

Performance Point

Planning and Periodizing Physical Training



by Anita Cote, Performance Planner, Canadian Sport Centre Pacific

August 2007

Planning is an integral part of coaching. In addition to the scheduling of camps and competitions, a Yearly Training Plan (YTP) allows a coach to ensure all elements involved in the athlete's development will be integrated when working towards achieving the team's or individual athlete's goals.

Besides technical training, an athlete's physical training plays a key role in their success. Coaches need to consider the key physical elements that need to be improved and incorporate this into the athlete's annual plan.

Steps to Planning and Periodizing Physical Training

1. **Determine what the key physical elements are required for success in the sport.** For example, mogul skiers require maximum strength, explosive power, reactive speed and power, anaerobic power and flexibility to compete well. They also need a solid functional foundation to stay injury free and an aerobic base to train well.
2. **Think about the underlying physical traits or skills that must occur prior to the development of those desired traits or skills.** In order to build explosive power a solid strength base must be built. Key to a solid strength base is an injury free, well balanced musculoskeletal system. The latter must occur first in building the athlete's power.
3. **Structure physical progressions much like technical progressions while considering what must come first and how much time is required for the adaptation to take place.** For example, it can take six to eight weeks to correct some muscular imbalances or with mass building, athletes can focus a few strength cycles on hypertrophy.
4. **Always refer back to the technical plan.** During technical camps or when the competitive season is underway, the volume of physical training must be reduced. It is impossible for an athlete to train all components at once; choose a focus but do not limit the training to only these elements – the focus represents the majority of training that is taking place during that training block.
5. **Be flexible to change your plan based on the athlete's rate of adaptation as well as unforeseen injury or scheduling changes.** Each athlete will progress at different rates so expect to make decisions on increasing, decreasing or eliminating any of the planned training blocks. An unexpected competition in the middle of a training cycle will force coaches to decide whether athletes should continue to focus on the physical plan at hand and train through the competition, or whether the competition is deemed important and thus the physical training needs to be altered to allow for tapering and recovery.
6. **Consider the physiological and psychological stress associated with certain training blocks or competitions and plan for recovery.** Coaches often underestimate the mental strain that certain events have on an athlete. Ignoring these much-needed regeneration blocks will not allow for the physical adaptations to take place and can lead to burn-out, injury or simply a decreased motivation, any of which will affect the output of athletes.
7. **Incorporate your physical plan into the Yearly Training Plan so coaches, athletes and other service providers can easily see how all of the critical elements for success work together.** For an example of a physical plan inserted into a YTP, please see the following link:

http://www.pacificsport.com/Images/PDFs/YTPtemplate_PerfPt07.pdf

For more information on planning and periodization, please consult your PacificSport Performance Planner.

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