

A wide-angle, high-angle shot of a soccer stadium during a match. The field is green with white markings. Several players in various colored kits are visible on the field. The stands are filled with spectators, and the sky is overcast. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

SoccerPulse

Know Your Squad

Companion Guide

This guide is meant to serve as a reference for coaches in understanding and interpreting the data they receive from SoccerPulse. Our suggestions and assessments are based on a 9-month data collection of a US based men's professional team. Remember that these are only suggestions, and you will need to use your own judgment and understanding of your players and your circumstances to make the most informed decision possible.

As always, feel free to reach out to our staff at soccerpulseapp@gmail.com for any questions you may have.

Yours in soccer,
Matt Danaher
SoccerPulse Creator

Collecting Data

In order for any analysis to be valid, you will need daily wellness questionnaires from your players EVERY DAY (even days off from training) and RPE reports after EVERY GAME or TRAINING SESSION.

If players do not fill out the wellness questionnaires daily, it will be nearly impossible to assess if they are at risk of overtraining or if they are unfit because there will be gaps in the data.

With this in mind, we specifically implemented push notifications to remind players to submit a report every day. They are also rewarded with a streak counter, symbolized by this fire icon, for the number of days in a row they submit a report.

It should be every players goal to have a streak equal to the number of days in the season by the final game.

IMPORTANT

In order for PUSH NOTIFICATIONS to function properly, players MUST enable them in Settings (outside of the app). Players are prompted when they first create an account to allow push notifications, but if they do not, they can turn them on by exiting the app, opening Settings, scrolling down to the app, and selecting ON for push notifications.

Players should set the daily questionnaire reminder to a time approximately 10 -15 minutes after they wake up in the morning.

If players have not submitted a report, you can remind them by entering Squad Status and selecting the Alarm button in the bottom left corner. Select either "All Players" or players who have "Not Submitted" yet (We recommend selecting those who have not submitted a report yet).

Analyzing Data



Above is real data from a player who has submitted a report every day for 5 months. This is a player who has suffered from multiple muscular injuries during the season, all in different areas and locations in his lower body.

You can see from the green on the left that he started the season feeling fresh but not fit, as most players do. As preseason progressed, he began to accumulate fatigue due to a high workload lack of necessary rest.

The first muscular strain occurred at the end of April and was followed by multiple muscular injuries in the following months. We will use him as a case study in the following pages.

Warning Signs



Above is another example of real data from a different player who also sustained multiple muscular injuries throughout the season. His injury occurred on May 5th, at the very end of this microcycle.

When players begin to consistently (3 days or more) stay above a 3 rating for fatigue and/or soreness, it could indicate that the body is not recovering from the loads being placed upon it.

Potential solution: Reduce training load for player by either giving more days off...

OR

Use player as neutral in training (less defensive actions = lower intensity).

Negative vs Positive Trends



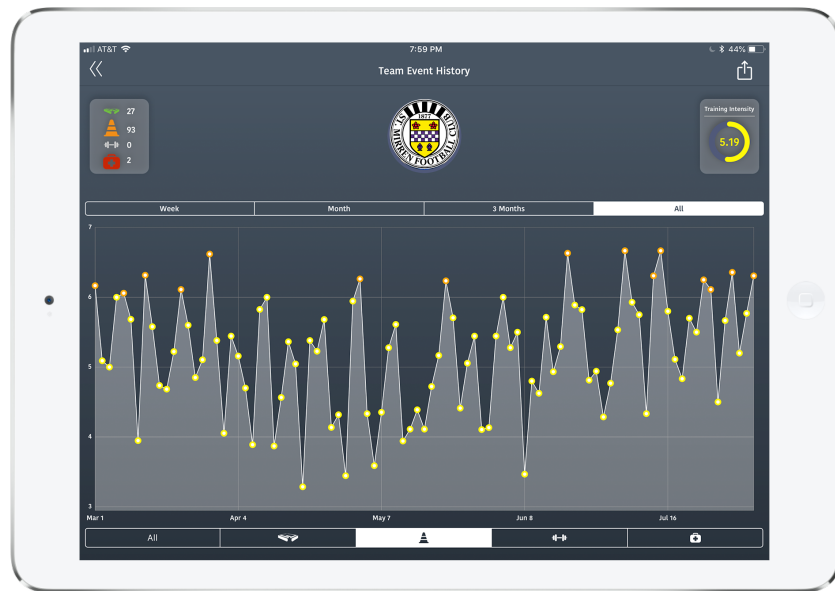
On the left is an example of a player who is experiencing above average soreness, fatigue, and stress. As his body isn't able to compensate for the load, he never returns to the green zone.

