

Utilizing Speed Quest for Soccer Speed Training

by Dan Pinkerton | Nov 2007

As a High School and State ODP coach I am always looking for the competitive edge in training to help my athletes. Over the last 16 years I've been a part of Performance Conditioning for Soccer and the last ten years worked closely with Speed Quest. I've found the concepts of Speed Quest to be the most complete all around system of training. The ease of including the basic concepts of speed, agility and strength in my regular training sessions have led to a very effective injury prevention program and has led to an increasingly successful High School soccer program. I've coached several high school sports, boys soccer, football and girls softball, in that time I've always struggled with a way to get my athletes to buy into off-season conditioning. Recently I've begun a program called Soccer Synergy that incorporates the concepts discussed in "The Explosive Athlete", into a twelve-week off-season training program. One of the most impressive outcomes I've seen as a coach as we began last year, "Soccer Synergy", was the enthusiasm of the athletes to train in small groups and learn the technical side of speed. We train in groups of 12 - 14 athletes 1-½ hours each session focusing on teaching the athlete the technical skills of speed, agility and strength. During the twice a week sessions we focus on speed and agility and rely on the athlete to work on strength training through out the rest of the week. We were almost as surprised as the individual athletes at the increases they made in short 3-month period. A quote from one parent sums it up: "I didn't believe at my daughter's age (17) girls could improve that much, as I watched other girls her age and they usually are stagnant or regress. She increased her vertical by 6 inches, and her 40-yard sprint by .5 seconds." One young man increased his vertical by 9 inches and decreased his 40 time by .9 seconds. During the training period each athlete participating realized between a 6% and 10% increase in their sprint speed and vertical. The greatest benefit of this program actually was for the club or High School coach who now had athletes training on their own and who had the technical skill to "Run Faster".

For the last six years I've been the head coach at Chugiak High School, Chugiak Alaska, for the girls soccer program. When taking over the team I piloted the twelve-week program I developed based on Speed Quest. We also incorporated the dynamic stretching routines in both our pre-game and post game sessions. In the initial years I had one and sometimes two athletes who regularly attended the twice a week open session. As of last year we began averaging 12 to 14 players in each session. The early benefits of the program began to show themselves two years ago as the

girls appeared in their first ever Regional Championship game and took second. In the last six years the team has appeared in six regional tournaments and five state tournaments. Building on that success the girls determined themselves to train together the next year. In the 2006-2007 season the benefits were realized early as they finished the first half of the season 7-1. As the season went on they only got stronger finishing the season in the State Championship game playing double overtime (110 minutes) and then winning their first State Championship in the penalty shoot out. As a coach the most significant benefit I've seen in utilizing the Speed Quest concepts is the reduction in sports injuries. Over the last 4 years we have had 0 season ending injuries. This is extremely significant in we only have a nine-week season, playing 25 possible games.

NOTE: Coach Pinkerton has been coaching High School Athletics for 16 years and has been involved in coaching Boys State Championship team in both Football and Soccer as well as a Girls Softball State Championship team. He has Masters in Educational Counseling and Guidance as well as a NSCAA State coaching diploma, and USSF National D license. He is Co-Founder/Partner of Alaska Northstars LLC, a college bound athlete-advising company. State Soccer Coordinator for Alaska Arctic Winter Games Indoor Soccer.