The Ongoing Phases of Athletic Training and their Mental Keys

Athletic training is much more than a space for developing athletic abilities. Training does not just determine the athletes' capacities, but it also lays the foundation for the existence of an actor responsible for making decisions related to the training content, who is the coach. Training creates the necessity for a coach, and determines, in turn, the athlete's capabilities.

Much has been written and much is yet to be written about the keys of athletic training, as the effectiveness and efficiency of the training changes with respect to the characteristics of the trainees. Athletic training, understood as a process of behavioral shaping for athletes, should respect certain central aspects, and adjust itself to certain patterns that we will be revealing over the course of the coming modules.

The athletic training process has phases and moments that are more attractive for the athletes, as well as moments that are not so attractive and that undermine the athletes' motivation, but should not be eliminated or reduced for this reason. The secret lies in the powers of persuasion of the coach, and in the athlete's sense of responsibility. Based on this, these less agreeable phases can end up being productive, and allowing the athletes to complete the training process with more resources than when they started.

Over the course of these modules, we will not only discuss athletic training, but will also address sports competition, with the intention of finding some keys that permit the athlete to access all of her resources during stressful moments and with the audience effect, which are normal conditions for an athletic competition.

Before describing the main characteristics of athletic training, we should go back to the objective of this process of shaping abilities and abilities. The objective of athletic training lies in expanding the athletes' resources, specifically their physical, technical, tactical and mental resources. That is to say that the athlete, at the end of the annual training process, should have more available resources than at the beginning of annual training.

In turn, in the sports competition, from the perspective of the coach, the objective is that the athletes have access to all of the resources

developed throughout the training process, to achieve the objective of breaking a record or defeating a given opponent.

Our first piece of counsel for those who work in the context of sports is, then, to remember that the coach should arrange the frequency, the quantity, the duration, the stress and the intensity of the training in such a way that it expands the resources of all of her athletes. Furthermore, she should prepare them mentally and physically in such a way that during a competition they can avail themselves of all of the resources that they have been consolidating during training. This is the great challenge which gives name to the sports coach. It defines both his present and his future.

Finally, in these modules we will address an aspect that notably affects the productivity and the climate of a sports team and that is not always analyzed with the rigor that it deserves. This is the treatment of the athletes during the post-competition.

We will begin with athletic training, and we will focus our attention on its basic tasks, to create a first look at the components of this behavioral shaping process.

Figure 1: Basic tasks of athletic training

- Planning the training.
- Adherence to training sessions and other complementary methods.
- Learning relevant abilities and behaviors.
- Repetitive practice of relevant abilities and behaviors.
- Practice and exposure to competitive conditions.
- Competition-specific preparation.
- Evaluation of training.

Source: Prepared by the author, based on Buceta, 1998, p.49.

Just as expressed by the Spanish psychologist and author José María Buceta (1998), athletic training has three ongoing tasks and four more alternative tasks. The ongoing stages are those that should be carried out throughout the entire athletic training process, and they are:

