

Build Better Athletes

Implementation Strategy

Overview

1 – decide upon testing events.

My recommendation is to test speed in a flying Sprint, one where the athlete is timed only after they've already gotten up to full speed. This means you are testing their speed not their ability to accelerate. I recommend testing the broad jump and vertical jump as well but just one would be good enough. Testing the broad jump on a soft surface where the athletes are landing on grass, wrestling mats or track and field sand pits is a good idea.

The vertical jump should be tested on a hard surface to get an accurate gauge of their leaping ability. Finally, choose a strength test but be aware that if you choose something like bench press, testing an entire roster could take a very long time. Chin-ups could as well though we had athletes doing them simultaneously on two sets of chin up bars while also in a rotation of other testing events that helps minimize time wasted waiting in line.

If you have a large group of athletes to test and assistant coaches to help you, I would recommend having four kids run the flying sprints at a time with each lane having its own coach doing the timing. Stopwatches work just great as long as the coach doing the timing knows when to start the watch. Ours was an imperfect system but worked. We timed the kids from one cone to the next starting and stopping the watch when they broke the upward plane of each. Doing this from the bleachers makes them more accurate, particularly if the coaches stationed equidistant between the cones.

We gave our athletes three attempts and told them to rotate lanes after each sprint so they would be time by a different coach on each attempt.

After the speed test is over with we then divided the group into three smaller groups. Each of those sub-groups were sent to the other testing stations, one to the broad jump, one to the vertical jump and one to the strength test. At both of the jumping stations, athletes were also given three attempts.

Build Better Athletes

Implementation Strategy

We also allowed athletes to “retest” one time later in the week if they wanted to try and improve their score but that is personal preference and is completely up to you.

A good set of testing events would be....

- 3 attempts in the flying 20 m sprint

- 3 attempts in the broad jump

- 3 attempts in the vertical jump

- A strength test. Pushups would be the most time efficient

Obviously, some sports like football and wrestling may want to get the bench press, power cleans and dead lift marks. Those could certainly be scored as well or be tabulated completely separate from the scoring.

In a sport like football where you have vast size disparities, you could actually have an overall scoring scale and then separate scales for lineman and skill position players for example.

Once you have those decisions made, and the scoring matrix created, now is time to do what I described in module eight which is sell the testing to your athletes and make them see testing day as game day. Doing so will eventually make them realize they need to prepare for testing day which is the ultimate goal of this.

The next step is to create a development system that addresses all five of the bio-motor abilities. When you take inventory of what you are already doing with your athletes you will likely notice that you are already addressing some of them.

If you adopt a strength training program and commit to it regularly each week that area is taken care of. Many sports already do conditioning specific to their sport which means the endurance work has been addressed. Sports like tennis,

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Basketball and soccer require a lot of agility and coordination work so just by doing the drills and playing those sports that area is being addressed as well.

I would encourage coaches in those areas to keep adding coordination drills as discussed in module five and change them up to prevent mastery.

If you make a commitment to do a very well-thought-out flexibility regiment you will have conquered the flexibility realm. Outside of a sport like track and field, true speed work is what most sports do not address yet, the vast majority of sports benefit from their athletes being fast.

Think what it would mean to your basketball or soccer team if two athletes got one more steal apiece from the other team each game. Or in baseball and softball, think about how often a runner is thrown out at first base by the tiniest fraction of a second. Again, we are not talking about making every athlete fast. That is impossible but we can make each athlete faster.

Then study the videos shown in module nine and add those to your pre-and post-practice routines to minimize the chances of injury and you will now have a comprehensive athletic development program in place.

Even while you are in season with your sport, with games coming up quickly and the focus on winning and improving, you will simultaneously still be developing athleticism, not just sport specific skills.

You can then continue improving the athleticism and the sport-specific skills on parallel tracks year-round and reap the benefits.