

A Review of Training Theories on Periodization for Sprinters

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Various theories exist on the ideal model of periodization for sprinters. For the most part, two training models exist, the Eastern Model of Periodization and the Western Model of Periodization. The purpose of this paper will be to review literature detailing both models and make a judgment on which is the better of the two approaches.

The two approaches share several points. Both the Eastern and Western Model of periodization begin with a phase of general, low-intensity exercise. This phase may be referred to as anatomical adaptation (Bompa 1991; Bompa 1999), 1st segment preparatory period (Schmolinsky, 2000), or general preparation (Winckler, 1991). In addition to this, both plans stress the need to plan around the competitive schedule (Bompa, 1991; Bompa, 1999; Korchemny; Schmolinsky, 2000). Also, both systems share a method where the load placed on the athlete is cycled throughout the week (Bompa, 1991; Bompa, 1999; Korchemny; Schmolinsky, 2000). Most importantly, the goals of the two training plans are the same- to get athletes in peak sprinting condition for a major championship or event (Bompa, 1991; Bompa, 1999; Bondarchuk, 1988; Dare & Kearney, 1988; Korchemny; Schmolinsky, 2000).

Despite these similarities, their approaches to the periodization of the training schedules are quite different. The Eastern Model of periodization of sprinters aims to develop all physical traits necessary for speed concurrently. In contrast, the Western Model focuses on developing the various physical traits at different points in the training cycle.

The Eastern school of coaching believes that the best results can be achieved if each phase of training builds on the previous one rather than neglecting the results achieved in the previous phase (Bondarchuk, 1988; Dare & Kearney, 1988; Korchemny; Schmolinsky, 2000). In an Eastern training model maximum intensity speed training is used all year round. Speed endurance would be developed throughout the year so that the athlete trains to lengthen the distance over which they can maintain maximum speed. Strength would also be developed year round so that the athlete would be at their strongest during the competitive season. A typical training schedule for the Eastern Model of periodization is shown in Fig. 1 (Korchemny p. 12).

In the Western Model, athletes train to achieve maximum levels in one area of conditioning and then move to a different phase of training. A typical training plan may start with 1 month of general conditioning, followed by 3 months of endurance work, followed by 3 months of strength work, 3 months of power work, and then a focus on actual speed training as the competition season approaches. In using this approach, maximum levels of fitness in each area (endurance, strength, etc.) are achieved and then the focus of the training switches to another area. In contrast to the Eastern approach, maximum speed work is not used until the final phase (Bompa, 1991).

By developing, and then neglecting various biomotor qualities throughout the year, the Western model seems to take two steps forward and one step back. In so doing, sprinters never reach peak fitness. Speaking on this type of training, Korchemny (p.6)

states that the athlete first “becomes a long distance runner, a weight lifter, and then a target event athlete.” The Eastern periodization model for sprinters allows athletes to develop all of these capacities simultaneously. This periodization scheme allows sprinters to achieve maximum levels of strength, speed-endurance, and speed at the same time, which results in better performances.

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