

Why Champions Get in the Weight Room During Their Season
Updated: September 30, 2019

By now, fall sports are in full swing.

Many of you spent all summer training and working out to get ready for the season. You lifted, you ran and you pushed yourself to become your best. The preseason came and you looked and felt great. You felt strong, fast and invincible. Your coaches noticed, as well.

But once official practices started, you stopped lifting. Now it's roughly a month into the season, and you're still not lifting.

I hear all the excuses.

You have practice until 6 p.m. and you're in A.P. classes so you have homework every night. On weekends, you're too tired from the week and have "no time to train."

I say bologna!

I think you just have poor time management skills. The best athletes I work with all make time to train in-season. They don't miss.

You would, could and should have time for in-season training, but for whatever reason, you're just not getting in the gym. And I have news for you—this is a huge mistake.

Although strength, hypertrophy and power can be largely maintained for a few weeks without training, it's the second half of your season when the decision to avoid in-season training will really bite you.

With each passing week, you'll get weaker, slower, smaller and less explosive. And it couldn't happen at a worse time, as the back-half of the season is when the most important games are played.

Conference championship games, rivalry games, playoff games, state tournament games—all usually fall in October or November.

The reason you felt so great entering the season was because you were "charged up," so to speak. Your body was getting stronger by the day, and with that comes speed and confidence. It is the training that gave you the edge. The training charged you up.

Think of it like your phone. It works great as long as you keep charging it. But leave it off the charger for too long, and it's dead.

Or think of it like getting a tan. You lay out in the sun all summer long, and in August, you have great color. Then you stop laying in the sun completely. In a couple weeks, your tan starts to fade. In a month, it's well on its way to disappearing. Eight weeks later, it's totally gone, and you can't even tell you had a tan to begin with.

Speed and strength are exactly the same way. In fact, even the timeline is about the same.

As the season rolls along and sectionals get closer, you are the weakest you've been since the end of last season. The time when you should be wanting to be your best, you're at your worst.

Not only does this drag down your performance and increase fatigue, but it also can make you more susceptible to injury. A freshly trained, strong body is far less susceptible to injury.

Then there's the confidence factor. Whether you'd like to admit it or not, you gain confidence from training, and that shows up on the field.

When you're "Charged Up," it gives you a distinct advantage over the opponents who are not.

With all that said, why stop training and lose your edge?

But it's not too late. If you get back in the gym now and train the right way, you can re-gain a lot of your lost progress and ensure no further declines.

Get your butt back in the gym and find time to train twice a week. Yes, twice a week. Done right, this will allow you to maintain your gains and not go backwards. You don't need four days a week to maintain your training. Two days is all it takes.

I recommend an upper-lower split. One day a week, do all your upper-body work, focusing on 3-5 reps for the big exercises and making sure you also hit your shoulders, triceps and neck (neck training is especially important for football and soccer players).

Then one other day each week, do your lower-body work. Don't be afraid to Squat. You don't necessarily have to max out if you don't want to, but you need to Squat in-season. Hit your hamstrings and glutes with moderate reps (8-12 reps per set) and be sure to train your groin, as well.

Both days should also include explosive-style movements where you focus on moving the weight fast! This is not the phase to focus on slow, grinding reps.

A good in-season workout doesn't need to take long. Just 30 minutes twice a week can be enough to get in some quality work and keep you charged.

You want to get stronger as the season goes on, not weaker. Leave that for your opponents.

Why do you think every college sports team trains during the season? Because they know how important it is to their success.

Get your butt back in the gym ASAP and save your excuses for someone else!

Coach Rick Scarpulla is the owner of the Ultimate Advantage Training Center. You can reach him at 914-433-1110 as well as on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Photo Credit: CasarsaGuru/iStock

READ MORE:

[Why Every Athlete Needs In-Season Strength Training](#)
[Gain a Competitive Edge With This In-Season Weightlifting Schedule](#)
[Why In-Season Strength Training Is Essential for Soccer Players](#)