

# **Multi-Media Approaches to Player Development in a University Masters/Veterans World Cup Futsal Team: Systematic Reflection and Self-Directed Learning**

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### **Abstract:**

*Multi-media provide flexible and rich opportunities to augment physical training methods and enhance player development in masters/veterans soccer programs. Three research questions guided the examination of whether and how multi-media experiences enhanced player development for masters players in a select futsal (6-a-side soccer) team at the University of British Columbia. In this study, multi-media played an effective role in the player development process. Specifically, data suggest that monthly DVD analysis and guided worksheet experiences provided masters players with focused and multiple replay opportunities to further reflect on critical performance incidents in the convenience of their own place and time constraints; it provided clear and tangible cues for monitoring effective responses to complex game situations; carefully constructed game-based DVD vignettes added motivational elements that could be shared on a social level, which also enhanced further viewing and analysis; and ultimately, multi-media experiences enhanced training behaviour (e.g., mental skills training prior to games), performance outcomes, and ongoing player development initiatives.*

*Integral to this paper is the scholarly production and implementation of multi-media experiences to enhance player development. For examples of mediums used, see Appendices A to F.*

### **Key Words:**

Masters player4s, DVD analysis, guided worksheet experiences, physical training, teaching, learning.

## Introduction

It is becoming increasingly popular for older adults (40 to 80+ years of age) to take up, and continue participating in, a wide range of sports, and at varying levels of competition (Hubball, in press). In masters soccer programs in Canada, for example, there is an increasing number of age-specific masters/veterans level soccer leagues (e.g., 040s, 045s, 050s, 055s, and emerging 060s). Traditional training methods for masters soccer programs tend to focus exclusively on combinations of intra-team practice games or physical skills practice such as drills for passing, dribbling, shooting, heading, and fitness conditioning (Tessitore et al, 2005). While fun, simple, and relatively easy to organize, without focused practice goals, nor systematic reflection about critical understandings of complex game situations (e.g., selective team offense and defense strategies), these approaches provide limited opportunity for strategic team development, and much less for targeted skills transfer in the realities of competitive soccer games. Thus, practice does not make perfect, but quality practice does. As part of an eclectic approach to learning-centred coaching practices (Hubball 2005, 2010), multi-media has the potential to provide flexible and rich learning opportunities to augment physical training methods and enhance player development. The use of learning-centred instructional practices that incorporate multi-media has further implications for enhancing student learning in a broad range of professional practicum settings (e.g., Pharmacy, Medicine, Social Work, Teacher Education etc). This study examined whether and how multi-media experiences enhanced player development for masters players in the *Team Canada: Inter UBC Masters World Cup Futsal (6-a-side soccer) Team*, based at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada. Research questions focused on key contextual factors when tailoring multi-media experiences to the specific needs and circumstances of masters futsal players; how multi-media experiences were used; and how the multi-media experiences impacted player development.

## Multi-media and learning-centred coaching practices

Team and player development processes are integrated: if a team is to truly develop and progress (e.g., in strategic and efficient ways), then so too must its individual players. Team and player development programs also typically differ in their emphases for improvement in favour of a team or on individual players. Essentially, learning-centred approaches to team and player development are based on the specific needs and circumstances of masters soccer players, and draw upon a broad range of sports science disciplines (e.g., socio-cultural aspects of masters soccer, sports management, sports psychology, sport pedagogy, exercise physiology, sports medicine) to enhance strategic improvements for effective teamwork, decision-making, and soccer skills in complex team game situations (Gonzalez & Solla Aguiar, 2007; Hubball, Mitchell, & Reddy, 2010; Vallee & Bloom, 2005). Experienced masters players (individually and collectively) are also expected to take an active role (e.g., planning, commitment, evaluation) in this process by utilizing prior knowledge and expertise, as well as demonstrate openness to developing new understandings and specific skills for effective teamwork and player-specific contributions in competitive game situations (Hubball, 2009).

Complementary to learning-centred coaching practices, multi-media experiences have enormous potential for masters players to engage in systematic reflection and develop critical understandings for effective responses in complex game situations. Given the complex lifestyle demands of masters/veteran soccer players, critical issues often focus on accessibility, flexibility, and social and relevant learning experiences (Janelle, Barba, Frehlich, Tennant, & Cauraugh, 1997; Vaughn, 2004). The flexible use of multi-media experiences (to augment physical training methods), for example, can have significant appeal for some masters players, especially those more able to engage with these experiences at their own convenience than to make specific commitments for time, place, and travel to team meetings, which are far more likely to be in conflict with pressing family, work, and/or alternative social engagements (Dionigi & O'Flynn, 2007).

According to Heritage Canada (2005), over 60% of Canadian homes have computer access and online capability (and this percentage is increasingly rapidly), which has significant implications for the use of appropriate multi-media experiences to enhance player development. In a masters soccer context, for example, multi-media learning experiences might involve (but not be limited to) team or player DVD analysis, digital photograph reviews of team/player celebrations or game incidents, e-mail reporting/discussion forums, print and coach's whiteboard chart, one-to-one personalized coaching feedback, and education-focused Internet sites and web management systems (e.g. WebCT, Moodle, and Blackboard).

Depending on the participants' computer literacy, web tools can be used to contribute to enhanced communication and interaction among masters players. For example, when using DVD game vignette analysis, sport psychology can assist with the identification of key observable cues such as player motivation (readiness), self-efficacy (situational confidence), level of focus and anticipation, and control of emotional states for optimal performance. Similarly, sport physiology can assist with the identification of key observable performance cues such as player strength, endurance, agility, coordination, and speed (Mitchell, Oslin, & Griffin, 2006; Nessel, 2004).

Essentially, multi-media experiences, including digital media, can engage masters soccer players on a cognitive (e.g., mental skills training) and experiential (e.g., virtual) level that is not possible from simple practice games and physical skill practices. Also relevant for masters/veteran players, the repeated use of multi-media to enhance player development poses neither physical risk to injury nor excess muscle fatigue. Specifically, multi-media experiences can be personalized to reinforce situation-specific game cues (e.g., team defense strategies) that are key to team effectiveness and player-specific role contributions in competitive game situations. Further, multi-media experiences can engage masters soccer players in an on-line learning community related to activities that celebrate common team issues and achievements, as well as individual contributions that help bond the team together (Friedman, 2008). As part of a broad repertoire of learning-centred coaching practices, therefore, multi-media contributions to player development have significant potential to enhance the quality of masters soccer experiences, performance outcomes, and ongoing improvements for soccer teams and individual players.

