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## Rugby Nutrition:

### Nutrition Strategies for Sevens Rugby

Specific nutrition strategies are required to deal with the training and competition demands of Sevens Rugby. Your periodised training program may be specifically structured to develop the necessary skills, speed, agility and endurance required to play this highly demanding game. Contact demands may be less than Fifteens rugby, but it is still advantageous to maintain a **high power-to-weight ratio** (i.e. high muscle mass relative to fat mass) to assist with the force needed for accelerating, sprinting, and for tackles, rucks and mauls. <sup>[1]</sup> Training objectives and demands may vary between individuals, but over a week can be considerable. Sevens' matches may be shorter than rugby union games, but if you take into account that you may cover 20-45% greater distance in a game at a **higher velocity** <sup>[2]</sup>, may play 2-3 games in one day with a short recovery period of only 3-4 hours between games, and continue this over 2-3 days, you can be quickly appreciate the importance of a **high energy nutritious diet with definite recovery strategies**.

#### Practical Tips specific for Sevens Rugby:

- **To meet the high energy and nutrient demands** - plan to eat at least 5-6 times a day. Between meals, snacks need to provide between 20-30% of your total energy intake. If you lack appetite or time, rather have concentrated options, like smoothies made with peanut butter, honey and banana, chocolate or other flavoured milk drinks, drinking yoghurt, pancakes with stewed apple and frozen yoghurt, scrambled egg with cheese, avocado mixed with cottage cheese; trail mixes, French Toast with honey, sliced banana and crème fraiche; rice pudding with stewed fruit and cinnamon.



- **Travel and touring plan** – playing multi-matches over a short period (2-3 matches/day for 2-3 days, which may be repeated within a 10-day period on a different continent) requires detailed and focused planning. This plan needs to address and co-ordinate airline food and meals, strategies to combat jet lag, hotel and venue catering facilities and food service. Find out ahead of time about the meals and times of service and plan to fill the gaps. This may mean setting up team rooms and organizing portable food options to be taken with to training grounds. Think of equipping team rooms with a toaster, blender, fridge and keep topped up with perishable items to ensure freshness – Super drinks (carrot, ginger apple, beetroot, celery) and fresh fruit, a selection of breads and fillings for sandwiches, baked items (sweet and savoury), coffee and smoothie stations.
- **Multi-match nutrition and recovery** – your recovery from your first match is your preparation for the subsequent match. so it goes without saying that you should maximize this opportunity to refuel, rehydrate and repair muscle damage. Game time may only allow for limited intakes so choose compact and easy to digest options: date balls, low fat doughnuts, pancakes or crumpets with cinnamon sugar or fruit, sorbet and frozen yoghurt, iced coffee and smoothies. These foods address your immediate recovery, however if your next game is >2 hours away, you can include an additional ‘pre-match’ meal. This may be pasta, rice or mashed potato-based with lean protein (lean meat, chicken breasts or baked fish) and limited fat. Don’t try anything new on match day!
- **Supplements** – the use of supplements for Sevens Rugby players is covered in another document

# TYPICAL MATCH DAY MENU

Eat breakfast 2-3 hours before your first match. You may choose to have a later breakfast if your first match is late morning

**TABLE 1: Example of match menu plan**

MEAL SCHEDULE	EXAMPLES OF MEALS
<b>BREAKFAST</b> 08:00	Fruit: fresh, stewed, salad, dried, juice Cereals/porridge: Bircher muesli, oats, cornflakes with milk/yoghurt Toast/Bread rolls spread thinly with butter/peanut butter/avocado pear/jam/honey Eggs (boiled, poached, scrambled); fish (kippers, salmon), lean cold meats and low fat cheeses; frittata or potato/pasta bake Chopped tomato and mushrooms and other salad items Tea, coffee, hot chocolate
<b>PRE-MATCH /TOP UP SNACK</b> ~1 hr prior to match	Oat and date cereal bar Sandwich or wrap or pita bread Fluid – sports drink
<b>DURING MATCH (including half time)</b>	Sports drink or water
<b>RECOVERY SNACK</b> Within 30minutes after match	Smoothie; chocolate milk, low GI bar; sandwiches and a wrap with protein fillings, pretzels and biltong Water and/or sports drink
<b>LUNCH</b> 2-3 hours before next match	Pasta; rice; sweet potato; mashed potato; bread roll lean bolognaise (with added red kidney beans, tomato, onion, baby marrows, peppers)  Stir fry Green salad (spinach, rocket, watercress, cucumber, peas & avocado)  Fruit
<b>PRE-MATCH TOP UPS &amp; POST MATCH RECOVERY (repeat of morning)</b>	REFER TO Pre-& post-match top up and recovery options above
<b>DINNER</b>	Lean meat/chicken or fish Pasta or unrefined grains Starchy vegetables (or soup) Other vegetables and salad Olive, seed or nut oils  <b>PLUS</b> fruit juice or fresh fruit or fruit/dairy-based dessert (fruit phyllo and custard or yoghurt)
<b>EVENING SNACK</b>	Horlicks/ Milo (made with low fat or fat free milk)  Date or banana loaf or sandwich

Your choice will depend on personal preference and energy requirements

Carbohydrates supply the body with the fuel needed to for training & competition.

Eat sufficient carbohydrate to replenish stores and low glycaemic options are recommended

A variety of fluids can encourage hydration. Sports drinks provide carbohydrate, electrolytes and fluid but your choice will be determined by your energy, fluid needs and appetite

A recovery snack of carbohydrate and protein replenishes fuel stores and helps with muscle recovery

Small frequent top ups will be easier to eat if you lack appetite after a match, are easier to digest and will keep your blood sugar levels steady

Lean protein foods help build & repair muscle, and fills you up.

Healthy fats provide essential fatty acids, and are needed for regulating immune and hormone functions.

A variety of vegetables & fruit provide valuable micronutrients & antioxidants.

For more information on *Rugby Nutrition*, go to the BokSmart website [www.BokSmart.com](http://www.BokSmart.com) or go to the following link: <http://boksmart.sarugby.co.za/content/eating-and-drinking-right>

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