

## **Nutritionally Relevant Factors for Soccer**

**Overview:** The recommended training diet for soccer players should be comprised of 55 to 65 percent carbohydrate, 12 to 15 percent protein, and less than 30 percent fat. It is generally believed that playing soccer places a high demand on glycogen stores, so *glycogen depletion could cause permanent fatigue and reduced performance during a match.* Of course, adequate energy intake, estimated to be approximately 4,000 calories for males and 3,200 calories for females, is also important. Without sufficient energy intake, glycogen will become depleted regardless of the makeup of the diet.

- *Play in soccer is expected to be continuous, making it difficult for players to consume fluids.* Since soccer players may not have an opportunity to regularly consume fluids during a game, pregame hydration status is particularly important. When possible (between periods and during official breaks), players should do whatever is reasonably possible to **consume some sports beverage to rehydrate and to replace carbohydrates.**
- *Surveys suggest the consumption of carbohydrates is less than optimal for soccer players.* Carbohydrate consumption is critical for the achievement of optimal soccer performance. Since surveys suggest that soccer players typically consume diets that match those of the general public, with a carbohydrate intake of around 50 percent of total calories, **players should make a conscious effort to improve carbohydrate intake.**
- *Pregame glycogen storage is critical.* Soccer players spend a lot of time running up and down the field, and this places a tremendous drain on muscle glycogen. Players who begin the game with more stored glycogen will experience an endurance advantage. To achieve higher glycogen storage, **players should consistently consume plenty of carbohydrates and fluids and also focus mainly on carbohydrates during the pregame meal.**