

SPECIAL REPORT

**THE NEW TRAINING TABLE**  
MILESTONES IN SPORTS NUTRITION



**1901** Yale football coach Walter Camp writes that "the athlete consumes roast beef, steaks [and] chops... to his content" and that "champagne was administered in cases of overtraining, but usually in homeopathic doses."

# THE NEW TRAINING TABLE

From college dining halls to professional clubhouses, a new food consciousness is revolutionizing sports. It's not just about gaining or losing weight. It's about performance targets, wellness and recovery. Eating to win has become a lot more complicated—and athletes are healthier for it.

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NEO MATURA (CHAMPAGNE); RICHARD STAGG/GETTY IMAGES (LADD); STEVEN ERAT PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES (FISH)

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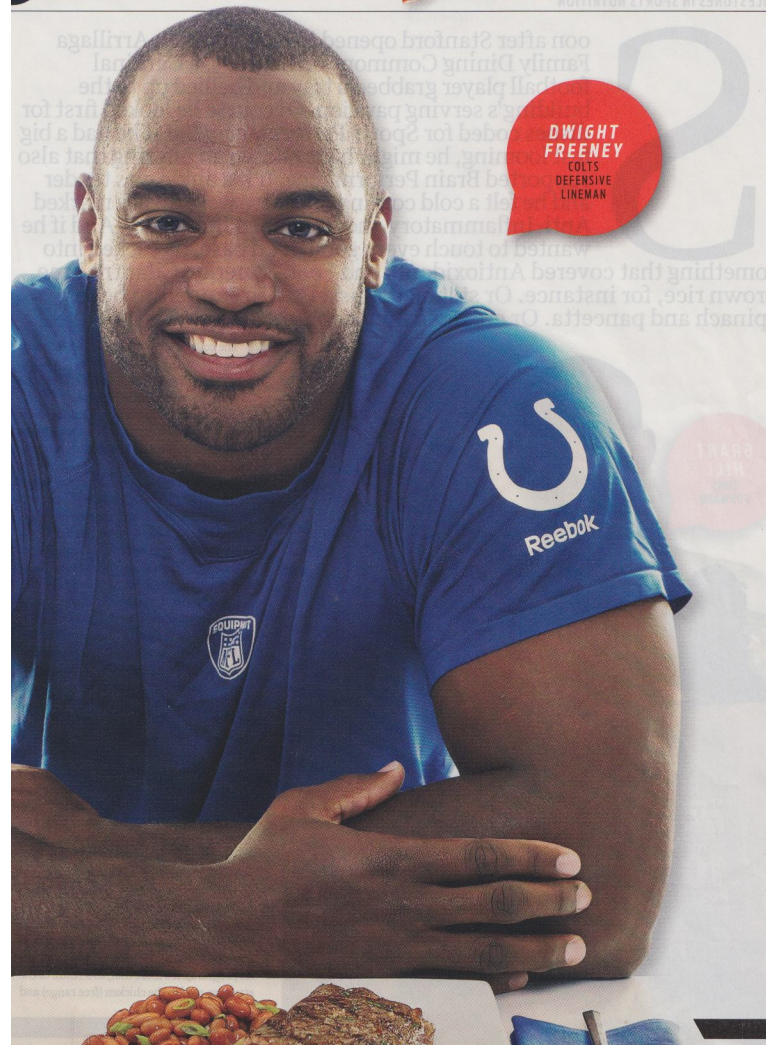


SPECIAL REPORT

**1966** Chargers lineman Ernie Ladd, 6' 9" and 310 pounds, beats an Italian fisherman in the finals of the Eating Championship of the World.



**1973** Because of a beef shortage, the Bengals struggle to stock their training table and begin serving more fish and poultry.



**DWIGHT FRENEY**  
COLTS  
DEFENSIVE  
LINEMAN





**S**oon after Stanford opened its \$20.3 million Arrillaga Family Dining Commons on Sept. 29, a Cardinal football player grabbed a tray and bellied up to the building's serving pavilion. Of course he looked first for dishes coded for Sports Performance. But if he had a big test looming, he might have chosen an offering that also supported Brain Performance. If his ankle was tender and he felt a cold coming on, there were dishes marked Anti-Inflammatory and Enhanced Immunity. And if he wanted to touch every good-food base, he tucked into something that covered Antioxidants and Food Synergy. Cilantro lime brown rice, for instance. Or steamed mussels with cannellini beans, anchovy and pancetta. Or creamed Swiss chard with prosciutto.



