



IN-SEASON STRENGTH & CONDITIONING FOR SOCCER PLAYERS

PART 2

Physiological markers of fitness can drop off in as little as 5 days...

Below is a quick detraining timeline

Days 3-5: Muscles lose elasticity. Aerobic capabilities drop by 5%.

Day 10: Metabolic rate begins to drop.

Days 11-13: Muscle tone sees first noticeable loss.

Days 17-19: Body becomes less efficient at thermoregulation. You're forced to use more energy cooling off.

Days 20-21: VO2 max had dropped by 20%.

Days 22-25: ~10% loss of muscle mass, which will be converted to excess body wt.

Days 27-29: Muscular strength drops by as much as 30%.

Soccer as we all know is a very physically demanding sport. At times during a high school soccer season players are required to play more than 2 to 3 games over the course of one week, on top of practicing daily usually for 60-90 minutes. As the high school soccer season is almost upon us, I'm convinced that most in-season injury comes from a lack of strength and, at the least, a lack of proper blending of volume, intensity, and frequency.

While many still believe that the overwhelming bulk of strength and conditioning training is done during the off-season, and in my opinion this train of thought is slightly outdated and warrants that physical capabilities are at their lowest at the time when they need to be at a peak... you guessed it, at the end of season when you're wanting to win championships and raise trophies.

The Goal is to Minimize Strength Losses In-Season: It's almost a sure thing that players throughout the season are going to hit some sort of wall when off-season gains begin to noticeably decline. Players seem to be slower, weaker, and fatigued due to the physical and mental intensity it takes to compete at their best during the everyday grind (not to mention the stresses of school work, traveling, and trying to keep a social life). Since soccer has so much volume, the sport needs anti-volume:

1. Too much volume adds fatigue to fatigue.
2. Compounded fatigue can lead to higher risk of injury during game situations.
3. 40-60 minute session once per week is all that is required while in season.

Common Sense + Intuition + Science = The Best Results

Common Sense: Any coach wants their athlete strong at the end of the year especially during post season. To achieve this, the program has to have an effective progression—not too much and not too little—that includes not tiring the athlete or making them sore, yet intense enough to create strength.

Intuition: Intuition comes from experience, and is your personal data base. Intuitively, a strength coach realizes the rigors of the soccer season—the lifting, the travel, and social life stress, and the performance. How do we keep the player physically and mentally healthy while keeping performance at a peak? The answer is to work hard enough to stress the body but to not apply so much stress to negatively affect performance.

Science: Having an in-depth knowledge of strength and conditioning, human physiology, fatigue research, and the effects these have on performance and injury are a must.

