RETURN TO SPORTS PRACTICE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR COACHES

Providence Sports Medicine is committed to supporting athletes as sports gradually return from the COVID layoff. Many athletes have not been able to train and condition their bodies for appropriate levels of activity on a consistent basis. What is important to understand is that the longer an athlete was unable to train at high levels on a consistent basis, the longer they will need to rebuild their physical performance. As sports at professional levels have returned, there have been many instances of injury across multiple sports. This has largely been due to a lack of adequate time to prepare for the unique physical demands of competition after prolonged periods of inconsistent training. While not every injury can be avoided, there are a few key steps that can be followed to help maximize athlete performance while helping reduce the risk of injuries.

One step is getting to know the types of sport activities that can be utilized throughout a practice session during the week. See the list below to better understand the classifications of these activities, examples of each type, and how to understand the difficulty or intensity that these activities present each athlete. The difficulty or intensity of the activity is important to consider because of how that activity might impact the physical performance, health, and wellness of the athlete.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER FOR PRACTICES

DYNAMIC WARM UP

A good dynamic warm up is an essential element of any sport related physical activity. Devoting 10 to 15 minutes to a thorough warm up can help improve performance by increasing core body temperatures, priming metabolism for activity, preparing muscles and joints for movements, fine tuning the nervous system for skills, as well as sharpening mental focus. Most importantly, a proper warm up can help decrease injury risk. For a great guideline on putting a warm up together, see our infographic for the warm-up checklist.

SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Technical Skills: These are activities like ball handling and passing in soccer, batting practice and playing catch in softball or baseball, dribbling, passing, free-throws, and shooting in basketball, passing and serving in volleyball, catching, position footwork, and non-contact blocking or tackling 'fits' in football. These can be done by one athlete alone or with 2 or more athletes working together on the same team or skill.

