



Speed, Strength, and Endurance Training

Alaska is proving to have exceptionally talented players that can compete on many levels, but one area we continue to struggle with is fitness of our players. It becomes very clear when competing with the best of the country at ODP, college camps, and showcase tournaments that the majority of our players don't have the work rate for a full game that many coaches are looking for.

The reasons for this are primarily twofold. First, there is little accountability here with too many clubs and too few players. We compete against clubs with hundreds of applicants hoping for a tryout, then 30-50 new players each year trying to take a spot on the team. If on the team and not performing at 110% all the time you are cut. In Alaska most clubs are reluctant to make cuts simply trying to keep enough players to play, and there is not a large pool of players looking to take your spot. Second, for half the year our conditions are not as conducive for the year-round physical training our sport requires.

The first reason we can't do much about – that comes down to you wanting to separate yourself from the good players to being a great athlete and putting in the time on your own. For the second, if you just can't put on a jacket and drill screws in your running shoes to go outside for an hour the following workout plans will help you become a year-round athlete, not just a soccer player. Remember that tactical/technical with a team, even four days a week, is essential but is NOT fitness training. At least two days a week find time for a personal workout.

SPEED TRAINING

You don't need a big area, even just 5 yards by 20 yards (a hallway or driveway works), for a good workout. Start with a 5-10 minute dynamic stretching warm up, 20-30 minutes of sprint work, and 5-10 minute dynamic cool-down. Below are activities to try. Between intervals focus on heart rate recovery if you know that principal, otherwise a work/rest ratio of 1:2 works well (i.e. hard for 30 seconds, rest one minute).

- Shuttle run w/ cones at ten yards (forwards, backwards, shuffle, crossovers, change...)
- Cones in shape of boxes, Ws, Zs... (different turns, front, back, side to side)
- Cones 1 foot apart for fast-foot drills (one foot in, two in, every other, high knees, side to side, in and out, lateral as you go forwards and backwards...)
- Cones 2 feet apart for jump drills (1 foot, both feet, height, speed, lateral,



ENDURANCE TRAINING

Simplest thing is just a five-mile or 40 minute run (equal to high school game half). If you can't make it out treadmills are good options. (Note: treadmills should NOT be used to train for speed as mechanics of kick and foot-speed are far different from actual technique.) My wife can run on our treadmill for hours but I get way too bored. The following are two very effective, somewhat engaging workouts I try to include at least twice a week.

1) Progressive: 5 minute easy jog; next 10 minutes increase pace .5 MPH every 2 minutes; recover jog two minutes; recovery walk 2 minutes (drink water); 1 minute at pace near warm up jog; next 10 minutes increase elevation 1% every minute; 2 minute recovery jog, 2 minute brisk walk to shake out lactic build up, 1 minute slow stretch walk with lunges, high knees, butt-kicks. For starters try the pace I go at, then increase from there. Here is my program:

0 – 5: 6 MPH	17 – 19: 4 MPH	32-34: 4 MPH
5– 15: start at 7.5 MPH, last two at 9.5 MPH	19 – 20: 5.5 MPH	34-35: 2 MPH stretch
15 – 17: 6 MPH	20-30: 1% - 10% incline	
	30-32: 6 MPH at 0%	

2) Negative splits (meaning you finish faster than you start): 5 minute warm up as above, then go 30 minutes increasing pace by .5 MPH every five minutes (start 6.5 MPH finish at 9 MPH). First should be easy, middle should be just enough for you to sing (not loud) to your music, last should be exhausting, but don't fall off! Five minute cool down as above.

STRENGTH TRAINING

Focus strength on endurance and building your core, not bulk. If using weights do high reps, low weight. You don't even need weights or fancy equipment. The following are ten easy and effective activities done at home.

- Pushups
- Pushups on ball
- Elevated pushups (feet on chair)
- Plank (on toes and elbows)
- Side Plank (one elbow)
- Crunches (ball in knees)
- Side-crunches
- Lunges
- Wall-sits
- Box/Hurdle jumps (front to back and side to side)

TOUCH TRAINING

Find any area you can pass and receive with yourself. I used to love a racquetball court at the gym, making space in my garage, or in the driveway against the house (mom loved it...). Put on your iPod and have fun being creative juggling, passing using all planes of both feet, receiving using all body parts and different weights, taking out of air and getting quickly to feet, turning on receiving, volleying, heading...