

# PROGRAM DESIGN: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

## ROUNDTABLE

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There is a great emphasis on player development in short, medium, and long term. When the season is broken down into sets of five games, it is easier to set precise objectives, achieve improvement, and pay attention to every single game. In the league, there is a growing emphasis on load management and resting players, which can be seen as a status symbol for some team members. However, there is no scientific evidence to determine the value of resting, and it may send the wrong message to the team. In a league where every game matters, maintaining the mentality of winning the next game is crucial.

It is suggested to distribute the load in a shorter, more intensive periods, focusing on information and tactical adjustments. This approach helps maintain the same performance for the main players during the season.

Emotional load is a critical component of player preparedness, as they often experience a variety of emotional states during a game. In order to manage these emotions, it is essential to distinguish between negative and positive experiences, as well as anxieties. In the NBA, balancing between games is necessary, but it is essential not to feed into the mentality that every game is just another one. By setting context and communicating with players, teams can better manage their emotional load and ensure a successful game. When a team is losing, coaches should be focusing on supporting the players rather than being harsh on them. This allows a more positive and open-minded approach to handling mistakes. Knowing players' personalities is beneficial for optimal performance and avoiding ego wars. Ego control drives talent and stubbornness. Great athletes possess both ego and competitiveness, which can be harnessed to unlock

their potential. Managing these traits effectively is essential for a team's success.

In stressful circumstances it is important to analyze the given situation and the reactions of people involved. It is also essential to consider the team dynamics and the role of each player in the team. By stepping back and focusing on team dynamics, players can develop a better understanding of their own roles and react appropriately to different situations. This approach helps maintaining a positive team spirit and avoiding negative consequences.

Players often face physical and emotional challenges of a congested schedule in the NBA and Euro League as well. On the road they can focus on the game more and avoid external pressures, such as family or work issues. Routines are crucial for athletes to build confidence and perform well. Constantly changing routines can help reduce anxiety and improve mental preparation. In a congested schedule, it is important to keep a strong connection within the team, assign individual coaches and keep players engaged with strength and conditioning coaches so that 'low minute players' can feel integrated as well.

In the NBA, morning practice sessions are preferred, as they allow players to rest before the next competition phase. Morning practices are beneficial for players' physical and mental well-being. The last half of the practice focuses on game shots rather than stationary shots. The timing of these practices depends on the game time and the players' game assignments. Coaches agree that two practice a day is not productive.

The debate between biology and psychology revolves around practice time and whether to stay at a game destination for a night or travel right back home. While some studies suggest that players are more likely to stay in the city after the game, others argue that it not necessarily means the players will go to sleep due to high adrenalin levels. In the NBA it depends mainly on the game schedule while in Europe rather on the available flights.

Game day routine includes waking up at 10 am, having a short meeting after breakfast followed by a 45 minutes “shootaround” practice. Lunch is scheduled 6 hours prior the game. Afterwards a nap and snack is provided. The team departs 2 hours prior the game to the gym where they immediately start taping and warming up. There is a pregame meeting in the locker room and finally the team is ready to win the game. Listening to music or making jokes can create a relieved pre game environment that helps the team in a successful preparation.

When working together with the referees, negative body language should be rejected. Basic personal respect should be given both ways.

Money can be a huge motivational factor for the players. Small bonuses for winning games were much appreciated by them and unexpected financial support can also be highly motivational.

The chemistry of the locker room is very significant, which is considered as a sacred zone for the players, where they desire to speak with one another without being judged by others. Typically, the head coach does not attend.

Take home messages: Pushing the ‘fast forward’ button through experiences can hinder preparedness for important situations, but a solid foundation is crucial for personal and professional growth. Overnight success takes 10 years.

Invest in yourself and be prepared for the right opportunity.