



PERFORMANCE SOCCER CONDITIONING

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO IMPROVING SOCCER PLAYERS

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Lessons from Barcelona and Fiorentina- Developing Movement Skills to Create a Better, Injury Free Soccer Player-An Introduction to Developing the Soccer Student Athlete

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The series of articles we are presenting in *Performance Conditioning Soccer* is based on Don Dirkendall's latest column in *Southern Soccer Scene* as it relates to youth soccer development.

Here is what he says:

"I've seen the developmental plans for mega-successful academies like Barcelona and Fiorentina, At the U10-U11 ages, they spend over 60% of training time on basic motor skills and individual ball skills. I've been told that U10-U11 players at Fiorentina PLAY NO MATCHES outside of the club for TWO YEARS.

The staff is more physical education teacher than soccer coach, teaching the kids how to walk, run, jump, leap, hop, skip, land, fall, throw, catch, grab, roll/crawl, climb. A great deal of time is spend on posture: flex, bend, twist, ad-abduction, rolling, hurling, static and dynamic balance.

The kids also get a good dose of gymnastics learning basic tumbling skills like somersault, cart-wheels, hand stands, kips, forward/backward rolls, shoulder rolls, sliding and so much more. Their training teaches basic movement skills, all while keeping the ball at the center of attention. Imagine the outcry if a travel team spend all the time "not playing the game."

Since physical education is no longer taught in school, the burden of teaching movement skills and creating a athleticism falls on to sport coaches. Also complicating the issue is early childhood specialization into a single sport with competition a beginning and lasting priority.

Based on these considerations we are introducing you, our reader, a means of developing lifetime movement skills and applying them to soccer. The system is call MovNat. Performance Conditioning Soccer does not endorse MovNat nor profit from it. But we do recognize the educational value it provides. We feel it is important to bring you this information and feel fortunate to have Jeff Turner a former MLS strength and conditioning coach present it. Enjoy!- **Ken Kontor publisher**

Developing the Student Soccer Athlete

Part One of this series will start with an introduction of MovNat, a fitness and physical education system based on the full range of human movement skills.

Athletes that become proficient in these fundamentals movements have much greater success in maximizing their soccer potential while minimizing injury. I'm basing this off the past 20 plus years in the trenches with athletes at every level from MLS on down.

As you can see there are three domains and we'll be talking about them throughout this series. We'll show you how to program MovNat and how you can integrate along with traditional strength and conditioning to the sport of soccer.



Jeff Turner



MovNat Movement Skills

Efficiency:

We often think if an athlete is strong or can run up and down the field with ease and speed they'll be a better soccer player. The only thing this really tells us is the athlete can lift more weight and run fast. In the absence of efficient movement skills and technique, energies will be wasted, your safety challenged, and all around game play will be less than optimal.

We blend traditional strength and conditioning on a foundation of natural movement along with an individual approach.

For years I was told you couldn't do this within a team or club setting. They were wrong! Not only has it worked for me, but others around the world have been experiencing success. As mentioned, some of the top academies internationally are have been implementing similar training...it will eventually catch on in the U.S.

Embracing something new is difficult for many...we (people in general) don't like new, it's the unknown.

Is it Functional?

When kids do not pass the minimum standards in school, they don't move to the next grade. If someone cannot pass the minimum standards of movement they should not be able to move to more complex exercises or training. How about if we say the minimum standard is as simple as being able to perform physical tasks through a full range of motion...pain free.

The Status-quo

Today's athlete is asked to be quicker, faster, stronger and better conditioned and in most cases with less than optimal preparation and recovery time -- that's a recipe for injury.

Current methods for preparing athletes range from horrible (look at Youtube) to brilliant. With so many experts contradicting each other, it's hard to decipher what's real or fantasy. The result is too much cut-and-pasting that never works as well as we hope for.

Books and DVD's can show you what to do, but they cannot "coach" you -- there's no feedback saying, "nice, well done, or do this not that."

While we cannot give you feedback in an article, we are working on a solutions on how it all fits together so that you the soccer coach can implement a program.

Strength and Conditioning

Strength Training and Conditioning is a good thing...done right! Way too much emphasis is put on "how much and how often" and not enough time spent teaching proper movement from the ground up.

So that's what we're going to do.

Build from the ground up. We're going to focus on Bullet Proofing student athletes -- for soccer, and for life.

