



“Year Long Periodization Training Schedule”

By Richard Fergola

Gold Level Coach
Asst. Wrestling Coach, Neosho County Community College

Do you ever wonder sometimes, when you are watching those elite wrestlers dominate the competition, what they do to be so good? How do they train? What makes them so much better than everyone else?

Well, some of it is pure God given talent, but most of it comes from training. The above average and elite wrestlers set goals and establish a training schedule for themselves that will most likely last year round.

Most people believe that there are two parts to a wrestler's season....in-season and off-season. Well, that is not true. Most above average and elite level wrestlers develop what is called a periodization schedule. This is a training schedule that is year round and is broken up into periods where training will change to accommodate what the wrestler is training for.

The periodization training schedule is broken up into four seasons:

- 1) **Pre-season**-this training is to prepare the wrestler for the upcoming high school or collegiate season. Weight-training and conditioning. (August-November)
- 2) **High School or Collegiate Season**-training is more specific, and more wrestling oriented. Training only for folkstyle. (November-February)
- 3) **Freestyle/Greco Regular Season**-training 2-4 times a week, wrestling about every Saturday in local tournaments, some regionals, more laid back. (March, April and May).

4) **Freestyle/Greco Post Season**-this training is more intense and focus is towards the climax of the year, national level tournaments. (June and July)

Some wrestlers can develop this type of a plan themselves, but most are usually trained by a coach that will work them through this plan in the beginning and then have the wrestler slowly take it on themselves. For the serious wrestler, a year long periodization training schedule will not only help you improve as a wrestler, but it will help in areas such as physical shape, mental toughness (psychological stamina), focus, technique, training habits, and most importantly it will help you peak at the times that are most important.

I have developed a year long periodization training schedule that I used with high school wrestlers when I was a head high school coach. This schedule can be adapted for collegiate level athletes as well. This schedule incorporates many different aspects of training at different times of the year. Of course this training regimen is not the “written word” by any means, but it has worked well in the past as well as the present.

Under this training schedule, I have produced 30 state qualifiers, 15 state placers, 2 state champions at the high school level. On the national level, it has produced 21 Cadet All-Americans, 2 Cadet National Champions, and one Junior National Greco-Roman Champion in just 5 years. So it is well proven. Please take this schedule and use it as much as you can.

Michigan Individual Regional Tournament. Jerry Salenbien, Dundee, wins by a technical fall 21-4, over Nic Higdon, Goodrich during the 135 lb. finals. Photo by David Schankin.



August and September

- Start the last week of August with the pre-season strength & conditioning program. Work outs should be held on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Never workout on Fridays, rest day. The first six weeks of this program is weight training only. This should consist of heavyweight and low reps to help build mass and power. This should last from August 26-Oct 3rd.

October

- End the weight training side of the pre-season on Oct. 3rd. Starting Monday Oct. 7th, begin the conditioning cycle. This cycle will last for six weeks and will run right up to the beginning of the wrestling season.
- The purpose is to have the athletes physically ready to step on the mat the first day of practice and when the first competition arrives, they will be prepared.
- The conditioning side of the pre-season will be a lot of strength exercises, running, agility, coordination, balance, stamina, cardiovascular, and a test of heart.

November

- End the pre-season strength & conditioning program on Nov. 8th
- In Kansas, the week of Nov. 11-15 is considered Buffer Week which entails that no winter athlete can be involved in any organized practice or workout. I usually just tell my athletes to rest a little bit, maybe get in a couple of runs that week and lift light.
- November 18th, start regular wrestling practice.
- Now that conditioning will come in practice, the wrestlers should pick back up a regular weight training regimen. Start the weights after the first week of practice is over. Most kids will have a weight training class so they can workout in there.
- Throughout the wrestling season, we do not want the wrestler to put on mass nor do we want to over train the muscle groups, so the training will be adjusted for in-season. The wrestler should switch to lifting light weight with higher reps like 15-20.
- Normally I would have my wrestlers go two weeks on weights and one week off. This gives them a small break from the weight room. In place of the weights that week, I will usually have them just do little things like pull-ups, push-ups, jump rope, stair master, etc. Have them follow this schedule throughout the season then stop the weight training one week before the state tournament.

December, January and February

- December will consist of competitions. The weekly training schedule will be different depending on how many competitions you have during the week. Here are a few examples of what you can do during the week throughout the season once you get into December when you have competitions:

1. One competition for the week (Thursday dual)

- Monday should consist of drilling, live wrestling, and conditioning. Should be an intense training session. Make wrestlers be within six pounds of scratch weight.
- Tuesday should consist of dictated drilling, some technique, and live wrestling. Wrestlers must be within 3 pounds of scratch weight.
- Wednesday is the night before the dual, so practice is short and is used to just get their weight down. Drilling

and conditioning is all that is needed. Wrestlers must be within one pound of scratch weight.

- Thursday will be competition.
- Friday will be a light practice, made up of mostly technique review and drilling.
- Saturday no practice.
- Sunday no practice.