For the purpose of this study, and oriented by learning-centred coaching practices, three assumptions about knowledge and its generation underlay the use of multi-media

experiences to enhance player development: it is personally constructed, socially mediated (e.g., communities of practice), and inherently situated (Cox, 2004; Hansman, 2001; Senge & Scharmer, 2008). These assumptions are intimately related and play a key part in the way we make sense of multi-media experiences to enhance player development. For example, recognizing that individuals personally construct knowledge about the world is essential for understanding the nature and substance of creating multi-media experiences for masters players. The socially mediated aspect of knowledge construction speaks to the notion of communities of practice, in particular the milieu in which multi-media contributions to player development exist and the support and multiple negotiations that occur in this setting. The principle that knowledge construction is inherently situated is honoured in this study by developing multi-media experiences from authentic game settings that reveal rich contextually-bound cues (e.g., team effectiveness and on-and-off-the-ball decision-making during team offense and defense situations) that are key to player development for masters players. Thus, the use of multi-media experiences to enhance player development is viewed as an individual, social, and contextual process. This study examined whether and how multi-media experiences enhanced player development for select masters futsal players (6-a-side soccer) at the University of British Columbia, Canada. Specifically, the following research questions guided this investigation:

Q1. What are key contextual factors when tailoring multi-media experiences to meet the specific needs and circumstances of masters futsal players?

Q2. How were multi-media experiences used to enhance player development?

Q3. How did multi-media experiences impact player development?

## **Method**

The data for this study span a 6-month period from January to June 2008. Guided by the above research questions, data sources included: (1) team and individual player DVD vignettes and coach's observations, (2) program documents, specifically effective team offense and defense framework, player-specific positional criteria, team performance records, and player development training journals; and (3) individual interviews with two participating players (33% of players in the 6-a-side team), one in a defense and one in a striker position (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Gerring, 2007). The authors of this paper include the coach and two players (one defender and one striker) in the select masters futsal team from the University of British Columbia, Canada.

Data were collected in each month of the 6-month masters soccer program. In order to develop appropriate multi-media experiences (e.g., DVD footage and worksheet materials), a camcorder recorder was recruited for each monthly competitive game event from an injured team player unable to play or a friend or family member. Recorders were instructed to follow the ball incidents with the camcorder, as well as maintain a broad focus on the field of play for each of the three 15-minute game periods (to obtain 45 minutes of raw game footage). Immediately following the game, on the same evening, the coach reviewed the raw game footage multiple times to benchmark key incidents drawn from the established framework for effective team offense and defense in futsal environments (Futsal Canada, 2009; Hubball, 2006), and to attempt to

include coverage of all team players in the eventual edited DVD vignette. The isolated clips were edited using I-movie software to reduce game highlights from 45 minutes into a 5- to 7-minute game vignette and to incorporate age-appropriate and varied music soundtracks (e.g., 1970s) for a fun and motivational recording. Copies of the DVD vignette were expedited through the team networking (workplace, community, mail-out) system for immediate impact while the game experiences were relatively fresh in the minds of the masters players. Typically, players would request a copy of the unedited 45-minute DVD footage for further analysis of individual and team performance. In addition, following a total of four to five months of individual game tapes, an important 7-minute compilation DVD vignette (with over 50 separate game-based incidents) was produced for analysis, as well as player-specific positional DVD vignettes compiled for each individual masters player.

The document collection coincided with the DVD productions. For example, the effective team offense and defense framework and player-specific positional criteria were collected at the beginning of the program, while DVD worksheet materials were collected through the mid-phase of the program, and player development training journals were collected at the end of the 6-month program. Individual interviews took place once or twice per month with each player. Player combination interviews enabled a collective intelligence to be brought to bear on team offense and defense strategies, where the ideas of the coach often led to a deeper questioning, refining, and discussion of those ideas by each team mate that might not have occurred in individual debrief meetings.

The first phase of the data analysis involved the identification of key issues pertaining to multi-media contributions in player development within and across the various data sources (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Kubler LaBoskey, 2004). It is interesting to note that, over time, these references became increasingly sophisticated, indicating each players' engagement in critical understandings, systematic reflection, and discourse around player development issues (e.g., DVD vignettes of tensions between player autonomy and commitment to effective team roles such as man-to-man marking in defense). The second phase of the data analysis involved member-checking (Feldman, Paugh, & Mills, 2004; Langhout, 2003) to ascertain if the themes identified in the second phase accurately reflected the experiences of the masters players involved in this program. Researchers analyzed qualitative data for common and isolated experiences and for major themes to highlight key progress and suggestions for further development. Quantitative data, on the other hand, were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The authors were able to share their findings together with respect to player development experiences, as well as with all team members of the select masters futsal team over the 6-month period of the study.

## **Results**

Q1. What are key contextual factors when tailoring multi-media experiences to meet the specific needs and circumstances of masters futsal players?

First, it is important to conduct a needs assessment of the player development context in order to tailor the multi-media experiences to suit the needs and circumstances of the team and each individual player. A total of six players were

selected for the Team Canada: Inter UBC Masters Futsal Team from a bigger squad of Vancouver-based masters players using two key criterion:

- Player's ability to have a high impact on the game in required position (e.g., focused on-and-off-the-ball during team offense/defense, and able to maintain high levels of energy, intensity, pace, and strength).
- Player's ability to have a high impact on team effectiveness (e.g., high level of availability and commitment to the 6-month development program, significant contributions to team spirit, cohesion, positivity, communications, leadership, and team determination to succeed especially in the face of adversity).

Over the course of 6 months, two masters players were tracked in-depth with regard to multi-media contributions to player development. Specific prior learning assessment profiles and multi-media experiences were established between the coach and each player. Multi-media experiences were crafted into a 2-week player development cycle. The 2-week player development cycle focused on a "W" shape of progressive individual cool-down training and rest days, as well as progressive build-up training and multi-media experiences in order to fully peak at the twice-monthly competitive team games. For example, on a 2-weekly basis from January to June 2008, each masters player typically participated in 30 to 40 minutes of squad/team practices; 5 to 15 minutes of DVD analysis (twice per week), and 30 to 40 minutes of physical fitness and ball skills practices with intermittent one-on-one coaching feedback as required (see Appendices A to C). Further, both masters players were strategically engaged (using multi-media experiences) with each other and the player-coach as part of a micro team learning community.

