

PLAYOFF PUSH

In American sports, they split their competitions into two parts with the first part being called the Regular Season and the second part called the Post-Season, more affectionately known as the 'Playoffs.' Every team in each sport (Baseball, Basketball or Gridiron) will have realistic and attainable goals for their franchise. The better teams, as well as the up and coming teams, will of course have high aspirations and be aiming for that playoff berth in the post-season.

During the majority of the regular season the teams will slowly build their momentum by trying to capture the Wins they need to for that playoff spot they desire. Everything the team does in in preparation for that 'Playoff Push' in the post season. Every game is treated like a dress rehearsal for the playoffs and is used as an opportunity to perfect their playbooks and a chance for the player to reach their optimal performance levels.

Individually, as the regular season progresses, every player will be working tirelessly by themselves as well as with the team coaches and coaches they employ themselves, to work on their technique and their personal abilities so as to maximise their potential for the playoffs. As the regular season draws to a close both team and players aim to be at the peak of their powers to allow them to give everything they have when competing in the playoffs.

With the majority of club championships (Post-season/Playoffs) nationwide now either commenced or in full swing and the League (Regular Season) completed or finishing off, both players and teams alike will have followed the same ideology as the US sports teams in attaining the peak ability in preparation for their own 'Playoff Push.'

From a goalkeeping viewpoint, there is a change in focus away from the training/League brain which is more developmental in approach with the purpose of technique correction and improvements in situation-based decision making the main priorities. The goalkeeper's focus now moves towards using the Competition brain by being able to complete the Seven Performance Stages through the Championship (Playoffs). These seven stages are being able to perform the skill; well; at speed; under pressure; under fatigue; consistently; in competition conditions.

The goalkeeper will use the league to perfect these seven stages using a variety of drills and game specific situations to grow towards their championship ability. When training in the regular season the goalkeeper will have used a high amount of reps per exercise and a moderate to high intensity allowing for adequate recovery between sets. Training in this way allows for the goalkeeper and their coach to correct imperfections in technique as well as produce gains in their goalkeeping ability.

As the league season begins to come to an end the goalkeeper will begin to adapt their training to a more Championship level. This will mean the goalkeeper will spend less time trying to perfect techniques and situational decision making and focus more on executing their abilities to the standard set by the seven performance stages.

Training will then reduce in duration but how it differs will be in the reps and intensity. The amount of reps will fall to a maximum of three to four and the intensity will rise to their maximum output levels for every rep. The allocated time for rest will also decrease only allowing the goalkeeper minimal recovery time to ensure that the goalkeeper is working under fatigue.

Now operating at their Championship level, the goalkeeper and their coach, must spend time focusing on their Goalkeeping Principles. While in the throes of championship football there is very little time to correct technical imperfections from game to game meaning that the focus must change from improving in your goalkeeping principles to performing your goalkeeping principles well and then maintaining this performance for the remainder of your championship run. It will be important to reflect on every performance both training and matches to ensure you keep your consistency as high as possible. The best practice is to use a specific goalkeeping diary to record any training/match goals, thoughts and milestones that you complete. This will allow you to have reference points for whenever you are tailoring your training sessions.

With the regular season (league) either closed or closing and the post-seasons (Championships) now under way, make sure that you have also adjusted your training accordingly. With Championship games comes championship pace and this is most definitely a cut above anything that you experienced in your league campaign. By adapting your training and preparations for this change in season, it will ensure you are in a good position to make a very strong **'Playoff Push.'**