

Season Planning – The Key to Peak Performance

“Failure to Plan, is Planning to Fail!”

Why a Season Plan?

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 1. Create a blue print for future planning – How do you know what has worked in the past if you don't plan your training.
 2. To provide focus and build progression throughout the season and throughout a career.
 3. Only way to get better from season to season and year to year is to be able to do a little more each season. Could be a little more volume or more volume in a particular energy system.
 4. How can you know if you did any more if you don't have it planned out?
 5. Chance to reflect on the success and failure of the season. (What went well and what didn't work.)

Training 101

- 7 Energy Systems that we are developing through the course of a season.
 1. REC: Warm-up & warm-down (HR under 140) Done everyday!
 2. EN1: Low end aerobic training (HR 140-150) Done everyday!
 3. EN2: “Anaerobic Threshold” (HR 150-170) Can be done everyday to some degree!
 4. EN3: VO2Max or “Maximum Oxygen Uptake” (HR 180 and above) Need 24 – 48 hrs. in between bouts!
 5. SP1: Anaerobic System done w/ no recovery in between efforts (Max HR) Need 48 – 72 hrs. in between bouts!
 6. SP2: Anaerobic System done with EZ swim in between efforts (Max HR) Need 48 – 72 hrs. in between bouts!
 7. SP3: Alactate system (short sprints at max speed) Done everyday!
- What determines which energy system you are training? Heart Rate and rest in between repeats or swims.
- Aerobic vs. Anaerobic vs. Alactate as your source of energy

Training Phases in a Season

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 1. Phase 1: Aerobic Development
 2. Phase 2: Aerobic Endurance
 3. Phase 3: Max Endurance
 4. Phase 4: Speed Phase
 5. Phase 5: TAPER

- Plan backwards if I have 24 weeks to train how many weeks in each phase?
 1. Taper 2-3 weeks
 2. Speed Phase 4-6 weeks
 3. Max. Endurance Phase 3-4 weeks
 4. Aerobic Endurance 7-12 weeks
 5. Aerobic Development 3-4 week

How Do We Develop a Season Plan

How do we as coaches develop a season plan?

1. Must first determine your focus meet for the season.
2. Important note: ALL SWIMMERS SHOULD HAVE A SEASON ENDING (CULMINATING) MEET.
3. Figure out the total number of weeks that you have to work with.
4. Plan the number of weeks that you will be spending training in the different training phases during the season.
5. Plan your training cycles backwards from the end of the season “Championship Meet”.
6. Stair Step Approach to training: 3-4 weeks of building volume and intensity and 1 week of recovery and testing.
7. Goal of training is adaptation! Allowing the body to be given a training stimulus, recover, and then hit it again at a higher level. Following the recovery period the body comes back stronger or with a higher capacity for work.
8. Must balance training physiology, biomechanical efficiency, and competitions in preparation for the culminating meet for that particular season.

Adding Competitions into the Season Plan

- Take a look at this fall/winter's meet schedule.
- Point out culminating meets for each group or level of swimmer on the team.
- Looking at meets as opportunities to rehearse your race strategy for the end of the season.
- Give the swimmer's opportunities to take the skills that they work on in a practice setting and see how they respond in a racing environment.
- Kids will not swim fast all of the time during the season, and as kids get older this becomes less and less of a chance of occurring.
- Focus can't always be on the end result of the time. The time on the scoreboard can't be the only thing that determines success and failure.
- We as coaches see the big picture, and often times it is tough for the parents and athletes to see that big picture.

Adding Competitions to the Season Plan pt. 2

- Enough meets to compete at so that you are “race ready” come the end of the season, but not competing so much that you miss training or don’t give your body enough of a chance to recover.
- Must try to get swimmers into multiple “levels of meet competition” along the way.
- Should compete in some meets that the competition is below your level, some meets where the competition is equal to your level, and some where the competition is higher than your level.
- Be tough on the kids when they are competing against the lower level meets (don’t let them go through the motions and make mistakes that can lead to unaccomplished goals at the end of the season).
- Higher level competitions: lots of reassurance and confidence boosting. Keep it positive!

