

Match Report:

Intermittent Fasting

"Football is simple, but it is difficult to play simple." Johan Cruyff.

We always try to complicate things, like a winger taking on an extra player when the simplest thing is to pass the ball to the striker who is free to shoot. Or, attempting to count calories when the body hasn't got a clue what a calorie means or even cares.

And then, when we do try to simplify things we forget to ask questions, we fail to spot the mistakes, because we accept the ref's decision blindly; if calories in equals calories out (CICO), then to lose weight is simply a matter of mathematics. But, why then do so many of us fail to workout this little equation or at least get somewhere near it?

We only have to look at the latest obesity figures to realise something isn't working, two thirds overweight, over 1/4 clinically obese, yep, we are indeed the fat men of Europe, and, as with Brexit, we're finding it increasingly difficult to squeeze out the door, past all the other expanding nations in the European community!

I guess I was looking for a simple answer to the obesity epidemic, something that didn't involve taking pills, spending money or exercising excessively. Something that was easy to follow and understand, involved no elaborate recipes or cooking skills and wasn't time consuming.

Step forward, Intermittent Fasting - what could be simpler than doing nothing?!

No shopping.

No cooking.

No preparation.

No time wasting.

No money.

No eating!

No fun, as well, you may be thinking.

Except, you may actually find the enjoyment you get from food when you do break the fast, and go on a gastronomic adventure, more than compensates.

Besides, look at the alternatives; calorie restriction which keeps you in a constantly deprived state with no energy and very little tasty food.

or,

Continuing with the status quo, which risks the development of chronic diseases and their subsequent woes.

That's certainly no fun!

Before kick-off however, I wanted to put my team through a few gentle warm up exercises, just to get them use to the pace of the game and to hopefully understand the rationale behind the sudden change in tactics.

This took the form of a two week induction period, during which I simply skipped breakfast and made a few carbohydrate substitutions. So off went bread (inc gluten free), potatoes, pasta, rice and cereals and on in place came; full fat yoghurt (Greek), cheese, butter, nuts, salads and green veg.

The skipping breakfast bit was easy, like most, I don't get ravenous cravings for food first thing in the morning. The natural circadian rhythms of the body dictate that mornings were originally for hunting rather than grazing.

Indeed, the neo-production of glucose by my liver was sufficient to tide me over until about 11am and the end of morning surgery, before the first thoughts of food even entered my head. And, if it had been a particularly stressful on-call, then the increased cortisol production gave me the extra energy to get to lunch without a morsel of food crossing the goal-mouth!

Those initial two weeks of skipping breakfast helped to overcome one of the most enduring and belligerent self-limiting hooligan beliefs in the field of health today, namely that we should eat breakfast like a king, because it gives us the energy we need to get through the day.

Thankfully, it's just the timing of this particular pass we need to alter, because by definition, break fast is always going to be the first meal of the day. You could take it at 6 o'clock in the morning, or 6 in the evening, and it can still retain its accolade as the most important meal.

What really matters for IF is that you extend the period/time before you break your fast.

And, to do that with confidence you need to realise delaying breakfast won't result in some sort of cataclysmic collapse in form, you can quite easily continue with your everyday activities and still achieve your goals.

Occasionally, during those first two weeks, I did notice a few hunger pangs around midday, but so fleeting, even the slightest distraction allowed the ref to wave play on and the game to continue.

Those cravings of hunger are also the reason I elected to make a substitution of the simple carbs. They have a habit of playing on the addictive areas of the pitch and making life more difficult for the manager to keep control.

Moreover, it also gives your insulin producing players more of a chance to rest, to hopefully rejuvenate their enthusiasm for playing, in much the same way older players are excused onerous training regimes towards the end of their careers.

The calories in = calories out (CICO) equation, is derived from the first law of thermodynamics.

The Law of Conservation of Energy - energy can neither be created nor destroyed.

The implication from this is that losing weight is simply a matter of eating less and moving more. Which is the traditional healthcare advice we have all been given.

