



# OLYMPIC VOICE

U.S. OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER, CHULA VISTA

## ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT. PERRY BAKER - RUGBY

Earlier this month, U.S. Rugby Sevens Men's National Team member Perry Baker competed in the first stop of the 2014-2015 World Series in Gold Coast, Australia. Baker's series debut helped the United States bring home some hardware in the Gold Coast 7s Bowl Final. Baker finished the tournament with a total of six tries, which ranked second on the team and fourth overall for the tournament.

A native of New Smyrna, Fla., Baker started his athletic career playing football at the age of seven. His football career continued through high school where he starred at wide receiver for Spruce Creek High School. Baker went on to play collegiately at Fairmont State University. He excelled at the wide receiver position for the Fighting Falcons and scored a total of 13 touchdowns in his collegiate career (10 receiving and three rushing). After two years with the Arena Football League's Pittsburgh Power, Baker picked up rugby in Daytona Beach before training at the Tiger Academy.

Baker was introduced to rugby when he was in high school by his position coach who played on a local men's team in the Daytona Beach area.

"I had never heard of rugby, I didn't know what it was," Baker said. "Then I went out to one of my coach's practices and I started playing and I fell in love with it." Baker continued to play locally in Florida before he was offered a contract to play and train in the resident program with the U.S. Rugby Sevens Men's National Team at the Chula Vista Olympic Training Center in 2014.

In his first opportunity to represent the Team USA at a World Series tournament, he had high praise for the experience as it was his first trip to Australia. "It was really good. All of the practicing we were doing and all of the training we were doing, it was good to just get out there and start playing with the guys. It was a lot of fun. We got to find out where we were as a team, so that was a good thing. I was just having fun out there."

Baker performed exceptionally well in the throughout the Gold Coast 7s World Series tournament as he provided head coach Mike Friday with a viable option off the bench for the Eagles. His speed proved to be a factor in the opening match against Canada as he set up teammate Zack Test for the match-winning try. "Coach was loose with me, so it allowed me to have fun," Baker added.

He has been very popular with his teammates on and off the field since joining the team in August. He is very humble and treats everyday as a learning experience and an opportunity to get better.

Although a future in rugby is bright for Baker, he is already put some thought into what he would like to do professionally after his rugby chapter closes. Law enforcement is a career path that has always interested Baker. He has set his sights high and hopes to eventually work for the FBI or as an air marshal.



*Perry Baker outruns a competitor from Portugal to score a try in the Bowl Semifinal. He scored three tries in that match to shutout Portugal with a score of 33-0  
Photo credit: Martin Seras Lima*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

### TEAM USA SHOP DISCOUNTS

Resident athletes receive a 20% discount on merchandise at the Team USA Shop in the Visitor Center at the CVOTC. Stop by to pick up some great Team USA gear!

## FEATURE. U.S. PARALYMPIC TRIATHLON TEAM

### THE U.S. PARALYMPIC TRIATHLON NATIONAL TEAM TRAINING CAMP AT THE CVOTC

By Max Lerner, CVOTC Athlete & Community Relations Intern

The Chula Vista Olympic Training Center recently hosted a U.S. Paralympic Triathlon National Team Camp. The team had access to all of the OTC facilities and Coach Mark Sortino had high praise for their experience. The athletes and coaches were very fortunate to have a two-to-one athlete-to-coach ratio, which made for some helpful, individualized coaching.

This camp's athletes included Aaron Scheidies, Allysa Seely, Christopher Hammer, Hailey Danisewicz, Jaime Brown and Patricia Walsh, while the coaching staff was rounded out by Chris Daggs and John Murray. All of the athletes are Paralympic hopefuls for Rio 2016 and, along with this camp, already began their offseason training in preparation for the September 2015 World Championships in Chicago.

Scheidies is an eight-time triathlon World Champion and eight-time National Champion, having traveled around the globe to compete in over nearly 200 triathlons. Scheidies was assisted in the camp by guide runner Colin Riley.

Seely is aiming for 2016 Paralympics and is also an American record holder.

Hammer's career accomplishments include 2011 IPC World Championships gold medal (1500m), 2011 Parapan American Games fifth (marathon) and 2007 NCAA Division II Cross Country All-American.