In addition to the player development context, it is important to conduct a prior learning assessment (PLA) for each player in order to tailor the multi-media experiences to suit his positional role and player development needs. The following section indicates the player development profile for the masters striker and defender respectively.

### **Player development needs assessment (1): Striker**

The following player development profile guided the engagement of physical and multi-media experiences for this masters striker.

*Contextual/Competitive game factors.* This player was an experienced masters soccer player; however, he was relatively new to strategic game understandings and specific role criteria for a striker in the 6-a-side futsal format. The player was very keen to learn, and possessed very useful striker attributes (determination, tenacity, strength, speed, stamina).

*Social/Team factors.* This player was not part of the winning 2006 Masters World Cup futsal team; therefore, he needed to be successfully integrated within a high level team dynamic. This also required him to establish his role in the select team as the new team striker and connect effectively with specific team offense and defense partner(s), as well as make overall contributions to positive team spirit, cohesion, and interpersonal communications.

*Individual/Physical, mental, and ball skills factors.* This player experienced significant and intermittent back pain problems throughout most of the 5-month period. However,

this player possessed very high levels of determination and physical attributes (e.g., fitness conditioning, strength, and speed) to succeed as an effective striker. This player needed to develop confidence and success in the striker role through specific success-based practices, situational ball skills, and positive reinforcement with other team players. Individual skills development also included education about the body's energy (anaerobic, and aerobic) systems and related fitness regime for the striker role.

Taking into account the above player development context and profile for this masters player, player-specific positional game criteria were developed to enhance performance for this team striker. These criteria were key for DVD analysis and were identified as follows:

- high level of focus during game situations in order to cause as many problems as possible for the opposition defense and goalkeeper (e.g., constant anticipation, threat and penetration attempts on opposition's goal)
- very vocal, confident, and lively on-and-off-the-ball (i.e., maintain high levels of energy, availability, intensity, pace, strength, and determination to succeed especially in the face of adversity) in the final third of the pitch
- critical team contributions to first-line of defense (e.g., rapid closing down of opposition player with ball furthest from our goal)
- maximize personal playing strengths (e.g., on-and-off-the-ball energy, positive team spirit)

### **Player development needs assessment (2): Defender**

The following player development profile guided the engagement of physical and multi-media experiences for this masters defender.

*Contextual/Competitive game factors.* This player was relatively new to strategic game understandings and specific role criteria for a defender in the 6-a-side futsal format. The player was very keen to learn, and possessed very useful defender attributes (determination, tenacity, strength, 6 foot 4 inch 'presence', stamina).

*Social/Team factors.* This player was part of the winning 2006 Masters World Cup futsal team, therefore was familiar with the high-level team dynamic and player expectations. He was required to play a significant leadership role as the last-line team defender (sweeper) in a new 1-1-2-1 formation, as well as make overall contributions to positive team spirit, cohesion, and interpersonal communications.

*Individual factors.* This player had very high levels of determination, competitive spirit, fitness, team ethic, as well as self-directed learning skills (focused and strategic thinking, self-motivation to improve) to become an effective defender. This player needed to develop self-efficacy for the last-line defender (previously executed by two defenders in the 2006 team formation) through specific success-based practices and DVD vignette reinforcement, discussing decision-making for defender actions during on and off-the-ball game situations, and positive reinforcement from teammates.

Taking into account the above player development context and profile for this masters player, player-specific positional game criteria were developed to enhance performance for this team defender. These criteria were key for DVD analysis and were identified as follows:

- high level of focus during game situations in order to cause as many problems as possible for the opposition striker(s)
- very vocal, assertive, confident, and lively on-and-off-the-ball (i.e., maintain high levels of presence, challenge, intensity, pace, strength, and determination to succeed especially in the face of adversity) in the first defending third of the pitch
- critical team contributions to last-line of defense (e.g., rapid closing down of opposition player with or without the ball closest to our goal), though willing to go forward when appropriate
- maximize personal playing strengths (e.g., physical presence, safe, assertive and reliable defending, positive team spirit)

These data suggest that a comprehensive needs assessment (including situational analysis and prior learning assessment for each individual player, as well as for the team) is critically important to tailor multi-media experiences to meet the specific needs and circumstances of masters futsal players.

Q2. How were multi-media experiences used to enhance player development?

An array of multi-media experiences was crafted into a cohesive, integrated, and responsive program for each masters player. Integral to this paper is the scholarly production and implementation of multi-media experiences to enhance player development (Appendices A to F). Multi-media experiences included the following methods:

- use of player-specific positional criteria
- use of team-specific criteria for effective offense and defense (Hubball, 2006)
- team (7.5 min) and individual (2.5 and 4.2 min) DVD vignettes
- one-on-one coaching feedback
- worksheet materials and coach's whiteboard chart
- e-mail match reports, planning, and practice reminders
- digital team pictures from previous games to enhance motivational team preparations

The team and individual DVD vignettes (Appendix A) are posted on the following server for this manuscript submission: <http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/futsalmovies>. The selected 7-minute team DVD vignette compilation highlighted intense and exciting end-to-end game action, goals and touches on the ball, passes, interactive offense and defense teamwork, and high quality soccer experiences from over 50 individual game clips of team performances. Furthermore, the brevity, music, player inclusivity, and reflective framework for effective team offense and defense made it more likely to be viewed multiple times, and was a valuable resource for masters players to analyze team/individual progress and identify further strategies for improvement. The personalised DVD vignettes for each player (Striker 2 minutes 40 seconds; Defender 4 minutes 20 seconds) also contained personalised music themes (e.g., soccer fan anthem, 50th birthday respectively). Player-specific positional game criteria (from each player development profile) were used to assess specific performances on the individual DVD vignettes for each masters player. In order to analyse team performances, the following framework (Hubball, 2006) was adapted and provided benchmark criteria for these masters players to assess and discuss the extent to which this select futsal team



performed effectively in team offense and team defense, as well for identifying goals for further improvement (Table 1).

