

## **Back Three – Speed and Conditioning**

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In the previous article on Back Three programming I discussed the various permutations around the weights programming, in this article I will be looking at aspects of speed and conditioning and then developing a weekly plan.

Speed is definitely the key, I have often quoted from an unknown American coach when asked “coach, how do I get my team faster” and his famous reply “recruit faster players”, in that top end speed maybe somewhat genetically determined you can improve acceleration and work on aspects of this key element of performance. I would train the Back Three on a 3 day per week program ideally immediately preceding or as close to the weight training elements of the program as possible.

I have already outlined a possible speed/power combination session on the Wednesday which I firmly believe is the way to go for many rugby players. If you can not organize a session like the one mentioned then follow elements of the speed program as outlined below. I highly recommend everyone obtaining a copy of Eric Cressey’s Magnificent Mobility and using elements within this DVD as the basis for your pre speed warm up.

### **Speed Sessions**

I have provided a brief outline as to the type of activities that I would program in a training session. In a team situation where you have a number of players I would make many of the drills competitive and also bring in game situation speed drills. All sessions require at least a 10 – 15 minute progressively increasing intensity warm up starting with mobility drills, building into ladders and mini hurdles with accelerations out of them. I know ladders and mini hurdles have had their critics over the years but I find them ideal as a warm up and movement related drill.

### **Warm Up**

Dynamic warm up drills for 10 – 15 minutes

Ladders: forward & lateral series

Hurdles: lateral series, march, skip, run + 10m accelerate out

### **Plyometric**

Select 2 drills and do 75 foot contacts

1. Bounding x 40m
2. Power Skip x 40m

3. Single leg hop L to 22m R to 50m repeat with reverse distances
4. Power Jumps for distance, say try line to 22 metre line
5. Repeat Hurdle jumps

### **Acceleration**

Accelerations from different starts 20 metres maximum distance, can be done with a weighted vest as well, do 10 reps with a different stance every second rep:

3 point stance  
lying on chest  
lying on back  
lying on back roll to left and roll to right  
hurdle jump & go  
standing facing opposite direction  
chip kick regather then go  
grubber kick regather and go

Medicine Ball throws and sprint out after them trying to touch or pass them on the second bounce of the MB, do 10 throws:

Rotational throw  
Caber throw forward  
Squat into push press  
Backward overhead throw

### **Maximal Velocity**

Select 2 drills from this list and do for 15 minutes, slow walk back recoveries between maximal efforts, you do not get fast by running slow

Flying 28's – build for 22m and then sprint maximally to the half way line

In & Outs – hard for 20m easy for 10m hard for 20 easy for 10

Change of direction cut – sprint hard for 30m hard cut diagonal for 10m then hard cut off other foot to straighten for another 30m

Straight sprints – 40m, 50m, 60m, 80m

### **Resisted Speed**

Sled sprints with added resistance 20kg, 6 x 25 metres OR

Parachute and Release – 25 metres with parachute release then 25 – 40 metres without the parachute x 6

## **Conditioning Sessions**

Irrespective of position you have to be aerobically/anaerobically ready to go the entire 80 minutes, to this end I firmly believe that for the Back Three 2 sessions a week and a games session or cross training session are important in the overall plan. Examples and progressions for 4 weeks in both repeated speed and hill repeats are included below.

### **Repeated Speed**

#### **Session 1:**

20 x 40secs on 20secs rest distance based on 110% of VO<sub>2</sub> max from 2,400m time trial range 150m to 220m or 200 metres in <40 seconds rest 20 seconds and then 100 m in <20 seconds rest 40 seconds x 10 (see note below \*)

#### **Session 2:**

5 minute continuous run at VO<sub>2</sub> max pace; then 20 x 50 metres at top pace from goal line to half way line then ease out and walk to the other goal line turn and start the next sprint, then 5 minute continuous run at VO<sub>2</sub> max pace

#### **Session 3:**

30 x 100 m every 60 seconds

#### **Session 4 :**

20 x 78m every 45 seconds, 10 x 50m every 30 seconds, 20 x 22m every 15 seconds (2 minute walk between sets)

**\*Note on calculation of distances from 2,400 metres time trial, if a player runs 10 mins 40 secs for the time trial his VO<sub>2</sub> max is approximately 48.0, if we want to gauge distances at 110% of VO<sub>2</sub> max we raise his VO<sub>2</sub> max to 52.8 which equates to a time around 9 min 45 secs or 4.10 metres/second or 164 metres for each 40 seconds effort**

### **Hill Repeats**

#### **Session 1:**

1 x 5 min, 5 x 3 min, 5 x 1min (1:0.5 walk back recovery)

#### **Session 2:**

15 x 60secs/30secs (1:0.5 walk back recovery)

#### **Session 3:**

10 x 60secs/45secs/30secs/15secs (1:1 walk back recovery)

**Session 4:**

15 x 30secs/15secs/45secs (1:1 walk back recovery)

**Weekly Plan**

**Monday:**

**AM Speed then Power weights**

**PM Games – Basketball, Handball**

**Tuesday:**

**AM Rest**

**PM Hill Repeats**

**Wednesday:**

**AM Speed/Power Combo**

**PM Anaerobic/Conditioning Games**

**Thursday:**

**AM Rest**

**PM Repeated Speed**

**Friday:**

**AM Speed then Power or Strength Weights**

**PM Cross Training or Boxing or Wrestling or Mixed Martial Arts**

Hope this helps out those players who play in the one of the Back 3 or Finisher positions,  
cheers, ashley