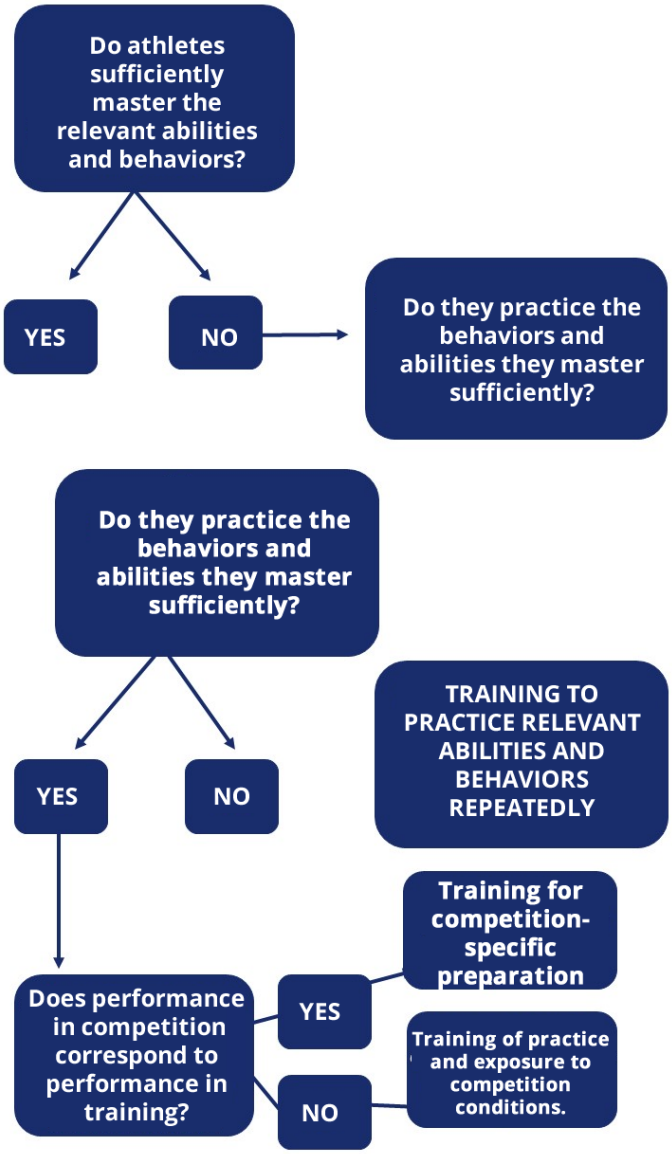
- Training planning.
- Adherence to training sessions and other complementary methods.

- Training assessment.

The transitory phases or stages are those that are programmed for a certain period of time due to circumstances of competition, the functional abilities of the athlete and the training time available to the coach. The transitory stages of athletic training are:

- Learning relevant abilities and behaviors.
- Repetitive practice of relevant abilities and behaviors.
- Practice and exposure to competitive conditions.
- Competition-specific preparation.

Figure 2: Decision tree for determining tasks in athletic training



Source: Buceta, 1998, p. 49.

1.1 Planning and Adherence. Characteristics and Particularities

We will begin by focusing on the development of the ongoing athletic training tasks, those aspects that need to be present all the time, during the entire behavioral shaping process.

In recent decades, many advanced and developments have emerged to assist athletic training in the area of sports planning. The need to anticipate scenarios and configure workloads, recovery times, competitions, travel, unexpected events and other alternatives in the time available for training creates and determines the urgent need for exhaustive prior planning.

High performance sports have distinct characteristics, aspects that differentiate them from other practices; planning, which is only one of these, is probably one of the most well-known. We plan loading and unloading, trips, rest times and simple and double training periods. We plan absolutely everything, nothing is left up to chance. High performance means anticipation and direction, and without planning, none of that is possible.

We make plans on the basis of available time, we establish mesocycles, macrocycles, microcycles and work sessions. We also make plans on the basis of daily workloads: simple shifts, double shifts and sometimes even triple shifts. We plan the complementary methods and training sessions, like laboratory sessions, medical studies, psychological assistance, nutritional assistance and other contributions from the sciences as applied to sports. Any stimulus that has an effect on the player's performance is anticipated, organized and included in the time line.
Planning is one of the basic ongoing tasks of athletic training, for exactly this reason. You cannot make plans just at one point in the year, you need to plan and then adapt that plan throughout the entire year, in training and in competition.

The changing characteristics of the overall context, the individual experiences of the athletes, the different athletic results, along with a series of unexpected events that always comes up in the moment, make planning into a continual task, a permanent and highly demanding part of fulfilling the essential objective of athletic training, which is to expand the

athletes' resources. Without proper planning, there is no possible way to achieve the proposed goal.

The different phases or moments that sports planning can include are shown in Figure 3, below:

Figure 3: Phases of Sports Planning

INITIAL STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

- Setting out the time period for the object of the plan.
- Consideration of the competitions that will be faced during this period.
- Evaluation of the athletes' chances of success.
- Setting the results objectives.
- Establishment of performance objectives.

