

TRAINING & INJURY PREVENTION. NEWS FROM OTHER SPORTS: AMERICAN FOOTBALL

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Athlete care and management in North American football, and specifically the National Football League, has begun to evolve due to influences from disparate sports and industries. Most teams are beginning to utilize big data, sports science, and behavioral science to answer the question of the day.

Few teams, however, fully integrate the mental, emotional, and physical training for its athletes in order to proactively link performance training around the athlete and/or coach.

Traditional organizational management inside these teams has proven a significant roadblock to fully integrating a whole person athlete care and management system.

The methods used by one team from the National Football League, and one American university football team from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) for injury prevention and proactive athlete management are based on four components:

1. Physical: how traditional methods in strength, conditioning, medical, and technical/tactical training are being augmented and supported through data science and sports science.
2. Mental: how traditional sports psychology and coaching is changing through better cognitive science and technological resources.
3. Emotional: the current state of work with athletes and the interest in mindfulness, meditation, and behavioral analytics as a way to control emotions and build character on or off the football field.
4. Organizational Management: a review of the traditional organizational hierarchy, and how this can change from the top to bottom to better support the player and coach in North American football.

Details on the structure, strategy, operation, and tactics used by an NFL and NCAA football team are:

- The integration of strength and conditioning, medical services, and coaching.
- The importance of a player development system and psychological program.
- The daily monitoring of behaviours with software.
- The use of data science in personnel decisions, on field tactics, and injury prevention.