However, this only gives us the result, in much the same way the result of a football match is decided by the number of goals scored minus goals conceded. It says nothing about how we arrive at that result.

That depends upon how we play, what players we pick, what tactics we choose, and of course refereeing decisions, all of which can have a big impact upon the outcome of any game.

Similarly, the foods we eat, the combinations of food, how we cook them and when we eat them, can have a big influence upon the result of the calorie equation.

We wrongly assume that what we see going on (calories), on the pitch, is all that is happening, but there are games within games, you the referee can't see everything on the pitch. You will miss certain fouls, wrongly interpret others and generally be oblivious to all the moves going on behind your back.

So, we miss the 25% of calories from almonds that don't get metabolised, we fail to see the cholesterol molecules being used to build the outer membrane of cells or the extra work that goes into digesting a juicy steak. We miss the impact cooking has on breaking down chemical bonds making metabolism less energetic, or how hormones like insulin facilitate the storage of glucose.

In other words, we forget the game is played on grass not on paper, and there is going to be a world of difference between the calories we see on the packaging of food (paper) and what actually happens physiologically in the body (grass).

In doing so, we also miss the solution to obesity, because we have wrongly assumed it's all about the calories going in and out. We have this very simplistic notion that whatever money coming in (calories) that doesn't get spent on the day to day running of the club, is deposited in the vaults of the fat cells.

And that conversely, if we are running a little short of cash (calorific deficit) all we need to do is make a withdrawal from the fat cell ATM's to supply us with the energy we need.

Alas, this "money" in the "Bellyfat Bank" isn't for instant access, it's been put there by your Chairman as a long term investment (in case the revenue stops completely during times of famine) and naturally they are not going to make it easy for you to get your hands on it.

Access requires more than just a chip and pin, there is in fact a whole Securicor team involved in its protection. Chief among them is insulin, which will happily collect the money and put it away for you, but when on duty it's not letting any come out.

It therefore makes sense that the first and simplest thing you need to do to obtain these untold riches, is to allow insulin to take an extended break. Long enough for you to calmly gain access, but not so long that you create panic and set off the alarms.

This is the inside job that nobody notices, until you are safely back home at the dinner table, having already distributed the bullion to more worthy causes.

Not so much robbing Peter to pay Paul, more like the Robin Hood scenario, when you take from the rich and give to the poor, for the benefit of the greater good.

And why does nobody notice?

Because, quite literally all you need to do is nothing, except perhaps a little driving!

By not eating and staying nice and calm you lull insulin into a false sense of security, they take a siesta whilst you drive the fiesta away stashed full of dosh, and nobody notices.

In metabolic terms you become a fat burner rather than a fat storer.

So, for those of you who still think you can get away with the equivalent of armed robbery, by exercising excessively, then think again, because sooner or latter the long

arm of the law is going to catch up with you - and a long custodial sentence for the fat cells is heading your way, as your body continually adapts to conserve its precious energy stores.

The only other possible option you have to get your hands on the loot, is to negotiate a few loan deals and start making smaller deposits (fewer calories), except that's really not sustainable either, because the Chairman of the Club will quickly recognise his assets are dwindling and make cutbacks and efficiency savings, perhaps even porning off some of your hard earned lean muscle tissue to make up for any deficit.

Non of which is really conducive to long-term growth or indeed, high quality play.

Money in the bank then, (fat on the belly) can see you through a tough spell - like pre-season when you have no revenue coming in, but, it can't help you play better.

That requires money being spent on positive improvements at your club. Investment in players, training facilities, quality nutrition and sleep etc. Without these health-inducing assets in place, obesity becomes a problem.

Which is why a very important point to understand, and one that took me a while to figure out, is, you don't lose weight to get healthy, you get healthy to lose weight!

It's worth pondering on this for a while, because here lies the crux of the matter - the keys to the "Bellyfat Bank" and access to all those hidden gems.

If you want to lose fat and keep it off, then you have to convince the Chairman, it's going to lead to long term improvements in how you play, that are both sustainable and produce worthwhile results.