CONSIDERATION OF THE TRAINING CONTENT

- Observation of the needs and existing resources for achieving the results objectives.
- Determination of the work to be performed.

ADAPTATION OF THE INITIAL PLAN TO THE TIME AVAILABLE

- Consideration of the available time.
- Reflection on the viability of the objectives and the contents of the plan.
- Establishment of priorities.

WORK PROGRAM TO UNDERTAKE

CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE DIFFICULTIES AND MODIFICATIONS

- Anticipation of interfering difficulties.
- Reconsideration of the plan.

Source: Prepared by the author, based on Buceta, 1998, p.59.

Certain central ideas spring from this suggestion of phases or steps for sports planning, which we will develop over the course of this module. They are the following:

1) The need to evaluate performance: it is crucial to know how to measure both existing resources like partial advances and, based on them, make the most appropriate decisions.
2) The definition of a work plan: the athletic training should not just expand the athletes' resources, but it should also dispel any uncertainty about the immediate future. The presence of a structure for the work, a functional organization serving the athlete's development, helps cement certainties and dispels anxieties, which notably improves the process of behavioral assimilation.

3) The adaptation of the work plan: it is necessary learn to manage *the possible*, but sometimes the possible is not ideal, so it does not coincide with what was previously planned; therefore, the coach's flexibility should permit the adaptation of the work plan to expand the athletes' resources.

1.1.1 Types of Sports Planning

As mentioned earlier, planning is a task that is developed during the entire process of training and preparing the athletes. This simple concept is not always understood in all of its breadth and in the concrete reality of the sports context, and we see many lapses in the continuous and permanent implementation of sports planning throughout the whole training process.
In relation to errors that can occur, we first differentiate between two types of errors:

- Errors in the content of the plan.
- Planning conception errors.

Content errors are those mistakes that could lie in the definition of the objectives, in the description of the contents of the training program, in the evaluation of the available time or in the adaptation of the work program.

Sports plans that have content errors, due to excess or due to deficit, are inconsistent, they lack effective forms and methods and are, simply, collections of formulas or of the hopes and dreams of the coach.

When determining our objectives, we often encounter a common error that consists in setting results objectives, without accompanying them with performance or process objectives. Surprisingly, this does not only happen in *amateur* spaces, but also in more professional formats and with a strong audience effect.

The **results objective** establishes the final direction of the process, it establishes **what we want to reach**, while the **process objective** or performance objective establishes **how we are going to achieve it**. It is necessary to link the possibility of success with specific behaviors on the part of the athlete. This association is what makes the training process coherent and attractive. We do not know any other motive for training, except to develop abilities that bring the athletes closer to achieving the goal.

Often we only evaluate sports coaches based on their victories and records, and we do not spend very much time looking at the growth they have fostered among the teams or the athletes in their care.

Is the result reached by chance, or by the combination of talents within the team? Yes, it can come from luck, but this will not be sustained over time.

Can the coach develop all of her athletes and, all the same, not achieve the results? The answer is also *yes*. But if we properly implement the planning process for the resources that need to be developed, and establish appropriate priorities, perhaps in the short term the results will be elusive, but in the medium term they will arrive and we will be able to maintain them in a sustainable fashion.

It is necessary that a sports coach and all of her assistants be skilled in the field of planning in order to increase the probability of achieving the desired results. Effective planning allows athletes to incorporate or consolidate necessary abilities that translate into the achievement of goals for the entire sports team.

It is fundamental to establish priorities within the content of the training program, but this can also go hand in hand with very common errors in the sports context. We can make an appropriate plan and link it with results objectives and performance objectives, but if we did not establish the primary actions necessary for setting priorities, we can fall into the trap of wanting to consolidate everything and end up without developing anything.

It is very important for the coach to be able to determine the priorities of development or consolidation in each of his athletes. When this aspect is clear and when a work plan has been developed based on this objective, the distance to the goal will surely be closer.