The collegiate training table, where coaches flipped pork chops at linemen for breakfast as yesterday as wilted lettuce. Welcome to the brave new world of the "performance and wellness dining hall." Stanford chef Bradon Marcello tosses anti-inflammatory spices such as turmeric and turmeric into a dish to shorten recovery time after workouts and injuries. They serve grass-fed beef because it has more omega-3 fatty acids than grain-fed beef, and omega-3s promote heart health and immune response. They rotate fruits and vegetables according to what's locally in season, making sure to choose organic produce, which is less likely to contain carcinogenic pesticide residues. Stanford even sidesteps the objections of ecology-minded undergrads by not using steaks from fields carved out of Brazil's rain forest.

Any student can eat at the Arrillaga, but the impetus for performance dining came from director of sports performance Bradon Marcello. He found an ally in former Stanford provost Condoleezza Rice and sugar daddy in John Arrillaga, the billionaire real estate developer and former Cardinal basketball star whose name also appears on the alumni building and two sports arenas centers (with a third coming in 2011). Not three years after its conception, the dining commons is giving new meaning to Stanford's nickname, the Farm.

The significance of the initiative has little to do with what comes first, the chicken (Stanford's long-standing attention to anything that affects athletes' performance) or the egg (the Cardinal's streak of 17 Directors' Cup awards to the nation's top Division I athletics program). It's more that, as a result of attention paid to the chicken (free range) at



the egg (cage free), the school is positioning itself to win the next 17 Directors' Cups—and every other college will feel pressure to emulate the Cardinal. As Marcello says, "We're way ahead of the curve here."

**T**his new food consciousness is revolutionizing pro sports as well. Front offices already spring for all sorts of advantages, from charter flights to software that delivers the latest Moneyball-style analytics. Yet for decades one of the most controllable variables of all—what athletes put into their bodies—was underaddressed in pro sports. Now franchises are adding chefs who pack the plane and lay out buffets before and after practice. Knowing how players' palates have been conditioned, the Heat serves an Egg McMuffin knockoff made with turkey and reduced-fat cheese. The Camels court free agents with their three-year-old food program, which includes customized nutmeats for players looking to gain or lose weight (and unlimited take-away leftovers).

Just as management finally realizes that it's foolish to buy a Maserati and fill it with bad gas, pro athletes, eager to extend high-earning careers, are increasingly hiring personal chefs and nutritionists. When food-sensitivity analysis revealed that Jaguars tight end Mercedes Lewis reacts adversely to pineapple, he gave up his beloved pineapple upside-down cake. Heat forward James Jones ate only vegetables the day after a road trip, to hit the reset button on his system. Colts defensive end Dwight Freeney puts on a couple of pounds before facing a running back and sheds them for a passing team.

It hardly matters that Freeney's micro-diet is mostly about emotional comfort, says gold medal Olympic swimmer Garrett Weber-Gale (page 126), a classically tutored chef who founded the website thleticfoodie.com. "If you think one or two pounds are better for you," Weber-Gale says, "they're going to be better for you."

Sports, especially individual sports, have long had their nutritional outliers: U.S. 100-meter hurdler Edwin Moses attributed his 10 consecutive wins from 1977 to '87 in part to meals that featured a rainbow of colors. The horror stories still tend to come from team sports, where a multi-



## "WE'RE WAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE HERE," SAYS MARCELLO.

millionaire might eat pizza twice a day in order to pocket what ought to be inconsequential meal money. Now team management at least tells athletes that red meat in moderation helps ward off anemia; that it's essential to control your weight as you push through your 30s; and that there's a risk of vitamin D deficiency during the jet-setting that characterize an NBA or NHL season. "We feed all this information to our players," says Lakers trainer Gary Vitti, whose team lays out a spread before and after practice. "We'll have some buy into it 100 percent, some buy into it as some percentage, and some who'll eat at McDonald's every day. That's pretty much the way society is."

But it needn't be. To that end, Stanford's new dining hall will do more than just label food at the point of service. At the performance breakfast bar Cardinal athletes might find not only walnuts for their oatmeal but also a summary of a recent study that found walnuts to have more antioxidants than any other nut. Indeed, the Arrillaga will feature a culinary studio for classes and demos, so consum-

ers can learn to take control of their diets. Like any Silicon Valley start-up, Stanford's performance dining effort benefits from free-wheeling brainstorming sessions. Marcello joins the school's dietician, sustainability director, dining services director, executive chef and wellness and performance nutritionist for biweekly exchanges of ideas. "We discuss where we want to go and what the research and trends are in the industry," Marcello says. "We say, Here are the things we recommend you cook with, here are the health benefits, now put it together and make it taste good. Nutrition is one of the last frontiers we have to conquer. It can make a good athlete great, or a great athlete good."

