PostScript

BOOK REVIEWS

Sports nutrition (handbook of sports medicine and science)

At first glance, this book could be mistaken as the abridged version of Nutrition in sport, which is the latest publication in the IOC Medical Commission’s Encyclopaedia in sports medicine and science series. Nutrition in sport is the most well-received sports nutrition book because all the relevant topics are covered by internationally recognised experts in the field. It is a delight for researchers and teachers because it provides authoritative, well written comprehensive reviews of the current literature on all the relevant topics in sports nutrition. So why bring out another text so quickly after the publication of Nutrition in sport? The answer is to help bridge the gap between previous editions. This Handbook succeeds because it not only provides the reader with the essential background on the nutritional preparation for, the participation in, and the recovery from training and competition but also because it is written by two of the most accomplished scientists in sport and exercise nutrition. They present the background to each topic and then follow this with a series of “expert comment” and a series of “case studies” on the topic under consideration. The authors of the expert comments and case studies are internationally acclaimed experts in their respective fields. This Handbook works well, so much so that I would recommend this text as required reading for all courses on sport and exercise nutrition. In the first of the three sections, the authors present well balanced information on the contributions of the macronutrients and micronutrients to energy metabolism during exercise. The study of the micronutrients is usually regarded as a Cinderella topic because of the less than obvious contributions they make to exercise performance. However, the inclusion of expert opinion on, for example, whether athletes should consider iron injections, as well as case studies on runners with low calcium intake, help lift this topic above the boredom threshold for most students. Knowing the studies that Ron Maughan and Louise Burke are to be congratulated for giving us this essential guide to the principles and practice of sports nutrition.

Analysis

- Presentation 18/20
- Comprehensiveness 18/20
- Readability 20/20
- Relevance 20/20
- Evidence basis 19/20
- Total 95/100

C Williams

Atlas of pain injection techniques

This book is therefore pitched very much at the anaesthetist involved in pain management or perhaps the radiologist doing a lot of

Recommendations

- Presentation 16/20
- Comprehensiveness 12/20
- Readability 15/20
- Relevance 12/20
- Evidence basis 10/20
- Total 65/100

Those who know the literature supporting the current recommendations on eating for competitive sports will think that they can skip the second section of the Handbook because the titles of the chapters are so familiar. My advice is to read them because they contain priceless nuggets of information that are normally only shared with colleagues or are offered in answer to questions at the end of lectures given by these two distinguished scientists.

Section three of the Handbook gets to grips with more practical questions. The chapter on assessing the nutritional status and needs of athletes should be read by everyone who intends to report information on the energy and food composition of subjects in their studies on food intake and performance. It will not only change the way you undertake dietary assessments, but it will also change the way you interpret dietary information in the literature on human nutrition. This is also particularly relevant because probably the most often asked questions in sports nutrition are “how much should I eat?” and “how do I lose weight?” The chapter on this topic along with the case studies and expert comment provide clear guidance on how to answer these questions. If you were thinking of trying a high fat diet to improve your performance, then read John Hawley’s comments on the latest research on this topic before you make the change. If I could recommend an additional chapter or even a series of additional case studies to be added to the next edition of the Handbook, then they would be on the topics of nutritional strategies for athletes recovering from injury and for athletes retiring from professional sports.

Notwithstanding the contribution that Nutrition in sport makes in providing such a definitive text for those of us researching and teaching sports nutrition, in my opinion the Handbook will have a greater impact on the understanding and practice in sports nutrition because it will reach a much wider readership than its larger sibling. Ron Maughan and Louise Burke are to be congratulated for giving us this essential guide to the principles and practice of sports nutrition.