Other significant content errors occur when there has not been an appropriate evaluation of the time available for work. This topic is more and more significant in high performance sports, where the calendars are increasingly tight, where there are different types of competitions throughout the year and where some athletes -if not the majority- compete in the same year both representing their club teams and their national teams. The pre-season, which is considered an essential space to set up the behavioral model for the team, is often blocked by commercial obligations that require trips, tours and friendly games. All of these details need to be considered when making a plan.

At the more *amateur* level and with younger athletes, there are other variables that can interfere with athletic training and which need to be considered. Schoolwork, final exam periods, extra-curricular activities, distances to be traveled, family activities, chronic illnesses, etc. are all variables that will end up taking time away from athletic training. The coach should make his plan based on the actual time available, and not on the ideal time that the sports development manuals indicate.

This is where the task of the sports coach becomes a truly risky activity that demands great flexibility and talent to make the best use of available time. They need to achieve results, they need to develop or consolidate behaviors among their athletes, but they do not have all available time that they would like in order to respect progress and adjust all of the necessary details. Faced with this situation, we propose two suggestions: set priorities and adapt the plan.

Adapting the pre-set work plan on the basis of solid emerging data is one of the keys for making that planning effective in order to achieve the desired results. Surprisingly, both on the professional level and the amateur level, we find many coaches who design meticulous, specific and detailed work plans, but who do not pay attention to the changes in the context or to the changes that occur in their team; as a result, the desired performance does not appear and the desired results are not achieved.

Figure 4: Sports planning and content errors

- Unreachable results objectives.
- Easily achievable results objectives.
- Results objectives without performance objectives.
- Lack of training priorities.
- Error the assessment of the available time or lack thereof.
- Failure or lack of adaptation of the work program.

Source: Prepared by the author.

Conception errors in relation to sports planning, in turn, have to do with how the coach understands the plan, what role he gives to it and in what way he manages this tool, which is so valuable for optimizing team performance and for increasing the possibility of achieving the desired results.

To begin, we will highlight two central conception errors:

- Rigid planning.
- Improvisation.

In which cases can we find rigidity in planning? Essentially, when the core context that determines the content of the plan (the results that should be reached, the performance of each athlete, the competition calendar, the available time, the commercial obligations, etc.) and when the planning is not adapted and is therefore not carried out in the way it was designed. Whenever the situations that determine a plan and make it useful change, the plan should change as well. Therefore, in sports, it is much more important to learn the concept itself than to learn to repeat another coach's formulas.

We place this error among conception errors because we understand that the error lies in understanding the plan in a mistaken way. This is not a task that should be carried out at a given moment in the season and that then later, at the end of the sports season, we can check its effects; on the contrary, planning is a continuous tool and activity, which is ongoing and never transitory. Those who understand planning as just one more phase in athletic training do not fully understand the concept and the breadth of this task. It is necessary to constantly revise, evaluate and adapt the plan and the work program.

Sometimes, in the sports context, we find coaches who manage their teams using plans that other coaches achieved at the beginning of the season, or with plans that were carried out before the preseason. In this way, then, they continue unchanging, following to the letter a plan made months before.

The opposite extreme from rigid planning is improvisation, which is also a type of planning error. Here, improvisation is understood not as an occasional action within a larger body of planned activity, but rather as the absence of planning. That is, it refers to the complete lack of work programs planned in advance. All of the plans that are put into practice reside in the head of the coach, and depend on his energy level, his time, his prejudices, his emotional state, etc.

