

Developing a Training Program

Priorities must be established to develop an effective training program to target the appropriate skills and organize them into a plan that adjusts frequency and intensity of practice sessions over a period of time to optimize performance.

Training of complex skill sets must be built around a well-organized structure that has been tested and modified to ensure the training objectives are achieved. Planning a training program represents a methodical and scientific procedure designed to assist the athlete to achieve their performance goals.

A training program must be simple and flexible enough to consider the athlete's background and physical potential. Even when based on objective criteria, there must be a willingness to modify the contents to match the athlete's rate of reaction to the physiological challenges and improvements in performance.

The training program needs to identify objectives for the entire training season. The training year needs to be divided into blocks of time in which specific and measurable goals can be achieved based on phases designed to develop technical, tactical, mental, and physical objectives.

Listed below are the different periods of the year, their phases and within each phase the types of training that take place.

Preparation Phases

General

- Developed basic skills
- Adhering to training schedule designed to peak for test or competition

- Establish a regime of high volume, low intensity workouts
- Scheduling aerobic on and off ice training
- Stressing exercises of large muscle groups
- Developing strength and flexibility
- Mental focus and visualization
- Nutritional training

Preparatory to Test or Compete

- Increase aerobic base, start anaerobic work (if age applicable)
- Increasing flexibility and strength
- Mental training – focusing and visualization
- High volume, low intensity practices
- Strengthening technique
- Choreographing a new program

Stages of Competitive Preparation

Early Season Training

- Train energy systems specifically for the performance - stamina
- Introduction of competitive strategies
- Increase number and intensity of workouts
- Concentrate on presentation activities
- Invitational competitions
- Daily full run-throughs of program with all of the planned content
- Evaluation and re-evaluation

Competition Experience

- Emphasize technical consistence
- Alternate low volume, high intensity and high volume, low intensity practices
- Maintain strength - conditioning
- Develop power and ice coverage
- Identify Ideal Performance Levels
- Competing – handling your emotions and the stress of competing

Peaking for the next Competition

- Reduce the workload immediately preceding a key competition to regenerate prior to preparation for the next competition
- What did you learn from your competition
- Start with low volume, high intensity practices
- Emphasis on simulating the competitive experience

Transitioning to the next Competition Season

- Downtime – rest and relaxation
- Recover from the stress of competing and from injuries – listen to your body
- Be active in other interests
- Participate in leisure activities, have fun, take time to enjoy family and friends

Skaters usually go through all phases in a competitive season, but the emotional intensity can vary and the phases may occur in a different order. Some skater at lower skill levels may experience more than one cycle as their competitive season tend to run together. Skaters alternate between just two phases such as the Early Season Training and the Competitive Experience.

Skaters involved in preparing for regional, sectional, and national or international have a different training calendar that reflects the competitions they will be entering. International skaters have to prepare to enter two or three international Grand Prix Competitions prior to skating at the US Nationals to qualify for the World Championships.

Every four years the dates for regional, sectional, National, Grand Prix, and World Championship dates are adjusted to accommodate the Winter Olympic Championships. The additional

of yet another major event requires skaters training schedules to be adjusted.

Reference Resource

Bompa, T.: Power Training for Sport. Mosaic Press 1996. p.49