To illustrate the point let's look at 3 different clubs during 2017: Chelsea, Arsenal and Sunderland.

Chelsea, the champions, had endured a poor last season under Jose Mourinho, which cost him his job, players didn't look interested and performances suffered. However, Abramovich, the billionaire chairman, recognised the problem and before spending any money on expensive transfers, he brought in Antonio Conte, as manager to transform the "health" of the existing players and improve their training regime, and only then did he sanction some costly signings.

All of whom helped them to win the Premier League: Kante (£30m), Luiz (£30m), Alonso (£20m) and Batshuayi (£33m), who scored the winning goal that clinched the title against West Brom.

Moreover, most of this outlay was recovered by the sale of players surplus to requirements, including a whopping £51m for Oscar. Now that's how you go about strengthening your team, and at the same time losing some of that "Bellyfat."

Next, look at Arsenal, a club with lots of money in the bank and high quality players (great genoteam), but, over the last decade or so has failed to live up to expectations. This has created a lot of unrest amongst the supporters, many of whom have called for the sacking of the manager, because they believe he has not spent enough money on team improvements.

Arsenal are in my opinion, the fattest team in the Premier League, but they don't want/need to do anything about it because they are still playing well and getting results. Though it may come as no surprise to learn they have one of the poorest injury records in the entire division, and in most people's opinion are underperforming given the resources available.

Finally, at the other end of the table you have a team like Sunderland, another club with a sizeable girth in the shape of a wealthy Chairman, only this time playing poorly. The Club was up for sale and the Chairman reluctant to spend because of the threat of relegation.

This was the unhealthiest club during the season and suffered the inevitable consequences - low morale (depression), dwindling attendances (dysbiosis), conceding too many goals (poor immunity) and relegated in April.

The money was there, but they weren't allowed to spend it, even though they badly needed a cash injection. With less revenue coming in, and the current bunch of players not up to the job, injury prone and demoralised, a veto was put on any further expenditure.

They had taken out the equivalent of a payday loan a few seasons before, when they signed Jermaine Defoe, and the astronomic interest payments (wages) now meant no more money was made available because of the threat of relegation.

Only if a team is in good health and playing well, can you really expect the Chairman to cough up this kind of money, and only if they fully understand the need to do so.

So, if you want to lose Bellyfat, it's generally a good idea to have a Premiership Health manager in charge, one that recognises the need to take an holistic approach and make improvements in all the key departments.

From the quality of the food, to the timing of meals, from the amount of sleep to the handling of stress, in fact anything that makes you healthier and gets you playing better, needs to be considered.

To find the solution to obesity, it's no good just looking at the result, you need to tackle the root cause of the problem, and that depends upon how well you play. The tactics you use, the substitutions you make, the quality of the passing and the strength of the defence.

You cannot hope to get a good result, in terms of fat loss, if you are continually stressing out most of the players involved by using counterproductive tactics and miss timing the passes or simply making too many passes and wearing them out.

Obesity is a multifactorial problem, stemming from miscommunication and mismanagement at many different levels of the Club. So, the traditional medical advice to eat less and exercise more, just doesn't cut the mustard anymore, and over the years has produced some pretty poor results, both on and off the pitch.

Yes, it's OK short term, but long term it's a metabolic disaster. Putting the club under tremendous financial pressures and making your job as manager extremely difficult. I think given the choice of managing, Chelsea or Sunderland last season, most of us would have opted for the team in great metabolic shape (Chelsea), over a team with a belly full of fat.

What we need now is a different approach/tactic from the usual “smash and grab” routine of calorie restriction and exercise excess, which just leaves everyone exhausted and the Chairman petrified of relegation.

I think intermittent fasting (IF) offers a more viable alternative, because, if done correctly, it allows you to communicate positive messages to the decision-makers at the club; the Chairman, Bank Manager and Head of Security etc.

It allays fears, puts minds at rest and ultimately gives you easy access to the belly fat reserves you need for progress and team development.

By allowing your metabolic players to take time off, you ensure they retain their enthusiasm for the game and more importantly, when they do come back on the pitch, they play with more energy and direction.