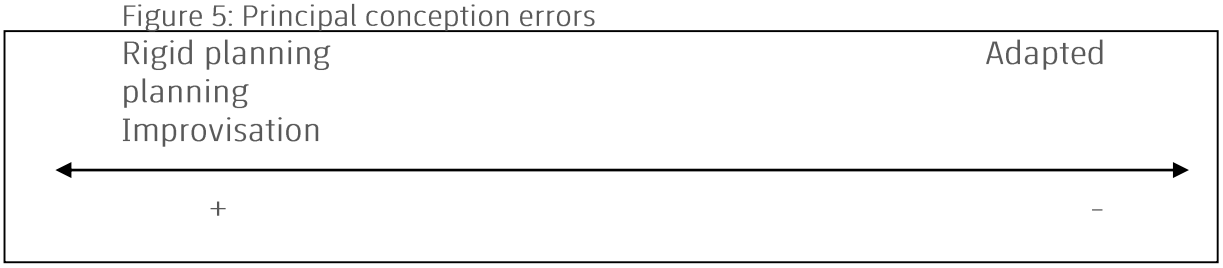
Planning is carried out to give direction to the team and to the athletes. The central idea is that the entire group should know the planned achievements, periodization of the workload, recovery times and exposure times. So we could consider all of these variables within the context of a work program that favors the adherence of the athletes and reduces their uncertainties.

Improvisation, by contrast, only generates uncertainty, disorientation and worry, both among the athletes as well as in the general context. Trainers who opt for improvisation are also committing a conception error in relation to planning. They see it as a sterile, boring task, without positive

effects in the performance or the results of the team; thus they view planning as a waste of time, and attribute to themselves special mental capacities which are as yet unknown to sports science.

Fortunately, today almost no coaches are left who opt for this method of developing athletic performance. It is very important to return for a moment to the first paragraph about improvisation. It is one thing to improvise an activity within a previously created plan, that is to say, use creativity and ingenuity to find an alternative way of developing a certain exercise or practice, and another thing entirely to use this method in a continuous and permanent manner, dispensing entirely with any kind of plan or program.

Figure 5: Principal conception errors



Source: Prepared by the author.

1.1.2 Quantitative and Qualitative Attendance in Athletic Training

Starting here we will begin to develop and focus on another one of the tasks of athletic training, just as important as planning. We will address adherence to athletic training.

Developing the best plan and making all of them necessary adaptations is little use if the athletes do not adhere to the program. Adherence is the quantitative and qualitative attendance both for athletic training as well as for any complementary sessions that the coach considers necessary. The team's adherence to training is made evident when the athletes are capable of performing all of the planned content with the intensity and quality required.

This training task, which is also ongoing, is an activity that must be continuously developed. The coach and his assistants must design strategies to promote an increase in the athletes' adherence the entire time. A coach could develop an effective plan, but if she is not capable of persuading and convincing her athletes to invest 100 % of their effort and attention in each day's training, the planning will not be effective, performance will not increase and the objectives will not be reached.

Often the levels of motivation and willingness to work among the athletes are higher at the beginning of the season, and therefore adherence is higher, but as time passes by, this adherence can vary. The results of the team, the role that each of the athletes plays in the team, the bond between the athletes and the coach, the opportunities to achieve the desired results and other factors influence the team's adherence to athletic training.

It is important to underline that the level of adherence is fundamental in order to achieve the desired results. If the athletes adhere to the training, the possibility of achieving the results is higher. But it is important to clarify that adherence should focus not only on athletic training, but also on all of the complementary sessions that the coach considers to be necessary.

Sports science has an increasingly bigger role in the management of the performance of athletes and teams. Furthermore, getting the athletes to believe in the positive effects of these complementary programs, and thus adhere to them, is a challenging feat. Complementary medical studies, sports psychology sessions, proper nutrition, preventive physical preparation, proper rest and more, are all actions that prepare the athletes to face more and more demanding challenges. For example, the collaboration between doctor, coach and psychologist is crucial to making a recovery from injury as full as possible (Diego and Sagredo, 1992, p. 256).

Figure 6: Activities complementary to training

- Special athletic training (e.g. to improve certain skills).
- Preventative work for physical preparation or physiotherapy.
- Physiotherapy sessions to recover from injuries.
- Periodic medical examinations and tests.
- Appropriate nutrition.
- Pharmacological treatment.
- Use of bandages, etc.
- Psychological sessions.
- Self-reporting relevant data.
- Personal preparation for training and competition.
- Personal care for specific problems (dentistry, fatigue, etc.).
- Rest periods.

Source: Prepared by the author based on Buceta, 1998, p. 111.