Danisewicz is a World Champion Triathlete and Paralympic hopeful for Rio in 2016. She won a world title at the Paratriathlon World Championships in London. Her gold medal resulted from completing the 750-meter swim; 20-kilometer bike ride and 5-kilometer run in one hour, 29 minutes and 29 seconds.

Brown earned a college scholarship to play collegiate baseball at Chapman University and went on to play in the College Baseball World Series in 2001. Since starting his career in paratriathlon in 2010, Jamie placed first at the USAT Paratriathlon Championship in New York City in 2011.

Walsh has raced in over 12 marathons and ultra-marathons and aspires to represent her country in the 2016 Paralympics in both track & field and triathlon. She was assisted in the camp by guide runner Marjorie Miller.

While at the CVOTC, the U.S. Paralympic Triathlon National Team planned for their entire offseason by setting goals for competition as well as benchmarks to obtain within the next year of competition before World Championships. The athletes were put through a multitude of different tests, which included an open 5K, a 750 meter swim and a threshold power bicycle assessment. All of these tests measured the athletes to see where they are now and how they can improve in the next calendar year. Over the next 11 months, the athletes will be assessed approximately every six weeks on the same tests to track their improvement before the World Championships next September.



Something new the athletes were exposed to this year was an extensive nutritional consultation to assure they are fueling their bodies with the proper nutrition to perform at a high level. The athletes were given a total body assessment, and in turn given a nutritional plan to follow in order to healthy training regimen. Coach Sortino wholeheartedly believes that proper nutrition is a cornerstone of successful training and successful competition. In addition to the nutritional consultation, athletes took advantage of total-body recovery in the CVOTC Sports Medicine facility, including contrast baths, chiropractic care and massage therapy.

Coach Sortino also had the athletes partake in outdoor yoga sessions in between training as a way to both recover and strengthen the body and mind. Sortino believes that his athletes can benefit greatly from doing yoga, combined with proper nutrition. The yoga training aims to help the athletes become more balanced and strengthen their cores, which is essential for triathletes.

The U.S. Paralympic Triathlon National Team will continue to train and improve this offseason before their season gets underway in the spring of 2015. A strong showing at the World Championships is the team's ticket to the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Paralympic Games.

## FEATURE. USA CYCLING NATIONAL TALENT ID CAMP

### ROAD CYCLISTS AGES 14-16 CHASE THEIR DREAMS

By Max Lerner, CVOTC Athlete & Community Relations Intern

The Chula Vista Olympic Training Center recently hosted the USA Cycling National Talent Identification Camp. Selected 14-16-year-old boys from across the country as far as Pennsylvania and as close as Orange County, Calif., came to the CVOTC with hopes of developing their racing future.

The mission of USA Cycling's National Talent ID Camp is to provide USA Cycling with junior talent evaluations while offering athletes a pathway to develop their cycling ability.

National Talent ID camps provide athletes with the necessary framework to improve skill sets and development. In some cases, the camps assist in selecting riders for international competition. A high percentage of the athletes invited to the 2014 National Talent ID Camp, held at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, were selected based on their performance at Regional Talent ID Camps.

These young athletes had the unique privilege to learn from some of the best cycling coaches in the nation who provide both expert training and coaching. The camp was managed by junior program director Billy Innes and well as coaches Jon Heidemann and Barney King.

The camp exposed athletes to a wide variety of amazing trails and very different terrains around Chula Vista.

In addition to on-the-bike training, daily interactive and expert-led classroom sessions explored important areas for talent development, including negotiating the cycling talent pipeline, sport psychology and performance, traveling and training like a professional, understanding United States Anti-Doping Association rules and encouraging personal growth.

Sport nutrition was a big part of the camp experience as well. The young athletes shared their meals in the CVOTC dining hall alongside full-time professional athletes training for a variety of Olympic sports. Athletes not only ate delicious, freshly prepared meals, but were provided with a great learning opportunity from nutritionists with hands on experience for taking their athlete lifestyle to a healthier level upon their return home.

USA Cycling offers Talent ID camps across the nation that are managed by industry professionals eager to advance the budding careers of young cyclists. Education is the primary component. No matter what level of skills the young athletes have upon entering the week, athletes leave the camp a better bike racer with knowledge they didn't have before.



