



COMPUTERS & SPORT

I think most of us appreciate sport on some level. While many are glued to TV screens or regularly attending matches, others enjoy participating for health and recreational reasons while some observe casually for things like the aesthetic appeal of the athletes themselves. There are many arguments between all fans but what cannot be disputed is the fact that modern athletes are exposed to and can benefit from things like biomechanics, video analysis and computer technology.

For example the typical post match week for a full time AFL footballer would involve him maybe doing some early morning recovery work, then heading to a one on one meeting with the coach who would have a prepared video/DVD of the individual's personal highlights (or possibly lowlights) from the weekend's game for them to study together and then for the player to view in their own time. Computers are also used to monitor a player's health in relation to concussion by comparing answers to questions with answers a player submitted when known to be 100% healthy. Similarly with diet, all fluid and food intake is noted and players are regularly weighed and fat tested to both see how much they should ingest before, during and after matches and training and what type of foods are required. Then of course there are the statistics which we as viewers are also bombarded with on broadcasts of various sports, in more and more sophisticated manners which are generated instantaneously by computers analysing enormous amounts of data about every facet of the contest in question.

I think a general conclusion that you can come to when comparing most modern day athletes in their respective sports to their predecessors is that the average level of performance has been raised and that there is a larger number of good athletes. This could be put down to the ability of many athletes to devote all their energies to their sport as much as the computer and scientific input. However a genius in one generation probably would be a genius in another generation even without all the extra input.

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