We recommend avoiding imposing any complementary training session; on the contrary, we suggest educating, persuading and convincing athletes about the short and medium term benefits that these

complementary training methods can bring. Other clear and extensive in the sports context are disruptions in diet and the consumption of harmful substances. As well as requiring treatment from specialists, these require action on the part of the non-specialists, who should learn to detect the signs of these conditions and send the athletes suffering from them to the professionals who can provide the necessary treatment (Weinberg and Gould, 1996, pp. 483-484). We reiterate, imposition lasts a short time; in contrast persuasion sustains itself over time and does not undermine the coach's leadership.

There are two very common questions among coaches, and both reveal the two basic athletic training tasks addressed so far. These questions are:

- Do the athletes have enough time to train?
- How are the athletes training?

The first question refers to available time, while the second points directly to adherence.

It is important, in order to have a clear view of the team's adherence, to differentiate between two important concepts: *attendance* and *adherence*. Attendance is relative and quantitative, and is often confused with adherence, which refers to the qualitative more than the quantitative. Often we find teams who have high attendance levels but medium or low adherence.

How can an athlete attend without adhering? An athlete attends with adhering when he does not feel motivated and does not put 100% of his energy into the training exercises, or when he tries to accomplish them without too much effort and only develops the actions that he finds most comfortable, in such a way as to avoid activities requiring more risk or effort.

Adherence is linked to a central concept for training, which is *the team culture*. The team culture refers to values, customs and traditions; in short , to the agreements established between all of the members of the team. It is very important, when beginning the training process, that the coach have available the necessary time to work with all of the members of the team in relation to the team culture. Being able to instill common values and agreement among the team about the day to day functioning of the team is a measure that notably improves adherence among the athletes.

It is important to note that a team culture is always established, whether or not it is managed by the coach, for which reason we recommend developing it at the beginning of the training process, and thereby avoid

dealing with these important topics at later dates, when cultural changes nearly always carry a significant cost both in productivity and for the climate of the team.

1.1.3 Behavioral Definition for Adherence Indicators. Observation and Record Keeping

One very important task for improving management of adherence among the athletes to the training and the complementary sessions lies in making an exhaustive definition of the concrete behaviors that constitute adherence. It is necessary that these behaviors be understood and shared by all of the members of the team, that they be observable and that the can be managed by both sides, both by the coach and by the athletes. If these behaviors are not precisely defined and are not appropriately communicated, adherence is left up to whatever each member of the team interprets it to be. This subjective openness is very risky and threatens both productivity and the climate of the team.

It is important to have this level of behavioral definition, not only to measure each athlete's level of adherence, but also to be able to properly manage the adherence of the group as a whole.

Figure 7: Behavioral definition of adherence

1. Attendance during training on time and in shape.
2. Attention to the coach's directions
3. Execution of the required skill following the coach's instructions.
4. Execution of the skill without frequent interruptions.
5. Execution of the skill with the desired final intensity and speed.
6. Good level of communication.
7. Rapid and effective decision-making.
8. Using the appropriate attentional focus
9. Meeting the objective of the training.
10. Enjoyment of training.

Source: Prepared by the author based on Buceta, 1998, p. 93.

In the recently described picture, only a few behaviors are mentioned -as examples- in order to define adherence behaviorally. Evidently, the implementation of each of these indicators of adherence requires an exhaustive definition and a specific determination of the scope of the indicator. This clarification could end up being redundant, but professional experience shows us that dispelling any ambiguities is crucial for improving performance and achieving great results. Agreeing on the definition, for example, of using the appropriate attentional focus or attend training on time and in shape is central because this

behavioral description reveals valid data that allows us to point the training in the right direction.

We mention this last comment, "point the training in the right direction", because just as the record of adherence helps the athletes to identify which kinds of behaviors are more or less important to master, it also helps the coach evaluate if the proposed training is appropriate for the current real capacities of the athletes. For example, if the coach finds that almost no member of the team can execute the skills with the desired final speed and intensity, she should adapt this aspect of the training, or give adequate advance warning to the athletes so that the training does not turn into a frustrating event that undermines the athletes' motivation.