**O**n a spring evening at Chicago's United Center, as a Bulls game against the Suns heads into the fourth quarter, point guards Steve Nash and Derrick Rose represent more than the NBA's past and future. Nash, 37, is in the vanguard of smart eating as his career with the Suns winds down. He won't knowingly put refined sugar in his body, and he works with a naturopath to design the most effective and



## THE NEW TRAINING TABLE

&gt; MILESTONES IN SPORTS NUTRITION



**1988** Giants G.M. George Young assigns an assistant trainer to shadow rookie defensive end Leonard Marshall to make sure he doesn't stop by McDonald's after training camp sessions.

least inflammatory diet. By contrast Rose, 23, who will be named the league's MVP in a few weeks, so loves Skittles that their manufacturer, the Chicago-based Wrigley Company, has given him a personalized vending machine with a complimentary three-year supply. "Everybody's got their poison," Rose once said, "and mine is sugar."

Three years ago Nash hooked up with Sun-ell Jain, a Scottsdale, Ariz., naturopath who

believes that most human ailments—not just digestive problems but also fatigue, insomnia and chronic headaches—can be traced to what goes into the body. Jain specializes in a kind of precision nutrition, in which blood is analyzed to see how specific foods affect an individual's body chemistry. As a result of this testing Nash discovered that he's averse to gluten (page 129) and dairy. The Suns' captain also won't eat salsa, the essential condiment

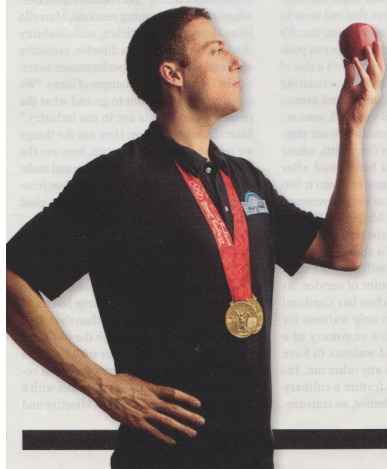
of the Mexican cuisine he adores, because he reacts badly to tomatoes and onions.

Across the locker room, Nash's 39-year-old teammate, Grant Hill, took notice and booked his own appointment with Jain. Hill already had some experience with what's known as applied immunology, or nutrigenomics: Eight years ago, recovering from serious ankle injuries while with the Magic, he consulted Sari Mellman, a Miami nutri-

## GARRETT WEBER-GALE

## IT'S ALL ABOUT TECHNIQUE

The two-time Olympic gold medal freestyler trains just as hard in three-star kitchens as in the Longhorns' pool



Swim practice is over this Saturday morning in Austin, and Garrett Weber-Gale has perhaps an hour to hunt down fresh calories before his body stages an insurrection. But he's doing something else—moving to an adjacent pool for more work—and there's a story behind that choice.

Ever since he relocated from Wisconsin to Texas in 2003 to further a career marked so far by two Olympic gold medals, Weber-Gale has made a habit of sponging up the knowledge of others. Today's extra-credit task is to improve his entrance, and Weber-Gale has jawboned Longhorns diving coach Matt Scoggin into sharing some Jedi wisdom. Throw a broomstick in the water, Scoggin says, and it picks up speed after breaking the surface. Why? Because of its rigidity. Keep your core, obliques and glutes as taut as possible—go all broomstick before you hit the water—and you'll get the same acceleration.

When he finally leaves the pool deck to eat his postworkout blend of oatmeal, cream of wheat, pineapple, banana, flax seed and protein powder, Weber-Gale is aglow with some new outside information. His life is a fastidious hunt for refinement, whether in the pool or in the kitchen. After working stages, or apprenticeships, at some of the top restaurants in the world—including Daniel in New York City; Maison Troisgros in Roanne, France; and Noma in Copenhagen—he's arranging for another, at El Celler de Can Roca in Girona, Spain. When swimming per-

mits, he promotes healthy gourmet eating with cooking demonstrations and videos. And he's ramping up his fledgling business, Athletic Foodie, which includes a line of spices in development and a Web community built around recipes and nutrition tips. Weber-Gale is a self-described "technique freak," whether the medley is a relay or a plate of vegetables.