**Table 1. Effective team offense and defense analysis for masters futsal**

On a scale of 1-10, rate the extent to which our team was able to execute the following team strategies (overall) for offense and defense: 0=Not at all, 5=Average, 10=Outstanding

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### Offense

**Our team adopted and executed strategic positional formations**

For example, all players in forward, midfield, and defender positions performed an offensive responsibility for the team. Players' positional roles complemented each other to produce a cohesive offensive unit. We adopted a 1-1-2-1 diamond or triangle shape formation to create depth in offense.

**Our team was focused to "read" and respond to the game**

For example, we were able to identify, predict, and act upon game patterns such as the strengths and weaknesses of the opposition's defense, as well as our team's offensive abilities.

**Our team asserted its influence (offensively) on the "tone" of the game**

For example, we executed "smart" and quick advances toward the opposition's goal area (e.g., give-go-and-call moves), as well as created space and options for the ball carrier.

**Our team demonstrated leadership and communication throughout the game**

For example, we constantly sent game-related signals to each other by calling and moving quickly into good positions for passing and/or penetration options, and created problems for the opposition's defense. Communications were positive, constructive, encouraging, and praising of teammates' contributions.

**Our team played with impact (we made it happen)!**

For example, we were determined to attack the opposition's goal in numbers, to strike, and be first to rebound. We were committed and confident to succeed, and, when necessary, we were able to raise our game to a higher level in order to overcome setbacks and/or gain a decisive offensive advantage for the team. Set pieces (e.g., center kicks, goal kicks, free kicks, corners, throw-ins) were organized in order to gain a decisive advantage for our team.

### Defense

**Our team adopted and executed strategic positional formations**

For example, all players in forward, midfield, and defender positions performed a defensive responsibility for the team. Players' positional roles complemented each other to produce a cohesive defensive unit. We adopted a man-to-man, diamond, or triangle shape formation to create depth in defense.

**Our team was focused to "read" and respond to the game**

For example, we were able to identify, predict, and act upon game patterns such as the strengths and weaknesses of the opposition's offense, as well as our team's defensive abilities.

**Our team asserted its influence (defensively) on the "tone" of the game**

For example, we were first to challenge for the ball, we were able to delay the opposition's advance to goal, and we were able to deny space and options for the opposition's attacking players.

**Our team demonstrated leadership and communication throughout the game**

For example, we constantly sent game-related signals to each other to mark opposition players, to cover vital space in front of our team's goal area, and prevent attacking opportunities for the opposition. Communications were positive, constructive, encouraging, and praising of teammates' contributions.

**Our team played with impact (we made it happen)!**

For example, we were determined to protect and prevent offensive strikes on our goal. We were committed and confident to succeed, and, when necessary, we were able to raise our game to a higher level in order to overcome setbacks and/or gain a decisive defensive advantage for the team. Set pieces (e.g., center kicks, goal kicks, free kicks, corners, throw-ins) were organized in order to gain a decisive defensive advantage for our team.

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These data suggest that a diverse range of multi-media experiences, combined with effective performance criteria/frameworks, are critically important to tailor multi-media experiences to meet the specific needs and circumstances of masters futsal players.

**Q3. How did multi-media experiences impact player development?**

The success of the select masters team, as well as multi-media experiences, clearly had a positive and reciprocal impact on team and player development for each masters player. For example, team performances in 2008 (Appendix B) throughout this 6-month study period resulted in two losses out of a total of 23 games, wherein the average score per game was equal to 5-1 in favour of this select team, as well as the ultimate team success of winning the universities masters world cup tournament in Switzerland against eleven different nations. The following section indicates the player development outcomes for the masters striker and defender respectively.

**Player development performance outcomes (1): Striker**

*Contextual/Competitive game factors.* This player demonstrated significant improvements in knowledge, attitude, and skills as an effective masters striker during team offense and defense game situations. For example, the multi-media experiences reinforced specific cues for practice and game-day situations. The select team scored 3 to 4 goals per game during the build-up games, as well as at the 2008 Masters World Cup Futsal Tournament. As the player reflected on his experiences as striker, he commented:

The multi-media allowed me to think more clearly on my [new] role in this select team. The exercise of embodying a specific focus helped and I got better, more proficient, as I got used to it over time. In hindsight, I could have reflected more on what I was doing and how well I was doing it but it did influence me in a more or less unconscious way from a body awareness point of view in game situations. I also watched Premiership professional strikers on YouTube – for inspiration, as a kind of pattern modeling, and to re-internalize the feeling of special awareness in the striker position.

*Social/Team factors.* This player's positive energy and commitment to player development as a striker contributed greatly to the overall team spirit and cohesion. He was a valued and valuable core team member as the exclusive striker in the 6-a-side team. Based on performance data for team offense, he developed into one of the best strikers at the masters level. In particular, when the tough/close games were on during tournaments and exhibition games he could be counted on to have a positive offensive

and defensive impact on the game. He also performed an effective captain's role in the Masters World Cup Tournament by coordinating team players and providing leadership. Further, he is motivated to build on his first Masters World Cup Futsal Tournament experience and train sharper and smarter (hopefully without back pain in the next campaign) to be an even better and higher impact striker at the next tournament in 2010/2011. As the player reflected on his team experiences, he commented:

I found practicing specialized parts of my game far more useful than participating in any kind of pickup game. I quickly learned more refined positional skills and awareness for a striker. In such a good team, the DVD replays also enabled me to develop anticipation skills, feeding off other players' movements, etc. I gradually gained team mates' respect for my performances and was also able to offer more and more to the team's cohesion. The regular e-mails about team/tournament information kept the high continuity going between monthly team meetings... I appreciated the joint practice sessions and discussions with the defender and coach to work on specific things in the game together and help with motivation to train.

*Individual factors.* Despite intermittent and significant back trouble, this player was fortunate to be predisposed with high levels of determination and willingness to learn to be an effective team striker.

Due to ongoing back problems, I wasn't able to do as much physical training and practice as I wanted in the 2-weekly "W" cycle. My back was not good, and I had to work with it, along with my personal, family, and work commitments. I was 50 years old ...not 22 after all! However, the DVD analysis really helped to keep me 'on-track' without aggravating my back further and still be able to peak on game days.

This striker identified the following goals for further player development in preparation for the next 2010/2011 Masters World Cup Futsal Tournament: back-health conditioning exercise as part of the 2-weekly "W" player development cycle, closer attention to the positional-specific criteria, and increased personal percentage of complete ball passes without losing team possession.

