

BLOODY GOOD SPORT

sharethedignity

COACH'S GUIDE *TO PERIODS*

Understanding periods
and performance



HEY COACH!

Let's talk about something that can really impact your athletes: periods. Menstruation can affect training, performance, and even confidence on the field. Here's what you need to know and how you can help your athletes perform their best, even when they're not feeling their best.

UNDERSTANDING THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE AND ITS IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE



MENSTRUATION

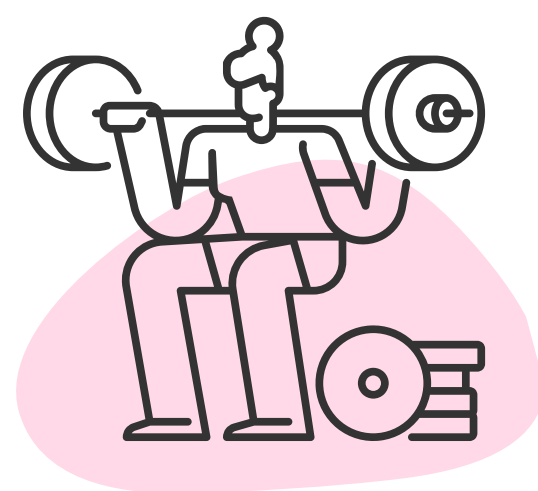
DURATION: 3 – 7 DAYS

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The body sheds the uterine lining, and hormone levels (oestrogen and progesterone) are at their lowest.

IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

Athletes may feel more fatigued and experience cramps, headaches, or general discomfort. This is a good time to focus on lighter, low intensity workouts or active recovery.



FOLLICULAR PHASE

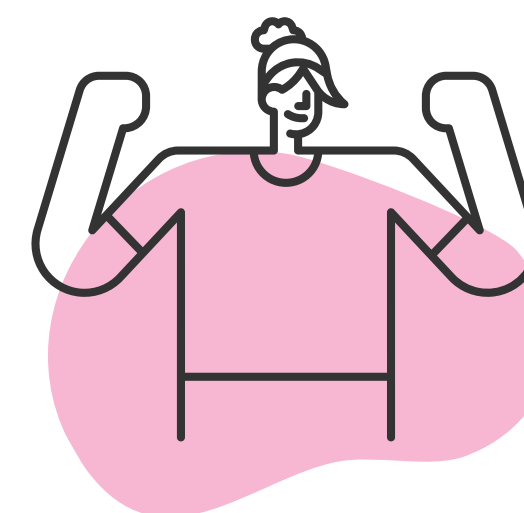
MENSTRUATION TILL OVULATION

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Oestrogen levels start to rise as the body prepares for ovulation, leading to an increase in energy and mood.

IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

This is when athletes often feel their strongest. Energy levels are high, and the body is primed for endurance and strength training.



OVULATION

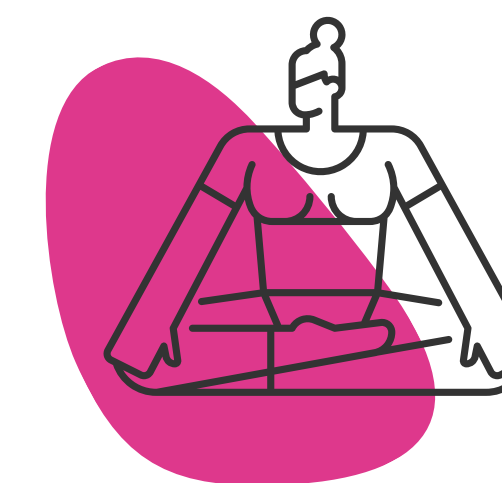
AROUND DAY 14

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Oestrogen peaks just before ovulation, and testosterone levels also increase slightly, boosting muscle-building potential.

IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

Energy levels are still high, and athletes may feel powerful and competitive.



LUTEAL PHASE

OVULATION TILL MENSTRUATION

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

After ovulation, progesterone rises and oestrogen declines. Athletes may experience a drop in energy and an increase in symptoms like bloating, irritability, or fatigue.

IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

The second half of this phase can feel more challenging. Athletes may struggle with endurance, focus, and motivation as the body shifts toward recovery mode.

COACHING TIPS

The menstrual cycle can influence energy, focus and performance.

