

SPORTS CONDITIONING NEWS

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What's Your Reaction?

Reprint: By LaRue E. Cook

I confess, I love inspiring and motivational lyrics to songs. As a matter of fact, I collect them. Here's one that I recently came across that I feel is very appropriate not only for the athletes, but for their supporters (parents, coaches etc.):

The Climb" by Miley Cyrus.

"There's always gonna be another mountain, I'm always gonna wanna make it move, Always gonna be a uphill battle, Sometimes I'm gonna have to lose; Ain't about how fast I get there, Ain't about what's waiting on the other side, It's the Climb."

To me this passage epitomizes what sport is all about – everyday, we as athletes face another mountain! With school about to restart, and middle school, high school and college athletes about to begin practice, taking the steps to ensure that our young athletes are prepared – both physically and mentally is what being a responsible parent, coach or teacher is all about!

Fitness Testing for Soccer Players

In a study reported in the October, 2011 issue of the Strength and Conditioning Journal, researchers took a look at what type of testing battery is appropriate for testing the fitness of soccer players. Like all sport-specific testing, coaches should conduct testing with a view towards what is needed for the particular sport involved. This "needs analysis" should consider such things as the type of aerobic conditioning, speed, strength, agility, speed endurance, power and acceleration is needed for the particular sport and athlete. For soccer the researchers suggest the use of such testing protocols as the "Yo-yo" intermittent test for aerobic capacity, 5-10 meter stationary start sprints for acceleration, and rolling start sprints

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Whether it's in practice, a game, or in the gym, each day is different, and poses a new challenge. Even the most elite athletes can perform great one day and lousy the next; it's what being human is all about. The key is to limit the number of those "lousy days" through hard practice and a positive attitude. One way of doing that is by "practicing" how to focus on what's going right in the training, practice, or game. Here's what I mean. During a tennis match your athlete (daughter) hits a deep approach shot, adeptly moves into the court positioning herself for a volley, anticipates her opponent's passing shot attempt, and then badly misses the volley. Do you see (and note) the great tactical play she made to put herself in position to make the volley, or do you focus on the missed shot? If you see the missed volley, and react to that in a negative way, next time TRY to see the great strategy involved and react positively! You just may be surprised at the confident and daring athlete you will be helping to create!

Article Reprinted from LaRue's published article in Tennis Life Magazine.

(Continued from Fitness Testing for Soccer)

for speed, as well as tests for agility and speed endurance. The authors of the article conclude that no matter what testing protocol coaches select, they must be time-efficient, valid and reliable.

Repair and Replenish

In a recent webinar that I participated in, put on by renowned sports nutritionist Nancy Clark, Nancy spoke of the goals and benefits of post-exercise or competition nutrition. Put succinctly, the primary goals of eating after your game, match or practice is to “repair and replenish” your muscles and glycogen stores. According to Ms. Clark, you do this by ingesting a combination of carbohydrate and protein. High quality carbohydrates and protein serves two purposes, first the carbohydrates help replenish your muscles’ depleted glycogen stores for improved energy, and two the protein helps to repair your muscles from the workout.

So, what are some examples of this type of post-

game, match or practice meal? Ms. Clark gave a few examples such as cheerios and milk, or pasta with meat sauce. Ms. Clark reiterated that, in her opinion, in most instances, food is a cheaper and just as good, if not better recovery method of refueling than many of the commercially manufactured products in the marketplace today.

Do you have questions about what nutritional advice is best for you and your particular circumstances? Our recommendation is to seek the advice of a registered or licensed nutrition professional.

Exercise of the Month

Exercise physiologists may define “acceleration” as “the change in velocity per unit of time.” Put in plain-English, acceleration is the rate that you increase speed. For most athletes, acceleration may be even more important than raw speed! So, how do you improve your athlete’s acceleration?

If you watch a track sprinter begin their sprint, one thing will immediately become apparent – the 45 degree body lean used to accelerate. This lean is important because it is necessary to get the athlete’s center of gravity (COG) moving outside,

or ahead of their base of support (BOS) – in sprinting, their feet. Here’s a simple drill that I use to give my athletes the “feel” of having their COG moving ahead of their BOS. The drill is called “Falling Starts.” In photo #1 the athlete stands behind a low hurdle (6 inches). As she leans over the hurdle, with a straight body, and her body reaches the 45 degree position, Photo #1 (I cue them by saying when they feel as if they’re about to fall on their face), she lifts one foot high over the hurdle (with a high knee action) along with her opposite arm to *explode* out and over the hurdle (see Photo #2).

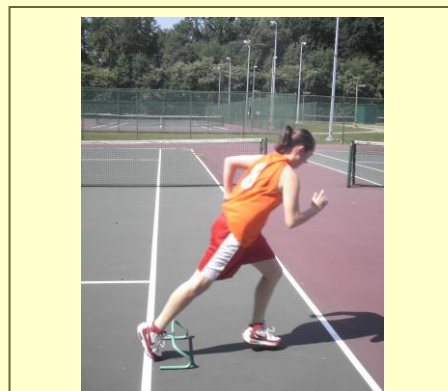


Photo #1 on Left – athlete begins her lean; and Photo #2 on Right – accelerating.

Sports Conditioning Clinic

With LaRue E. Cook

LEC Fitness presented a sports conditioning clinic for tennis players in Southern Maryland on Sunday, October 9th. The clinic was presented to a group of tennis players of all playing and fitness levels, and included exercises teaching proper dynamic warm-up and stretching, strength, power, agility and footwork, core strengthening, and acceleration.

“The group did great, and I think we all had a ton of fun,” said LaRue, the clinic’s instructor.



Tennis conditioning clinic participants performing a shoulder-stabilization exercise.

LEC Fitness Gets New Logo!

After putting its logo design project out for bid, and receiving responses from several designers, we finally decided on a new logo design. Thanks to several of our clients, who voted on their favorite design, we selected this logo.



About LaRue

LaRue E. Cook is the President of LEC Fitness, LLC. He has been working with athletes of all ages for 18 years, and during that time has trained junior athletes just starting in sports, several nationally-ranked junior athletes, high school athletes, and those those pursuing College sports. LaRue has also served as the consulting Strength and Conditioning Coach to a Division II athletic program.

LaRue is a Certified Sports Performance Trainer through the USA Weightlifting Association, a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist through the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA), a Certified Sports Conditioning and Injury Prevention Trainer for the Cincinnati Sportsmedicine Research and Education Foundation's award-winning Sportsmetrics™ Program, a Certified Youth Conditioning Specialist, and a Certified Speed and Agility Coach (USA Track and Field, and ISSA). LaRue is a nationally-recognized strength and conditioning expert who has served as Sports Conditioning contributing author for a variety of publications including ESPN.com, Women's Basketball Magazine, Tennis View Magazine, LiveStrong.com, Tennis Life Magazine, and iHoops.com. Additionally, LaRue has authored a Continuing Education course for the International Sports Sciences Association on Deceleration Training for Female Athletes, and an eBook on Shoulder and Core Strengthening for Throwing, Racquet and Overhead Athletes.

LaRue has served as an Adjunct professor of Strength and Conditioning for Female Athletes, and Youth Conditioning.

We work with individual athletes and parents, coaches, sports teams, or entire athletic programs.

Working with your athletes is our privilege, and one that we will never take for granted.

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