Lesson Six: Components of the Training Season

The training season typically consists of three main phases:

- 1. General preparation phase
- 2. Specific preparation phase
- 3. Competition phase

The season ends with the athlete's participation in the **targeted championship**. Afterward, there is a **transitional period** designed to **help the athlete recover** from the fatigue accumulated during **competition and intense training**. This phase also prepares the athlete for a **new training season**.

The **duration of the training season** and the **length of each phase** depend on **various factors**. These will be discussed in the following sections.

1. General Preparation Phase

The primary objective of this phase is to **develop the athlete's physical, functional, psychological, and technical foundation**, which will later support **specific preparation**.

The **duration** of the general preparation phase **varies** depending on:

- The athlete's level
- The sport specialization
- Training experience

Proportions of General to Specific Preparation

- Junior athletes: 1:3 (general preparation is three times longer than specific preparation)
- Intermediate-level athletes: 2:3
- Elite athletes: 2:2

Progressive Load Increase

Training load should **gradually increase** in both **volume and intensity**. However, **too rapid an increase** can have **negative effects**, such as:

- Premature **peak performance** without a **sufficient training base**
- Inability to maintain peak condition until the competition
- Risk of injury or burnout

This is known as **"phosphoric training"**, where **high-intensity training is concentrated over a short period**. It achieves **peak form quickly** but does not ensure **sustained performance** throughout the season.

Objectives of General Physical Preparation

- Develop physical attributes (strength, speed, endurance, flexibility)
- Enhance moral and psychological discipline
- Improve motor skills through learning and mastering movements
- Optimize **body functions**
- Develop aerobic and anaerobic capacity
- Strengthen psychological resilience
- Improve overall health and fitness
- Optimize energy expenditure
- Prepare the athlete to tolerate higher training loads

2. Specific Preparation Phase

The goal of this phase is to **prepare the athlete for peak performance (sporting form)** by increasing **competition-specific training**.

This phase includes:

- Sport-specific drills
- **Development of physical qualities** (speed, endurance, strength specific to the sport)
- Increased training intensity
- Technical and tactical training

While the emphasis is on **specialized exercises**, **general exercises are still included** to **maintain the gains from the general preparation phase**.

Key Features of the Specific Preparation Phase

- Gradual increase in training intensity
- Training volume initially remains stable but decreases as intensity rises
- Increased focus on sport-specific skills
- Competition drills progressively become the primary focus

Objectives of Specific Preparation

- Achieve high-level physiological adaptation for the sport
- Improve coordination between different body systems
- Shift training focus from volume to intensity
- Transition the athlete from general fitness to sport-specific performance
- Increase competition-specific drills

At this stage, the coach must have a **deep understanding** of:

- General and specific physical abilities required for the sport
- How to integrate technical and physical training

3. Competition Phase

Objective

The main goal of this phase is to **maximize performance** and **maintain peak form** throughout the competition period.

Training Structure

- The focus shifts to **competition-specific training**
- Training loads are **fine-tuned** to maintain **optimal performance**
- Athletes work on optimizing technical execution and tactical strategies

Different Competition Structures

- Individual sports (e.g., swimming, track & field):
 - The competition is usually at the **end of the phase**.
 - The athlete is prepared to **peak once** at the championship.
 - Training loads are carefully structured and tapered.
- Team sports (e.g., football, basketball):
 - Competitions are **ongoing** throughout the phase.
 - The coach must manage performance across multiple matches.
 - Athletes must **peak multiple times** rather than just once.

Goals of the Competition Phase

- Achieve maximum physical and technical performance
- Maintain peak condition for multiple competitions
- Retain **physical and technical gains** from previous training phases
- Psychologically prepare athletes for competition and handling success or failure

4. Transition Phase (Active Recovery)

This phase serves as a **positive recovery period** to help the athlete:

- Recover from accumulated fatigue
- Gradually transition into a new training cycle

Key Considerations

- Training volume and intensity decrease gradually
- The duration of the transition phase depends on **previous training loads**
- It should **not exceed 4–6 weeks**
- If training loads were low during the season, the transition phase may be skipped

Double Periodization Model

Standard Periodization vs. Double Periodization

Different sports require different training structures.

- 1. Standard Periodization (Three Phases)
 - **Best for endurance-based sports** (e.g., long-distance running, cycling)
 - o A long preparation phase ensures gradual performance improvement
- 2. Double Periodization (Two Competitive Cycles)
 - Ideal for power and speed-based sports (e.g., sprinting, weightlifting)
 - Includes:
 - Preparatory phase 1 → Competition phase 1
 - Preparatory phase 2 → Competition phase 2
 - Transition phase

Matveev's Findings

- Endurance athletes benefit from long preparation phases and gradual load increases.
- Speed and power athletes perform better with double periodization, as training volume is less important than training intensity.

Conclusion

The training season is structured into phases to optimize performance and recovery.

- The general preparation phase builds a solid foundation.
- The specific preparation phase focuses on sport-specific conditioning.
- The competition phase ensures peak performance.
- The transition phase helps prevent burnout and prepare for the next season.

By choosing the right **training model (single vs. double periodization)**, coaches can **maximize an athlete's potential** and ensure **sustained success in competitions**.