

## Hydration ... A Competitive Advantage

A properly hydrated athlete is able to compete at his highest level. Hydration is something that must be done daily and continually. A properly hydrated athlete will be able to perform at higher levels for longer time periods. An athlete can tell if he is hydrated properly by his urine color. The color should be very comparative to the color of lemonade.

If an athlete is dehydrated, even the smallest amount, there will be a negative influence on their performance. Headache, dizziness, weakness, fatigue, irritability, muscle cramps, increase in resting heart rate, decrease in urination frequency, chills, and constant thirst are all examples of dehydration. The following is some examples of the effects of fluid loss as it pertains to one's body weight:

### **% Body Weight of fluid loss: Effect**

- 1% loss: Elevation of core body temperature
- 3% loss: Impaired performance
- 5% loss: Cardiovascular strain
- 7% loss: Decrease in the ability to regulate heat
- 10% or more loss: Heat stroke

The average football player loses from 2%-6% of their body weight in fluids each practice **regardless of weather conditions**. Continual loss of fluids without the appropriate amount of fluids without the appropriate amount of fluid replacement in a football player can result in a greater susceptibility to heat illness and increase the chance of concussion, which ultimately results in the loss of practice and game participation.