### **Player development performance outcomes (2): Defender**

*Contextual/Competitive game factors.* This player demonstrated significant improvements in knowledge, attitude, and skills as an effective masters defender during team offense and defense game situations. For example, multi-media experiences reinforced specific cues for practice and game-day situations (e.g., first to challenge for the ball; using physical presence, fitness, and leadership attributes). The select team only conceded 1 goal per game during the build-up games, as well as at the 2008 Masters World Cup Futsal Tournament. As the player reflected on his experiences as defender, he commented:

I enjoyed watching the game DVD vignettes several times using the main worksheet to better understand the game and all the actions that preceded and followed particular incidents. This appeals to me a lot as I find the game strategies fascinating and so helpful in trying to be an effective defender [not to

mention that it helped our team to be more successful!]. That's why I also enjoyed and appreciated watching the full 45-minute unedited game tape in order to assess my general positioning, decision-making, and actions during the game (as well as the team's).

*Social/Team factors.* This player's motivation and commitment to player development contributed greatly to the overall spirit, cohesion, and success of the select masters futsal team throughout the 6-month preparation. Further, he received the team's Most Valuable Player award following the success of the 2008 Masters World Cup Futsal Tournament. Consistent with his approach, he is motivated to build on his successful experiences in the 2006 and 2008 Masters World Cup Futsal Tournaments and further develop his leadership abilities as a high impact defender in the select masters futsal team. As the player reflected on his team experiences, he commented:

It was useful to see the team performing so well on the DVD, as it helped to situate my leadership role and place as the last-line defender. Although most of the DVD clips tended to be team offense incidents (most spectacular), it was our high intensity full-court team defensive abilities and lack of conceded goals that was probably the most successful team attribute – I felt especially proud of that and insisted the other players keep the focus of a clean sheet on their more offensive radars too! The regular e-mail reminders and prompts about the upcoming games, as well as the digital pictures of the team or our players helped us all get focused for the game so we were ready from the starting whistle.

*Individual factors.* Despite being a relative newcomer to the game of soccer at the age of 40, this player was fortunate to be predisposed with high levels of determination, fitness, and willingness to learn to be an effective team defender. The defender made these comments about the player development experiences:

When I first learned that I was going to be the last-line defender in the new team formation, I wasn't too sure.... As time went on I became more confident in this new role and the other guys knew I was dependable and quite formidable as our final line of team defense...I found the one-on-one coaching feedback very useful to build my understanding as well as confidence in this role...I like to put everything into what I do to succeed so the strategic aspects of my positional role (and that of the team's game plan) were very appealing and helped me to have a greater impact with good results, especially in the face of team injuries and absences to adapt to...I liked having only myself to organize as the last person in defense, especially with all the injuries we had and spare guys filling in.

This defender identified the following goals for further player development in preparation for the next 2010/2011 Masters World Cup Futsal Tournament: participation in the 2-weekly "W" player development cycle, closer attention to the positional-specific criteria, and increased personal percentage of complete ball passes without losing team possession.

## **Overall reflections on the use of multi-media player development experiences**

As time progressed through the 6-month period, the two players clearly became more comfortable and proficient with the use of multi-media player development experiences. In particular, frequent and related e-mail messages were very pervasive in terms of practice reminders and specific cues for team offense and defense strategies. Players became more knowledgeable, adaptable, and skilled with their positional roles. Discussions also became more critical and sophisticated with respect to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of individual/team performances; players engaged in higher levels of individual skills training (mental and physical skills) for advanced competition; and players increasingly became effective at close man-to-man marking at full field, assertive interpersonal game communications and team spirit, and complex movements off-the-ball in order to support team mates. Thus, social support and cooperation with significant others in the use of multi-media player development experiences were critical factors related to enabling positive player development outcomes for these two masters players. These data, therefore, suggest that multi-media experiences positively impacted team and player development outcomes.

That said, the use of multi-media experiences in this study was not without its challenges nor was it a panacea for effective player development. The following issues were significant challenges that had to be overcome in this program:

- requirement for a strategic vision to implement multi-media experiences in team and player development context
- recruitment of skilled person(s) to record 'quality' raw game data
- time and expertise required to review raw game data and select key clips (using team and player performance criteria frameworks) and effectively edit team and individual DVD vignettes
- e-compatibility of masters players, as well as their computers
- player commitment to repeatedly using multi-media experiences for deeper game understandings and rich player development initiatives

Thus, the additional time and hard work required of both coaches and individual players to engage in multi-media were critical factors in the success of these player development experiences.

## **Conclusion**

Team and player development programs are rapidly gaining recognition and interest among committed masters athletes from a wide variety of sports in Canada. This paper examined the implementation of multi-media experiences in player development in a select masters futsal (6-a-side) team.

In this study, a comprehensive needs assessment (including situational analysis and prior learning assessment for each individual player, as well as for the team) and learning-centred multi-media experiences that engaged masters players in systematic reflection and self-directed learning, helped to predispose (e.g., attend to specific role/game cues), enable (e.g., provide multiple replay options in convenience of time

and place flexibility), and reinforce (e.g., monitor improvements and progress) team and player development outcomes.

Specifically, longitudinal data in this study suggest that monthly DVD analysis and guided worksheet experiences provided masters players added benefits from asynchronous learning experiences with focused and multiple replay opportunities to further reflect on critical performance incidents (e.g., effective criteria for team offense and defense, player-specific positional roles) in the convenience of their own place and time constraints. Second, multi-media experiences provided clear and tangible cues for monitoring effective responses in complex futsal game situations. Third, carefully constructed game-based DVD vignettes (e.g., specific coverage of players during key game incidents for analysis, age-appropriate and varied music tracks) added motivational and fun elements that could be shared on a social level (e.g., family members, friends, colleagues) also enhanced further viewing and analysis, albeit at times in a light-hearted sense. Ultimately, multi-media experiences enhanced training behaviour, performance outcomes (e.g., mental skills training), and ongoing player development initiatives. It is important to note that not all masters players would likely engage in specific multi-media player development experiences due to the complexity of their lives and range of alternative fitness and leisure commitments. However, the principles and broad range of strategies inherent in these multi-media player development experiences can provide powerful learning tools and motivational support for all masters players. This study has implications for the use of learning-centred instructional practices that incorporate multi-media in a broad range of professional practicum settings. Further studies are required to investigate the extent to which particular media have specific impacts on player development at various levels of masters soccer.