# NUTRITION. THE CAFFEINE CRAZE

By Jillian Kaye, USOC Nutrition Intern

From that morning cup of coffee or tea to energy drinks, sodas, chocolate and sports gels, caffeine is one of the most widely consumed stimulants due to its addictive energizing and performance enhancing effects on the central nervous system. While most people look to the stimulant to help them wake up, many athletes look to caffeine to help boost their athletic performance by amping up their energy and giving them a cognitive edge during training and competition. The following information provides insight on real food vs. synthetic forms of caffeine, and the pros and cons surrounding use for athletic performance.

## CAFFEINE CONSUMPTION

While many Americans consume large quantities of caffeine, athletes should be particularly aware of how much they consume due to its potential effect on athletic performance. The average American consumes about two cups of coffee a day (16 oz.), which can range from 200- 400 mg of caffeine depending on how it was made. The following table provides common doses of caffeine found in typical foods and sport products.

PRODUCT .....	SERVING SIZE .....	CAFFEINE (MG)
Brewed Coffee.....	8 oz.....	95-200 (varies with coffee beans)
Decaf Coffee .....	8 oz.....	2-12 (varies with coffee beans)
Tea (black, green) .....	8 oz.....	14-70
Soda .....	12 oz.....	35-55
Energy drinks .....	16 oz.....	160
Chocolate Bar .....	1 bar (1.55 oz.).....	9 (milk), 18 (dark)
Caffeinated sport products .....	1 gel (1.2 oz.), 1 stick of gum .....	25-100 (gels), 40-100 (gum)

Studies have shown that consuming 3-6 mg of caffeine/kg of body weight (150 lb = 210-420 mg) about one hour before training or competition leads to improvements in performance of trained athletes. However, the evidence suggests that there is no additional benefit to performance in doses above 3 mg/kg body weight, and that lower doses may also have a benefit, so it is best to start lower than higher if trialing caffeine. In addition, most studies rely on anhydrous caffeine (capsule, tablet, powder) which may exert a different effect than coffee or other 'food' forms of caffeine due to differences in the absorption rate, dose or the lack of other 'additives.' Endurance athletes or those with multiple heats/finals on one day may benefit by splitting their dose into smaller amounts to get the same effects. As with all new fueling strategies, always make sure you trial caffeine during training before using during competition. Knowing how the body will react to caffeine consumption can decrease complications that could be detrimental.

## THE PROS:

While the reasons for performance improvements are not fully understood, the research indicates caffeine helps to:

- Prolong endurance – seen in competitions ranging from sprints in track and swimming to 5Ks to Ironman competitions
- Decrease perceived level of exertion – seen in competitions like soccer, rowing, canoeing and kayaking
- Increase reaction time – seen in the start of events like alpine skiing, BMX racing, track & field and swimming, soccer, volleyball, rugby
- Increase concentration – seen in events like gymnastic, shooting and archery, volleyball, soccer

It is worthwhile to note that while athletes in sports like archery and shooting have reported an increased concentration from caffeine, they also experience elevated heart rates, which affect their need for precision, focus and fine motor skills.

## THE CONS:

Due to caffeine's effect on multiple body systems including the central nervous system, gastrointestinal tract and urinary tract, it is vital to be aware of possible adverse reactions. The following are possible adverse reactions to be aware of:

- Anxiety
- Overstimulation
- Elevated heart rate
- Restlessness
- Inability to focus
- Gastric irritant
- Mild diuretic
- Dehydration
- Insomnia
- Addiction (from overuse and reliance)

Furthermore, products like energy drinks and pre-workout supplements contain high doses of caffeine compared to coffee and tea. As with all supplements, these products are unregulated by the FDA, leading to mislabeled caffeine content and other undocumented ingredients commonly listed as a 'proprietary blend,' which may contain harmful or banned substances. However, if labeling is accurate, the quantity in these products is known which can be helpful compared to the large variability of caffeine content in sources like coffee and tea. If you are looking for a specific dose to improve performance, choose only products verified by a third party organization that tests for accurate labeling ([www.NSFSport.com](http://www.NSFSport.com)). Athletes should consult a sport dietitian to become more educated on potential contamination, dosing, timing and potential side effects they may experience.

