

## THE LANGUAGE OF PERIODIZATION – Wayne Le Moore

Many coaches find themselves confused by the language of periodization. Part of this confusion results from the fact that every coach periodizes training uniquely and often uses terms differently from others. The following is a short glossary of the terms that describe the periodization of training.

**Training Year** – The period of time over the course of a calendar year during which the athlete trains.

**Cycle** – A time period in which specific workouts with specific purposes are planned. There are several types of cycles.

**Macrocycle** – A macrocycle describes an extended body of training focused on a particular sport or event. For example, the training of a year-round distance runner would cover two, and possibly three, macrocycles: one for Cross Country, one for track season, and perhaps one for indoor track season. Sometimes, coaches will refer to a training year as one macrocycle.

**Period** – As the term implies, a period is the basis of the periodization process. Generally, a macrocycle is divided into three training periods: **preparation, competition, and transition** (or recovery). *Preparation* involves what is typically described as pre-season. *Competition* describes the unit of time covering actual meets and races. *Transition* is the recovery time connecting one macrocycle to another.

**Phase** – A training phase is a unit within a training period that emphasizes a specific type of training. The concept of a training phase is based on the fact that any single type of training yields consistent improvement over roughly three to four weeks. A phase usually varies from two to five weeks, with four weeks or one month being most common. A training phase is often referred to as a mesocycle. Much as a macrocycle is comprised of distinct training periods, each training period is comprised of different training phases. For example, within the competitive period of the season there may be early competitive, general competitive, and peak competitive phases. During each of these phases, a specific type of training is stressed.

### EXAMPLES OF CROSS COUNTRY TRAINING PHASES

- *General Preparation* – This phase usually consists of gradually increasing in long, steady distance mileage to improve VO<sub>2</sub> max and cardiovascular fitness.
- *Specific Preparation* – This phase introduces hill and tempo runs along with steady distance to improve aerobic efficiency.
- *Early Competitive* – During this phase, mileage is reduced and the intensity of workouts increases. Lactate threshold training, in the form of tempo runs, hills, repetitions, and intervals, becomes more important.

Competition begins.

- *Competitive* — Performance in dual meets and invitational races, along with increased training intensity, is emphasized.
- *Peak Competitive* — The phase for which peak performance is planned.
- *Transition* (or Recovery) — A transition phase is one of total and active rest, allowing physical and mental recovery before the start of a new training cycle.