In other words, they play with purpose and when you play with purpose, you start playing as a “Team” again and the health of the Club begins to improve and with it the results!

Player Ratings:

Health-Keeper. 9/10 *Continues in tip-top form, made plenty of saves from the opposing viruses and bacteria, just the one little slip-up when caught napping after a restless night's sleep, allowing the attacker to hit the back of the throat, but nothing a little salt water gargle couldn't sort out!*

Left-Back (family and friends). 8/10 *The new team tactics certainly seemed to find favour with this player. Interest was kept high and after a few early hesitant moments, their support play got stronger and stronger, even resulting in a few "Stop and Go" moves from other players.*

Right (Lifestyle) Back. 9/10 *Played like this was his natural position, never looked flustered and always seemed to have plenty of time on the ball, a real throwback to times gone by. Strong and athletic, making lots of high intensity bursts from defence, helping to set up the two goals of fat loss and muscle gain.*

Central (Beliefs) Defender. 9/10 *Again demonstrated lots of resilience and ultimately got on top of the opposition attackers. Most notably an encounter with the breakfast monster, which required a pass of sublime timing to overcome and even more crucially, a realisation that "Stop and Go" was a safe and effective tactic to use on grass not just on paper.*

Central (Values) Defender. 8/10 *This player's quality shone through the more the game went on. The quality of taste, the quality of food and the quality of the pass, all had a big bearing upon the result and enjoyment of the game.*

Midfield (Energy) Dynamo. 8/10 *Another stand-out performance from this key midfield player. Never looked like running out of steam, even though many had questioned his fitness given the new team tactics. His contribution only increased as the game went on, playing a role in both goals and helping to clear out the opposition fat stores.*

Midfield (Decisions) General. 8/10 *The decision to include this player in the team was well and truly justified. It was a brave move by the manager, who had previously criticised the player's commitment. This time however, it was a rock solid effort that produced some excellent results. Including a delightful forward pass for the first goal.*

Midfield (Connections and communications) Link-Up. 7/10 *A much better display on the pitch this time around, there was certainly less resistance to his style of play from the other players. It was only the opposition left stranded when he introduced the "Stop and Go" move early in the first half and glided past the fat's defences.*

Action Attacker. 8/10 *Well, they say actions speak louder than words, so it's hard to argue with this players performance. He had a hand in every goal and it appeared he even found time to sit down and take a rest, before bursting into life again in front of the posts.*

Goal-Scorer. 8/10 *The result may have been a little one sided when he scored the 2 key goals in the second half (fat loss and muscle gain), but somebody's got to put the ball in the back of the net. What was most striking however, was the quality of play that preceded both goals, a real team player.*

Team Captain (Purpose). 10/10 * *Once again the Captain played a starring role, influencing every important aspect of the game. Tackling back when needed and always encouraging the other players to produce their best. A steely determination to make a difference, and improve the quality of play, not just of his own team-mates, but of anyone watching.*

Subs: Focus 8/10. Motivation 8/10.

Post - Match Comments:

Manager:

“I thought this was a real team effort, initially the lads were a bit sceptical in training, but once they saw the results and how easy it was to beat the opposition, they soon got on board. Special praise must go to the Captain, who I thought demonstrated great control and carried out my orders to the letter, I hope this is a sign of things to come.”

Chairman:

“Well, I was really pleased with the result and how they played, I saw some real quality out there today. It looks like these change in tactics have been worthwhile and worth the investment. So I want to congratulate the manager and players. I'm confident we are going to have a good season and who knows, perhaps compete for some silverware.”

Finance Director:

“Overall I think that went very well. I can see this style of play attracting more fans and sponsors, which ultimately will generate greater income. We might even look at investing more resources in this area to make further improvements. I'm sure the Chairman is a very happy man tonight.”

Fan:

“I thought the manager had finally lost the plot when I heard about what he planned to do. But, I have to say all the players looked well rested, and worked harder than I've seen for a long while, they played well and deserved the win. The “Stop and Go” tactic worked a treat, the opposition didn't have any answers to it. I think we've got an exciting season ahead.”

