

University of Memphis Training Program

As we analyze the demands made upon players during a game, it is apparent that bursts of explosive activity during which the players recover. The “all out” activity is largely in the form of short bursts of flat out running interspersed with tackling, shoving, and wrestling for the ball in scrums, ruck and mauls.

Are you fit enough to play the game near your potential sustaining a high level of performance for full 80 minutes? By the middle of September your answer should be a positive “Yes.”

Fitness is specific: Running training is vital for Rugby. Weight training is particularly beneficial to players who wish to increase power, acceleration and speed. Incorporated in running training is Fartlek training to accustom players to the energy sapping personal contact in rugby. These three areas form the integrated training program.

I recommend that you try to organize your training on a regular weekly schedule basis. This program is a nine-week preparation for the games in the first weeks of September. Every week should contain a minimum of two weight training sessions, two interval running sessions and one fartlek. Two samples of scheduling follow:

Sat. Fartlek	Sat.
Sun.	Sun. Fartlek
Mon. Interval Run	Mon.
Tues. Weight Train	Tues. Interval Run
Wed. Interval Run	Wed. Weight Train
Thu. Weight Train	Thu. Interval Run
Fri.	Fri. Weight Train

How you decide to organize your training schedule is your responsibility. Always remember that variety and competition make training more interesting and more fun.

Interval Running

Objective Procedure

- To develop acceleration; speed and endurance.
- 1- Train twice per week. Each session should be approximately 1 hour in duration (includes warm-up.)
- 2- Stretch and warm-ups thoroughly before training.
- 3- Front five forwards will have a slightly different program to the Back Row and Backs.

Interval running involves bursts of running with intervals of low rate activity or complete rest to allow recovery. The variations, as you see, are endless, but four factors have been carefully manipulated to achieve the optimum results. For example:

Set 1 8 x 110 yds at fast (walk) 1- distance to be run = 110 yds 2- pace to work rate = fast 3- rest interval = walk 4- number of repetitions=8

Terms Used

Work Rate

at full – maximum speed; flat out.

at fast – 70-80 % of maximum speed, with emphasis on controlled stride.

at easy – 60 – 70% of maximum speed, with emphasis on relaxed running.

Rest Interval

Jog – On you toes, jog the distance run.

Walk – Briskly walk the distance, unless stated otherwise.

Pulse – Walk back to your starting place and check your pulse (at the side of you neck, under you chin). When it is 128 beats/min begin your next repetition. It is the easiest to count for 15 sec. and then multiply the number by 4 for and approximation of beats/min.

The Program

All players will do the same interval running for the first two weeks. Then the front five will split away from the rest of the team for their more specific program, You will notice that the demands made upon players steadily increase in intensity as training progresses.

All Players

First Week

Day 1	Set 1-	2 x 400 meters at easy (jog)
	2-	4 x 200 meters at easy (jog)
	3-	8 x 100 meters at easy (walk)
Day 2	Set 1-	6 x 200 meters at easy (jog)
	2-	2 x 400 meters easy (jog)
	3-	1 x 800 at easy

Second Week

Day 1	Set 1-	2 x 800 at easy (walk 400)
	2-	4 x 400 at easy (jog)
Day 2	Set 1-	2 x 800 at easy (walk 400)
	2-	1 x 1600 at easy

Front Five

Third Week

Day 1	Set 1-	6 x 100 at fast (walk)
	2-	4 x 200 at fast (walk)
	3-	2 x 400 at fast (jog/walk)
Day 2	Set 1-	6 x 200 at fast (walk)
	2-	3 x 400 at fast (jog/walk)

Fourth Week

Day 1	Set 1-	8 x 100 at fast (walk)
	2-	4 x 200 at fast (walk)
	3-	2 x 400 at fast (jog/walk)
Day 2	Set 1-	1 x 800 at fast (walk 400)
	2-	3 x 300 at fast (jog/walk)

Fifth Week

Day 1	Set 1-	6 x 100 at fast (walk)
	2-	5 x 200 at fast (walk/jog)
	3-	4 x 400 at fast (walk)
Day 2	Set 1-	1 x 600 at fast (walk 200/pulse)
	2-	5 x 300 (walk/100 pulse)

Sixth Week

Day 1	Set 1-	8 x 50 at full (walk)
	2-	4 x 200 at fast (walk/jog)
	3-	2 x 400 at fast (walk)
Day 2	Set 1-	2 x 600 at fast (walk 200/pulse)
	2-	4 x 300 at fast (walk 100/pulse)

Seventh Week

- Day 1 Set 1- 10 x 50 at full (walk)
 2- 6 x 100 at fast (walk)
 3- 10 x 50 at full (walk/pulse)
- Day 2 Set 1- 8 x 200 at fast (walk)
 2- 1 x 600 at fast (walk)
 3- 4 x 100 at full (walk/pulse)