## Acknowledgements

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### **Appendix A (DVD Vignettes)**

- Team DVD (7 minutes)
- Striker DVD (2.5 minutes)
- Defender DVD (4.5 minutes)
- DVD vignettes are posted on the following server for this manuscript submission:  
<http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/futsalmovies>



## Appendix B (Team Performance Data and Digital Photographs)



### *Inter UBC Masters Select Team*

The *Inter UBC 6-a-side Masters Select Team* has quality players in all strategic positions so that we can train hard to play our best competitive, smart, and exciting soccer and ensure that the **“sum product of our whole team far exceeds that of the sum product of our individual players”**.

### **Inter UBC Masters Select Team: Performance Stats**

6-month Build-up Games Results and 2008 Universities Masters World Cup Standings

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2008 6-month Build-up Games Results: Inter UBC Masters Select Team (against Vancouver, BC and USA Soccer Teams)

P	W	D	L	F	A	pts
23	19	2	2	104	23	39

- Winners, Squamish, BC, 6-a-side Masters Soccer Tournament
- Winners, Belliingham, USA, 6-a-side Masters Soccer Tournament

=====

2008 Universities Masters World Cup Results: Day 1 Group - Inter UBC Canada

P	W	D	L	F	A	pts	Standing
5	4	1	0	18	2	9	1 <sup>st</sup> Place Group Winners

**2008 Universities Masters World Cup Results: Day 2 - Finals Inter UBC Canada**

P	W	D	L	F	A	pts	Standing
5	5	0	0	16	3	10	1 <sup>st</sup> Place Tournament Champions

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### 2010, June, Universities Over-45's Masters' 6v6 World Cup Tournament, England

- Inter UBC CANADA, Germany, England, USA, Wales, Switzerland, Turkey, Hungary, United Nations, Ireland, Holland, France, Australia



### **Appendix C (Bi-Monthly Program Schedule)**

*Bi-monthly program schedule and chronological sequence of team meetings and multi-media activities*

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- Saturday January 26 World Cup Meeting/Overview Team development Program Overview and Team Expectations/New Kit etc 3pm followed by 4v4 and 6v6 competitive indoor game against local Vancouver-based Over-40 Club team
  - *Follow-up DVD game analysis and reflective e-learning questions*
  - Saturday February 9th 3v3 and 6v6 competitive indoor games practice with 40+ developmental soccer program
  - Saturday February 23rd Team meeting 1-hour prior to kick-off, followed by 4v4 and 6v6 competitive indoor game against local Vancouver-based Over-40 Club team
  - *Follow-up DVD game analysis and reflective e-learning questions*
  - Saturday March 1st 3v3 and 6v6 competitive indoor games practice with 40+ developmental soccer program
  - Saturday March 15th Team meeting 1-hour prior to kick-off, followed by 6v6 competitive indoor game against local Vancouver-based Over-40 Club team
  - *Follow-up DVD game analysis and reflective e-learning questions*
  - Saturday March 31st 3v3 and 6v6 competitive indoor games practice with 40+ developmental soccer program
  - Saturday April 12th Team field trip and meeting prior to kick-off, followed by 6v6 competitive indoor tournament against US, Bellingham Over-40 Club teams
  - *Follow-up DVD game analysis and reflective e-learning questions*
  - Saturday April 26th Team meeting 1-hour prior to kick-off, followed by 6v6 competitive outdoor game against local Vancouver-based Over-40 Club team
  - *Follow-up DVD game analysis and reflective e-learning questions*
  - Saturday May 10th Team field trip and meeting prior to kick-off, followed by 6v6 competitive outdoor tournament against BC Squamish-based Over-40 Club teams
  - *Follow-up DVD game analysis and reflective e-learning questions*
  - Saturday May 24th Team meeting 1-hour prior to kick-off, followed by 6v6 competitive outdoor game against local Vancouver-based Over-40 Club team
  - *Follow-up Individual DVD performance analysis and reflective e-learning questions*
  - Saturday June 7th Team meeting 1-hour prior to kick-off, followed by 3v3 and 6v6 competitive outdoor team practice
  - *Follow-up Individual DVD performance analysis and reflective e-learning questions*
  - Thursday June 19th 4-5pm. Light team practice, Filzbach, Switzerland
  - Friday June 20th 10-11am. Light team practice, Filzbach, Switzerland
  - Saturday June 21st, *2nd Over-45's World Cup 6-a-side Football Tournament, Filzbach, Switzerland*
  - Sunday June 22nd, *2nd Over-45's World Cup 6-a-side Football Tournament, Filzbach, Switzerland*
-

**Appendix D (Player Development Cycles)  
2-week player development cycles (Striker & Defender)**

**STRIKER****Contextual/Game skills development practices**

- a) Keep focused on player-specific positional game criteria. Consider the 8-10 meter final zone of the pitch your primary 'office', 90% of your penetration takes place within 6-meters of the goal. During off-the ball activity, keep defender(s) moving across the 8-metre goal zone, anticipate team turn-overs and make runs into space (preferably toward the goal) and make yourself available for a pass.
- b) Practice squad training 3v3 and 6v6 games in the striker role
- c) Within 10 meter zone, practice receiving (good first touch practice) – faking – accelerating – shooting (fwd, swd, bwd) - repetitions
- d) Within 6 meter zone, practice speed shooting (feed, shoot repeat at speed) and rebounds (fwd, swd, bwd) - repetitions
- e) Practice 1v1 on goalkeeper, 2v1 and shooting - repetitions
- f) Practice 2v1 pressure passing in confined area and high levels of % passing completion/possession - repetitions
- g) Complete periodic reviews of team and personalized DVD analysis of game-based highlights (i.e. critically reflect on impact and patterns of attacking play) for the following:
  - anticipation of the play coming your way (reading the game/ recognizing team mates' patterns of play in all zones of the pitch and making yourself available for passing/penetration options)
  - positioning (making yourself available for passing/penetration options, sharpness and first to react and pounce/rebound for the ball, first line of team defence to press/pounce and challenge the furthest opposition ball carrier or closest defender)
  - effective communications/signals (verbal and non-verbal) to team mates, e.g. calling and motivating team mates,
  - striker confidence - posture/focus; assertive, spirited and tenacious execution; positive reaction following offensive challenge on opposition goal
  - set piece contributions (fast corners, free-kick rebounds or low shots)
  - playing to personal strengths and causing maximum problems for opposition goalie and defenders in game situations
  - learn "patterns" from professional model strikers: Torres /Shearer /Anelka/Drogba

**Social/Team skills development practices**

- a) Keep focused on player-specific positional game criteria and share plans, training, progress and critique with other team mates
- b) Plan to make significant contributions toward your role as team striker

with offense and defence partner(s); and contributions to positive team spirit, cohesion, and interpersonal communications.