Results:

First a few stats:

First-Half:

Time in Possession:

16hrs Fasting (Opposition Half)

8hrs Eating Window

Weight Loss. 7lbs

Waist Loss. 1inch

Waist:Height ratio. 48 (Healthy, Normal weight)

Shots against: 1 sore throat

Second-Half

Time in Possession:

18-20 hrs Fasting

4-6hrs Eating Window

Weight Loss. 7lbs

Waist Loss. 2 inches

Waist:Height ratio. 45.33 (Slender and Healthy)

Shots against: 0

Goals Scored:

Fat Loss: 15 - 10%. Total 5%

*Muscle Gain: Bicep. +1 inch
Chest. +1 inch*

Post-Match Analysis.

First things first, a number of self-limiting Hooligan Beliefs were successfully banned from the game:

Belief : Breakfast needs to be taken in the morning. - It doesn't.

Belief : It is bad for me to fast. - It actually has many health benefits.

Belief : It is hard and boring. - It's easy to do and makes food more enjoyable.

Belief : I need food for energy. - Not all the time! - Gluconeogenesis and Bellyfat will do.

Belief: Calories in equals calories out (CICO). - A refereeing mistake!

After looking at the Self-Observant TV (SOTV), the video analysis team identified four mistakes to iron out in training to improve play.

1. Not eating enough during feeding window.

In order to maintain the trust of your Chairman, it is important to eat sufficient food during your feeding window to satisfy your players needs. You should not feel hungry or short of energy during this time.

2. Not eating high quality food.

To give your metabolic players a good workout, nutrient dense food is required. By eating food containing lots of vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants, you can ensure all the players get involved and nutritional needs are met. This also helps to reduce hunger.

3. Eating too early.

Eating too early in the day means you have a longer time to wait between your last meal of the day and bedtime. It is generally easier to sleep through the majority of your fast.

4. Trying to do too much too soon.

Attempting to run before you can walk, often leads to injury and disappointment. Don't try to fast all day (24hrs) to start with. Get your Teams used to the tactic first.

Learning Points:

Eating window is flexible - no hard rules - 6 hrs after waking is a good ballpark figure.

Use caffeine strategically:

Coffee, or rather caffeine acts as a stimulant and increases noradrenaline, giving your Energy player a boost - don't drink too much 2-3 cups is enough.

You can try adding butter and coconut oil to the coffee to give you even more energy, without stimulating insulin.

Don't workout/exercise too early - an hour before eating would be ideal - focus on heavy strength and only light aerobic exercise. HIIT can work wonders.

Eat big and healthy to maintain muscle strength.

Try mixing it up with different IF protocols.

16/8 (traditional) easy.

20/4 (warrior) medium difficulty.

5:2

This tactic of unpredictability helps to keep everyone on their toes. Usually a change every 3 months works well.

Managers View:

From my own perspective, I reckon it's been a worthwhile exercise, with some good positive results. I believe this style of play is sustainable and perhaps, most importantly, healthy and beneficial to my "Teams for Life."

It offers a flexibility I haven't seen with other dietary tactics and at the same time requires relatively little effort to maintain, in fact it becomes easier the longer you go on.

Which I guess makes it unique, because, rather than hitting a plateau, you actually feel as though you are in greater control of your metabolic players and can adapt to different game situations. And, with this control, a manager can achieve better results.

During the season, I've learnt:

I can survive without food for 24 hours, indeed, this was often easier than having just a little to eat.

I've learnt, at least for my own particular GenoTeam lineup, that IF is the best tactic to use if I want to lose fat and retain muscle and strength.

It doesn't have an adverse effect upon my defences (immune system).

It is sustainable and conducive with long term growth, and therefore, Premiership Health.



IF everyday not only helps you: “Work Rest and Play”

It might also help to keep the doctor away!

Play Well - Get your Teams into Shape and Take Care!

Dr Rob