

Training Philosophy

Martin: How would you describe your training philosophy in a few sentences?

Pat: I always ask the question: is this specific to the event? And if not, is it essential to injury prevention? The rest of it you don't need.

Now specificity for throwers and sprinters includes things like plyometrics; even though it is not specific to the technique it is specific to fast-twitch muscular work. So while Evelyn lifted very little weight – she never did squats or snatches – she did plyometrics and countless fast tempo drills called shake-ups.

I've learned a lot, even since coaching Allyson Felix in 2004. I question every aspect of the workout. The injury prevention stuff has to be done every day throughout the season but we don't waste time with unnecessary drills that aren't specific to the event whether it is sprints or throws.

Martin: You mentioned that training must be either specific or help with injury prevention. Can you give some examples that help with injury prevention?

Pat: Almost 90% of what I did as a coach was injury prevention. The actual technique and kinesthetic awareness required for sprinters to run at a speed faster than anyone has run before is scary. You can't sprint if you are injured. Injuries are a real part of the game, so I focused on injury prevention. As a result of that, when I was coaching at Radford University the throwers were especially upset with me because I made them go on long walks like Allyson Felix had done.

Because of the way your foot strikes in front and pulls your hips over your foot you are developing butt power. **Walking fast uphill** requires even more development of butt power and also, strengthens the anterior tibialis, which is good for preventing shin splints.

My last coaching gig was at a boy's high school in Maryland where I had a lot of football players. They came off the football program beat up and vulnerable to injuries.

For their warm up, instead of jogging a mile, which was what the head coach had them do, **I had them walk a half-mile as fast as they could. They hated it, as did the heavy throwers because it is hard; everyone was surprised how hard walking is. Injury prevention is the real secret of sprinting. All the other drills don't matter if you are hurt.**

*A common drill at the time was **hop-backs** and it really worked my butt. Once I made that connection I made it an instrumental part of my sprinters training. You lean forward, stand on one leg, and hop back 10 times then repeat on the other leg.*

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