#### Individual skills development practices

- a) Keep focused on player-specific positional game criteria and take into account back pain prevention rehabilitation
- b) Ball skills development
  - practice basic ball juggling, dribbling, passing against a wall and shooting practices (fwd, swd, bwd) - repetitions
- c) Physical fitness skills development
  - complete 1-6 meter grid sprints (PC and anaerobic energy systems) - repetitions
  - complete strength and general fitness conditioning including moderate to low impact aerobic conditioning (cycling, swimming, jogging, light weights) - repetitions
- d) Mental skills development
  - rehearse assertions for general self-belief as a striker e.g., *“I’m one of the really good 045/050 strikers in BC and the World Cup soccer. This is my team position and I’m good at it. With even more focused “striker” training (as any position), I can be one of the best high level impact strikers in masters soccer”*.
  - think positive before, during and after the practice/game
  - set realistic game-based targets (SMART) to motivate yourself (e.g., high % ball control and first-touch, high % completion of passes, call frequent times when you are in a good position, make frequent fast and assertive first line defence challenges for the ball, have four good shots on target)
  - visualize yourself in specific game situations (e.g., fast break, rebound, 2v1, 1v1) and focus on player-specific positional game criteria
  - anticipate, think critically and make smart decisions, on and off the ball (e.g., reading and responding to the game)
  - manage self-control (e.g., take a deep breath, don’t react negatively, be positive and stay cool especially under adverse game conditions!)

## **DEFENDER**

### **Contextual/Game skills development practices**

- h) Keep focused on player-specific positional game criteria. Consider our half of the field your primary 'office', 90% of penetration against our team will take place within 6-meters of the goal. During off-the ball activity, keep 'tight' to opposition striker, and make yourself vocal and available for passing options
- i) Participate in squad training 3v3 and 6v6 games in the defender role
- j) Within 10 meter zone, practice clearing crosses safely with head and/or either foot - repetitions
- k) Within 6 meter zone, practice speed defending (feed crosses and repeat at speed, fwd, swd, bwd) - repetitions
- l) Practice 1v1 scenarios against striker, 2v1 as a lone defender practices - repetitions
- m) Practice 2v1 pressure passing in confined area and high levels of % passing completion/possession - repetitions
- n) Complete periodic reviews of team and personalized DVD analysis of game-based highlights (i.e. critically reflect on impact and patterns of defending play) for the following:
  - anticipation of the play coming your way (reading the game/ recognizing team mates' patterns of play in all zones of the pitch and making yourself available for passing/penetration options)
  - positioning (making yourself available for passing/challenge options, and first to react and pounce/rebound for the ball, final line of team defence to press/pounce and challenge the ball carrier or closest opposition striker)
  - effective communications/signals (verbal and non-verbal) to team mates, e.g. calling and motivating team mates,
  - defender confidence - posture/focus; assertive, spirited and tenacious execution; positive reaction following opposition challenge on our goal
  - set piece contributions (fast corners and low shots, quick free-kick taker)
  - playing to personal strengths and causing maximum problems for opposition striker(s) in game situations
  - learn "patterns" from professional model defenders: Terry, Ferdinand, Vidic, Carvalho, Cannavaro,

### Social/Team skills development practices

- c) Keep focused on player-specific positional game criteria and share plans, training, progress and critique with other team mates
- d) Plan to make significant contributions toward your role as team defender with midfield/defence partner(s); and contributions to positive team spirit, cohesion, and interpersonal communications.

### Individual skills development practices

- e) Keep focused on player-specific positional game criteria
  - f) Ball skills development
    - practice basic ball juggling, dribbling, passing against a wall and shooting from corner passes (keeping the ball low) - repetitions
  - g) Physical fitness skills development
    - complete core strength and general fitness conditioning including moderate to low impact aerobic conditioning (hiking, light weights) - repetitions
  - h) Mental skills development
    - rehearse assertions for general self-belief as a defender e.g., *“I’m one of the really good 045/050 defenders in BC and the World Cup soccer. This is my team position and I’m good at it. With even more focused “defender” training (as any position), I can be one of the best high level impact defenders in masters soccer”.*
    - think positive before, during and after the practice/game
    - set realistic game-based targets (SMART) to motivate yourself (e.g., high % ball control and first-touch, high % completion of passes, call frequent times when you are in a good position, make frequent fast and assertive defensive challenges for the ball, have four good blocks from opposing offense challenges)
    - visualize yourself in specific game situations (e.g., 1v1, 2v1, rebound) and focus on player-specific positional game criteria
    - anticipate, think critically and make smart decisions, on and off the ball (e.g., reading and responding to the game)
    - manage self-control (e.g., take a deep breath, don’t react negatively, be positive and stay cool especially under adverse game conditions!)
-

**Appendix E**  
**(E-mail Messages, Prompts, and Team Soccer Academy Websites)**

May 25<sup>th</sup> Inter UBC Masters 2008 World Cup Team

**26 DAYS to World Cup Kick-Off! *Caution - Be careful to stay fit and injury-free!***

***Hello Cam, Jason, John R, Pradeep, Harry, Teun, John D, Steve,***

Inter UBC v's West Vancouver/UBC Team. Game. Good news = no injuries from Saturday and we did ok in the end. Not an impressive display of games [2-0, 1-2, 1-0, 1-1, and 2-2 (after 20 minutes)] by our high team standards but in the grand scheme of 5-months of competitive build-up games, this happens to every great team in a season and was ideal timing for us as a wake up call to get us more focused and sharper for the final games in Bellingham before we head off and make an impact in Switzerland! Key focusing and sharpness points for us to apply in Bellingham: *our individual impact on the game, as well as our critical contributions to team defence* (assertive very close man-to-man marking responsibility) *and team offence* (calling, making ourselves available for fast and quality passing/penetration options). Results to date below are very impressive going into Switzerland - great team work and commitment everyone. :-)

*2008 Inter UBC Masters Results thus far*

P	W	D	L	F	A	pts
19	14	3	2	81	20	31

*This is a reminder about Bellingham details and final team practice before Switzerland*

1) Thursday evening, June 5th Round-robin games in Bellingham. Depart Bowen Island on 3:00pm boat (John Reid vehicle), depart UBC area (Cam's vehicle) at 4pm (remember your passports), return Vancouver approx 1030pm. We'll have cell phones in the 2 vehicles so let's exchange numbers. Here's the details of the Venue = Northwest Soccer Park ><http://www.whatcomsoccer.com/map%20info.htm>

2) Saturday June 7th = Final Team Practice (Brand new Sutherland turf field, North Van 1230-2pm).