The record of adherence helps to define adherence behaviorally and to share it in an exhaustive manner with the entire team; it is also useful for measuring individual and collective adherence but, fundamentally, it provides data so that the coach can better manage adherence.

Finally, it is very important to clarify that adherence is affected both by deficit and by excess. That is to say, when the athletes train more than they should and with more effort than they should use, the level of adherence is also affected, just as if they were training at a level below their potential.

These days, in successful environments, we often find parents who affect the adherence of their children by making them carry out additional training sessions, whose ultimate result is the deterioration of the athletes' motivation, and they end up leaving the sports practice for a given time or forever. We increasingly need to be careful with this aspect. More is not always better, and, if extra training is necessary, it should always be the coach who is in charge of it and is responsible for determining its necessity. It is important to behave calmly, and respect the coach's role and the athletes' processes of maturation.

1.1.4 Mental Keys for Promoting Adherence to Athletic Training

One important error is understanding adherence from the perspective of *must be*, from the conception of the potential ideal of "we must be respectful", "we must be punctual" or "we must train hard". This potential ideal can be fulfilled sometimes, but at other times it fluctuates. In some moments this is accomplished, but in others, responding to the dynamic and changing emotional states of the human being, it is not.

The sports coach's main challenge lies in how to manage adherence, knowing already that at some moments during the year of competitions it will decay, and the he, as the leader of the whole team, needs to work hard to raise the levels of motivation until they reach the desired point.

"Compete the way you train": this maxim, common in all types of sports, individual and in groups, mens' and womens', implies an enormous responsibility for the coach. The coach is not just responsible for planning the quantity and the content of the training sessions, the rest periods and the complementary sessions, but additionally, and fundamentally, he or she is totally responsible for achieving that all of their athletes feel content with the process, that they have fun and that they devote 100% of their efforts to the sport. This is the daily challenge of the high performance leader.

Adherence is not a static snapshot; on the contrary, it is a dynamic movie, with filming every day. Adherence depends on many actions that the leader can choose to carry out or not, but the impact of those decisions will be seen in the team's adherence levels.

Figure 8: Fundamental objectives of psychological intervention to reduce the risk of lack of adherence to training

Development of basic motivation

- Increase interest in the athletic activity.
- Achieve implication and personal commitment from each athlete.
- Resolve conflicts of interest that could affect motivation.

Strengthening day to day motivation

- Achieve a pleasant work environment and satisfactory interpersonal relations.
- Foster interest in the daily work.
- Help the athletes have fun, learn, feel comfortable, confront interesting immediate challenges and obtain social reinforcement.

Management of stressful situations during training

- Consult with the coaches to manage their decisions and stressful behaviors.
- Properly manage novelty, difficulty, level of rigor, workloads, ambiguous situations and situations of conflict and rest periods.
- Train the athletes in athletic abilities for self-regulation.
- Modify relevant beliefs and attitudes.

Strengthens self-confidence

- Foment the perception of control over the situations presented during training.

Management of rules and guidelines for behavior, specifically related to adherence

- Improve the athletes' attitudes towards adherence to training.
- Establish adequate plans for behaviors of adherence or non-adherence.

Manage possible relevant models

- Management of the most significant athletes in the group.
- Management of cases that, for whatever reason, need to be exceptions.

Source: Prepared by the author based on Buceta, 1998, p. 97.

Strengthening day to day motivation is a task that requires rapid and agile evaluation of the athletes' emotional states, if we understand *motivation* as the internal state or process that activates, directs and maintains behavior towards an objective (Cashmore, 2002, as cited in Dosil, 2004, p. 128). Many circumstances affect the athletes' daily lives, and the coach should have the ability to detect and dispel those factors that interfere with training in order to generate an attractive and pleasant environment. Monotony and repetition are situations that destroy day to day motivation. At the same time, innovation and creativity are necessary abilities for a coach to fully take on her role.

