**Core Stability**

**What is the core?**
The “Core” represents the functional unit of the muscles of the trunk and the muscles of the pelvic-hip region.

Trunk muscles include the abdominal muscles and the back muscles, all of which attach to the bones of the spinal column and provide it with both flexibility and strength. Some of the muscles that attach to the back also extend over the pelvis and into the legs including the large hip muscles such as the gluteal muscles.

**What does the core do?**
These muscles work together to provide a solid base from which all other muscles can work to initiate movement in the arms and the legs. Core stability is the name given to the dynamic interaction between these muscle groups. They need to work together to stabilize the body through the abdominal area.

**How does the core work in sports?**
Strong core muscles improve performance in sports. Any dynamic movement you make with your upper or lower body originates from the muscles in your core therefore when you need to generate power, these muscles work as a unit to help you achieve this. There must be a sufficient amount of strength and neuromuscular control in the hip and trunk muscles to provide core stability.

**Why is the core important in injury prevention?**
Strengthening these core muscles will absorb stresses put on the body. This is essential to prevent all forms of injury both in the lower back area and within the lower extremity, in particular the knee. Risk of injury is increased when there is an imbalance in any particular muscle group and a strong core allows the muscles to work more efficiently and together. Core training is also important for athletes returning to sport following an injury and should be included in any rehabilitation program.

References:

Exercises are from the FIFA 11+ program available at [http://f-marc.com/11plus/exercises/](http://f-marc.com/11plus/exercises/)