



November — Diabetes Awareness Month — is the perfect time to focus on how our daily choices impact long-term health, performance, and well-being. Our student-athletes in the SCHSL, know that every decision they make—on and off the field—matters. One major decision is what they drink and eat.

Here's the fact: Diabetes is no longer just an adult issue. Youth diabetes — both type 1 and type 2 — is on the rise. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), new-onset diabetes in young people (under age 20) is increasing. From 2002 to 2018, the rate of type 2 diabetes in youth more than doubled (from about 9 to about 18 new cases per 100,000 per year).

Further, the prevalence of prediabetes in adolescents is deeply concerning — as many as one-third of U.S. adolescents may now have elevated blood sugar levels that put them on the path to diabetes.

Why is this relevant for student-athletes? Because high sugar intake (especially from sugary drinks) accelerates risk factors like excess weight, insulin resistance, and inflammation—factors that hurt performance, recovery, and long-term health. By participating in this 5-day challenge, you're not just “giving up soda for a week” — you're taking control of your fuel, your body, and your future.

Over this challenge, student-athletes will:

- Identify where sugar hides in their daily routine
- Swap sugary drinks for better hydration options.
- Replace high-sugar snacks with nutrient-dense fuel.
- Feel how energy stabilizes, focus sharpens, and recovery improves.
- Finish strong and reflect on how to carry these habits forward.

Let's use Diabetes Awareness Month to transform awareness into action. This challenge is not just for one week, but to make positive changes for a long-term, healthier lifestyle.

5-Day Ditch the Sugar Challenge

Goal: Eliminate added sugars (especially sugary drinks), stabilize energy, and experience the difference in performance, recovery, and focus.

Day 1: Awareness — Spot the Sugar

Theme: Know what's slowing you down.

- Track everything you eat and drink for one day.
- Highlight anything with added sugar.
- Swap one sugary drink for water or an unsweetened option.

What You'll Notice: Hidden sugars in 'healthy' foods.

Performance Impact: Awareness builds accountability.

Day 2: Replace — Choose Fuel, Not Filler

Theme: Fuel for power, not cravings.

- Cut out soda, sweet tea, and sugary juices.
- Drink at least 64 oz (8 cups) of water.
- Try fruit-infused water or sugar-free electrolytes.

What You'll Notice: Possible fatigue or headaches from sugar withdrawal.

Performance Impact: Energy starts to stabilize; muscles hydrate more efficiently.

Day 3: Refuel — Rebuild with Real Energy

Theme: Protein and produce.

- Eat balanced meals: protein + carbs + fats.
- Snack on Greek yogurt, eggs, jerky, or fruit.
- Avoid sugary afternoon snacks.

What You'll Notice: Fewer cravings, more steady focus.

Performance Impact: Reduced inflammation and faster recovery.

Day 4: Reset — Feel the Difference

Theme: Energy you can trust.

- Continue sugar-free drinks and meals.
- Reflect on changes in sleep, energy, and focus.
- Encourage teammates — you've made it through the hardest part.

What You'll Notice: Clearer thinking, better endurance, and improved mood.

Performance Impact: Consistent performance and sharper focus.

Day 5: Perform — Power from Within

Theme: Sugar-free = performance-ready.

- Stay sugar-free all day and finish strong.
- During practice, note stamina and focus changes.

What You'll Notice: More energy, less fatigue, and fewer cravings.

Performance Impact: Enhanced endurance and improved mental focus.

Wrap-Up & Reflection

Compare Day 1 vs Day 5: What's different in your energy, focus, and recovery?

- Don't stop here: continue your new habits!

Sugar Awareness Table (grams per serving)

Drink	Sugar (grams)	Equivalent Sugar Packets
20 oz Soda	65g	16 packets
16 oz Sweet Tea	54g	13 packets
12 oz Energy Drink	39g	10 packets
16 oz Sports Drink	36g	9 packets
12 oz Juice (added sugar)	42g	10 packets