Six years ago, just after his sophomore year at Texas, Weber-Gale was given a diagnosis of high blood pressure and barred from practice when his readings crept too high. "It freaked me out," he recalls. "In 2004, I'd missed making the Olympic team by one spot, and here I was a year later, wondering if the dream was being taken from me by circumstances beyond my control."

In fact, the most critical factor in hypertension—diet—was well within his control. As it happened Weber-Gale had just moved out of the dorms and begun to feel his way around a kitchen. His family soor helped by arranging for lessons.

In Beijing three summers ago swimming second in the men's 4 x 100 freestyle relay, Weber-Gale gave the U.S. a lead that Michael Phelps had ceded in the opening leg. That helped set up anchor Jason Lezak, who famously touched Alain Bernard's favored France by .08 of a second in his individual events. Weber-Gale couldn't make good on the promise he'd shown at the Olympic trials, where he'd won the 50 and 100 meters. Although his trials time in the 50, a U.S. record



**1989** Jets nutritionist Janet Horowitz tries to get players to eat better by distributing a weekly newsletter to their wives and girlfriends.



**1993** A poll of 23 NFL team trainers finds that football players twice the amount of fruit and vegetables as the average

tionist who has worked with Freeneey and dozens of other pro athletes. "I remember my mom once saying that pizza is one of the best foods for you because it has all major food groups," says Hill. "There's so much bad information out there."

Hill's current regimen (limited sugar, lots

of whole grains, goji berries instead of strawberries) has him feeling better than ever. "I'm not as sore as I once was," he says. "My first year in the league it was fast food every day. Sugar is the last thing you want when you're 39 and your body needs to recover."

Food-sensitivity testing among athletes emerged in the early '80s, when a chunky,

underachieving Martina Navratilova nected with Robert Haas, a Florida nutritionist whose dad owned a Burger King. chise. As Navratilova won 104 of her next tournaments, she helped turn Haas's *Eat to Win* into a No. 1 best seller. But Navratilova's demarche barely penetrated pro sports, least of all the NBA, where Ma

Checks piloted the 76ers' 1983 championship on a d

## A GOURMET TRAINING MEAL

Garrett Weber-Gale cooks in the simple galley kitchen of his Austin town house, where an apron with the slogan TRAIN HARD/EAT RIGHT/SWIM FAST hangs over the sink. Baskets of fruits and vegetables and an English-language copy of Larousse Gastronomique sit steps away. He whips together a meal that an elite athlete not only could love but also could win on

up is a chilled fennel, pear and citrus soup of Weber-Gale's invention. "If we were in France, I'd probably use cream of hazelnuts, tossed in a goat-cheese-and-orange vinaigrette." Next comes a beet salad with cipollini onions and s on your plate, the more nutrients. "Plus," he says, "you don't have to think as much." The goat cheese comes from eber-Gale typically eats red meat twice a week and tries to make it lean cuts of bison, which are high in iron ow in cholesterol. Tonight he's finishing medallions of grass-fed Colorado bison with a beef-stock reduction, a grill. To the reduced beef stock he adds a fig-infused balsamic vinegar, one of his favorite ways of adding r without sodium. As he beholds the perfectly pink centers of the filets, he invokes one of his mentors: "Michel r side dishes Weber-Gale chooses potatoes au gratin, made with an antioxidant-rich purple varietal, and as- thin slices with an implement called a mandoline—"the most dangerous device in the kitchen," he says. Then ers the potato slices in ramekins with a buttery Spanish sheep's cheese called Malvarosa. Weber-Gale says, "They don't help me achieve my goals." He waits a beat, then leaves the table to fetch a small bag cabinet. It's full of candied grapefruit slices he has boiled into a confit. They're the perfect treat for an Olympian ing: Each has notes of sugar, but there's enough sweetness held back to hint at some distant reward. —AW

would have earned him a bronze medal in Beijing, he failed to reach the eight-man final. He says, "Beijing was both very exhilarating and very disappointing."

