Body Composition and Mental Health Concerns in Athletes: The Athlete Voice

Body composition assessment is often presented as a routine part of performance optimisation, yet its psychological impact on athletes can be significant and sometimes overlooked. Drawing on my own experiences as a former international athlete, alongside my work supporting athletes through Project REDs, I will explore how an emphasis on weight, body composition and physical appearance can influence an athlete's relationship with food, exercise, their body and ultimately their health and performance.

I'll also consider the pressures athletes can feel to conform to particular body ideals, the potential consequences of poorly communicated or inappropriate body composition assessments, and the importance of creating environments in which athlete wellbeing is prioritised alongside performance. My aim is to bring an athlete–centred perspective to the discussion.