

TICK THE BOXES – DO THE SMALL THINGS RIGHT!!!

We have entered the second week in February and cricket is going well. All the initial pains of the season has long gone disappeared and you are on top of your game.... except that when you get up in the morning it does tend to be a little more difficult every week as the season go past. Now, I can already see some of you mumble to the person next to you: "he's just getting old...!!!"

Surprise....!!!!!!

You will be pleasantly surprised that not only the older guys, but also some of the young-guns are more often than not the ones that start struggling during this part of the season. You can stop laughing at me right about now and read on and then, if you don't agree with me, we can discuss it anytime!!

So, what happens with the cricketer's body round about this time of the season?

Let's first think about cricket as a sport... cricket is very unique in the sense that it is a repetitive sport where you have very high intensity, start stop actions which has to be repeated over basically the whole day. Take bowling for instance. Imagine a bowler playing in a Supersport game in the domestic franchise competition. He has a run-up of twenty (20) metres and a follow-through of ten (10) metres. He bowls between twenty (20) and twenty five (25) overs in a day. A day consists out of three sessions of two hours and ten minutes, which gives you six and a half hours of cricket. Now, quickly add up the maths,

He:

- does between 120 and 125 sprints when bowling
- covers between 3,6km and 4,5km just through bowling
- does fielding for the rest of the time where he normally covers more than double the distance he covers through bowling, even though that is not at such an intense pace

Now, we can all recognise that this is potentially a very serious ask of the body if you have to repeat this two days a weekend for at least five weekends in a row. Why do you think there's a stigma about serious fast bowlers who must have a screw loose somehow!!!

The fact of the matter is, that it doesn't matter how well you have prepared during your pre-season in all aspects that any athlete has to cover, or how many warm-up games you played before the season started, or how much you have loaded your body with match-intensity net sessions.... the body can only take so much!! Physiologically, if you look at the strain the biomechanics of the sport puts on the body, the repetitive impact the sport has on the joints and the eccentric loading the sport puts on the antagonists of the body during the actions needed to play this sport it is possible to think that something has to give in.

Then there is always the mental and psychological strain the mind has to go through – who can tell me that they feel great in the morning when they need to wake up fifteen minutes earlier just to get up out of bed at their normal time just to go through the same thing today which caused them to be in exactly the same situation as which they find themselves in right now!!!! The added psychological pressure I speak of is something that I am sure all professional sportsmen have gone through..." What am I talking about?..." you might be asking and my answer will be only one, dreadful word:

CONTRACTS!!!!

The future of your career is in the hands of someone else who looks at what you have accomplished during the season and also how you will do in this last bit of the season. This has the potential of putting some serious strain mentally on you. This mental pressure you put on yourself to perform, present itself in extra effort you physically put into your game.

So what does this have to do with physiotherapy, you may ask – it's easy... in short, look at what the body goes through again:

- Prolonged, repetitive, high-intensity workouts
- Physical fatigue
- Mental and Psychological fatigue
- Extra physical effort
- Biomechanical, Orthopaedic and Muskulo-skeletal strain

If you look at these five points, it is easy to see that this actually is a recipe for potential disaster through:

- Overuse Injuries and
- Injuries because of Fatigue.

I say potential, because of my outlook on physiotherapy where prevention is better than cure.

It is very important to understand that the team medical staff as a unit has the massive responsibility to make sure that every athlete in their care has to be monitored individually so that the needs of everyone can be answered for. This includes the needs that need to be taken care of by the:

- Team Doctor
- Physiotherapist
- Biokineticist and Fitness Trainer
- Sport Scientist
- Nutritionist
- Sport Psychologist

So, monitor your players in every aspect, keep them fit and fresh, prevent any potential injury and make sure that the player focuses on the game and nothing he has no control over and you will have your player in much better condition to help you win games.....