Eighth Week

- Day 1 Set 1- 2 x 50 at full (walk)
 2- 8 x 100 at fast (walk)
 3- 8 x 50 at full (walk/pulse)
- Day 2 Set 1- 6 x 75 at fast (walk)
 2- 1 x 600 at fast (walk 200)
 3- 4 x 200 at fast (walk)

Ninth Week

- Day 1 Set 1- 4 x 50 at full (walk)
 2- 6 x 200 at fast (walk)
 3- 8 x 50 at full (walk/pulse)
- Day 2 Set 1- 10 x 25 at full (walk)
 2- 8 x 50 at full (walk/pulse)
 3- 6 x 75 at fast (walk)
 4- 4 x 100 at fast (walk)

Back Row and Backs

Third Week

- Day 1 Set 1- 8 x 100 at fast (walk)
 2- 4 x 200 at fast (walk)
 3- 2 x 400 at fast (jog/walk)
- Day 2 Set 1- 6 x 200 at fast (walk)
 2- 3 x 400 at fast (jog/walk)

Fourth Week

Day 1 Set 1- 8 x 50 at full (walk)
 2- 1 x 400 at fast (walk)
 3- 4 x 100 at fast (walk)

Day 2 Set 1- 6 x 100 at full (walk)
 2- 6 x 200 at fast (walk)

Fifth Week

Day 1 Set 1- 9 x 50 at full (walk)
 2- 6 x 100 at fast (walk)
 3- 3 x 400 at fast (walk 200)

Day 2 Set 1- 8 x 75 at full (walk)
 2- 4 x 200 at fast (walk)
 3- 2 x 400 at fast (walk 200)

Sixth Week

Day 1 Set 1- 8 x 25 at full (walk)
 2- 6 x 50 at full (walk/pulse)
 3- 4 x 100 at fast (walk)
 4- 6 x 50 at full (walk/pulse)
 5- 8 x 25 at full (walk)

Day 2 Set 1- 8 x 100 at fast (walk)
 2- 4 x 200 at fast (walk)
 3- 1 x 400 at fast (walk 200)

Seventh Week

Day 1 Set 1- 10 x 50 at full (walk)
 2- 5 x 100 at fast (walk)
 3- 1 x 200 at fast (walk)
 4- 5 x 100 at fast (walk)
 5- 10 x 50 at full (walk)

Day 2 Set 1- 12 x 100 at fast (walk)
 2- 8 x 75 at fast (walk)
 3- 4 x 50 at full (walk/pulse)

Eighth Week

Day 1	Set 1-	8 x 25 at full (walk)
	2-	6 x 75 at full (walk/pulse)
	3-	4 x 100 at fast (walk)
	4-	6 x 75 at full (walk/pulse)
	5-	8 x 25 at full (walk)

Day 2	Set 1-	12 x 50 at full (walk)
	2-	12 x 100 at fast (walk/pulse)
	3-	12 x 50 at full (walk)

Ninth Week

Day 1	Set 1-	18 x 50 at full (walk)
	2-	12 x 100 at fast (jog/walk)

Day 2	Set 1-	9 x 50 at full (walk)
	2-	6 x 100 at full (walk/pulse)
	3-	3 x 200 at fast (walk)

Remember, flexibility and agility are also essential for speed and acceleration – especially from awkward starting positions. So ensure to stretch before and after each session.

Weight Training

Objective – To develop power and strength

Procedure – 1. Keep up the schedule prescribed for your position.
2. Record all your lifts and note progress.
3. Warm-up at each lift before working.
4. Try to train with a teammate.

The Lifts – To be executed in the order in which they appear below:

- (1) Squat
 - (2) Power Clean
 - (3) Bench Press
 - (4) Dead Lift
 - (5) Military Press
- (If time is short concentrate on the first three lifts only)

The Program – Repetitions and weight for each lift will be slightly different for different positions in the team. “Maximum” is when only one repetition is possible with a particular weight.

A. Front Row and Second Row Forwards

- (1) 3 sets - 8–10 reps. (70-80% of max.)
- (2) 3 sets - 6-8 reps. (80-90% of max.)
- (3) 3 sets – 6-8 reps. (80-90% of max.)
- (4) 3 sets – 6-8 reps. (80-90% of max.)
- (5) 3 sets – 8-10 reps. (70-80% of max.)

B. Back Row and #8

- (1) 3 sets – 8-10 reps. (70-80% of max.)
- (2) 3 sets – 8-10 reps. (70-80% of max.)
- (3) 3 sets – 6-8 reps. (80-90% of max.)
- (4) 3 sets – 6-8 reps. (80-90% of max.)
- (5) 3 sets – 8-10 reps. (70-80% of max.)