It was, however, the site of a life-changing encounter. As he left the set of the *Today* show, where he, Phelps, Lezak and Cullen Jones had gone to talk up their relay exploit, Weber-Gale spotted someone outside the green room: Daniel Boulud, the French celebrity chef who had just opened a restaurant in Beijing and was on *Today* to promote it. Weber-Gale told Boulud about his interest in cooking and asked the chef to pose for a picture. Boulud slipped Weber-Gale a business card, and a few days later Weber-Gale swung by Maison Boulud for a meal. "I've had

experiences in the culinary world that others would never get," says Weber-Gale, who was soon invited to stage for three days at Boulud's New York City flagship restaurant. "A lot of doors open because of my swimming. You tell people you're really passionate about learning, and they're willing to teach you."

During his five-week stage at Troisgros, the cooks took Weber-Gale to the markets in the morning and expected him to perform like any apprentice during the mealtime rush, only to chase him from the kitchen each afternoon so he could ununch his 6' 2" frame in a pool a short bike ride away. As he was schooled in the proper technique for making sabayon—"Hold the whisk like a pencil and make figure

eights, using your wrist, not your arm," he says—the voice could have been that of Scoggin or any other of Weber-Gale's poolside earworms.

At first Weber-Gale made his share of mistakes in the kitchen, once slathering honey on chicken breasts only to watch them char. "I didn't know that sugar burns," he says. And trips to the grocery store tended to end in frustration: "There was nothing to buy. Your average baked beans or pasta sauce is packed with sodium," which Weber-Gale avoids because of his blood pressure. So he experimented with tomatoes and other fresh produce to make his own sauces and salsas. He found acidic food-stuffs such as vinegars, citrus juices and even greens that could stand in for salt. His own spices are all low

in sodium: Kickin' (a Cajun bl Grillin' (a barbecue) and Can (a mix that includes smoked pa cayenne pepper and chile pep

"For me food is a really emotional thing," Weber-Gale says. I on the road or at the Olympic ing Center, he might crave the he rotates into his diet back h avocados, brown rice, prunes, a square of dark chocolate ar midday ("for my feelings," he

Boulud regards his protégé chef in the making. "Garrett is to end up with a restaurant s day," he predicts. Weber-Gale so sure. After the London Oly he hopes to live for a spell in E to soak up more of the contin food culture. Then he imag a career ferreting out and it inspirational food stories, c website and on TV, while con ing to reach people such as the who recently thanked him dur autograph session in Indiana Using tips he found on Weber( website, he said, he had 10 pounds. "When it comes to ing, I'm in about the second or grade," Weber-Gale says. "M [Troisgros] and Daniel have doctorates. I'm just a regular who has some serious pasta

One of them is Maison T gros's signature dish, salmoi sorrel cream sauce. Weber is tinkering with a variation features almond milk and fat rice milk. *Quel sacrilège!*—e that if it tastes great it would equivalent of beating the Fren over again.



## THE NEW TRAINING TABLE

### MILESTONES IN SPORTS NUTRITION

1997 golfer Jesper Parnevik says he eats nothing but fruit and volcanic sand for stretches to cleanse his system.



**JOSE TABATA**  
PIRATES  
LEFTFIELDER

**ANTHONY PALATUCCI**  
PIRATES  
CHEF

## "THERE'S SO MUCH BAD INFORMATION OUT THERE," SAYS HILL.

chocolate-chip cookies and Hawaiian Punch, and in 1998 the Wizards' Rod Strickland, late in an overtime defeat of the Nets in New Jersey, threw up his routine pregame meal of pizza and a hot dog on the court.

But almost three decades after *Eat to Win*, food-sensitivity testing is sweeping through pro sports. Mellman and her son, chiropractor Leon Mellman, pay particular attention to foods that affect white blood cells for better or worse, so the body can maximize its immune response. Like at least 6% of the population, many athletes have a sensitivity to gluten—not necessarily full-blown celiac disease, or the wheat allergy it is often confused with—but enough intolerance that eliminating gluten can reduce inflammation and the chance of other autoimmune disorders. "The biggest trends I see are gluten-free and dairy-free diets," says Jaguars nutritional consultant Anita Nall Richesson, a former Olympic gold medal swimmer.

Nash is a reluctant evangelist—"I don't

like to get up on a soapbox," he says—but he and Hill have had some success influencing younger teammates, including Jared Dudley and Channing Frye. "Guys on our team hear Steve and me talk about it," Hill says. "They see the results, and they're curious."