Taper Phase – Senior Swimmers only

- Not much literature on Tapering.
 1. 14 pages out 800 pages of Maglischo's "Swimming Fastest" bible on swimming
 2. 15 pages out of 300 pages of Australian Great Bill Sweetenham's "Championship Swim Training"
- 1-4 weeks in duration
- I use the gradual approach to tapering by cutting back the workload during that period(coming back down the stairs)
- Drop 200-400 yds. off the volume of the workout each day, as well as cutting back the workload done in each energy system that we are training.
- Very individualized as seen in the factors when planning a taper, throw that on top of the different athletes that have different season ending meets and it can be a circus.
- See sample taper plan and taper workout.

History of Tapering

Prior to 1960

1. Prevailing thought was that athletes should increase their training volume and intensity to peak levels just before the swimmer's championship meet.
2. Coaches believed that this would bring athletes to their peak of physical performance for the meet.
3. We now realize that the opposite effect happened causing swimmers to go into their season ending meet fatigued and peak performance was unlikely to occur.

1970's and 80's

1. Different approach to training and tapering.
2. Swimmer's finished their heaviest training load a few weeks prior to their season ending meet.
3. Reduced period of training leading into major competition.
4. Allowed athletes to recover and super adapt to their training resulting in higher levels of performance.
5. This period of reduced training came to be known as Tapering.

The last 10-15 years

1. More and more research done to try to demystify the taper.
2. Focused on the physiological effects of the taper on the athletes.
3. Research has shown that the duration of a peak performance can be maintained for 7-10 days without additional training.
4. 2-3 peaks can follow within that next 1-2 months of that initial taper if training time is available.
5. Highly individualized time of the season.

Factors affecting the Taper

- Factors Affecting the Taper

1. **Training Background** – those athletes that swim on a year round basis can taper a little longer and have a better possibility of being able to peak multiple times in a year.
2. **Athlete's age** – Generally the younger the athlete the shorter the taper. Due to the fact that kids seem to recover faster from training and secondly the younger kids don't train at a high enough volume to be able to taper too long.
3. **Gender Differences** – Females seem to recover faster than males resulting in less time to taper to reach that peak.
4. **Body Composition** – Generally the more muscular the person is, the longer the taper time needed to recover.
5. **Athletes Mental State** – An athlete who constantly worries about their performance or who is always nervous shouldn't be tapered as long as those athletes that are mentally on an even keel.
6. **The events that the athlete competes in** – Sprinters vs. Middle distance vs. Distance Swimmers. Those athletes that are competing in shorter races (50's and 100's) can taper longer than those competing in the middle distance and distance events of 200, 400, 500, 1000, and 1650.

What things can we do to help the taper be successful?

- **Nutrition** –

1. How many of you were at Brad Arnett's talk last week? Brad had a lot of great information. Handouts from Brad's talk are here if you need them. The talk is also posted on Youtube. Don't wait until the day or two before the meet, start making changes now.

- **Hydration** –

1. keeping well hydrated leading into the meet and at the meet. DRINK WATER AND CUT BACK ON THE SPORTS DRINKS!

- **Sleep** –

1. Similar to the Nutrition portion, It is great to get a good nights sleep the night before the meet, but more important to get enough sleep the weeks leading into the meet.
2. Just because the swimmer has extra energy because of tapering doesn't mean it should be wasted staying up later than normal – especially important on the weekends leading into the meet. Don't do everything training wise in the pool and then not follow up with being smart about how late you are up on the weekends.
3. sleepovers for younger swimmers or staying out late for the older swimmers serves to put you into a sleep deprivation mode that will carry into the next weeks practices and could lead to illness.

- **Rest (in and out of the pool)** –

1. This is what tapering is.
2. We do it in the pool to allow the body to adapt to a season of training and let the body recover and feel strong and ready for a great performance.
3. Don't counteract this rest in the pool by not also resting outside the pool.
4. Parent's I am not saying that Johnny or Susie can't do anything at home, what I am saying is don't go play the soccer tournament, or participate in the big run or race, or shovel 10 inches of snow.

What things can we do to help the taper be successful?