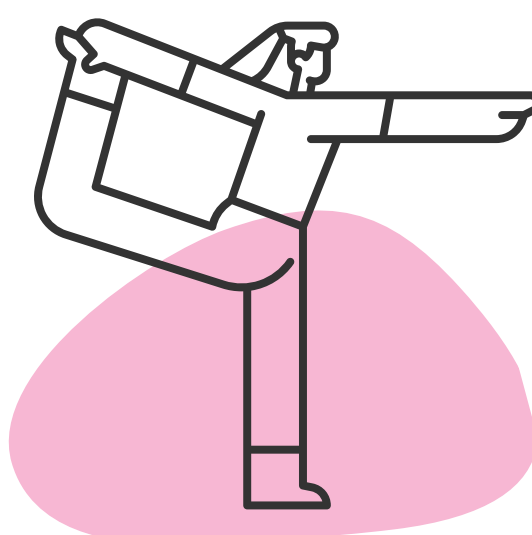
These coaching tips offer simple ways to support women and girls across each phase.



MENSTRUATION

COACHING TIP

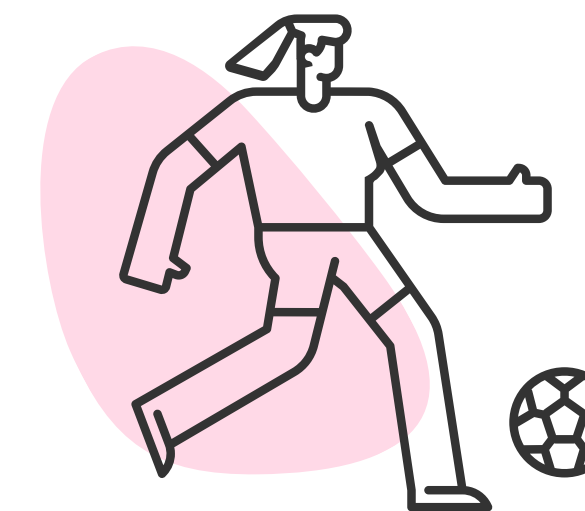
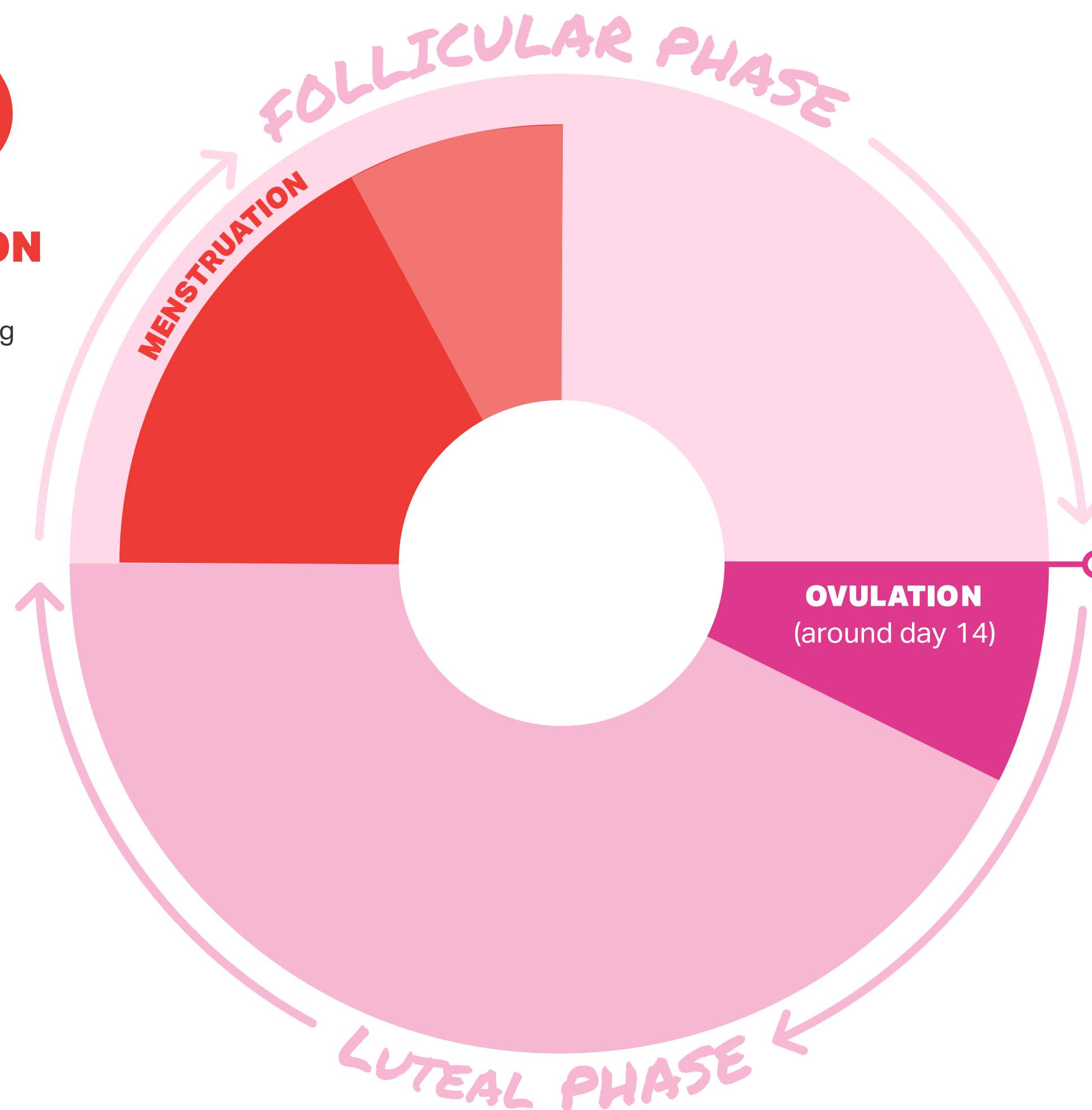
Be flexible with training intensity. Encourage rest and allow for modifications to workouts.



