It's late, you're tired, hungry, and sharing a bus with athletes just as hungry and cranky as you are. Sometimes it's difficult to care what you eat just as long as you eat. It is important to remember, though, that what an athlete eats will affect how he or she feels both on and off the field. The old saying, "where there's a will there's a way," applies to eating on the road.

It may be a challenge that requires some forethought and planning, but today's fast-food and family style restaurants, supermarkets, and packaged foods do allow athletes to remain true to a training diet so they can meet the demands of training and competition. The purpose of this paper is to assist you in helping your athletes make good food choices during team travel situations.

**Goal Setting**

As with all aspects of training, conditioning, and performance, establishing goals is an important step in determining the action plan. Nutritionally speaking, the goal is to eat foods that will support health, fitness, and performance. This translates to consuming adequate calories as the No. 1 priority, followed by consuming appropriate carbohydrates (5–10 g/kg BW) to keep muscles well stocked, in order to prepare for or recover from competition and to meet the demands of daily training (Steen, 1998).

Appropriate protein (1.2–1.6 g/kg BW) intake helps with muscle and tissue repair (plus the numerous other functions of protein: hormone synthesis, enzyme formation, red blood cell formation). Caloric need determines adequate fat calories and can range from 40 to 150 grams. Dietary fat is essential for the carrying and absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, regulation of cholesterol metabolism, hormonal synthesis, and as an energy source. Hydration, of course, is always essential.

Although most athletes are concerned about the pregame meal, the effect of their daily food consumption on their ability to train has a far greater impact on performance. If athletes eat to train at their peak, they can compete at their peak. If athletes are not training to their capacity, they cannot be competing at capacity.

There is plenty of carbohydrate, protein, and fat in fast food—it is the quality and balance of these macronutrients that becomes an issue. Based on selection, it's easy to load up on high fat items. However, if your athletes are restrictive in their food selections, say, by avoiding a variety of foods and cutting out whole-food groups such as meat or dairy products, they may be avoiding protein foods or erroneously trying to eliminate all fat from their diet. The source of carbohydrate consump-
Fast Food Tips

1. To increase carbohydrates, order extra beans, rice, vegetables, side salad, rolls, low-fat milkshakes, juice.
2. To increase carbohydrate, choose thick bread sandwiches or pizza crust. Order two regular size items vs. one “jumbo” size (more bread).
3. Fast food typically lacks vitamins A, D, and C as well as folacin and fiber. Supplement your fast food meals at snack time and at other meals by choosing green leafy vegetables and dark orange (carrots, sweet potato) vegetables at least every other day (folacin, fiber, Vit. A). Eat citrus fruit or other food high in Vit. C at least once a day (orange, grapefruit, strawberries, broccoli, potatoes, green and red peppers, kiwi). Also include at least 2 cups of milk or low-fat yogurt each day (for the Vit. D and calcium). Choose whole grain breads and cereals whenever possible (fiber and folacin).
4. Choose fried foods only two or three times a week if at all.
5. Did you know that adding a tablespoon of mayonnaise and two slices of cheese to your sandwich is like adding 7 pats of butter? Skip the mayo and save 12 grams of fat. Limit extra cheese, as each ounce (1 sq inch or 1-1/2 slices) has 8 grams of fat.
6. Choose mustard, ketchup, salsa, pico de gallo, Tabasco, Bar-B-Que sauce. Hidden fat sources include oil (like on the Subway sandwich), salad dressings (12 grams per ladle), special sauces, anything fried, sour cream, guacamole, Caesar dressings, cheese, and cream.
7. For breakfast try pancakes, English muffins, cereal, juice, or even milkshakes. Try Canadian bacon as a breakfast meat. Sausage and bacon are higher in fat than prime rib!
8. If you eat out at fast food restaurants often, expand your choices by including family style restaurants like Ponderosa, Sizzler, Dennys, IHOP, or Red Lobster for greater variety and selection.

Breakfast Choices—Did You Know?

1. A Super Slam (Denny’s) Breakfast Platter with 2 scrambled eggs, 3 pancakes w/syrup and margarine, 3 sausage links, and 3 strips of bacon provides 1,570 calories and 73 grams of fat (53 chocolate kisses have that much fat).
2. A Hostess old fashioned glazed doughnut has 12 grams of fat (that’s more than a single hamburger or Egg McMuffin). And it does not provide you with any significant amounts of calcium, B-vitamins, vitamin C, phytochemicals, or other nutrients to keep your body burning fuel efficiently and to keep your cells healthy. If you want a doughnut, have one, but also have milk and fruit with it, or a bowl of cereal or whole grain toast.
3. Four sausage links provide 32 grams of fat and no carbohydrates. That’s more fat than a Big Mac or a quarter pounder with a small order of fries. Choose Canadian bacon instead; 3 slices provides 9 grams of fat.
4. A cinnamon raisin Danish from McDonald’s provides 21 grams of fat.
5. An Au Bon Pan corn muffin has 17 grams of fat. Portion size will drive the calories and fat content. A small (2-1/2 oz) muffin is reasonable, but some muffins weigh in at 5 oz!
6. Choose a bagel, English muffin, or bread, preferably whole grain or rye (2 grams of fat or less) vs. a croissant or biscuit (12+ grams of fat).