

Coach's Guide: Supporting Athletes During Their Menstrual Cycle

Building a Stronger, Safer, and More Informed Team

Menstruation is a natural part of many athletes' lives. As a coach, understanding how it affects your players — physically, mentally, and emotionally — can make a huge difference in their confidence, performance, and overall well-being.

This guide helps you create a period-friendly training environment where your athletes feel supported, not sidelined.

□ 1. Understand the Basics

- The **menstrual cycle** typically lasts 21–35 days.
 - Common symptoms include:
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle cramps
 - Headaches
 - Mood changes
 - Bloating
 - Every athlete experiences their cycle differently. There is no “one-size-fits-all” response.
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2. Create a Safe, Shame-Free Environment

DO

Use correct terms like *menstruation* or *menstrual cycle*.

Normalize open conversations without forcing disclosure.

DON'T

Avoid slang or using the topic as a joke.

Don't make athletes feel awkward if they mention their cycle.



DO

Offer privacy, empathy, and discretion when needed.



DON'T

Don't shame athletes for needing a break or adjustment.



3. Adjust Training When Needed

- Allow for **flexibility** during intense days — modify drills or reduce training load.
 - Offer **rest days** or lighter sessions during menstruation when necessary.
 - Encourage **hydration, stretching, and warm-ups** to reduce cramps and injury risk.
 - Be mindful of **performance dips** — they don't mean laziness or lack of dedication.
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4. Be Prepared & Proactive

- Keep **sanitary pads and pain relief items** in the locker room or first aid kit.
 - Make sure **toilets are clean, accessible, and have disposal bins**.
 - Encourage athletes to **track their cycle** to better understand how it affects them.
 - Support **confidentiality** — never single someone out.
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5. Involve the Whole Team

- Educate **male coaches and teammates** to reduce stigma and promote team solidarity.
 - Create a team culture where menstruation is **acknowledged and respected**, not mocked or silenced.
 - Include menstrual health education in **wellness briefings** or team check-ins.
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6. What Athletes Need from You

- **Support, not pity**
- **Options, not pressure**
- **Respect, not assumptions**

- Understanding, not judgment
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□ Final Thoughts

Your support can help athletes feel seen, safe, and strong — even on tough cycle days. When menstruation is no longer a taboo in sports, **everyone wins**.

You're not just building champions. You're building confidence.