

European Athletics Coaches Association Workshop Split, Yugoslavia 16-17 January 1988

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The second workshop of the EACA was held in Split, Yugoslavia on 16-17 January 1988. A total of 76 coaches attended. Accommodation was at the Hotel Lav and the workshop itself was held in Hajduk Stadium, site of the 1990 European Championships. The theme of the workshop was "Speed Training".

The programme outline was as follows:

- Day 1 - General introduction and briefing
 - Workshops on year plans
 - Workshops in units
- Day 2 - Workshop on micro-cycles
 - Workshop on macro-cycles
 - General conclusions.

The delegates operated in four event groups i.e. Sprints and Hurdles, Endurance Events, Throws, and Jumps. A group leader was assigned to each group on arrival. His role was to draw members of the group into active involvement in the workshop. In the course of the workshop it was anticipated that each group would generate examples of each coach's practical approach to speed training.

In the main, the purpose of the workshop was well met, even if, as in Leuven at the first workshop, it took time to establish the tempo of group participation for a successful workshop. However, lessons are learned all around during such an experience and the organizers were able to identify several points which should help to ensure even more successful workshops in the future. In addition, the leaders of

each group reported what they felt were the most important points to emerge in their group's discussion. The main points from the Sprints and Hurdles, Endurance Events and Jumps groups are summarized below:

Sprints and Hurdles (Robert Inglis - GBR)

1. Sprinting speed is best developed by exposure to maximum/sub-maximum speed training over distances up to 80m. This effectively means 98% or better.

2. Speed training is a year round activity.

3. The preparation of the sprinter, throughout the year, requires parallel development of strength and speed. The underlying principle is that all relevant training methods must be worked on together with the emphasis shifting throughout the year to produce final high level performance.

4. The preparation of the sprinter needs to be progressive week to week, month to month and year to year. There were varying points of view as to how the programmes should progress but the twin-peak micro-cycle was the most used and favored. Climate and facilities, it was pointed out, could explain some differences in approach.

It was interesting to hear some coaches indicate that at the end of a recovery and regeneration micro-cycles, sprinters feel lethargic and reluctant to perform at speed. A suggested reason for this is that the body physiologically has over compensated, but that there has been a "slight breakdown of the nervous system".

5. The most significant discussion was on the quality of speed in training and the requirements of the final performance. Suggestions in this area include the use of supra-maximal run-

ning with various pieces of apparatus. (A number of coaches did not feel that downhill running made a contribution in this area). This problem is related when the coach, having used every means at his disposal to improve performance, has found that the athlete's progress has come to an end. In these circumstances it may be appropriate to force further improvement by supra-maximal training.

Endurance Events (Jose Manuel Ballesteros - ESP)

The basis of improvement in speed for middle distance runners is the increase of *power* which can be effected through the following methods:

1. *Training with loads* such as weights, weighted vests and belts etc. In the beginning this should be with local loads and high repetitions and aimed at the developing of the muscle groups used in the act of running. Later, displacing exercises can be used to work on the dynamics of speed power.

2. *Multi-jumps* mostly of the horizontal type. This is aimed at developing elastic power. The distances used should be from 50m to 100m and the progression should be from heavier to lighter loads with increasing speed.

3. *Hauling and hills* avoiding excessive loads and over-steep hills. This type of training, with reduced load and increased recovery, may even be scheduled during competition periods.

On the other hand, speed in middle and long distances is a relative factor and depends on the degree of fatigue (the fastest athlete is not necessarily the fastest finisher). In the middle distances it is harder to run a 24 second 200m at the end of a 800m race than it is at the end of a 5000m race. There-

fore, a certain amount of resistance training, depending on the particular race, should be carried out as follows:

1. *Interval sprints* of 50m with intermediate recoveries of 50-100m totaling 3000m.

2. Any other *velocity-resistance* methods with the aim being to reduce the rests between efforts to the lowest possible level while using the breaks between sets for recovery. This type of work is most necessary for 800m runners and of reduced importance as the distance of the race increases.

Jumps (Thomas Larsson - SWE)

1. Optimal speed is the most important factor in the jumping events and should be as close to maximum speed as possible. Therefore development of maximum speed is of primary importance.

2. Development of speed for the horizontal jumps follows the same basic principles used for the sprints.

3. As it is necessary for the long jumper to lower the body's centre of mass (CM) in the penultimate stride, thus causing a deceleration, it is vital to practice lowering the CM gradually in the last six strides to improve long jump capability.

4. Speed training for jumpers should be as specific as possible. This means that speed training should be done in relation to jumping exercises and with a lower CM. An example could be to do 6-8 approach runs timing the last 4 strides. This can be done all year round or only in the competitive period.

5. In the long jump, it is suggested that the mind should focus on the speed of the swing leg at take off. This action can be trained by using a short (4-6 strides) run-up, stepping on a box

no higher than 10cm on the penultimate stride then jumping from a regular board.

6. Reactivity, the connection between speed and strength, should be practised and monitored regularly.

7. Future training units will feature a mixture of methods within the unit – for example strength and technique or reactivity training. However, because of the risk of injury, caution should be used when mixing full jumps with speed training.

8. When using towing to develop speed it is important to limit the resistance to a level that will not slow the athlete more than 0.4 sec.

9. It is important that the athlete has an understanding and involvement in the planning of his training. The more this knowledge and understanding increase the closer to optimum each training unit will be.

10. The chances for competitive success are greatly increased if the athlete can remain injury free. Therefore, this objective, demanding knowledge, caution, anticipation and ingenuity, must become a priority. An example of this is the use of paper hurdles when doing bounding exercises.

Future fixtures for the EACA

1989 - Sprints, Hurdles and Relays Congress - Bad Blankenburg, GDR.

1990 - Endurance Training Workshop - Barcelona, ESP

1991 - Middle & Long Distance Congress - Vierumakeki, FIN.

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