

PINES VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM 2026

Beyond the Numbers: An Examination and Scientific Evaluation of Body Composition Assessment in Athletes



Date: Thursday, 29th October 2026



Time: 20.00 PM GMT

Body composition is one of the most frequently measured and often misunderstood metrics in sport. While optimizing fat-free mass and/or reducing body fat may enhance performance in some sports and for some athletes, body composition is only one piece of the performance puzzle.

This symposium will critically examine the evidence linking body composition to athletic performance and discuss when body composition assessment is warranted—and when it may do more harm than good. Experts will compare the strengths and limitations of commonly used assessment methods, review evidence-based nutrition and training strategies for safely altering body composition, and explore best practices for communicating body composition results to athletes. Particular emphasis will be placed on minimizing unintended consequences, including body image concerns, low energy availability, and disordered eating. Attendees will leave with practical, athlete-centered strategies for integrating body composition assessment into sport nutrition and performance programs while prioritizing both performance and long-term health.



SPEAKERS

- Gary Slater (University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia)
- Carly Pachanowski (University of Delaware, USA)
- Therese Mathisen (Norwegian School of Sport Science, Norway)
- Anders Askey Mellbye (Norwegian School of Sport Science, Norway)
- Alysha C. D'Souza (McMaster University, Canada)
- Kristin Fant (Baylor University, USA)



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