



Developing a high level of skill in any sport requires thousands of hours of training and competition. Soccer is no exception. U.S. Soccer's Recognize to Recover program promotes periodization as an important element in the development of a strong player and team.

PERIODIZATION PROTECTS PLAYERS

Excessive training and an intense competitive schedule can be counter-productive to player health and potentially result in decreased performance, injury and burnout. It is important to apply a detailed and disciplined periodization schedule to soccer training and competition to allow athletes time to recover from the demands of the sport.

Player fatigue is a natural and expected result of any soccer training and competition. Intense play, such as during a game, leads to acute fatigue characterized by a decline in physical performance over the following hours and days. This fatigue impacts both the nervous system and muscular system. In cases of acute fatigue, players may require more than three days to completely recover, both physically and mentally. During this time, the player may also be at a higher risk for injury.

PERIODIZATION SIMPLIFIED

Periodization creates a systematic training plan for an athlete or team involving progressive increases and decreases of different training components, such as strength, power, speed, endurance. The training differs for each period of the season and reflects different training goals specific to that time of the season. The concept helps players reach their best possible performance in the most important competitions of the year.

BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE YEAR

At a minimum, each year should be made up of distinct phases of training and recovery. In simplest terms, it should include:

- Pre-Season: light workouts allow the player to adjust to rigors of training
- In-Season
- Pre-competition: builds aerobic stamina and skills; training may include longer practice sessions and increased intensity
- Competition: prepares players for best performance by increasing practice intensity and reducing practice length or adding recovery time
- Transition or Off-Season: recovery period allowing the body time off through complete rest or by engaging in other activities that do not include typical soccer skills

EIGHT TIPS FOR TRANSITION

1. Focus on mental and physical recovery
2. Training sessions should focus on fun and simple objectives
3. Allow for family time and individual needs
4. Consider the length of the season and the length of the off-season when designing a transition plan
5. Allow players flexibility in deciding what activities they want to participate in during off-season
6. Maintain no more than two structured training sessions per week
7. Focus on injury prevention by training 'weaker' areas of body, small muscles and strength imbalances
8. Maintain fitness to be better prepared when pre-season conditioning resumes

Periodization Scheduling:

It typically takes from four to eight weeks to see significant improvements in skills such as strength, speed, power or endurance. Divide the training schedule into smaller segments, each with a beginning, end and rest period.

- Annual Plan: yearly plan of major training and competition components
- Macrocycle: training unit of four to six months
- Mesocycle: training divided into monthly time periods
- Microcycle: one-week training periods
- Training Day: each day's exercises and goals
- Training Unit: reps and sets of specific exercises



**RECOGNIZE TO
RECOVER.**

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NUTRITION FOR SOCCER

SOURCE

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