eaten by athletes three to four hours before the event.

What's the purpose of the pre-competition meal?

The purpose of the pre-competition meal is to prevent hunger during competition. However, the stomach should not be full during the event. In general, it can take from one to four hours for the stomach to process a meal and empty it into the intestine. If athletes are a bit nervous about the competition, this process might proceed more slowly. Foods which remain in the stomach during competition may cause indigestion, nausea, and possibly vomiting. For safety's sake, advise athletes to eat their pre-competition meals three to four hours before competition. That way the stomach will be relatively empty during the event.

What should athletes avoid in the Pre-competition meal?

High-fat, high protein foods such as meats (like steak and hamburgers) and fried foods (like French fries and doughnuts) are not digested quickly. For that reason, they are avoided or limited in the pre-competition meal. Foods that contain a high percentage of carbohydrates are easily removed from the stomach or digested very easily. This allows athletes to compete without food in their stomachs.

How can you prevent dehydration?

To prevent dehydration, simply have athletes drink fluids. They should drink two cups of water for every pound lost as sweat. However, some athletes try bizarre and dangerous techniques to voluntarily dehydrate and "make weight". Others involuntarily dehydrate during long periods of heavy sweating, such as during football games or marathons. No matter how athletes become dehydrated, the only way to prevent dehydration and its effects is to have them drink enough water to replace what was lost as sweat.

Factors which affect re-hydration

To re-hydrate an athlete, fluids must be absorbed as quickly as possible. Three factors affect how fast fluids leave the stomach and are absorbed: volume, temperature, and sugar content.

Volume

Large amounts of fluids (up to 20 ounces or 2 ½ cups) empty more quickly from the stomach than the small amounts. Athletes, however, may find it uncomfortable to exercise with a full stomach. If they drink ½ cup of water every 10-15 minutes, athletes will get the fluid they need without a bloated feeling.

Temperature

Cold drinks (45-50 degrees F) leave the stomach more rapidly than warm fluids. Cold solutions lower the temperature of the stomach which cause the stomach to empty more rapidly. (Cold drinks also help an overheated athlete cool down). Even ice cold drinks should not cause stomach cramps, regardless of the volume.

Sugar content

Sugars (glucose, fructose, or sucrose) slow the rate that fluids leave the stomach. For example, if one of your athletes drinks 12 ounces of plain water, only 30 percent of the water will still be in the stomach 15 minutes later. If that same athlete drinks 12 ounces of soft drink, 100 percent of the drink will be in the stomach 15 minutes later. So drinking a strong sugar drink is a poor method of replacing water lost as sweat. Only very diluted drinks can deliver the water needed.

It's been found that the sugar content of sport drinks should not exceed 2 to 2 ½ grams per 100 ml. That's about ½ teaspoon of sugar in ½ cup water. Most commercial sport drinks have two to three times that amount of sugar. If your athletes use sport drinks, they should be diluted at least 50% - ½ cup sport drink plus ½ cup water.

Sports Nutrition Nancy Clark, MS, RD 830 Boylson St., Brookline, MA 02167

THE PRE-COMPETITION MEAL

When it comes to pre-competition eating, each person has individual food preferences. Hence, no one single food or “magic meal” will ensure top performance. Whereas some athletes (such as those in sports involving running and jumping may prefer to eat nothing before an event, most people perform better after having eaten a small, 100 to 300-calorie snack or a moderate 300 to 600-calorie meal.

The goal of the pre-competition meal is to enhance stamina and endurance without causing any stomach discomfort. The pre-competition meal or snack helps to:

- Maintain a normal blood sugar and prevent performance problems associated with hypoglycemia such as light-headedness, blurred vision, needless fatigue, and indecisiveness.
- Settle the stomach, absorb some of the gastric juices and prevent you from feeling hungry.
- Provide energy to fuel your muscles. Yes, your body does digest and use food you eat before exercise!

Although eating too much food can have adverse effects (nausea, stomach cramps), so can eating too little (lack of energy). The following guidelines offer points to consider regarding your own personal pre-exercise eating program. Because each person is unique, you should experiment to learn which foods-and how much of them-work best for you.

1. Choose primarily carbohydrates before an event because they digest quickly and are readily available for fuel. Some popular choices include bananas, cereal, breads, bagels, crackers, and pasta. A little protein and fat are OK to eat for sustained energy, but large portions of fried foods, peanut butter, cheese burgers, or other high fat meals will linger in the stomach and may feel heavy and uncomfortable.
2. Pay attention to meal timing. In general, you should allow 3 to 5 hours for a large meal to digest; 2 to 3 hours for a smaller meal, 1 to 2 hours for a blenderized meal (liquids are absorbed more rapidly than solid foods), 0.5-1 hour for small snack. Always eat extra carbohydrates the day prior and do little or no exercise so your muscles can refuel. Before morning events, eat a healthy, high carbohydrate dinner and bedtime snack the prior night. That morning, eat a light meal (such as 1 to 2 slices of toast and/or cereal) as tolerated to stabilize your blood sugar, absorb some of the gastric juices, and keep you from feeling hungry.

Before afternoon events, eat a hearty breakfast and a light carbohydrate-based lunch.

Before evening events, eat a hearty breakfast and lunch, then a light snack as tolerated 1-2 hours prior.

Some athletes break all the rules and enjoy a big meal with no problem within an hour of the event. Others can eat nothing for four hours prior. You simply have to experiment during training to determine what foods (if any) settle comfortably, when you should eat them (one, two, or three hours prior?), and how much you can eat.

3. If you get very nervous stressed, or have a sensitive stomach, you may prefer to abstain completely from food. You should make a special effort to eat extra food the day before to be well fueled for the competition.
4. Always eat familiar foods prior to competition; don't try anything new! Experiment with new foods during training to determine if they settle well, cause “acid stomach”, gas, heart burn, cramps, or intestinal discomfort.
5. Eat a high carbohydrate diet every day to prevent chronic glycogen depletion and ensure adequate glycogen replacement. One pre-event meal does not compensate for an overall poor training diet.
6. When traveling, plan to bring your favorite sports foods such as a tried-and-true cereal, muffin, fruit, or sandwich. This way, you can worry less about fueling yourself and be free to focus on performing.
7. The pre-competition meal may have a greater psychological than physiological value. For example, if you firmly believe that steak dinner helps you perform best, then eat it even though this meal “breaks the rules” regarding pre-game suggestions! (but you should also experiment during training with pasta or another high carb, low fat choice to see if this more appropriate food settles better and offers an energy advantage.)

Sample high carbohydrate, low fat

Pre-competition food suggestions:

Breakfast: oatmeal, cold cereal, lowfat milk, bananas, toast, juice, muffin, bagel, yogurt, French toast, pancakes.

Lunch: sandwich with wheat bread but little if any mayo, noodle soup, granola, no meat.

Snacks: crackers, bagel, toast, canned or fresh fruit, yogurt, small turkey sandwich, leftover pasta.

Dinners: spaghetti with tomato sauce; a small serving of chicken with extra rice, noodles, potato, or rolls.