

## Managing Physiological and Nutritional Needs of Rugby Players in Kenya

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**Abstract :** Rugby is a highly intense and physical game requiring speed and strength. The need for physical fitness therefore cannot be over-emphasized. Sports are no longer about lifting weights so as to build muscle. Most professional teams are investing much more in the sport in terms of time, equipment and other resources. To play competitively, Kenyan players may therefore need to complement their 'home-grown' and sometimes ad-hoc training and nutrition regimes with carefully measured strength and conditioning, diet, nutrition, and supplementation. Nokia Research Center and University of Nairobi conducted an exploratory study on needs and behaviours surrounding sports in Africa. Rugby being one sport that is gaining ground in Kenya was selected as the main focus. The end goal of the research was to identify areas where mobile technology could be used to address gaps, challenges and/or unmet needs. Themes such as information gap, social culture, growth, and development, revenue flow, and technology adoption among others emerged about the sport. From the growth and development theme, it was clear that as rugby continues to grow in the country, teams, coaches, and players are employing interesting techniques both in training and playing. Though some of these techniques are indeed scientific, those employing them are sometimes not fully aware of their scientific basis. A further case study on sports science in rugby in Kenya focusing on physical fitness and nutrition revealed interesting findings. This paper discusses findings on emerging adoption of techniques in managing physiological and nutritional needs of rugby players across different levels of rugby in Kenya namely high school, club and national levels.

**Keywords :** rugby, nutrition, physiological needs, sports science

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