C. Backs

- (1) 2 sets – 10-10 reps. (60-70% of max.)
- (2) 2 sets – 8-10 reps. (70-80% of max.)
- (3) 2 sets – 10-12 reps. (60-70% of max.)
- (4) 2 sets – 10-12 reps. (70-80% of max.)
- (5) 2 sets – 10 -12 reps. (60-70% of max.)

The Sessions –

1. Train a minimum of two sessions per week,
2. Complete the requisite number of sets for each lift before moving on to the next one.
3. Player should feel free to utilize extra lifts which are more specific to the kind of strength they require for their particular positions. For example, a loose head prop may choose to work at strengthening his neck muscles.
4. Stretching exercise is essential before, after, and in between sets to retain flexibility.

Continually monitoring your maximum for each lift is necessary in nothing development (see newsletter) and also for projecting the weight load for future lifts. You will progress very quickly in the first few weeks reaching plateaux of development thereafter, In order to work out the relevant percentage of maximum as you progress, measure the maximum in each lift at the beginning of the last session in each week and use this quantity (hopefully an increase on the previous week's best!) to work out the training weights for the next week. For example, I am No. 8 who managed to bench press 280 lbs. for my maximum at the end of my third week of weight training. For my fourth week I will be benching with 80-90% of 280 lbs. which is approximately 260 lbs.

Fartlek Training – meaning “speed play”

Objective – To develop stamina and strength endurance.

Procedure – 1. Once a week, preferably at the weekend.
2. Stretch thoroughly before starting each run.
3. Try to run with a teammate.

The Fartlek – This type of training is ideally suited for rugby players. It brings the specificity of weight training (strength/power) and interval training (speed/stamina) together for the sake of endurance. It is of limited use to be an excellent scrumager and yet be unable to contribute in the driving loose play because of a lack of running fitness. Fartlek running will ensure the sort of endurance fitness we need.

The fartlek session should last for a minimum of 25 minutes to begin with, progressing to 45 minutes in the ninth week. You must be active throughout this time period. Try to find an area including steep inclines (hill and step sprints are excellent for strength and stamina), plenty of grassy surface, fences or hurdles, sand dunes if possible, trees and bushes etc. Avoid training in circuits round a track or rugby field although this may be most the accessible for some.

Having fixed the most suitable area for your session you are ready to begin. Within the framework of cross-country running Fartek training includes changes of pace and exercises:

Change of Pace –

After an easy paced first quarter mile inject 50 yds. of striding/sprinting followed immediately by 50 yds. of jogging. This 100 yd. pattern should be repeated every other 100 yds. The change of pace should occur up inclines preferably! No walking is allowed at any stage.

Excercises –

During the first session aim to do a minimum of 20 push-ups, 20 sit-ups and 20 burpees. Each exercise should be done in sets of 5 repetitions to each set (12 sets in all) and one particular exercise set, eg. 5 push-ups should be followed by another exercise set, eg. 5 burpees, approximately 100 yds. Later, this should be followed by the third exercise set of 5 sit-ups another 100 yds. further on (12 ‘stations’ in all). The number of repetitions to each set should be increased gradually increased from 5 to 10 by the ninth week of training.

Fartlek training is meant to be fun. Once you have the pattern of running speeds and exercise reps. in your mind try adapting it to different routes always remembering the need for inclines (resistance) and continuous running. If these sessions are done correctly there is tremendous transfer value to the game situation. Remember – “keep on your toes at all times.”

General Considerations

Heat Problems and Diet

Much of what needs to be said here is really common sense. If you are working hard at strenuous activity of any kind, it is important that you compensate properly for your body's loss of water, energy etc. Read the section on 'Water Loss, Environmental Heat Problems, and Prevention of Heat Illness'. Make sure you eat plenty of food high in carbohydrate and protein value. Those of you who are weight training particularly intensively should increase your intake of protein by using one of the many protein supplements available on the market. If you are in doubt about the kinds of food and their classification as to whether they are most suitable or not, consult your doctor or refer to a text on nutrition and energy systems. Eat well and sleep well. Check your weight regularly.

Ball Skill Training

Elements of ball control must be incorporated in your general training program in order to reproduce the specificity needed for a high transfer of training to the match situation. Each of you should have access to a rugby ball at all times so that you are able to practice kicking, passing, catching etc, before or after any training sessions. Use resistance work with a partner during intervals between sets, eg. , scrimmaging in pairs, mauls, carrying etc. The more you are able to train with a rugby ball the more complete your preparation will be. Too often we see a thrilling movement involving many players break down at the last pass due to a basic lack of ball skill. We must be stronger, fitter, and faster but not at the expense of our rugby playing skills.