

TRAIN HARD OR TRAIN SMART?

BY
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I remember it like yesterday. I was invited to perform a workout for a High School Baseball Team in metro Atlanta GA. I did some SAQ work (speed, agility, quickness), position specific footwork drills and I ended with traditional baseball conditioning. The conditioning was “poles”, which is running from foul pole to foul pole within a predetermined time. The time frame was 15 min for conditioning and 15 min for the SAQ work, I considered that a good day. However; the coaches and parents were not happy at all. They wanted more running. I asked them why and they said, “They just need to run until they can’t run anymore”.

This is the mindset that us strength coaches are trying to change. Are we training baseball players or distant runners? Baseball is a sport, which is anaerobic by nature (without oxygen). Baseball requires short to moderate bouts of explosive movements. Doesn't it make sense for our conditioning to be short to moderate in duration?

Endurance is a factor with baseball conditioning; this is how we establish a conditioning base. However, running miles upon miles isn't necessary. A base can be established with long sprints and monitoring rest between sprints. A typical workout is as follows.

1. Baseball skill work (hitting, throwing, fielding)
2. Conditioning (long sprints, poles, gassers, base running)
3. Core routine
4. Stretch for cool down

This is a typical off-season workout lasting about 1 1/2 to 2 hours 3xweek. When you keep the player moving and monitor the rest time, you are well on your way to creating a baseball specific endurance level. The remaining days (e.g. Tuesday, Thursday) **consist** of SAQ work, along with the baseball skills work, core routine and cool down. We now have a typical off-season baseball-conditioning program. The next article will discuss in season programming which can get tricky with games and travel.



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