

The Evolution of Sport Practice

James Smith

Coaches world wide must be educated to the fact that sport practice and any other training or rehabilitation outside of practice are all the same thing- Movement.

Movement is the commonality shared between technical sports practice, physical preparatory training, and active methods of physiotherapy.

Physical preparatory and physiotherapeutic strategies have advanced over time down to the minutia of specific loading variables (sets, repetition, recoveries, density/frequency, intensity, volume, amplitude, direction, miometric, isometric, pliometric, reactive/elastic, perturbations/oscillations, H-Wave, Cold Laser, Muscle Stim, massage/myofascial techniques, and etcetera...). These variables have been dissected, researched, published, and discussed to the point of becoming mind numbing. As a result, however, outcomes are very much predictable in terms of biomotor and physiological adaptation rates as well as rehabilitative/recovery/regeneration methods, and the time needed to return to full preparatory activities following a plethora of traumas, surgical repairs, and the like.

Ironically, however, the technical-tactical realm, particularly regarding team sport preparation, exists in the dark ages. To this day, around the world, the focus remains on drills at the expense of optimized methods of execution (which are far more significant than movements themselves) and strategically thought out loading parameters. Further, team sport technical-tactical training fails to be accounted for with anywhere near the same degree of detail as the cyclic and acyclic disciplines which live and die by the smallest of margins (hundredths of a second, centimeters, grams, ...). One may become dumbfounded as quickly as they may become inspired by this glaring inadequacy.

Technical (as well as tactical regarding team, combat, and endurance disciplines) training is exercise; nothing more, nothing less. It is specific exercise relative to each athlete's competitive endeavor. It must therefore be conceptualized with an even greater degree of acuity than any other form of exercise; due to the direct correlation it has with the competitive outcome.

Regarding team sports, while physical preparatory and physiotherapeutic strategies are integral towards attaining the ideal harmony between all facets of preparation, and ultimately sport results, they are both secondary in importance to strategic technical-tactical loading and its transference to sport results. For this reason, at the level of professional/Olympic sport, a multitude of championship programs have attained their results with misdirected physical preparatory methods; yet there has never been a championship program well served exclusively by any possible genius that existed in the physical preparatory or physiotherapeutic domains.

One then wonders how it is that high level sport performances are possible; given the fact that the methods of technical-tactical loading (the most important aspect of sport training) exist at a pedestrian level of sophistication. The liberating factor always has been, and always will be, the talent level of the athletes combined with the coaches ability to motivate them to perform at the highest possible level.

We may thus recognize the historical significance of the talent identification and selection of athletes and how it is fundamental towards high performance results. We must also acknowledge that team sport coaches must, at the very least, possess skill in breaking down and instructing tactics as well as inspiring the athletes to provide their best efforts.

What then might be possible if technical-tactical coaches are educated as to the fundamentals of training adaptation; such that sports technical-biomotor development in the team sport realm is given the same attention to detail as the preparation of a sprinter, triple jumper, thrower, or speed skater? The answer is a level of team sport performance that the world has never seen.