

Lesson Five: Periodization of the Annual Training Plan

1. Concept of the Training Season

The **major training cycle** refers to the **training season**, which consists of several **medium training cycles**. It is also one of the key components of **year-round preparation** and forms part of a **long-term training plan** extending over multiple years. While it aims to achieve **specific short-term objectives**, it also contributes to **long-term athletic development**.

2. Periodization of the Annual Training Plan

This refers to the **structured planning** of **individual, team, and group training** throughout the year. It is a **repetitive closed cycle**, meaning the plan follows a continuous and recurring structure.

The **timing and technical segmentation** of the annual training cycle are closely tied to the **schedule and significance of competitions** planned throughout the season.

Matveev's Theory of Periodization

The Russian scientist **Matveev** introduced the **modern periodization model** in **1962**, proposing that the training year be divided into three main periods:

- **Preparatory period:** 6–7 months
- **Competition period:** 3–4 months
- **Transition period:** 1.5 to 2.5 months

Both the **preparatory and competition periods** were further divided into **multiple phases**, each with **specific objectives**. These objectives were then **distributed across the phases** to ensure a structured **progression toward peak performance**.

Single vs. Double Peak Periodization

Matveev's model initially focused on achieving **peak athletic performance once per year (single peak periodization)**. However, by **1965**, he demonstrated that **double peak periodization** was **superior to single peak periodization**, particularly in **swimming and track & field**.

1.2. The Annual Training Plan

Setting a **clear goal** is the **starting point** for creating a structured training plan. Every subsequent step is designed to **achieve that goal**.

Sports training experts emphasize the **importance of meticulous planning**, regardless of the **type or level of competition**. This is because **preparation and readiness** ultimately determine an athlete's **best performance**.

The **annual training plan** is a series of interconnected plans that all contribute to a **long-term objective**.

Evolution of Annual Training Plans

During the **1980s and 1990s**, annual training plans evolved **significantly** compared to the **1960s**. The key factor behind this evolution was the **increase in the number of competitions** athletes participated in throughout the year.

- In the past, training was **focused on a single major competition per year**.
- Today, coaches must prepare athletes to **achieve peak performance multiple times** within a single year.
- As a result, the **annual training plan now includes multiple training seasons**, each concluding with a **major competition**.

Types of Annual Training Plans

Depending on the **number of training seasons per year**, annual training plans can be categorized as follows:

2.2. Single-Season Training Plan

During the **1950s and 1960s**, **single-season periodization** was the dominant model. The training year was divided as follows:

- **Preparatory period:** 6–7 months
- **Competition period:** 3–4 months
- **Transition period:** 1.5–2.5 months

Limitations of the Single-Season Model

- This structure **allowed athletes to peak only once per year**.
- Over time, it became **ineffective** due to the **increasing number of competitions**.
- Coaches needed a **more flexible periodization model** to accommodate multiple competitions.
- This led to the development of **multi-season training plans**.

3.2. Two-Season Training Plan

- Introduced in the **United States in the mid-1980s**.
- Suitable for sports with **distinct summer and winter seasons**, such as **swimming**.
- Applied successfully to swimmers like **Salnikov (World Champion, 1500m freestyle, 1982)** and **Michael Groß (Germany, 1981–1982 season)**.

4.2. Three-Season Training Plan

- Developed in response to the **increase in annual competitions**.
- First introduced in **East Germany in the 1970s**, later adopted by **other nations**.
- Allows an athlete to reach **peak performance three times per year**.

- Each season consists of **at least 20 weeks**, with individual periods lasting **6–12 weeks**.

5.2. Four-Season Training Plan

- The training year is divided into **four distinct seasons**.
- Each season **ends with a major competition**.

6.2. Five-Season Training Plan

- The training year is divided into **five seasons**, each lasting **8–12 weeks**.
- Each season concludes with a **competition period of 1–3 weeks**.
- Each training season consists of:
 - **Five medium training cycles**
 - Each medium cycle includes **two microcycles** (each lasting **one week**)
 - This results in a **10-week training season**

Conclusion

- Modern sports training has evolved from **single-season periodization** to **multi-season models** to accommodate **the increasing number of competitions**.
- The choice of periodization depends on **the sport, competition schedule, and individual athlete requirements**.
- The **double-peak model** has proven to be **more effective than single-peak training**, particularly in **high-performance sports**.
- Coaches must adapt **training plans** to ensure **optimal performance at multiple points during the year**.