LUTEAL PHASE

COACHING TIP

Focus on steady, moderate training. This is a good time for flexibility, mindfulness exercises, and ensuring athletes are staying hydrated and well-nourished.



FOLLICULAR PHASE

COACHING TIP

This is a great time to schedule more intense workouts, strength training, and competitions. Athletes are likely to feel more motivated and capable of pushing themselves.



OVULATION

COACHING TIP

Use this time for peak performance activities, such as personal bests or heavy lifting. Confidence is usually high, and athletes may feel more assertive.

HOW PERIODS CAN AFFECT PERFORMANCE

ENERGY UPS AND DOWNS

Hormonal changes throughout the cycle can cause fluctuations in energy. Some days, athletes will be full of energy, while other days, fatigue might hit harder.

CRAMPS AND DISCOMFORT

Many athletes experience cramps, back pain, or headaches during their period, making intense training more difficult.

MENTAL FOCUS

Mood swings or feelings of anxiety can make it tough to concentrate during practice or competition.

HYDRATION AND RECOVERY

Hormonal shifts can also affect hydration and muscle recovery, which means your athletes may need extra care during this time.

CRAVINGS AND NUTRITION

Don't be surprised if they're craving sweets or salty snacks, this is common during their cycle.

PERIODS CAN BE UNPREDICTABLE

SURPRISE STARTS

Sometimes periods arrive out of nowhere, which can catch your athletes off guard during training or a game.

LEAK WORRIES

Leaks are a real concern for many athletes and can cause a lot of embarrassment. Having extra uniforms or shorts on hand and being discreet in these situations can make a huge difference.

PERIOD PRODUCTS

Not everyone carries supplies all the time. Having extra pads or tampons in the locker room or first aid kit can be a lifesaver.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

KEEP THE CONVERSATION OPEN

Encourage your athletes to share how they're feeling. A simple "How's everyone doing today?" can open the door for them to let you know if they need to take it easier.

BE FLEXIBLE WITH TRAINING

Some days, athletes might need to dial it back or adjust their workout if they're in pain or feeling low on energy. It's okay to switch things up based on their needs.

BE PREPARED

Keep a stash of period products available, just in case. Athletes will appreciate having them on hand for emergencies.

HANDLE LEAKS WITH CARE

If an athlete has a leak, offer them a solution - like a spare uniform - quickly and discreetly to avoid any embarrassment.

SUPPORT HYDRATION AND NUTRITION

Make sure your athletes are staying hydrated and eating well, especially during their period when they may feel off balance.



CREATING A SUPPORTIVE SPACE

NORMALISE THE CONVERSATION

Periods are a natural part of life, so by treating them as such, you help reduce any stigma or discomfort athletes may feel. On the next page you will find the Bloody Good Sport team conversation scripts to help normalise the conversation.

ENCOURAGE HEALTHY CHOICES

Yes, cravings happen, but remind your athletes to balance their diet to maintain their energy and performance.

PROMOTE REST AND RECOVERY

Don't push athletes to perform through discomfort. Show understanding and flexibility when they need to rest.

