

Build Better Athletes

Implementation Strategy

Module 8 – Athletic Testing

As a coach, creating a comprehensive athletic development program is the goal but the athletic testing and scoring is the engine of that training program. Why? Because the best planned and thought-out training program will do no good if the athletes are not motivated to take part.

As the video in the module described, I witnessed this first hand. For a decade we did the predictive testing without scoring and the athletes went along with it but showed very little enthusiasm. After adding the scoring matrix AND doing some high-quality marketing with the athletes about striving for a perfect score, ranking high among their teammates, comparing favorably to past All-State or State Champion athletes, they saw the testing entirely differently.

In your case, you may be adding the testing for the first time. This is your chance to make a similar “sales pitch.” Tell them you are using the scoring to track their progress from year-to-year but also point out all of the things mentioned above. Give out banquet awards for the best single-season improvements and testing scores. Point out that the positive scores will be posted for all to see.

In fairness to your situation, when I decided to add the scoring to the testing I had over a decade of test results to use to create the scoring matrix or rubric. If you do not, that is okay. I would recommend testing for two or three seasons before establishing the long-term scoring rubric. Keep two things in mind though.

1 – once you set your long-term scoring matrix it is best that you don’t continually modify it. Doing so will make comparing scores from year-to-year inaccurate

2 – similarly, really examine what tests you want to implement and try to keep them the same for the duration as well. It is also crucial to the consistency of the scores that the tests be conducted the exact same way from year-to-year.

I recommend that you test athletes for speed, explosiveness and strength. When I was testing my track and field athletes we did the flying 40-yard dash, a standing Broad jump, a vertical jump and a chin up test. I did two different types of jumping tests because that sport has events that require horizontal explosion and vertical explosion.

If your sport does not, you could drop one of those explosion tests or go ahead and test both just as a measure of athleticism.

Until you’ve accumulated enough scores to establish average performances, from which you can build your positive and negative scoring for each event, you can come up with any

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temporary scoring system to rank the athletes on that specific team for **just** that one season. A year or two later, once you have the permanent matrix in place, you can go back and re-score all of the athletes already tested if you like. Doing so is important in my opinion but completely optional.

We made sure to test every athlete the first day or two of the season. It would be even better to test as many athletes as you can two or three times a year. That would certainly keep the athletes motivated to train knowing that the next testing was only a few months off. However, that's not very realistic with the busy schedules that most athletes (and coaches) deal with today.

Ultimately, creating a program that addresses all five bio-motor abilities in conjunction with the athletic testing and scoring will be a major boost to your program and well worth the effort that goes into it. As noted in the video, the testing and scoring will impress many parents and likely the administration as well which is always a good thing.

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