

## PERIODIZATION



How many times have you seen people cramping, failing to go all the way, or be able to even start. How many times have you seen people perform great during the prelims and then not getting out the blocks at all during the semi's or finals? Why is this happening to a lot of sportsman around the globe and especially to the semi-professional scene?

Let's look a little closer to home... how many of our players are going overseas during the winter period? How many players are working a full-time job during this period, or studying, or just lying around. My question is: how many of our players actually know what to do, when to do it and for how long to do it in order to be fully prepared and fit for the upcoming season. Would it not be interesting to have a look at the previous seasons to see when in the season the most injuries occurred and what sort of injuries did occur in the different stages of the season...

Periodization during off-seasons is a very important, but often neglected part of the year in the career of semi-professional sportsman for a number of reasons. And knowing what this encompasses in order to be fully prepared for upcoming seasons is even more neglected or ill-understood. Here are a few pointers that sportsman should be aware of when preparing for upcoming season:

- ***Rest and Nutrition***
- ***Year-Round Training***
- ***Record Keeping***
- ***Agility and Flexibility Training***
- ***Sprint -, Strength -, Endurance – and Plyometric Training***
- ***Skills Training (Perfect Technique Training)***

Paula Radcliffe, three time winner of the New York Marathon once said: "It does make it frustrating, because you think: why can I get it right all the time in New York, but I can't get it right in the Olympic Games" And the answer to this is pure and simple that her periodization of her training did not allow her to peak at both these specific periods.

John Sheperd wrote the book "Periodization: planning your training for peak performance" in which he highlighted a couple of very important points coaches as well as athletes need to know. These points will help you train better and more efficient in order for every athlete to be 100% prepared for all the curve-balls a very hectic season in your sport might be able to through (or bowl..?) to you. These pointers are as follows:

- ***Which training models is most relevant to the specific demands of my sport – and why?***
- ***How do I make sure I allocate the right amount of training time to each aspect of my fitness requirements?***
- ***How can I use periodization to maximize my strength-training programme – and lift my performance to new heights?***
- ***What are the best strength exercises for me to do – and when?***
- ***How do I maintain all my newfound speed and strength during times of the year when competition, not training, is my priority?***



So, now the question begging is how familiar are we at NWCA with the practicalities of planning our seasons to peak at the right times and also to get the very best result out of the season...

From a physiological perspective, it is impossible to try and improve all the different aspects of one's fitness all at the same time, meaning we'll have to break up our training regimes into compartments where we focus on a specific part of our training at a time. Regardless of the time of the year, an athlete's of season is first and foremost for the build-up

of a base of endurance and then speed, strength, power and explosiveness. It is important to note that different sporting codes demand different sort of training, as it would be unwise to train as a bodybuilder when you want to run the comrades marathon!!

That is why it is important to know that cricket is a sport that demands short stints of speed and explosiveness repeated over a long period of time. This is what makes our sport so interesting, as we need to combine a whole lot of different training methods and combine them to create a fit and ready cricket player. This brings me to a very important part of a off-season/training period. I'm saying this, because I believe that with a medical and biomechanical screening of any athlete, any deficiencies can and will be detected and training can be accurately adjusted to suit the needs of that particular person.

And then – when you know what every individual needs to work on, training can normally be broken up into four phases:

- **Conditioning (Preparation) Phase**
- **Competition Specific Preparation Phase**
- **Pre-Competitive Preparation Phase**
- **Competitive Phase**

During the conditioning phase, you normally work on the principle where you do long sessions at a low intensity and then build up to short, very intense sessions before the competition periods. The reason for this is the fact that you need a base to work from, otherwise the intensity will leave you down and out and you will not even reach the competition phase.

Now, in every one of the four phases, except for the competition phase where maintenance work needs to be done, you will always break up the particular phase in smaller compartments. These compartments are as follows:

- **Aerobic and Endurance**
- **Speed**
- **Base strength**
- **Explosive Strength**
- **Reactive Strength**
- **Power**
- **Combination of Power and Speed**



It is very important to realize that during every one of the above mentioned compartments, it is crucial to have the correct technique. Because if you don't do it right, you will definitely not reap the rewards of all the effort that you have put in. This is where the medical and biomechanical screening done at the beginning of the preparation phase once again comes into play. During the screening, technique - or lack of technique due to discrepancies because of a number of different possible reasons will be spotted and these must be corrected.

Last, but not least...

A lot of the sportsmen think that now that they are fit when the season (competition phase) starts, they don't have to do maintenance work on their bodies. And as already noted, cricket is a very unique sport because of the demands on the body. So, if you do not maintain the different aspects of your new-found fitness, you are sure to become one of the many statistics in the world of sport...

Thus, don't just prepare... maintain too!!!