REMEMBER

Empathy and understanding go a long way. By being aware of how the menstrual cycle affects your athletes, you're not only supporting their performance, you're creating a positive, respectful environment that helps them thrive.



CONVERSATION *SCRIPTS*

COACH'S GUIDE FOR TRAINING SESSIONS

ADAPT TONE AND TIMING AS NEEDED

These conversation scripts are designed to help coaches start open, respectful conversations about menstrual health. They offer simple language and prompts that support understanding, build trust, and help athletes feel confident, supported and motivated in their training and performance.

Opening

"Team, today we're taking 20 minutes to talk about something that matters – periods and how they affect players in sport.

As a club, we've pledged to be a Bloody Good Sport with Share the Dignity. That means we're committed to making sure periods never stop anyone from playing.

This is about respect, inclusion, and making sure every player feels comfortable, supported, and able to thrive. Because in sport, no one should be left on the sidelines - especially not by their period.

So let's have an open chat. This isn't about embarrassment. This is about being stronger as a team."

Periods and Performance

Coach's talking points:

"Periods affect players differently. Sometimes energy feels lower, sometimes there's cramping, sometimes mood changes, and sometimes it doesn't affect you at all. All of that is normal.

The important part is: we'll support you.

- ▶ Training can be adjusted - lighter sessions, more recovery, or time out if needed.
- ▶ Performance isn't just about pushing through. It's about playing smart and looking after your body.
- ▶ We've got a new resource called the Athlete's Guide to Periods and Performance. It's on the Bloody Good Sport website and has tips on how to manage your cycle, product options, and how it can link to energy and training.

I encourage everyone to take a look at it. Knowledge builds confidence."

Dialogue prompts:

- ▶ "When do you feel your best to train or compete?"
- ▶ "Are there things we could do differently at training to support you?"
- ▶ "Would it help to build in optional lighter drills or recovery options during certain times of the month?"

Uniform Choices

Coach's talking points:

"Uniforms can be stressful, especially during periods.

That's why our club is reviewing our policy to make sure it's period-friendly. Options could include:

- ▶ Dark shorts or leggings
- ▶ Breathable fabrics and designs that work with pads and period underwear
- ▶ Flexibility in what players choose to wear on game day

This is about comfort and confidence. A uniform should support you, not make you anxious."

Dialogue prompts:

- ▶ "Would darker shorts make a difference?"
- ▶ "Are there uniform changes you'd like to see?"
- ▶ "Would you prefer to give feedback as a group or 1:1?"

CONVERSATION SCRIPTS

Breaking Stigma – Building Culture

Coach's talking points:

"For too long, periods have been seen as something to hide. But in this team, we're going to talk about it openly.

That means:

- Normalising that periods are part of sport.
- No jokes or negative comments.
- Supporting each other – if someone's struggling, they're not left to figure it out alone.

We'll be putting up Bloody Good Sport posters around the club to remind everyone that periods are part of the game."

Dialogue prompts:

- "What would make you feel more comfortable talking about periods here?"
- "How can we support each other better as teammates?"

Products and Access (if applicable)

Coach's talking points:

"At our club, we now have free period products are available for anyone who needs them.

- You'll find them in [bathrooms near ...] and in [first aid kits with coaches/managers].
- If you ever need one, grab it. No embarrassment, no questions asked.
- If you're stuck during training or a game, just let a coach or manager know – we'll sort it out fast.

This is the same as strapping tape, water bottles, or first aid."

Dialogue prompts:

- "Does everyone know where the products are stocked?"
- "Would you feel comfortable grabbing them during training or games?"
- "What else would make it easier?"

Closing Rally

"Being a Bloody Good Sport is about more than winning. It's about looking out for each other, on and off the field.

Remember:

- Training can be flexible if needed.
- Uniforms are open for feedback. *(if applicable)*
- Stigma has no place in our team.
- And Free products are always stocked. *(if applicable)*

We are here for you."

REMEMBER

Coaches play a key role in shaping positive sporting environments. By starting informed, respectful conversations about menstrual health, you help build trust, support healthy training practices, and empower athletes to perform with confidence.

MORE RESOURCES

You can find more information and education resources from Bloody Good Sport - sharethedignity.org.au/end-period-poverty/advocacy/bloody-good-sport

For more information tailored to Female performance and Health, the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) has a suite of free education modules - [Education modules | Australian Sports Commission](#)

GAME ON PERIOD.