**I**t's the day before that game between Chicago and Phoenix, and a dozen miles from the Bulls' Deerfield, Ill., practice facility, team chef Steve Jackson has been pinballing around a catering kitchen since 5 a.m. An associate of Jackson's is already at the Deerfield complex, whipping up made-to-order prepractice breakfasts in a private dining area steps from the court; the Bulls' own Methuselah, 39-year-old forward Kurt Thomas, reliably phones in a request for an egg-white omelet on his way over. Jackson will soon arrive with lunch, which is served as soon as practice ends. "The guys don't have to rush out to eat," he says. "When they come in they can let go,

relax, bust each other's stones. I don't Ronald [McDonald] walking through door as much as I used to."

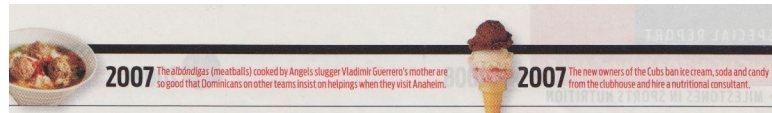
Jackson makes almost everything from scratch. Rather than fry and sauté, he grills and roasts. Today Jackson is offering breaded catfish, grilled barbecued chicken breast, roast pork loin stuffed with bread and andouille (spiced pork sausage) and a sweet potato mash laced with maple syrup. "It's an off-day, and we're playing" so I'll use a little fat," Jackson says. Still, cream of broccoli soup is made with 2% milk.

Jackson has been feeding the Bulls for 10 years, which is to say since before they got good again. Soon after taking over, Scott Skiles decided that his players, who would win only 23 games in the 2003 season, were spoiled. Arguing that a team was luxury, he persuaded the front office to cut Jackson loose. But the following season Jackson was back, and one day Skiles let up from his postpractice meal and confessed, "If I'd had this in my day, I'd still be playing."

When they joined the team, big men LeBron James and Tyson Chandler, two poster boys for the Bulls' wilderness years, had never heard of salmon and quickly dismissed it with a blanket, "I don't eat fish." By the end of their tenures with the team, in 2005 and '06 respectively, both coaches had heard of salmon among their

favorite dishes. "A youngster 18 or 20 do get it," Jackson says. "At 23, 24, 25, they're getting it. All it takes is breaking that barrier." Jackson has made inroads with former Luol Deng, who at 26 is just past that age of realization and used to forswear fish too. "My tastes have broadened," Jackson says. "Every day last year I caught him making himself tuna-salad sandwich. I'm getting a minimum 70 percent compliance, which is pretty good."

But one Bull passes up the team feeds tirelessly. Jackson has heard the stories all over the place, such as one told by Robert Dozier, a legume teammate at Memphis: The NBA A eats candy, pineapple and syrup but "he really eats real food." Jackson has appealed to Rose's mother, Brenda, and his older brother Reggie in hopes of reforming the young star's habits—if only at breakfast, that proves most important meal. "If all else fails, give him a box of Frosted Flakes and a carton of milk," Brenda replied. But the Bulls' still hopes for a breakthrough. From deb



2007 The alibónigas (meatballs) cooked by Angels slugger Vladimir Guerrero's mother are so good that Dominicans on other teams insist on helpings when they visit Anaheim.

2007 The new owners of the Cubs ban ice cream, soda and candy from the clubhouse and hire a nutritional consultant.

flight attendants on the team charter, he notes that Rose at least picks the chicken off his chicken Caesar salad. And Jackson takes some comfort in knowing that Rose recently hired a personal chef. "Derrick Rose is a fine young man," Jackson says. "He just doesn't know how to eat."

**T**he United Center sits just west of downtown Chicago, on the edge of a food desert, one of those tracts of urban America where people live at least one mile from a grocery with fresh produce. Great pluralities of NBA and NFL players

(including Rose, a native of Chicago's South Side) grow up in such neighborhoods, on streets lined with Kwik Marts and fried-chicken joints. Where food is available, it's likely to be canned or processed and overpriced. Where it isn't—well, think of that scene in *The Blind Side* in which the actor playing Michael Oher scavenges the bleachers of a high school gym for leftover popcorn.

The pathology of food deserts extends beyond malnutrition to poor education. Before last season Jaguars defensive tackle Terrance (Pot Roast) Knighton showed up at training camp 40 pounds overweight

after pigging out on macaroni and cheese prepared by his mother, Rochelle, who had moved to Jacksonville from Hartford to live with him. After eating dinner for two weeks at the home of Richesson, the Jaguars' nutritionist, and two meals a day at training camp, where his choices could be monitored by Richesson's husband, Luke, the team's strength coach, Pot Roast was not only a leaner cut but was also rid of his migraines.