The leader should develop challenging trainings, with exercises that awaken the athlete's motivation and inspires them to constant improvement. Play, competition and challenge are all components that

training should contain. If the coach is not able to mix them correctly and does not pay attention to this central aspect of training, he will be acting against the adherence of his athletes; they could receive the best of all possible trainings, but if it is the same every day, after a certain time it will end up undermining their motivation.

Therefore it is important not only to plan the training content, but also to focus fundamentally on specifically designing the presentation of the training, with the goal of the athletes feeling excited and eager to come to training to see what new challenge they will face that day. This action of designing the training should not be an extraordinary activity for the coach; on the contrary, it is a daily activity that she should carry out when performing her role.

Management of the training conditions significantly influences daily motivation. If the training field is in good conditions, if the elements of training are sufficient, if the training attire is clean and available, if the interruptions and interference of outside factors are under control, evidently adherence will be much higher than when these conditions are not present. The coach is responsible for delegating and directing his team members in preparing the training conditions. Closely related to the above is the attitude that the coach assumes towards the athlete based on the results of the responsibilities of preparation (Valdés Casañ, 1998,. p171).

Another very significant aspect, relevant for achieving better adherence, is the management of stress from training. From the design of highly complex exercises, to the coach's punishments, to the prolonged repetition of exercises and the duration of the training itself, all of these produce large amounts of stress and should be presented in an appropriate manner. Stress is a part of competition, and the coach needs to habituate the athletes to stress; for this reason it is necessary that it appear, but it should do so respecting certain forms.

Whenever the athletes are to be exposed to high stress situations, either for their complexity or for their load, it is necessary for the coach to anticipate and provide the necessary resources for them to confront the stressful situation. In past decades, many coaches considered that this phase of training was accomplished by increasing loads and complexity and seeing who adapted favorably, without providing resources or much less, warning. Those who survived stressful training sessions were the true successful athletes. But this is not true. It has been demonstrated and proven that deliberate exposure to stressful conditions not only undermines the motivation of all athletes, but also that it adds no extra value or new resources.

One agent that is determinant in relation to the level of stress in a training session is the coach himself. Often the coach transforms himself into the biggest stress-causing factor, and generates emotional dependence and a certain defenselessness among his athletes, a product of his unstable emotional states that transform into continuous scolding, emotional outbursts and behaviors that distract, confuse and paralyze the athletes. The coach should regulate his own emotions to become a collaborator with the athletes, to master the stress in training and in competition and not become a *stressor* himself.

Does this imply that the coach should not point out mistakes or punish dysfunctional behaviors? Of course not. The coach should point out mistakes and correct dysfunctional actions, but he should do so in an appropriate way and with the goal of reorienting and recovering his athletes. The coach's emotions should be at the service of his athletes; for this reason he should not unload his emotions and hold his athletes at their mercy.

It is very important and necessary that the coach generate training sessions that strengthen the athletes' confidence and their sense of competence. *Self-efficacy* is the sensation of competence and control that the athlete experiences when she performs successful executions and it positively impacts her emotional state. The coach should pay special attention to this aspect during the design of training. If the athletes are always working on new, highly complicated actions, the sensation of self-efficacy and self-confidence will be hard to raise. Therefore, training that shows weaknesses more than improving strengths will always lose adherence.

So, should we not work on new and complex actions during training? Yes we should work on them, during a set time and combined with previously consolidated actions so that we do not affect the sense of self-efficacy and so that we do not generate a negative impact on adherence to the training.

Finally, we recommend *rewarding* those who show high levels of adherence to training and *managing* those who show fluctuations. Rewarding implies recognizing their contribution and continual effort for personal development and for the team; managing, in turn, implies working together with the athlete to discover the factors that are interfering in their emotional states and keeping them from giving 100% of their efforts in each training session.

We conclude, then, that adherence is vitally important in the process of shaping individual and collective behaviors, so that the coach should have sufficient resources to continuously strengthen the level of adherence of

his athletes. Adherence is a movie that is filmed every day, and where the director needs to design the best set and create the best images.