- **Mental readiness/focus**

1. Take care of the controllables. The only thing we have control over is ourselves.
2. Swimmers and parents don't focus your kid's swimming on another competitor. Don't focus all of your energy on trying to beat a rival or teammate. This isn't beneficial use of energy.
3. Stay calm, confident, and positive.
4. Don't make it harder than what it is. Don't spend the weeks and days stressing about all the what ifs that the upcoming meet might bring. All we are asking as coaches is for the kids to do is swim a set distance faster than what they have done it in the past -- pure and simple!

- **Don't Cut corners**

1. We already are cutting back the workload at practice, so make sure that you complete what the workout calls for.
2. Too often warm-up and warm-down get neglected (swimmers getting in the water late for warm-up and getting out and running into the locker room before warm-down is completed). Warm-up important to be ready to perform well in the day's workout and warm-down important so that you can perform well on the next workout.
3. Don't do anything stupid that could affect the outcome of the end of the season meet. HS Boys example.
4. "100% right is 100% right; 99% right is 100% wrong"

- **Make Corrections**

1. Taper time can be a great time to make technique corrections.
2. The body isn't as tired, and most swimmers are more focused during Taper which may make it easier for kids to hone in on what they are doing and have the ability to make the appropriate correction.

- **Communicate**

1. Make sure that your swimmer communicates how they are feeling with their coach.
2. Communicate sooner rather than later, the sooner we know about something the better we can adjust what we are doing.

What can you expect during taper?

- **Mid taper Blues**

1. Normal to feel sluggish or heavy at some point in time during taper.
2. Sore or stiff – this is your body adapting to the training. Spend some extra time stretching and warming down, ice bath, hot tub (only a couple of minutes), massage. All dependent on how you are feeling. Talk to your coach if you have questions.
3. This happens at different times during taper for each person due to the individual differences that we discussed earlier.
4. As long as you are keeping your heart rate in the appropriate level you are still getting the desired training affect. Don't get too hung up on any times done during taper – because you went :45 on a broken 100 the year before and only went :47 this year. Has no bearing on your success at the meet.

- **Things to be aware of (swimmers)**

1. You don't have to feel good to swim fast! Feeling good is an extra benefit. It is hard not to feel good once you get to the meet, put on a racing suit, and shave.
2. Be mentally tough! Your body will do whatever your head tells it to do – Don't talk yourself out of it. Tell yourself how good you feel or how strong you feel in the water, and with repeated positive self talk your body will start to realize that it does feel good or strong or whatever you tell it to feel.
3. Stay Positive! This will help you feel better about what is happening and it will help your teammates out also. No one wants to swim with negative people. Stay upbeat, positive, and excited.

- **Things to be aware of (parents)**

1. Your kids may be more irritable during this time – hard to believe that it could be at a higher level than what they normally function at. Due to the stress, doubts, and impending doom that many kids feel during this time.
2. Stay positive around your swimmer(s). Read the Parent Pressure article copied from Splash Magazine.
3. Enjoy the meet with your swimmer(s). Ultimately it is about the journey and experience and not the end result.
4. Don't keep your swimmer home to rest the night before the competition. This is their last chance to be with their teammates, loosen up, get excited about the meet, and get reassurance from their coaches.

Things to remember

- No doubts, swimmers must believe 100% that they are going to succeed. Parents and coaches must help them with this. “The Belief in limits creates limited people!”
- Communicate with your coaches. Don’t wait until the end of the season when it is too late to fix something that may be fixable. Ask your coaches the questions. Tell them how you are feeling so that they can make adjustments for you.
- It drives me nuts as a coach to hear after the fact that “these certain things weren’t done”. Communicate with your coach so that each swimmer gets what they need to be successful.
- If you fall short of your goals, the season is not a loss. Formulate a plan with your coach to make it better the next season.
- Success is more than just swimming faster times and seeing what the scoreboard says. Swimmers can be successful during the season in many other ways (ie. Learning of life skills, technique improvements, etc.).

Hard work is always rewarded! It may not always be as fast as we hope, but I am a firm believer that it pays off eventually!

Don't Be Afraid to Fail

Successful people are not afraid to fail; they have the ability to accept their failures and continue on, knowing that failure is a natural consequence of trying. The law of failure is one of the most powerful of all... you only really fail when you quit trying. – Wynn Davis