On the right is a player who has an ideal looking graph. He is fresh on the day of the game (far left of the graph), and despite dropping down very low on the day after the match (a normal reaction), each day he trends positively toward 100% before the next match.

In an ideal world, most of your players should look like the graph on the right. Be wary of the players who are always feeling poor or always feeling great.

If they're always feeling great, you aren't overloading them enough in training. If they are always feeling poor, they could be being overloaded too much or too often.

Training and Game Rate of Perceived Exertion



Above is a graph of the average RPE for all players throughout the course of the season. Ideally, your most intense session should be the day in the middle of the week, or at least 72 hours prior to match day.

It is important to try and taper the training sessions as you approach match day. You always want your players to feel 100% the day of the match if possible.

For a recovery session (either MD + 1 or MD + 2), try and keep the session intensity between a 2 and a 4, depending on the duration.

For a training session when you have 3 days to recover before the match, aim for a session intensity between a 7 - 9 if possible. This is the day when you can push your players and really prepare them for the intensity of the match.

RPE Warning Signs



As your season progresses, if RPE responses for games continue to increase, your players are most likely fit, but could be lacking freshness.

This means that they have less in the gas tank than they did at the beginning of the season, and could be displaying symptoms that are similar to a team that is unfit.

There are a few ways to help regain freshness for your players without lowering the intensity of your sessions.

You could try increasing rest time in between sets, decreasing the total duration of the session from 90 minutes to 75, or give extra rest days to the group.

The RPE scale is really a measure of internal load, so if two players compete in the same game but one is feeling fresh while the other is fatigued, it is expected that the fatigued player will have a higher RPE than the fresh player, despite playing in the same game.

High Soreness

When players report high increases in soreness, it is likely due to an overload (higher intensity or higher volume) or a new stimulus (starting a new strength program). If a player hasn't experienced a new stimulus, it's a good idea to monitor the player and speak to them if the soreness is specific to one area, or if it is balanced across their entire body. If it is unique to one area, they may be at risk of injury, or may be compensating for a muscular weakness.

High Fatigue

When players report high fatigue, it could be due to a lack of recovery, an overload, lack of sleep, or external mental stress which saps them of energy. Fatigue may be one of the most important parts of the daily questionnaire, so when players report high fatigue, be sure to examine your individual and team periodization to check for overtraining or, if the fatigue is after a match, a lack of preparation leading into the match.

High Stress

When players report high stress, it could be due to the pressure of competition or from issues in their social or personal life. It's always a good idea to have a private conversation with a player who reports high stress to see what is bothering them. Remember, the body cannot tell the difference between stress from a funeral or a wedding, so excess stress is always going to impact the ability of the player to give 100%.

Return From Injury

We hope your players never get injured, but if they do, we have some soccer specific suggestions on how to bring them back into the team safely. These are only suggestions and must be tailored to the player and the specific circumstances. They also should not be started until the player has been cleared by their doctor to return to play.

Stage 1: Isolated movement/technical work

Before players should do anything in an open, changing environment, they should begin with basic patterns to rebuild their confidence and muscle memory. If possible, tailor the technical work to the type of actions the player will perform (outside back getting wide and receiving on their back foot).

Stage 2: Neutral in Training

After the player has successfully shown that they can perform basic actions without pressure, we can reintroduce them to an open environment, but one where they only perform attacking actions. This way, they are not reacting to an attacking player and will only have to perform actions that they are comfortable with.

Stage 3: Full Return to Training

If the player can perform attacking actions comfortably, they can slowly transition to performing both attacking, defending, and transition actions. Remember that this will dramatically increase the intensity for them, so it would be a good idea to reduce the total volume (remove player from last 10-15 minutes of the session).

Return From Injury Part II

Stage 5: 45 - 60 minutes in a Reserve Game (if possible)

If playing in a reserve game is not an option, skip this step (but adjust for minutes) in Stage 6. The reason why it is a good idea to have a player play in a reserve game before returning to the first team is because the intensity will be slower than what they are used to. This allows them to adjust to the intensity of a match without completely overloading them.

Stage 6: 45 - 60 minutes in a Game

If the player played in a reserve game, you can play them at a similar minute amount in this game. If they did not play in a reserve game, they shouldn't play more than 30-45 minutes. Remember, the intensity for a real game is higher than the intensity for a reserve match, so a player who plays 60 minutes in a real game has a higher training load than a player who plays 60 minutes in a reserve game.

Stage 7: 60 - 90 minutes in a Game

Repeat the process above (only if you've had at least 1 week in between matches) to gradually return the player to playing in a match at full capacity.

Questions?

Have a specific question about your team, a player, a circumstance, or anything soccer related? Reach out to us with your question at soccerpulseapp@gmail.com and we'll be happy to respond to you.

Best of luck with your season!