

Transcript – Katey Stone: Dealing with burnout

KATEY STONE: We've actually experienced burnout a fair amount in 21 years I've been here. Oftentimes with some of our Olympians that have come back from the Olympic Games. It starts to happen sort of November - December post-Olympics [period], into our next season.

The signs of it, they can be very different; I mean kids just get more emotional than normal, they get very fatigued, they're working hard, they actually try to work harder to combat maybe that feeling of 'I've just got to work harder, I've got to get through it' and that usually goes in the other direction. They get more fatigued and sick.

And, so the way that we have done it and it's probably, I don't know, maybe 15 years now that we give our kids two days off a week. Most people don't do that and, I mean, some people may now. But our typical hockey season is a Friday / Saturday night game, so Sundays off, so then we'll come back and practice on Monday and then we'll give them Tuesday off and then we'll go Wednesday / Thursday and play again on the weekend. Sometimes we'll have three games in a week so we have to tweak it a little bit but we never give up those two days off.

The reasons are multiple: one, academically it's great because they have a day just to be a college kid and go to class and do the labs and plan accordingly. But recovery is huge and rest and recovery are, I think, the two most under paid-attention-to things in college athletics. No matter how much your athletes know, if they can't perform the way they want to and show what they know on game day it doesn't matter what they know, so they've got to have a lot of gas in the tank and it's a very long season and you want to be playing your best hockey coming out of February going into March.

So if your kids are banged up and exhausted that's not going to happen {playing well}. And mental fatigue is as critical to the detriment of your team as physical fatigue. So we try to get our kids out, get them away from here, don't have them come down to the rink and spend that time doing other things: being a college kid, enjoying themselves. It's paid tremendous dividends and also we're not injured anywhere near as much as we used to be because they have that extra day. I mean if they play hard the expectation is that they play hard then they should rest really well.