

Paddy Brophy; Making it Down Under

Last October, our former student Paddy Brophy packed his sun screen and shorts and jetted off for sunnier climes in the Western Australian city of Perth. The Kildare attacker had just signed a two-year international rookie contract with AFL side *West Coast Eagles* and in doing so he had become the first Salesian to ply his trade in Aussie Rules. Previously, Paddy had caught the eye of a number of AFL clubs following two impressive years with the Kildare seniors where he had been considered one of the brightest GAA prospects in the country. A couple of weeks ago we caught up with Paddy to get a little insight into his new life as a professional athlete.

Pre-Season

Prior to the new season we completed a strenuous and testing pre-season to ensure we were in peak condition for the new season. Pre-season has a much higher workload than the in-season training that we complete once the season kicks off. We train every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. On these days I arrive at the club at 8am in order to have adequate time to get my prep done prior to training, this can include strapping up any injuries, foam rolling or physio appointments to help loosen out and ensures we are able to train fully. We train early in the day to avoid the searing heat of the Australian sun and sessions usually last for about 90 minutes, then straight after training we recover.



Recovery is an important part of the training as it allows the muscles to repair, rebuild and

strengthen and it also helps to prevent injuries. It involves getting into ice bins for 10 minutes followed by going to the physio again if needed. Afterwards, we normally grab lunch.



Following lunch we have individual meetings with our line coaches and we also have meetings as a full team. After the meetings we have prehab then a weights session. Prehab involves a lot of injury prevention exercises and stretches. After the weights, the day finishes with another recovery session in the ice bins and I get home about 5pm. Tuesdays and Saturdays are lighter and involve a lot of work on team tactics and individual focus points that each player needs to work on. For example, because I haven't grown up with the oval ball I do extra kicking practice to help me improve on Saturday mornings. Thursdays and Sundays are rest days.

In Season

In-season training is very different. The

season kicks off at the end of March and we have a game every weekend until the season finishes. Due to the games being played at such a high intensity the workload in training decreases. However meetings and recovery increase even further. Meetings also take place involving the opposition and we also try to help the community, therefore we attend a lot of events and gatherings. We have recovery sessions almost every day, sometimes on the beach which is nice and we do yoga once a week. As I didn't grow up playing the game I do a lot of extra touch sessions. These sessions include kicking, hand eye coordination drills and clean hands drills. To avoid over training and burnout we don't have the same level of weight training as we did in the pre-season, however we do regular strength tests in the gym to try and ensure we maintain our strength levels. To help keep our fitness at optimum levels there is a huge emphasis on our diet. In season we regularly meet with the

dietician and we have to make sure our body-fat skin-folds are always below 55. Before training and particularly on the day before a game we eat lots of carbs to help us sustain our energy levels and maintain our optimal weight. Tall players in key positions usually weigh between 95-105 kgs, while players in my position of running back are usually 10kgs lighter as we are required to be much more mobile and cover more ground during the course of a game. In preparation for games, we try to consume in the region of 5 to 6 litres of water or Gatorade the day before.

SCAM Magazine would like to sincerely thank Paddy for generously agreeing to help us complete this article. We would like to extend our congratulations to Paddy on being signed by the West Coast Eagles and wish him all the best for the seasons to come.