

Pre-Season Conditioning

by Brad Hackett

Head Coach @ Muhlenberg College

Chairman – Men's Development USA Track And Field

The key to a successful track and field season can be made or broken in the first 35% of the season. Most training theorist state that the general preparatory facet of the season should be between thirty and forty percent of the overall season. Whether the athlete participates in high school outdoor track and only has an eight week season, or if the athlete is an NCAA All-American and can practice for nine months, the 30-40% concept must be abided by.

A coach must recognize that a high quality and well planned pre or early season conditioning program will determine the rate of success for the upcoming competitive season. Therefore, the objective of this article is to identify potential plans for a pre-season conditioning program.

One dilemma that a high school coach has is that the size and ability level of a roster may make it quite difficult to create workouts for each individual involved in the program. Circuit training is a way which may afford the coach the opportunity to create a conditioning program that will allow each athlete involved in the program the flexibility to improve without risking injury. Circuit training will also allow the coach to have a large group of athletes working out at the same time in a controlled environment.

The coach needs to recognize that during pre-season conditioning there are four primary areas which need to be developed for any track and field athlete. The lower body, the hip flexors, the abdomen (Truck), and the upper body. Listed below are a variety of exercises which the coach may utilize to develop these four important areas. Once the exercises for a particular body part have been identified, circuits may be created in order to rapidly and safely work on that particular facet.

The circuits should be timed rather than designating a specific quantity to each exercise; therefore each athlete will have the opportunity to work within their own athletic ability. An example of this would be the creation of an abdomen circuit. Make the circuit timed by suggesting 30 seconds on 30 seconds off for each exercise.

Abdomen Circuit 30 on 30 off

- 1) Crunches
- 2) V-Sits
- 3) Opposite Knee (Chinnies)
- 4) Flutter Kicks
- 5) Double Leg Eagles
- 6) Toe Touches
- 7) Leg Toss
- 8) Back Hypers with a twist
- 9) Side Ups

A coach can establish the same type of workout with In Place Jumps for the legs, with Medicine Ball throwing for the upper body and abdomen, and with General Strength Circuits for the Upper Body.

Circuit Training is an important part of the overall training season. If the hard work is done in the first 30-40% of the season, the athlete will have the base to allow for a successful season. By creating circuits for the pre-season conditioning facet of the season, the coach will be able to improve the fitness level of the entire team without risking injury to any one individual, as the athletes will be allowed to work within the parameters of their existing fitness.

GENERAL PREP AND CONDITIONING

I. In Place Jumps

- Straddles
- Splits
- Double Leg Butt Kicks
- Single Leg Butt Kicks
- Tucks
- Stars
- Russian Kicks
- Slalom Lines
- Single Leg Squats
- Prisoner Squats
- Pogos
- Lunge Good Mornings
- Downhill Skiers
- Lateral Squat Jumps
- Rockets
- Speed Skaters

II. Bounding

- Bounds
- Single Leg Hops
- Double Leg Hops for Distance
- Double Leg Hops for Speed
- Hop Step Step
- Straight Leg Bound to Bound
- Hop Hop Step Step

III. Box Jumps

- Progressive Box Jumps
- Depth Jumps

IV. Hurdle Hops

- Hurdle Hop Consecutive
- Hurdle Hop Pause

V. Abdomen Circuit

- Crunches
- V-sits
- Opposite Knee (Chinnies)
- Back Bike
- Toe Touches
- Double Leg Eagles
- Leg Toss
- Back Hypers
- Side Ups

VI. Medicine Balls

- Overhand Partner Toss
- Chest Pass
- On Knees Partner Toss
- Side Toss
- Back to Back Exchange
- Overhand Backward
- Underhand Forward
- Leg Curls
- Soccer Kicks
- Superman
- Knee Toss
- Seated Roll
- Prone Catch and Toss

VII. Multi Shot Throws

- Overhand Backward
- Underhand Forward
- Lunge Throw
- Squat Throw
- Hop Hop Forward
- Hop Hop Backward

VIII. General Strength Circuit

- Crunches
- Pushups
- V-sits
- Hand Clap Pushups
- Toe Touches
- Decline Pushups
- Chinnies
- Hand Stand Pushups
- Double Leg Eagles

IX. Weight Room

- Squat
- Cleans
- Snatch
- Bench
- Step Ups
- Lunges
- Pullover
- Take Off Punches
- Lats
- Leg Curls
- Leg Extensions

X. Track Workouts

- Mechanics Drills
- A's
- B's
- Straight Leg Bound
- High Knee
- Backward High Knee
- Backward Run
- One Legged Straight Leg Bound
- One Legged Straight Leg Bound A's
- Tempo Runs
- Hill Running
- Stair Runs
- Absolute Speed
- Stick Drill

REMEMBER - THE PYRAMID CAN ONLY BE AS HIGH AS THE STRENGTH AND STABILITY OF THE BASE PERMIT