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments (604-947-9168). See you on June 5th if not before - should be a lot of fun and interesting challenge against the US teams. All the best

-harry (604-947-9168)

Hubball, H. T. (2005-Present). Universities masters/veterans 6-a-side world cup soccer tournament & symposium website.

<http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/newsite/faculty/facpages/hubball/worldcup10/index.htm>

Hubball, H. T. (2001-Present). Inter UBC Futsal Soccer Academy: Research and Practice, Website.

<http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/newsite/faculty/facpages/hubball/hubball2.html>



### **Appendix F (Print and Coach's Whiteboard)**

- *Jet-lag strategies for overseas competition*
- *Tournament strategies for multi-day events*

<b>SPORTS PERFORMANCE AND JET-LAG: Individual Preparation Strategies</b>
--

*"Different strokes for different folks"*. The following internal and external jet-lag strategies may, or may not be appropriate for you – they were useful for the 2006 World Cup in England, as well as for the UBC youth team players on a 2002 England Football tour. Some of these strategies may be helpful... food for thought?

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- ❖ Google search "Overcoming jet-lag"
  - ❖ Alter your watch to GMT as soon as you are in your seat on the plane. Refer to your watch regularly and condition your mind to GMT (forget the current time in Vancouver!).
  - ❖ Consider 'active rest' strategies during your flight (e.g., walking, stretching in aisle).
  - ❖ Ensure high fluid levels (little and often) before, during and after the flight. Limit alcohol, caffeine and simple sugar drinks
  - ❖ 'Nap' when you can during the flight although be aware of GMT (day and night times)
  - ❖ On arrival in the Switzerland, get outside the airport building asap for fresh air. Go for a light run (e.g., 10-minutes) and exercise as soon as possible after arrival (don't overdo it – work within comfort zone). The 'elements/fresh air' assist acclimatization in a new time zone
  - ❖ When settled into Swiss accommodation, get outside as much as possible and/or go for brief walks, swim, cycle etc
  - ❖ Try to keep your regular day and night routines as best as possible until your mind/body gets in synch within a few days
  - ❖ Think positive about jet-lag condition – all tournament players will "feel it", some more than others - we will be less jet-lagged and more ready to go!
- 

***See previous sheet for tournament strategies: physical and mental preparation***

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**2-Day FOOTBALL TOURNAMENTS: Individual Preparation Strategies**

*“Different strokes for different folks”*. The following tournament strategies may, or may not be appropriate for you – they have proven to be very useful for the *Inter UBC* youth academy and masters players in many tournaments. Some of these strategies may be helpful to you... food for thought?

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***Building-up for a 2-day Tournament (e.g., Switzerland, England)***

- ❖ A few months or more prior to the tournament, go for a light run (e.g., 20-minutes) and exercise on the Sunday, after our Saturday build-up games to simulate (to a lesser degree) the physical effects of a day-2 tournament (caution! don't overdo it – work within your known comfort zone).
- ❖ Generally taper/reduce mid-week aerobic/anaerobic training 2-3 weeks before the tournament. Continue with strength, flexibility and conditioning exercises. Specifically, what's the best physical preparation that you can do in your situation for the 2-day tournament – make it happen!
- ❖ Ensure high carbohydrate and fluid levels, cut back on alcohol, caffeine etc
- ❖ ***Mentally rehearse:*** 1) team arrival and tournament circumstances, conditions and processes (e.g. Filzbach, June 20-22) 2) effective personal game-plan strategies for the 2-day series of 4-5 games 3) effective team game-plan strategies for the 2-day series of 4-5 games 4) review previous DVD highlights 5) positive feelings about physiological condition – all tournament players will “feel it”, some more than others – our team will be less stiff and achy and more ready to play at pace in each game and on each day!
- ❖ Our build-up games and team development from Jan-June will progressively prepare us as a team to arrive in Switzerland in the most competitive, fit, cohesive and focused condition for the tournament. We have a light team practice at the tournament venue in Switzerland on June 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> in order to accustom to playing conditions and further prepare mentally, physically and socially

***Strategies for minimizing jet-lag at overseas tournaments...coming later!***
**During a 2-day tournament**

- ❖ Ensure high carbohydrate and fluid levels (little and often) before, during and after games - detrimental effects of alcohol, caffeine, and simple sugar drinks
- ❖ Consider ‘active rest’ strategies between games to prevent stiffness (e.g., walking, stretching, ball juggling, visualization, massage). Specifically, what's the best physical and mental preparation for you on day 1 and 2 – make it happen!
- ❖ Cool-down stretch and team debrief after each game, followed by individual relaxation/down-time period, and team game-plan before next game.
- ❖ At the end of DAY 1, following cool-down/stretch and team debrief, individual relaxation/down-time period, hot bath, massage and replenish carbohydrate and water fluid levels (significantly limit alcohol at the end of day 1 - enjoy it fully when the games are over on day 2!) social, fun, playing-cards, snooker, darts, TV,
- ❖ DAY 2 – think positive about physiological condition – all tournament players will “feel it”, some more than others - we will be less stiff and achy and more ready to play at pace in each game on day 2! Repeat day 1 above

**After a 2-day tournament**

- ❖ Allow the body to rest and heal after a vigorous tournament schedule – caution! don't underestimate the mental and physiological impact. Build up slowly to normal activity levels. Too much too soon could increase the likelihood of injury. Continue with strength, flexibility and conditioning exercises.
-