2. One competition for the week (Saturday tournament)

- Monday will still be drilling, live wrestling, and conditioning. Wrestlers must be within 9 lbs of scratch weight.
- Tuesday will be technique day. Be within 7 pounds.
- Wednesday will consist of mostly live wrestling sessions. Training matches. Be within 5 pounds.
- Thursday will be drilling, some live, and conditioning. Must be within 3 pounds.
- Friday will be a short practice. Mostly conditioning and drilling. Must be within 1 pound.

3. 2 day tournament for the week (Friday and Saturday)

- Monday - same as #2, but must be within 7 pounds.
- Tuesday - same as #2.....within 5 pounds.
- Wednesday - same as #2....within 3 pounds.
- Thursday - same as #2.....within 1 pound.
- Friday - competition.
- Saturday - competition.
- Sunday - rest.

4. Two competitions in one week (Thursday dual and Saturday tournament)

- Monday - hit practice hard. Dictated drilling, live wrestling, and conditioning. Get their weight down to 5 pounds.
- Tuesday - drilling and conditioning. No technique. Be within 3 pounds.
- Wednesday - light practice. Drilling and conditioning and one live match. Within one pound.
- Thursday - dual competition.
- Friday - just maintain weight and leave within one pound again.
- Saturday - tournament competition.
- Sunday - rest

5. Two competitions in a week (Thursday dual and two day tournament on Fri. and Sat.)

- Same as #4, except there will be no practice on Friday. Just the tournament competition.

March

- After the state tournament is over, make sure that your athletes take at least one week off from any activities.
- After the one week lay off, start the strength & conditioning program again, but adapt it a little.
- Alternate the weight training and the conditioning by weeks. One week will be weight training (heavy weight and low reps), and then the next week condition (long distance running, sprints, push-ups, pull-ups, etc). Then the next week go back to weight training but lift light weight lots of reps and then the next week condition and so on and so on.
- Continue this training schedule through March. Some of your wrestlers may participate in Kids Federation wrestling throughout March, but this schedule will be for the ones who do not.
- Towards the end of March or the first week of April, begin drilling again for freestyle and Greco-Roman about 2 to 3 times a week.

April

- In most states, local freestyle and Greco tournaments will take place every Saturday through April and May. You can go just about anywhere and find a tournament somewhere.
- Continue to practice 2 to 3 times a week and attending tournaments on Saturdays. You should get at least one more practice a week when training for a bigger tournament such as regionals, FILA Nationals, National Duals, or Cadet/Junior Nationals in Fargo.
- In April, the elite level wrestler should try and compete at the Cadet FILA Nationals in Chicago or the FILA Juniors in Chattanooga, TN.
- Throughout April, May and June there are regional tournaments for the Cadet or Junior level wrestler. These regionals are based all over the US and are used as qualifiers for each state's national teams and will usually feature some the regions best wrestlers.

May and June

- When school is out at the end of May or beginning of June, most freestyle clubs will not work out as much and the number of workout partners will diminish greatly.
- Start to implement more running and light lifting into your training schedule. At least 3 times a week.
- If your Freestyle/Greco club cannot provide the quality workout partners that you need, then try to find a USA Wrestling regional training center to travel to at least once a week.
- Continue to drill and live wrestle 3 to 4 times a week.

- In June, the Cadet level wrestler, should try and attend the Cadet National Duals with his/her respective state team. This tournament provides each wrestler with approximately 15 to 16 matches in 3 days. The competition is very high level.
- At the end of June is the Junior National Duals. This is the same format as Cadet Duals. Both of these tournaments provide a ton of mat time and are usually a prelude to the national championships in Fargo, ND.

July

- In the first of July, about 2 weeks before nationals training camp, the wrestlers should intensify their training sessions. Should be an increase in conditioning, running, drilling, live sessions, and cut back on the weight training.
- Attend your national team training camp where you will have elite level training partners to train with for a week where you will use that time to fine tune your conditioning and technique. The camps main purpose is to just get repetition, more conditioning and control your weight.
- Attend the national tournament the following week in Fargo, ND.
- After Fargo, take about a 2 week break from all training, unless you are an incoming college freshman, then take just one week off and continue back with running and lifting about 3 times a week. No mat work during this time. You want to report to college in good shape.
- If you are going to still be in high school, then take the two week break to give your body some rest time that it needs. Recovery is very important. Eat well during this time,

mainly concentrating on lots of protein and fewer carbohydrates. Maintain a good diet.

August

- When school starts back up again, begin weight training on your own with heavy weight and low reps about three days a week and run the other two days.
- At the end of August, the cycle will start all over again with the pre-season strength & conditioning program.

This year long periodization training schedule will really help develop your wrestlers into above average and elite level wrestlers. The constant training, mat experience, and exposure to different coaching styles will elevate their focus on what needs to be accomplished in order to become a very successful wrestlers.

If you are a serious wrestler and you have high goals set for yourself, then it is wise to establish a year long periodization training schedule so that you can improve yourself and peak at the most important competitions throughout the season. 🏆

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