Every time a new player reports to the Bakersfield (Calif.) Jam, the Clippers', Raptors' and Suns' affiliate in the NBA's Developmental League, strength and conditioning

AMY YODER BEGLEY

## RUNNING AWAY FROM GLUTEN

Eliminating this protein as given many athletes a substantial energy boost



**A**lessio Fasano has been an even busier man since he and 15 colleagues published a study in the journal *BMC Medicine* last March that showed it was possible to be sensitive to gluten—a protein in wheat, barley and rye, as well as in some soup and sauce thickeners—without having full-blown celiac disease. Athletes from around the world have contacted Fasano, the head of the University of Maryland Center foreliac Research, for advice on how to limit their gluten intake. Pro cyclists had been seeking Fasano's help since 2008; now he makes three annual trips to Europe to consult with elite athletes in tennis, basketball, soccer, rowing and swimming.

More and more athletes credit going gluten-free with boosting their energy. Some, such as U.S. distance runner Amy Yoder Begley (above), do because they have celiac disease; others, including Saints quarterback Drew Brees and the world's top-ranked tennis player, Novak Djokovic, do it because they are gluten sensitive; and an intrepid few, including the Garmin-transitions pro cycling team, do it because they are seeking a competitive edge. With gluten awareness on the rise because of the rapidly increasing number of people experiencing medical problems from ingesting the protein, gluten-free and gluten-light diets are not likely to join low-carb/low-protein (not to mention high-carb/low-protein) programs in the trash can of athletes' eating trends.

While gluten can be a fine source of protein for most people, Fasano's research reveals that 6% of the U.S. population may be gluten sensitive, experiencing stomach pains, headaches or depression after ingesting the protein. Less prevalent (but still on the rise) is celiac disease, which causes the body's immune system to attack and inflame the intestines after ingestion of the protein.

Gluten, which was not a part of the human diet until people began cultivating wild grasses for food 10,000 years ago, cannot be fully broken down by enzymes in the body, even in people who aren't gluten sensitive. Consider this: According to Fasano, the digestive juices in your stomach are so corrosive to meat protein that if you dipped your finger in them, it would be down to the bone in 30 seconds—but the same juices can't polish off the gluten in a single crouton. "Some parts of gluten have the digestibility of a rock," says Chaitan Khosla, a Stanford professor of chemical engineering. "It just sits there, marking time, until it goes to the upper intestine."

The medical community is still not sure why some athletes feel a boost after eliminating gluten, but Fasano believes that it's because of gluten's protracted stay in the digestive tract: Blood that is needed in the extremities and in the brain gets diverted to the stomach to assist in the digestion of gluten, thereby diminishing the supply for energy and performance. Asked why the incidence of celiac disease has doubled in the last 15 years, Fasano says that wheat farmers have increasingly cultivated their crops to contain more (and possibly different) gluten to give food a pleasant taste and texture. "Your great grandfather's grains are not your grains," he says.

Yoder Begley, a U.S. Olympian in the 10,000 meters, travels with a reference book of restaurants that have gluten-free menus. To get the carbohydrates that her body needs to turn glucose into fuel for exercise, she eats carb-rich foods that aren't filled with fat or sugar, such as bananas, rice pasta, polenta and sweet potatoes. Her diet is a model for a burgeoning number of athletes. "All she knew to go after for carbs [without gluten] were things like potatoes and candy," says Krista Austin, a physiologist who helped tailor Yoder Begley's diet. "Nowadays almost every athlete I work with, whether recreational or professional, asks about gluten."

—David Epstein



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**2008** Team USA ships 25,000 pounds of lean meat to Beijing for the Olympics after finding that Chinese poultry is full of steroids.



**2009** Canadiens enforcer Georges Laraque announces that he has become a vegetarian.

coach Tim DiFrancesco takes him through the aisles of a grocery store. "I ask him to point out five cereals and five snack foods he'd be willing to eat," says DiFrancesco, who grew up among the farmers' markets of rural Vermont. "Then we figure out which would do the least damage." The point is, sometimes chefs, nutritionists and trainers have to meet young athletes halfway.

"Guys want to recognize what they're eating," says Glenn Lyman, a personal chef who spent five years in Cleveland and cooking for LeBron James and collects recipes from clients' mothers and grandmothers. "You can't go from junk food right to tofu and salads. So you take food that's familiar and present it in a healthier way. Barbecue is familiar, the smell of charcoal is familiar—that's how you do it. Instead of fried chicken and sweet potato pie, you roast the chicken and serve it with baked yams."

