

Soccer Referee Fitness Training

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All referees agree that conditioning work is a must for year round training. What they don't agree on is how to perform the conditioning. Conditioning should not be referred to as just aerobic training. Soccer refereeing requires speed and power and if you are running mileage, I truly feel bad that it is counterproductive. You are putting yourself at a severe disadvantage and are actually hurting your performance.

What types of conditioning should you do?

I continually stress the importance of general strength circuits for the average soccer referee. You can work on multiple facets while performing GS circuits. You are working on strengthening, balance, coordination, and aerobic capacity. I recommend that you use this as a recovery day type of workout.

These workouts are especially great when you are just starting your conditioning program. General strength circuit training helps you to build a greater work capacity, something that referees need that are just getting into soccer refereeing conditioning program.

Example of a General Strength workout:

Here is an example of a general strength circuit performed on the pitch;

Split squats - 10 each leg

Jog 50 yards

Rotational push-ups - 8 each

Jog 50 yards

Bicycles - 1x30

Jog 50 yards

Burpees - 1x10

Jog 50 yards

Staggered push-ups - 10 each

Jog 50 yards

Russian twists - 1x25

Jog 50 yards

Backwards lunges - 10-each leg

Jog 50 yards

Lateral lunges - 10 each leg

Jog 50 yards

Reverse crunches - 1x20

Jog 50 yards

1 Leg squats - 10 each leg

Rest 3 minutes and repeat circuit.

Tempo Running

Extensive Tempo are runs at 65-79% intensity (HR ~140-160). I typically use these runs at 100-600m. The length of these runs is going to depend on your present fitness level.

For the most part, I do not use Extensive tempo runs too often. The old saying 'train slow to run slow' could be used here. A problem with extensive tempo is that you can't work on your running form at all with such slow speeds. The demands of soccer do not require referees to run far distances at slow speeds.

The benefit of using extensive tempo runs are they can be used to help flush out the system. If you are feeling tired from previous workouts or even sore, extensive tempo workouts are great for recovery.

Use extensive runs at the beginning of training sometimes to build a little base before jumping into intensive tempo workouts. Also this type of workout helps to enhance oxidative mechanisms.

Use extensive tempo with our general strength circuits for the most part. This is where you run from station to station exercise.

Examples of an Extensive Tempo Workout:

1) 2 x 10 x 100m (75% intensity)
30" rest between reps and 2' between sets

2) 2 x 8 x 200m (70% intensity)
1' rest between reps and 2' between sets

Remember, referees should be able to hit their times and be within their target heart rate. If you aren't, take more rest between reps, reduce the volume of the workout or shut the workout down because you are missing the training benefit/goal.

Intensive Tempo

Intensive tempo is usually referred to as interval training. Intensive tempo is running distances over 80 meters at 80-89% intensity. (HR ~160-180). Running intervals for tempo work is also great for conditioning and superior to running long distances.

Because intensive tempo borders on speed and special endurance due to the high intensity, lactate levels can become very high. Your body must adapt to handle, buffer and remove the lactate so training in this state is extremely helpful for soccer refereeing. Since all energy systems more or less turn on at the same time, intensive tempo is highly stressful on both the aerobic and anaerobic systems. It is a great conditioning tool used for soccer officiating.

Examples of an Intensive Tempo Workout:

- 1) 6 x 200m (82% intensity)
3.5' recovery between reps
- 2) 2 x 4 x 250m (86% intensity)
4' rest between reps and 8' rest between sets

Progress the intensity of your tempo runs based on your conditioning goals. The ability of referees to buffer lactate accumulation will determine their success as fatigue levels rise throughout the course of their game..

Speed Endurance

Speed endurance is the ability to maintain speed in the presence of fatigue without decelerating. Speed endurance runs are going to vary in distance depending on your fitness level.

For example, soccer refereeing consists of short bursts of acceleration followed by lower intensity movements. So speed endurance workouts would be of shorter distances with shorter recovery. For a greater chance of success, try to maintain high levels of speed and intensity, even when tired.

These workouts are mentally challenging (since the presence of fatigue), so maintaining proper form and technique must be stressed. Training at high levels while fatigued will help to improve performance, both mentally and physically at the end of the game when the game could be on the line.

Examples of a Speed Endurance Workout:

- 1) 2 sets of 7 x 30 yards
25 seconds rest between reps and 3 minutes between sets
- 2) 2 x 80y (95-100% intensity) 7 minutes rest
2 x 100y (95-100% intensity) 8-10 minutes rest
2 x 120y (90% intensity) 10 minutes rest

How it relates to your fitness training:

Monday: General Strength Circuits
Tuesday: Acceleration
Wednesday: Extensive Tempo
Thursday - Acceleration
Friday: General Strength Circuits

Next 2 weeks

Monday: Acceleration
Tuesday: GS Circuits
Wednesday: Maximum Velocity
Thursday: GS Circuits
Friday: Acceleration
Saturday: Intensive Tempo

Depending on your improvements and progressions:

Next 2 weeks

Monday: Maximum Velocity
Tuesday: GS Circuits
Wednesday: Acceleration
Thursday: GS Circuits
Friday: Maximum Velocity
Saturday: Intensive tempo

Your training days will look like this at the end of the training period:

Monday: Maximum Velocity (w/ Acceleration)
Tuesday: GS circuits
Wednesday: Speed Endurance
Thursday: Extensive tempo
Friday: Maximum Velocity (w /Acceleration)
Saturday: Intensive tempo