## THE REAL UNDERLYING ISSUE

Caffeine is a very controversial topic in sport and among athletes. Although caffeine is not illegal as a stimulant and performance enhancer (in moderation, NCAA has an allowable limit), it is highly addictive and athletes can become very reliant on its effects. If you find yourself looking to caffeine to get you through the day or even a workout, there may be a bigger issue at hand. Lack of good sleep, appropriate fueling, recovery nutrition and rest can leave anyone looking for that extra push supplied by caffeine. Athletes experiencing a dependence on caffeine during training should discuss alternative strategies for increasing daily energy with their sport dietitian, coach and/or sport psychologist.

# PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY. MIND-BODY CONNECTION

## SECTION TWO IN A THREE-PART SERIES OF PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY TRAINING

By Lindsay Thornton, USOC Sport Psychologist, Psychophysiology

As covered in the last month's issue, the Psychophysiological Principal states:

*"every change in the physiological state is accompanied by an appropriate change in the mental or emotional state, conscious or unconscious, and conversely, every change in the mental or emotional state, conscious or unconscious, is accompanied by an appropriate change in the physiological state."*

There are a few simple ideas that can be incorporated in your mental training to make sure that your mind and your body can work cooperatively. Paying **attention** is one idea that was covered last month and this segment of the sport psychophysiology article will cover **muscle activity** – we will take a look at **breathing** in next month's issue.

### MUSCLE ACTIVITY

Assuming you will take a few minutes each day to engage in the mental practice of being aware of your attention and increasing your attentional control skills, you can easily incorporate noticing what is going on in your muscle system as you become competitive.

When you are intensely focusing, what happens from your head to your toes? Are you leaning forward, clenching your jaw, tensing your shoulders/forearms/wrists/fingers? See if you can exert mental effort while using only the physical effort that is necessary for the task. Overworking your muscles without microbreaks is one way to end up with a repetitive strain injury. With psychophysiology equipment, we can monitor the resting tension and activation levels of muscle groups in athletes to determine if they have consistent activation patterns across their performances, and if they have brief and effective periods when their physical tasks are complete when they reduce the resting tension to almost zero. You can do this fairly well without equipment by scanning your muscle groups in your mind's eye to assess resting tension. You can use stretching, tensing/relaxing, or pressing your fingers into the muscle to try to minimize tension.

Create a routine of resetting your posture before you begin and at regular intervals if you are doing cognitive training. Note that this can be for anything you do – driving, answering emails, talking on the phone – see if you can make it a habit to maintain an efficient posture. Sort out how to take on a cognitively challenging task without overusing your muscle system. One way to address this is to create a habit of relaxing your forehead, eye muscles, jaw, neck, shoulders and down to your fingers before starting.

See how this might relate to sport performance, specifically are you using excess muscle effort to in an attempt to create mental effort (we call this misapplied effort, where the goal of increasing mental effort or attempting to 'do something better' is incorrectly translated to excess tension in the muscles). As you notice your patterns, consider the short term and long term effects. Take some time to build your awareness and self-regulation skills in your muscular system in order to maintain muscle health and potentially avoid developing unnecessary repetitive strain injuries.

Muscle awareness is not just about your health, there are performance implications as well. In research studies with sprinters, tensing the shoulders is associated with losing speed. You might have heard your coach say to relax your shoulders or move your arms faster when you are trying to speed up (in any sport that involves running).

The reason they tell you this is that there is neural coupling between the arms and the legs (neurons that are associated with arm and leg control are synchronized in the pre/motor cortex) when we are walking and running. If the arms are going slower - due to the restricted range of motion in a runner's tense shoulders - then according to the way the brain works, the legs could slow down.

An effective intervention is to give athletes information about what their tension is like along their upper trapezius. This could be done with a muscle sensor on the shoulder that provides audio feedback, or the coach/teammate monitoring the muscle tension recording. When you are told your muscle is tight, it is pretty easy to relax it, so all the runner would need to do is relax more effectively while under the physical strain of running fast. You might think your shoulders are relaxed are running, but it's easy to shift your attention to running fast and have your shoulder tension creep up. There is no guarantee that a runner will run faster with this, but the potential barrier of slower arms leading to slower legs would be removed (and if that is something that is inhibiting performance, well, then they might go faster).

