



PERFORMANCE SOCCER CONDITIONING

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Professional Soccer Athletic Trainers' Society

Present:

Soccer Injury Prevention Strategies

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Pacers High School Student AT Camp, Indiana Athletic Training Association, Washington Nationals (MLB) and D.C. United (MLS).

Richards received his B.S. in Athletic Training from the University of Evansville, where he also served as the interim strength coach for a semester before going to the University of Akron, where he earned his Masters in Exercise Physiology.

A certified strength and conditioning professional, Richards enjoys running sports performance programs focusing on injury prevention and functional movements.

We welcome a new regular contributor the Professional Soccer Athletic Trainers Society (PSATS) to Performance Conditioning Soccer. Each submission will provide coaches, parents and athletes with the latest strategies in prevention injury and maintaining a healthy soccer lifestyle. The mission of the Professional Soccer Athletic Trainers Society (PSATS) is to serve as an educational resource for the Major League Soccer athletic trainers. PSATS serves its members by providing for the continuing education of the athletic trainer as it relates to the profession thereby improving the athletic trainers understanding of sports medicine as it relates to soccer. PSATS strives to improve the education of its members so that they may better serve Major League Soccer, their organizations, and the professional soccer players under their care. PSATS also serves as an educational resource for those outside of the professional soccer community to better educate them on the role of the athletic trainer within the sports medicine team. Thank you PSATS!-ed

This Issue- Massage for Team Injury Prevention

Skylar Richards is in his second season as the Crew's Assistant Athletic Trainer. Richards came to Columbus after gaining experience with various organizations, including the Evansville Otters (Frontier League baseball), Indianapolis



Skylar Richards



Early in my career as an Athletic Trainer and strength and conditioning specialist, I was exposed to soccer and the very European sports medicine approach to its applications. Those experiences triggered the realization of how truly important massage is physiologically to the success of not only an individual athlete but in terms of injury prevention as applied to an entire team. This is especially true in respect to those teams whose seasons are exceptionally long. In this installment, I will apply the basics of massage (covered previously by the periodical by Tim Monaco in issues 13-4, 5, and 6) to season long injury prevention stand point.

When implementing team massage for injury prevention, it is logistically important to make assumptions generally for the entire team while still tailoring to the needs of the individual. We must, therefore, start by assessing the physiologic state of the team. There are several different schools of thought regarding this approach, all of which seem to correlate with typical strength and conditioning periodization schemes. Therefore if your seasons training sessions are properly periodized, it works

well to correlate massage applications with your team's training scheme. General periodization schemes work by breaking up the season into various periods of 1) High Intensity 2) Low Intensity and 3) Medium (Average) phases. These phases can vary in both length and occurrence but should allow us to assess what condition the body is in and therefore what massage approach is best.

High intensity

High intensity periods will focus on long duration training at heart rates above 90% while also utilizing great amounts of force production. The physiologic response of the body to this type of training is muscular force production and lactic acid creation. Therefore, the majority of treatment time should be spent dealing with this tissue break down and metabolic waste. A flushing technique should be used to move this metabolic waste. Flushing massages work best with gravity aided effleurage. In this technique, the limb is put into a position that causes gravity to move the target waste toward the torso while the deep, broad strokes of effleurage encourage faster movement. (Note: flushing should not only focus solely on muscle fluid but moving joint effusion as well). However due to the nature of the muscle breakdown, working too aggressively on deep tissue can cause further fluid buildup and tissue inflammation. A knowledgeable therapist will find appropriate tissue depth where fluid build up occurs without causing tissue bruising.

Low Intensity Weeks

The goal of these weeks is to allow the body to heal, recover, and rebuild from both the high intensity work and prolonged periods of any intensity of training (i.e. mid season). Because our goal during this time period is for recovery, performing aggressive and deep tissue work could negate the healing process. However, because there will not be a significant amount of metabolic waste created, due to the nature of low intensity training. Therefore, it is an opportune time to create physiologic changes using less damaging techniques. Due to its focus on the superficial tissue and not the recovering deep tissue, myofascial release work can greatly help to improve function and mobility while allowing the tissue to recover. Other techniques

such as joint traction and static stretching (utilized post training) are both gentle on the muscle tissue while aiding function.

Average Intensity periods

The majority of your trainings sessions, by definition, should fall within this category. Because of the broad inclusiveness of this period, focus should be on individual player needs. This means your focus will be a balance between soft tissue maintenance (asymptomatic) and soft tissue correction (symptomatic). (Note: symptomatic does not indicate injury, however but the "normal" dysfunction of tissue caused by training).

This period then becomes the most important time for an experienced therapist to identify areas that are or could become problematic. Below are some examples of different treatments that typically apply to the two different categories.

Asymptomatic

- Rolfing
- Self treatment (i.e. foam rolling)
- Facial rolling
- PNF stretching
- Active Mobilization

Symptomatic

- Myofascial release
- Graston techniques
- Deep tissue work
- Joint mobilization

In summary, I encourage professionals to adapt their approaches to best fit their teams' needs while maintaining the physiological state of the team as the foundation for their treatment plans.●

More Information Please!

For further information or clarification on the subject contact Skylar at SRichards@thecrew.com.