



Off-season and Preseason Conditioning

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For those of you who are preparing to participate in a high school fall sport the summer is the time of year for you to build a foundation of strength, speed, and endurance that will help you to both perform better in your sport and lessen the likelihood of sustaining injuries.

For a fall sport athlete the summer falls into what is called by strength and conditioning professionals as the preparatory period. The preparatory period is the time of the year for an athlete when there are no competitions and only a limited number of sport-specific skill practices or game strategy sessions. This is a great time for an athlete to focus on establishing a base level of conditioning to increase their tolerance to more intense training. The preparatory period can be divided into 3 phases: Hypertrophy/endurance phase, basic strength phase, and strength/power phase.

- The hypertrophy/endurance phase occurs early in the preparatory phase and can last from 1 to 6 weeks. This stage often involves low intensity work at a high volume to increase lean body mass and develop general muscular and metabolic endurance.
- The basic strength phase involves a resistance program that is more sport specific. Heavier loads and fewer repetitions are used during this phase to build muscle mass.
- The strength/power phase is the last phase of the preparatory phase and it involves performing power and explosive exercises at high loads and low volumes to achieve gains in speed and explosiveness.

In summary, there is a lot that you can do this time of year that can go a long way in producing a productive, successful, and healthy fall athletic season.