Laying The Foundation

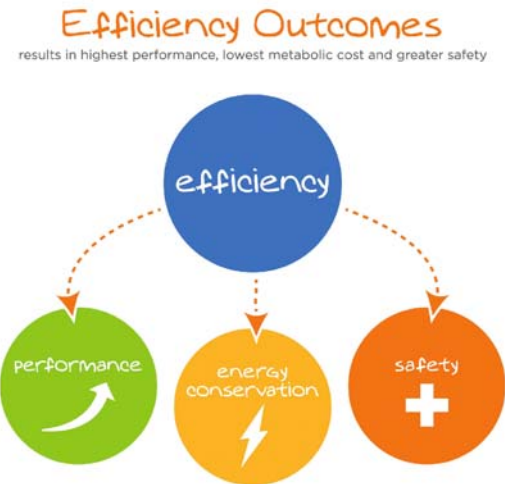
We'll introduce:

- Strength and conditioning...naturally.
- Essential movement efficiency principles.
- How to dose training per athlete.
- Developing all age groups and abilities...how to scale.
- What to do if you have a gym, no gym...equipment, or just using your environment.
- Working with the multi-sport athlete.
- Foundational movement skills that apply in the weight room, on the field, and everyday life.
- Jr. Club to College...a how to plan.
- Lifestyle...Food, Fitness, and Fitting it All In.
- Tools to continue on your own.

This series will help coaches:

- That want more than a generic program for the long-term development of their athletes.
- With a system that will minimize injuries while improving athleticism.
- Athletes that want a way / system to train at home, the gym, park or whatever their environment provides for them.
- Teams that want to bond and learn together in a Cooperative environment. Paintball and zip lining are fun. Experiencing a Team Building effect at each practice is priceless.

This will be more than a series of articles -- its a "Manifesto" for the development of our student athletes.



Getting Started

How do we know if our players are moving well? We use the Functional Movement Screen (FMS) which is a ranking and grading system that documents movement patterns that are key to normal function. By screening these patterns, the FMS readily identifies functional limitations. These are issues that can reduce the effects of functional training and physical conditioning and distort body awareness. **Net Link** to FMS: <http://www.functionalmovement.com/fms>

Most would agree we see too many injuries, and no compass that points true north. By practicing fundamental movements like crawling, efficient running, jumping, balance and even climbing at each training session we not only get a “fitness effect” but also groove proper patterns every single training session under the watchful eye of the coach.

Efficient movement is key to becoming bullet proof. Here’s something you start with now, Foot-Hand Crawl, aka, the Bear Crawl.

Crawling by its very nature, is a fundamental building block to human movement and motor development. Performing this movement during your warm-up or in a combo with other movements as in the picture below may provide many benefits like:

- shoulder stability which is critical for fine motor and visual motor skills
- balance, core strength, and lower body stability
- Introduces body weight shifting between upper and lower body

1st Progression

The Knee-Hand Crawl: Start by crawling on hands and knees to get the coordination and movement pattern. Begin by moving opposite hand and knee (left knee, right hand) and place them approximately 6-12 inches forward in the direction you’re moving. The front (lead) knee should touch or almost touch the wrist on the same side (trail hand).



2nd Progression

Next we’ll progress to the foot-hand from the knee-hand crawl. Lift your knees off the ground so your points of support (POS) are now feet and hands. Make sure weight is evenly dispersed through feet and hands, keep the back flat. The stride length may be a bit larger compared to the knee-hand crawl. (Figure 1)



Figure 1

Final Progression

Combining the Foot-Hand Crawl with the Deadlift can be done in the gym or you can use sandbags, rocks or logs outside. I love the deadlift, it builds the body from head to toe, and by adding the Foot-Hand Crawl you’ve just worked your entire body. (Figure 2)




Figure 2

With a few sandbags and MovNat skills you could develop a full body strength and conditioning session. The athlete above will be performing many traditional lifts at his/her Division One program along with some non-traditional movements and lifts. Long-term development is the foundation, but when we get athletes (freshmen) preparing to play in college, we need to make sure they’re prepared with the tools they’ll use at their program...not just what we think is right.

There is no reason kids cannot learn how to properly lift stuff from the ground at a young age. In fact, if we don’t, we do them a disservice.

Our next article in the series will be more about MovNat. The how and why you should adopt it. You’ll learn how to implement right away as I’ll include video and actions lists.

This is so much more than the musings of a fitness coach...it’s a culmination of (1000s) of training sessions, interviews, books, listening, applying and seeing what worked and what didn’t. To make this even better, please give us your feedback -- this is your Manifesto. 

Welcome to the Shift

For more information about Jeff Turner <http://www.movnatohio.com/coaches/jeff-turner>
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