Tactical Games: Think of these as anything involving the "X's and O's" of a sport where 2 or more athletes compete against each other within the game. This could include full on 11 v 11 soccer on a full field, or a small 5 v 5 possession game. It might include 3 v 3 half-court basketball games, or 5 on 5 full court games.
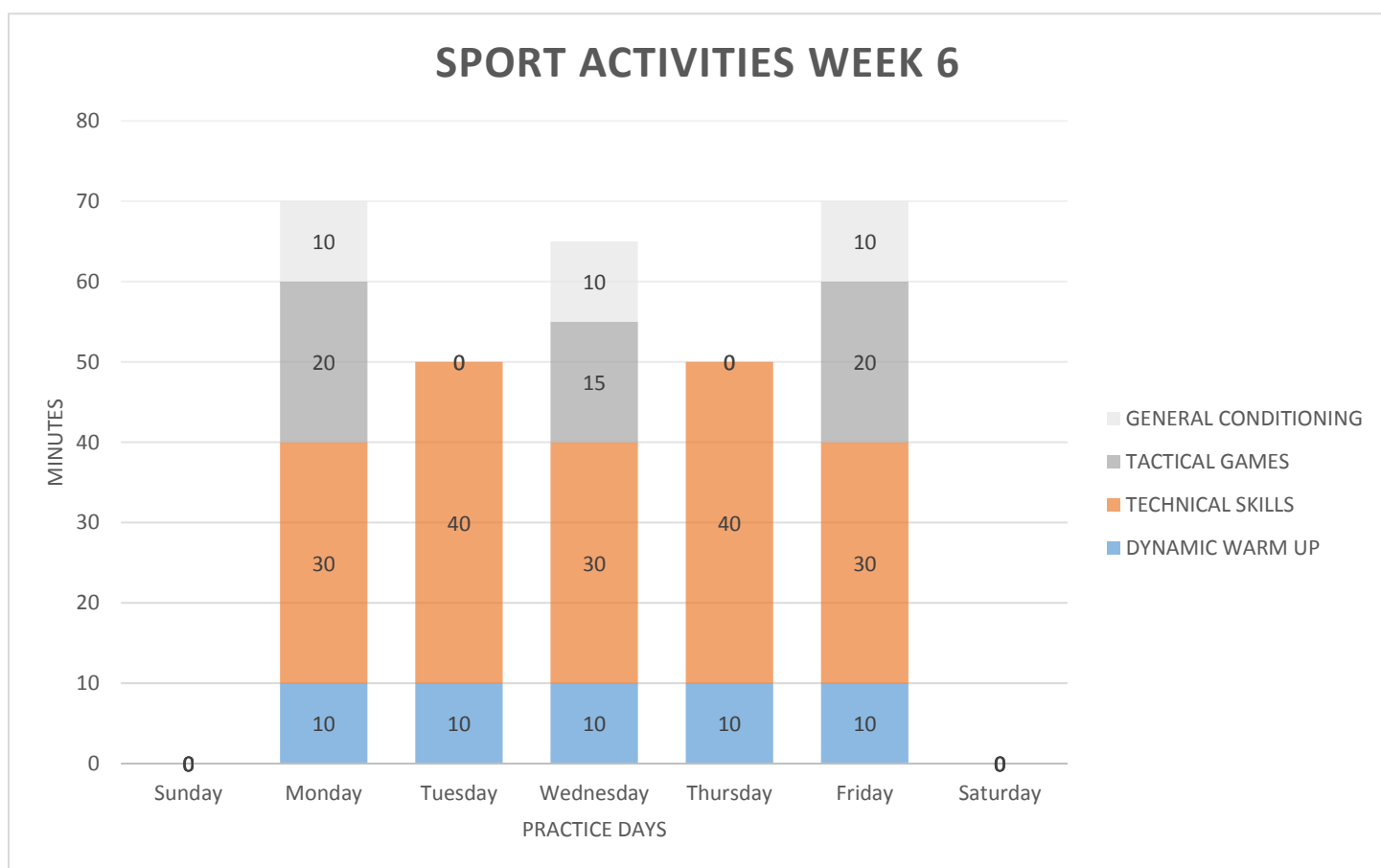
GENERAL CONDITIONING

This consists of any activity aimed at improving sport-relevant fitness. See our website for the free Conditioning Program for information on how to gain a base of fitness for sports.

WEEK 6 TIPS FOR RETURNING TO PRACTICE

DYNAMIC WARM UP: Using guidance from the infographic , make warming up a mandatory part of each session, devoting 10 minutes to it at the start of each activity.

SPORTS ACTIVITIES: In week 6, we maintain work on **Technical Skills** as outlined above to help athletes perform sports skills with implements like balls, gloves, or bats. This also allows the athlete to work on their foundational sport skills prior to more intensive activities associated with **Tactical Games** that are progressed this week as well. In Week 6 we continue to increase our time playing Tactical Games that are more intensive and competitive. It is important to gradually expose athletes to these higher demands in the coming weeks.

GENERAL CONDITIONING: Use the Week 6 outline from the Conditioning Program as a guide for conducting General Conditioning activities.

SPORT ACTIVITIES WEEK 6

Stacked bar chart titled "SPORT ACTIVITIES WEEK 6", X-axis: PRACTICE DAYS, Y-axis: MINUTES (0–80).

Day	Dynamic Warm Up	Technical Skills	Tactical Games	General Conditioning
Sunday	0			
Monday	10	30	20	10
Tuesday	10	40	0	
Wednesday	10	30	15	10
Thursday	10	40	0	
Friday	10	30	20	10
Saturday	0			

Legend: GENERAL CONDITIONING, TACTICAL GAMES, TECHNICAL SKILLS, DYNAMIC WARM UP

VISIT OUR PROVIDENCE SPORTS MEDICINE WEBSITE FOR WEEKLY PROGRAM UPDATES!

FOR PROGRAM QUESTIONS, SEND US AN EMAIL TO CONTACT OUR EXPERTS