

Presented By:



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In-Season Training**

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Winter Training, Spring Practice, Summer Workouts and 7 – on – 7 Tournaments have all played a part in getting your team ready for the season. It’s time for you to finish this cycle by continuing the physical preparation of your athletes. I’m not talking about playing the game or even practice what I’m referring to is your In-Season Training.

The continuity of this transition and the emphasis that you put on your In-Season training program will have a great effect on how this season will turn out. I have seen programs where athletes are over trained and I have also witnessed football coaches who can’t find time to get their athlete’s workouts scheduled. The thing that amazes me is that we all have the same 24-hour clock. Our athletes all have classes, meetings, practice and games. Everyone has a seven day week. The key is to incorporate your workout schedule around the obstacles that are put in your way. Everyone has their issues, school hours, class schedules, bus schedules, other sports, whatever the issue is there is a way to work around the issues to get done what you know you need to do finish the training process. As you organize your workout it’s up to you to find out how to make the best workout that not only fits your athlete’s needs but also one that fits your athlete’s schedule. Find a program that you understand and makes sense to you. Don’t do a program that doesn’t fit your personality or your background. Go out and research different types of program until you find one that fits your background and your long term plan for your team. Unfortunately this may mean that you need to spend more time than you have in the past. It also may turn out that you will need to get to school earlier or stay after practice. If you or any of the coaches on your staff are worried about spending too much time getting the job done the right way it may be time to get out of coaching.

If you are willing to put in the time that it takes to ensure your players are at their physical best throughout the entire season, here are some things that I like to focus on during my workouts.

Scheduling

I like schedule my workouts to be completed in the morning. This allows the athlete to get up and get to work. It also gives the athlete ample time to recover from the workout. With sufficient recovery time you are able to aggressively maintain the athlete’s flexibility, movement and strength throughout the season. When I speak about “aggressively maintaining” the physical well being of your athletes I am referring to the way that we train. First, I want to keep our athletes movement skills sharp and quick. Secondly, I will organize my workout so that core strength and flexibility is constantly being improved upon. Finally, I want to ensure that

my athlete's upper body strength is better than it was during the off season and their lower body and explosive strength to be in the 80% - 85% range. To monitor the upper body strength I would incorporate a 225-pound rep set at the end of Monday's workout after the second week of the season. The reps would increase each week with the last. The results showed that the athletes were able to do as many, if not more reps, at the end of the season as we did during the spring testing.

Movement

As we did with our off-season training I always want to do all of our movement training prior to the strength portion of the workout. It is imperative that we work on the essential skills that we use every day, while the athlete is the freshest. The Dynamic Movement, Core Strength, Flexibility, Foot Quickness and Range of Motion drills will be done in a series of drills.

Strength

After the movement drills the athlete will then do their strength movements. I have always felt that the strength movements facilitated in making you a better athlete. Too many programs do their lifting first which will fatigue the systems of movement. When you move "tired" you will be sloppy and you will learn "sloppy" techniques. If you move first you learn great body position so that when you are tired your body will still be more efficient in its movement than a body that started with less technique work.

As previously mentioned I will work the athlete in to the 80% - 85% range while doing the three major strength movements, Clean Pulls, Squats and Bench Press (either Incline, flat, dumbbell or with a bar). You will notice that I have moved away from the Snatch, Jerk, Power Clean and Hang Clean movements that are normally part of my program. I have found that the triple extension on weight is the necessary movement. As we get into the season several, if not most, athletes have accrued hand, wrist, elbow or shoulder injuries that restrict their ability to catch the bar. The program also incorporates the use of Power Balls into the routine to continue working the explosive triple extension position without putting added stress on the athletes back. The rest of the movements of the workout focus on Joint Integrity, Range of Motion and Strengthening.

Variety

I always have a lot of variety in each workout. If we do Front Squats on Monday of Week 1 we will do Back Squats on the following Monday. If we did a Flat Bench Press during the second workout of the week we will do an Incline Dumbbell lift the next time we do the workout. If you use chains or bands in your workout this would be a great change up for your program. In the end you will be working a similar movement pattern as well as similar body parts. These variations could mean the difference between hitting a plateau and continuing to develop.

Not only do we see the variations in the major lifts but also with auxiliary work. There are literally thousands of exercises out there. Simply go to a local book store and get a book or body building magazine and look for different angles or grips or usage of tools to get more out of your workout. Workouts don't need to be boring. Once you lose the athlete mentally you will also lose them physically.

Perception

As the athlete goes from the Off-Season program to the In-Season program is that there is a Personal Physical Perception (PPP). As they get ready for games they look across the field and begin to size up their opponent from a physical perspective. They can range from feeling that they are David facing Goliath or they might feel they are Goliath facing David. I'd lost money betting on Goliath if I'd been there, how do you want your athletes to feel as they are getting ready for the game. One of the things that made me smile when I got into the NFL was one of the players on our team, that we had played against when he was in college, said "you guys were always giants on the other side of the field during warm-ups". In reality we were not that much different, but the perception began beating this young man before the first snap.

Not only is the PPP having the effect on your team's opponent but also on your own players about themselves. Each athlete at the peak of his physical condition knows how he looked and how he felt. As the season goes on and they start losing that muscular size that they had during the Off-Season they will mentally lose faith in their ability. When they don't believe in themselves you might as well not even show up, you are beat before you get on the bus.

Nutrition

The last thing that I will talk about is the way that your athletes are eating during the season. It is imperative that you make sure your players are getting a good breakfast, they are eating lunch, getting a fruit or nut snack before practice and that you've gone the extra mile by speaking to the players parents about providing a solid dinner for their children. Nutrition is one of the biggest areas that we, as coaches, can make a huge difference in our athlete's lives. Some parents don't know any better, some don't care. That's where we feel the gap by providing information and assistance. IF we don't do it we leave to some desk jockey at a nutrition store, who is working on commission, to keep our athletes dialed in nutritionally. In the past I have used gone to produce companies to get ripe fruit they couldn't sell. I've gone to bakeries to get day old bread for sandwiches. Booster clubs will help with peanut butter and other food items to help close the gap; it's up to you to take the initiative to do everything in your power to make things better for your athletes.

The In-Season is so important. Don't miss the opportunity to complete the chain that was started at the end of the last season. Don't be the weakest link in that chain.