Understanding and Managing Burnout

What is Burnout?
- A physical, emotional, and social withdrawal from a previously enjoyable sport activity
- Burnout occurs as a result of chronic stress or overtraining

What are the signs/symptoms of burnout?
- Physical
  - Low energy/exhaustion
  - Changes in appetite
  - Changes in sleep patterns
  - Deterioration in athletic performance
- Psychological
  - Decreased interest in the sport
  - Lack of desire to play
  - Loss of motivation
  - Decreased involvement
  - Apathy
  - Irritability or anger
  - Depression

What to do to Prevent Burnout or Intervene if it’s Occurring
- Talk to your child before and after every season about his/her motivation to play
- Make sure your child takes breaks, even if for a few days, especially after a long season
  Kids need a timeout from their sports
- Be supportive of your child’s social life
- Encourage your child to play other sports if he/she expresses interest even if it’s not in any formal, organized way
- If you’re seeing warning signs, address them directly by asking your child if he/she is okay
- Talk to your child’s coaches to see if he/she is struggling with the athletic environment
- Take your child to a qualified psychologist who can help assess signs/symptoms, particularly to rule out more significant problems like depression or anxiety disorders

Adapted from Smith & Kays (2010) and Weinberg & Gould 2011