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The interrelation of social facilitation theory and training age: An initial analysis of psychological perspectives across a diverse population of competitive runners

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The social facilitation theory states that performances can improve with the presence of a crowd. The information on this theory suggests that with a crowd/spectators present, an athlete will perform better. This survey aims to define the connection between an athlete's experience and their psychological disposition towards spectators. Training age is defined as the number of years an athlete has spent within a specific sport. Research suggests that athletes of a higher training age will outperform those of a lower training age. Within a sport, such as running, the concept of training age could be questioned due to performance situations where athletes with a higher training age have been outperformed by athletes with a lower training age. Depending on the level of psychological arousal an athlete experiences during competition, performance could increase or decrease regardless of training age.

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Building healthy food relationships in young athletes

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Over 21 million youth between the ages of 6 to 17 play team sports on a regular basis, with another 5 million engaging on an occasional basis in the United States, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association. This statistic represents an exciting opportunity for teaching nutrition education to young people by relating it to athletic performance. Conveying basic sports nutrition concepts using simple educational tools can not only positively affect the performance of young athletes but help establish better lifelong eating habits. This session spells out how to communicate these concepts effectively to young people. Choosing whole sustainable foods to supply adequate energy rather than relying on powders, caffeinated drinks and supplements will be a central emphasis. Included in this presentation will be strategies for balancing pre-game and post-game macronutrients, appropriate hydration choices and problem-solving time management issues. During the session, I will provide strategies (tips, ideas) for how coaches and parents can relay this information to young people more clearly and help explain the connection between diet and health. Educational graphics appropriate for this age range include eating timetables, top ten performance enhancing foods and chemical-free sports drinks. Most research for pre-college age athletes centers on exercise regimes, injury prevention and psychological issues. This presentation relies on the well-recognized nutrition recommendations for children of all ages, applying them to the fundamentals of sports nutrition and provides practical guides that are clear and easy to follow.

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