

East Tennessee State University

From the Selected Works of Jeremy A. Gentles

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Off-Season Training – Implementation and Challenges

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Off-season Training Implementation and Challenges

Jeremy Gentles, PhD, CSCS

Outline

- The off-season; what it should be (and shouldn't)
- Obstacles to an appropriate off-season
- Solutions...(ish)

The Off-Season

- Should be the favorite time of year for S&C
- and...
- Should be a time when sport coaches can take a step back and plan

The Off-Season

- Becomes a nightmare for S&C
- because...
- Off-season becomes an extension of the in-season.

Before I Get Too Soap-boxy

What should the off-season be about?

Off-season Focus

- Is a period of time that should be dedicated to general development/preparation
 - With a shift toward more specific prep as pre-season approaches
- Should increase lean tissue and enhance an athlete's tolerance for more intense training
- Higher volumes and lower intensity

Training Priorities by Season

Sport season	Sport practice	Resistance training	Resistance training goal
Off-season	Low	High	Hypertrophy and muscular endurance (initially); strength and power (later)
Preseason	Medium	Medium	Sport and movement specific (i.e., strength, power, or muscular endurance, depending on the sport)
In-season	High	Low	Maintenance of preseason training goal
Postseason (active rest)	Variable	Variable	Not specific (may include activities other than sport skill or resistance training)

From Essentials of Strength Training and Conditioning, Fourth Edition

Resistance Training Frequency

Sport season	Frequency guidelines (sessions per week)
Off-season	4-6
Preseason	3-4
In-season	1-3
Postseason (active rest)	0-3

From Essentials of Strength Training and Conditioning, Fourth Edition

What Are the Obstacles?

1. Sport coach
2. Sport coach
3. Sport coach
4. Sport coach
5. Sport coach
6. Sport coach
7. Sport coach
8. Sport coach

What Are the Obstacles?

- Personnel (not much you can do here)
- Limited Time
- Mentality
- Administrative support

Obstacle - Limited Time

- Winter and summer break
 - Limited hours (more Div II and III)
- Other NCAA hour limitations

Obstacle - Mentality

- Coach always “needs” athletes game ready
 - Skill does NOT fall off a cliff
- Too many scrimmages in off-season
 - Help them schedule games that still allow for appropriate development
- Not just coaches
 - Athletes, parents, fans, etc.

Obstacle - Mentality

- You must know what to expect
- Example
 - In order to get into sets of 10, you **MUST** be able to count on athletes not going out and doing sprints, punishment runs or continually playing.

Obstacle – Administrative Support

- No support from admin to do the right thing
- Very few know anything about athlete development, particularly at the admin level
- There are major structural problems in college athletics

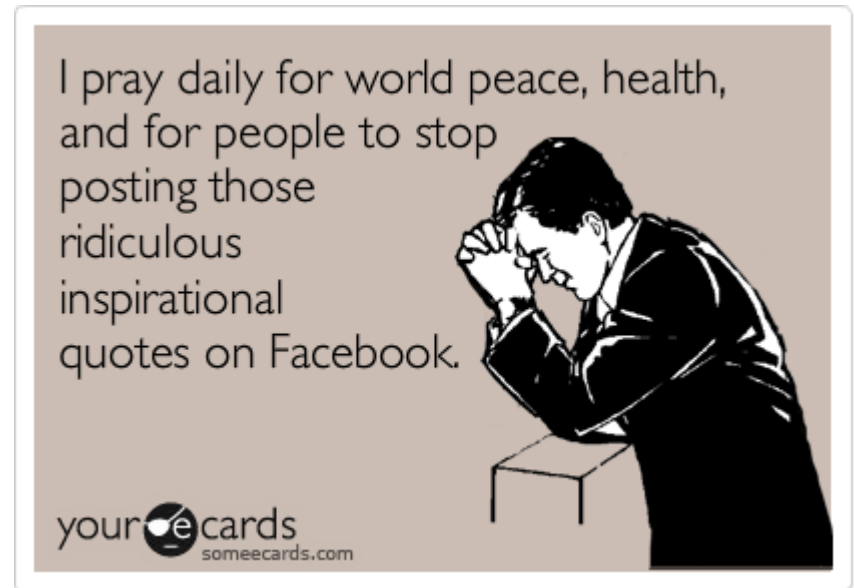
What Are the Solutions?

First, there is NOT always a solution!

Second, there are no little “tricks of the trade”
that can fix these problems.

Creating a Culture

- The buzz culture I see too often...
- Yelling and screaming, inspirational signs and memes, quotes from dead coaches and philosophers



Creating a Culture

- Begin creating this culture by educating athletes and coaches
 - You must be an educator
- If you want (and coaches) to do what they need to do in the off-season or when they go home, they need to understand the process.
 - It is hard to buy into something you don't understand

Creating a Culture

This means....

- You better have a plan
- Athletes (and coaches) should not have to guess
 - They should know what to expect before they get there

Testing (aka, CYA)

- If you don't have numbers, how do you demonstrate you are doing your job?
- Testing may help with athlete compliance
 - Can you keep hold athletes accountable for poor testing results?
 - Can you show that the program really matters in the off-season or when athletes are gone?
 - Must have sport coach buy-in to have any teeth

Testing

- Demonstrate current issues related to athlete dev
 - Ex, lower classmen vs upper classmen
- Test while you train
 - RMs during training
 - Jump height during training
 - Timed sprint, agility and edurance work as conditioning.

Relationships

Of course relationships are important

But...

Relationships

- Everyone has an opinion about how you should do your job as an S&C coach
- These “opinions” often become more than opinions
 - Can you tell the sport coach how to run practice and get away with it?
 - Can you or the sport coach tell sports medicine how to rehab an ACL and get away with it?

Relationships

- So how do keep good relationships
 - Just be flexible?
 - How flexible can you be before it is no longer your program?
- Unfortunately, you might have to ask, “Do I keep my job or do I try to do it right?”
- This reinforces the importance of having administrative support

The Obstacles and Solutions

- Limited Time
 - Culture: Buy in to the process so athletes and coaches do what they need to do (winter and summer)
 - Testing: Hold athletes to the fire with testing results
- Mentality
 - Culture: Educate athletes and coaches
- Administrative support
 - Testing: Demonstrate your success to admin
 - Relationships: Priority is often pleasing the sport coach, but you need your foot in the door

The Long Game

- Need the tools in place to win the long game
- Don't expect everyone to do things right, or even be interested in doing things right
- Off-season is an excellent time for you to demonstrate how development should be done.