



What Does Sport Specific Training Really Mean?

“I want to do soccer/basketball/football/softball/volleyball (insert sport name here) specific training. Can you do that?” I feel like much of my time, during an interview with a potential client is spent answering this type of question. Most performance coaches or physical therapist will answer “of course I can train/treat you”. All too often and unfortunately, this is not the case and the athlete spends more time wasted then improving.

One of my favorite coaches, both in test (books) and in person (I have taken seminars from this man) in all the world and one of the most recognized names in athletic performance coaching is Vern Gambetta. In his book “Athletic Development: The Art and Science of Functional Sports Conditioning”, he discusses something that I try to use as the foundation of my treating and training athletes. It is the “Systematic Sports Analysis Approach”. It will appear simple at first glance, but let me tell you, there are many out there that skip one or two steps in the process. The process involves the following steps:

1. Analyze the demands of the sport. If one does not understand the specific demands of a sport, then it seems likely that they will find it difficult to connect their “plan” to the athlete sitting in front of them.
2. Understand the position or Event in the sport. If one does not know what the mechanics of striking a soccer ball over distance are or does not understand the specifics of doing the butterfly stroke in swimming, then it begs the question as to how one can train or treat that athlete effectively.
3. Analyze the qualities of the athlete. Evaluation is the keystone of any good treatment or training program. This includes both areas of positives or strengths and areas of negative or weaknesses. If you focus on a negative and miss out on the positive, one will ultimately miss something and therefore, fail the athlete in one area or another.
4. Understand common areas of injury in the sport. This may seem counter intuitive but let me tell you that it is a mean the difference between a successful season or watching your athlete sitting on the bench or in the training room for most of the season. If you do not know that ligament and muscle strain are the most common injuries in soccer players and therefore you don’t work on deceleration and eccentric loading and control activities within your program, then expect the worst.

These are just a few of the things that we try to accomplish when working with our athletes. Want to learn more? Contact us at www.elitelevelpt.com Contact us at www.elitelevelpt.com.