If adapting to those tastes improves a young athlete's diet even marginally, it's well worth doing. Food matters: In studies performed in Europe, researchers varied the amount of exercise offered to children during the school day. They found that kids who got less exercise made up for it with more physical activity after school, and those who got more in school took it easier once they got home—which indicates that people have a self-regulating mechanism that keeps them within some range of physical exertion each day. These findings suggest that efforts to control obesity and promote health would best be focused on caloric intake rather than energy output. In other words, instead of Let's Move, Michelle Obama should probably call her antiobesity initiative Eat Your Peas.

The question is how to get fresh peas on the plates of people in food deserts. It's an issue being tackled by Will Allen, the former Miami basketball captain and ABA player who has won a MacArthur "genius" grant for his work with Growing Power,

which has created urban farming oases in hard-to-reach parts of Milwaukee and Chicago. The challenge of food deserts also animates Grant Hill. "A lot of kids have never tasted a real tomato," he says. "We need to offer them safe, healthy options." Otherwise a huge cohort of Americans—the pool from which so many pro athletes are drawn—will continue to be, as Allen puts it, "malnourishing [themselves] to death."

**ANTIOXIDANT**  
PASTRAMI, LENTILS, WILD ALASKAN SALMON FILET, ONION BROLLE, TOMATOES, GREEN BEANS

**ENHANCED IMMUNITY**  
SEARED SALMON, TUNA, POACHED BEEF, CHERRIES, CASSIQUET OF HEIRLOOM BEANS

**BRAIN PERFORMANCE**  
SMOKED CORNISH GAMEHEN, WHOLE GRAINS, SWEET POTATO AND PAKCHAI FORCES

**ANTI-INFLAMMATORY**  
CRISP WILD ALASKAN SALMON, AGRICULTURAL SQUIP, PURPLE POTATOES, ORGANIC ROOT VEGETABLES



**THE PATHOLOGY OF FOOD DESERTS EXTENDS TO RICH PROS.**

As the endgame between the Bulls and the Suns unfolds, it confirms the changing of the NBA guard more than the virtue of healthy eating. Hill and Nash close most of a 22-point gap, but Rose scores the Bulls' final two field goals to help secure a 97-94 victory.

Afterward Nash is asked about that Skittles machine in Rose's home. A reporter has just swung through the Bulls' locker room carrying a gracious message for Nash from down the hall: Rose says he hopes he can perform at Nash's level once he too has logged 15 seasons in the league. Nash produces a reply as well-balanced as his meals. "Derrick can probably eat as many Skittles as he wants and it won't affect him because he's young," he says. "But he's humble and hardworking, and when he's ready, it'll be just another area where he can improve."

The very nature of major league baseball—from the late nights and odd-hour flights to the appetite-suppressing, dehydrating heat of high summer to the unpredictability of extra innings and rain delays—discourages healthy eating. But even baseball's nutritional norms are beginning to change. MLB now encourages road teams to stipulate what they want in a buffet, and most do. But because of the unhealthy rhythms of the game, a major league team can seize the advantage by introducing a comprehensive food program. And there's a better example than that of the Pirates, who have installed a \$250,000 "performance kitchen" at PNC Park.

Team chef Tony Palatucci regularly prepares Latin dishes before games, and dietitian Leslie Bonci urges every player to have two meals before arriving for a night game. "If they eat something, they're more likely to drink something," she says, "so they're hydrated." Bonci advises pitchers and catchers not to lard up with heavy meals or big portions before they work, and she huddles with Delta, the team's charter carrier, to make sure flight attendants offer smoothies and sliders as stand-ins for beers and burgers.

The Bucs infantilize their players to a extent: Pirates who tend to skip breakfast

or struggle to keep weight on are packed with Bucco Bags, which include yogurt, fruit and a breakfast sandwich to get them started the next day. Palatucci cuts up fruit for players and uses the team's two Convothers oven-steamers to give foods "that look of fried product," he says. "It's sort of foolin' the players, but we don't say that to them."

The team that finished last in the National League Central for four straight years left the NL Central sporadically into July. No one attributes the Pirates' rise solely to their diet but no one is dismissing its influence either.

"It's never about perfection. It's about how good you can get when you're eating right. The athletes make the choice. And if they reap some benefit in terms of strength, speed, stamina and recovery, then bravo. That makes me happy, and it makes them happy too."