A few minutes of practice each day can build your awareness and self-regulation skills in your muscular system. As your skills develop, you will refine your ability to notice what type of effort you are using and if that type of effort is most appropriate for the physical demands. An easy example of noticing this might be paying attention to how tightly you grip your phone when texting normally, then when rushing or emotionally charged. When you catch yourself overworking your muscles or holding excess tension outside of sport training, work to regulate to a more appropriate muscle activation level.

If you come up with something related to your sport, talk with your coach about your muscle activation patterns and see if there is a more efficient way to execute your skills.

## CVOTC VENUES. IMPROVEMENTS UNDERWAY

There are numerous venue improvements happening in Chula Vista that have taken shape over the past few months and are undergoing a quick transformation over the next few weeks. The Strength & Conditioning Center as well as the AT&T Athlete Connections Center are both currently closed for replacing the pavilion tents that cover the structures. Down at the track, the re-surfacing project should be completed on November 17 and over at the field hockey pitch, the new turf should be installed by December 8. The picture to the right shows the process of tearing up the old turf to prepare the base for the new international competition-quality turf that will host a Field Hockey World League tournament in February 2015. The tennis courts will be re-surfaced in December to provide an ideal training venue for top-ranked wheelchair tennis athletes and an excellent recreational space for resident athletes.



## GET INVOLVED. COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

**BMX** --- Chula Vista BMX allows athletes of all ages to practice and compete at one of the best venues in the country. For more information go to [www.chulabmx.com](http://www.chulabmx.com)

**ARCHERY** --- Roadrunner Archery Club makes it possible to practice and learn the sport of archery from the nation's best. For more information go to [www.roadrunnerarchery.com](http://www.roadrunnerarchery.com) or call 760-215-3930

## NGB TRAINING PROGRAMS. NATIONAL TEAMS & ATHLETES

The CVOTC currently hosts NGB resident athlete training programs for archery, BMX, field hockey (men), rugby 7s (men & women), track & field and Paralympic track & field in preparation for upcoming world cup and world championship events.

Archery --- BMX --- Field Hockey --- Rugby 7s --- Track & Field --- Paralympic Track & Field

## ATHLETES IN COMPETITION. RESULTS

RUGBY – Gold Coast Sevens .....October 10-12  
Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

The Men's Eagles Sevens came home with some hardware after defeating France by a final score of 31-15 in the Bowl final. The U.S. team is currently ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the latest standings with eight points. The U.S. team defeated Canada in its opening match of the tournament by a final of 17-15. They then dropped two close matches to England and Argentina. The U.S. team then went on to defeat Japan in the quarterfinals and Portugal in the Bowl semifinals to reach the finals match. Team USA won the match handily against France. The Eagles 7s team will travel back to Chula Vista to train for their next tournament in Dubai, which is scheduled for the weekend of December 5-6.

ARCHERY – Pan Am Championships .....October 18-25  
Rosario, Argentina

Both of the men's and women's archery teams qualified for the 2015 Pan American Games in Toronto with their performances at the 2014 Pan American Archery Championships. The men's team of Jake Kaminski and brothers Sean and Daniel McLaughlin scored a silver medal and the women's team of Khatuna Lorig, LaNola Pritchard and Mackenzie Brown won the bronze medal in team competition.

## ATHLETES IN TRAINING. UPCOMING CAMPS

Kayak – Czech Republic Kayak National Team ..... Nov. 1 - 29  
Archery – JDT Selection Camp ..... Nov. 11 - 15  
Rugby – Men's 7s November High Performance Camp ..... Nov. 15 - 22  
Archery – Compound JDT Camp ..... Nov. 17 - 23  
Soccer – Norway National Men's & Women's Soccer Team Camp ..... Nov. 22 - 29  
Track & Field – France Jump Events Training Camp ..... Nov. 22 - Dec. 31  
Field Hockey – U-21 Men's Combined National Camp ..... Nov. 30 - Dec. 5  
Soccer – Paralympic Soccer November/December Camp ..... Nov. 30 - Dec. 7  
Rowing – Lightweight Men's Camp ..... Nov. 30 - Dec. 21