TRAINING PHASES AND PERCENTAGE OF INTENSITY

by:
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What makes a competing team in an athletic competition successful? Most probably, it is because of the good training program prepared by coaches, trainers and other members of coaching staff. Training program may not be successful or effective if it wasn’t well-planned or well designed for the needs and not well executed during the implementation. There are different strategies and techniques applied in this program just like those that were used by successful coaches in different sporting events. The development and total improvement of the competitive athletes lies on the stages or phases of a programmed training. The line telling that “You cannot make a superstar in one night.” is absolutely true. Most new coaches didn’t realize how important programming of training was. Some of them go directly to game proper without considering and recognizing the needs of the athletes especially with regards with their skills, condition, strength, weaknesses and psychological aspect. This will surely lead to a less efficient and effective performance.

Mastery of the skills takes a long time and it should be interconnected with their psychological and physical condition. We does not just physically prepare the athletes, the preparation must address the holistic development and improvement of the athletes. A training program could be innovated or modified depending on the strategies a coach or trainer wants to employ. It is very important to consider the different formula pertaining to the achievement of athlete’s total development and improvement.

This program that I want to share focuses on the percentage of intensity during four training phases; the Conditioning Phase, Skill Phase, Pre-Competition and Competition Phase. This is a year-round training program that could be changed or modified according to evaluation and analysis of the athlete’s performance during last
competition they have joined. This could be applicable to beginning athletes but in a lesser percentage of intensity.

To begin with, the coach has to plan a year-round program suited to the sport. Recording materials must be prepared and utilized as well as the list of target skills to be developed. A close observation is required from the very beginning of the training in order to analyze the next steps to be taken if the development of the athlete is slow or there were no improvement at all after the execution of the program the coach has designed prior to the first implementation.

The first phase is the **conditioning phase**. It is done in a long period of time from three to four months. It is long in terms of duration because it will serve as the core of their skills that has to be developed next after they finished the first phase. Conditioning phase focuses on endurance, speed, power, strength, agility and other related components required in their sport. It should be ranged from 60%-70% within three to four months of training. The first phase also included skill development that ranges from 30%-40% within three to four months. The skills that had to be developed were the skills required in the sport wherein the coach is working with. The time should be equally divided for the aspects of the conditioning phase. There is a third aspect in this phase, the psychological aspect, but it has only 10% in the first two phases of the program. It is more on motivating factor. The focus of the motivation is to make the athletes strive to pursue their performance level in preparing themselves for a competition. This could be a critical stage especially when athletes experience hard times in conditioning themselves and improving the required skills. The coach must make the athletes understand that motivation is a shared responsibility. If not, others might quit.

If this program was followed religiously according to plan, the coach can now move on to the next phase, the **skill-phase**. It could be done from three to four months also. In this phase, the percentage of conditioning aspect should be minimized or lessen
to 30%-50% for the reason that the focus will be on skill development. The skill aspect should raise its percentage from 30%-40% to 60%-80% of the training. The psychological aspect will remain 0-10% within three to four months of the training. Drills and exercises to improve their required skills must be consistent, effective and efficient until errors are eliminated. It is the phase wherein athletes are starting to make their muscle and other systems memorize the skills. Psychological aspect is remained lower because athletes were also starting to like what they are doing in the training. So, 10% should be enough to motivate them.

After six or eight months of training following the phases of conditioning and developing skills, one to two months will be allotted for pre-competition phase, a stage wherein the athletes will showcase their skills attained during the training. It is more focused on the execution of skills and plays. These were the keys to their success in the competition. The psychological aspect in this phase must be lifted from 10% to 40%-50%. It could be a great factor in preparing them for the competition. It is a phase wherein overview and odds could be given and explained as well as the possibilities and probabilities of getting the target goal. Conditioning aspect in this phase should be lowered to 0-30% to avoid burn out among athletes but skill aspect should remain high in terms of percentage of 50%-80% but bit lower compared to the skill phase of training. This aspect should remain high for the reason that this phase is a perfection stage of training. Athletes cannot win in the competition if their skills were not mastered before the competition. Preparation should last from one to two months only.

In the competition phase, the conditioning aspect should be lowered to 5%-10% only. Over conditioning in two weeks before the competition can cause pain that might lessen their performance of the skills. The percentage of the skill aspect must be also lowered to 10%-30%. Since the skills were mastered, training the skills must be in cooling down mode. The aspect in this phase that requires high percentage will be the
psychological aspect. Athletes are preparing for the actual competition so they should be motivated well. This phase requires 80%-100% of developing psychological aspects like mental toughness and mental conditioning. Motivation, self-esteem, self-confidence, composure, team work and other psychological factors must be resisted by the athletes. This is the shortest phase of the training and it ranges from one to three weeks. It is more on game planning and motivational factors were exercised by the coach and his staff.

After the phases were completed, the coach can now make an analysis and evaluation based on the result of the game and athletes’ performances. Modification and revisions of the program could be made if there is a need to do so then start all over again after modification and revisions had been made. If the program is successful based on the result, then stick to it or don’t stop adding new components to your program to make the program more effective and efficient.