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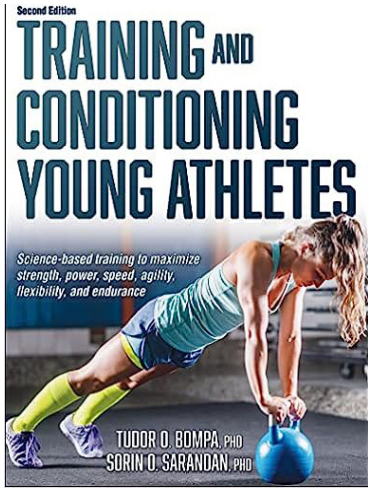
RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Book reviews

Training and Conditioning Young Athletes. 2nd Edition

Authors: Tudor O. Bompa and Sorin Sarandan
Publisher: Human Kinetics, December, 2022
320 pages; Price: $34.95 (Paperback), $33.20 (Kindle)



About thirteen years ago we presented in this journal another book by Professor Tudor Bompa. At that time a search by Google yielded 95,000 results. Well, at present, on a similar search the number of the results was more than three times greater, about 298,000. And this even if Professor Bompa is not a rock or sport star; he is just a sports scientist. It is true that he is not an ordinary sports scientist, but the world best expert in training periodization.

Periodization is a special science within the sports sciences, because it is considered the core one for launching champions. In other words it is the science of managing the complex potential of the athletes so that they reach their maximum at the right moment; the moment of the most important competition of a year, or sometimes even of an athlete's career. Professor Bompa is none other person than the author of the book titled as simply as possible "Periodization", which has already reached its 6-th edition at Human Kinetics in 2019.

In fact, even this work from 2022 that we will speak about now, represents a second attempt, a second approach of the subject it is dedicated to. The previous edition – entitled "*Conditioning of Young Athletes*" was published in 2015. But in relation with the year of the second publication of this book, it should also be mentioned that 2022 has a special, completely private significance for Tudor Bompa, as it coincides with the 40th anniversary of his successful professional collaboration with Human Kinetics.

The key theory, the philosophy of Tudor Bompa on training and conditioning, is that only a strong physical foundation maximally improves the chances of the young athlete to benefit fromof an ideal development and finally become a top athlete. It means that the emphasis on acquiring technical and tactical skills, which defines the majority of the current training programs offered to young athletes, represents a really unpardonable and dangerous mistake. And this because even if the respective skills are also essential for achieving athletic goals, without sufficiently improving the so called "athleticism", the young athletes will not become champions at their adult age.

That is why this book aims to propose and documents a long-term training methodology for young athletes. In other words, it collects and shares the best modern and scientifically proved methods and exercises, to be used for training athletes from under 12 [U12] to fully physical and technical maturation [U23].

The content of the book is distributed into four parts and 12 chapters, of which the first four constitute the initial part, entitled *Training considerations.* Such considerations should be permanently kept in mind by both the coaches and parents, being well known that early years of a young athlete's involvement in sports comes with not only positive effects but also with potential challenges. And this because exposing children to high intensity training can also result in sometimes even negative repercussions; especially when the coach and/or parents are too concentrated on winning at all costs.

If the above mentioned quasi-general training considerations are presented within the initial chapter, the second chapter addresses specifically *injuries and injury prevention*, while the next one – the greatest of the first part – contains *"guidelines for long-term training"*. It is the sequence of the book within which the authors draw attention on the requirement to keep balance between the work (training load) and recovery, on starting specialization only after the athletes have developed a solid multilateral foundation, and on the importance of the individual characteristics and anatomical age in designing training programs of the young athletes. Warning also as clearly as possible on the danger to approach the children as simply little adults. A mistake much more frequent than acceptable, an error which originates in the superficial and/or inadequate coaches preparation.

One of the most important aspect clarified by the authors is that described by the title of the 4th chapter:

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"*Stages of Long-Term Athletic Development"*. In essence, between U12 and U 21 - 23, there are five specific phases (stages) of physical development, which all the coaches working with young athletes must take into consideration and which they should observe when designing the training programs. And this because to each stage of development corresponds a clear scope of training and type of training.

The title of the second part is *Nutrition and Energy System Training*, but only the first two (number 5 and 6) out of the three chapters in this part is addressed to the young athletes' nutrition principles, and to the effects of training on the energy system. In the same context are also presented the methods to be used for periodically assessing the improvements the respective athletes display, as a consequence of the training program. Whereas the other chapter ("*Model Training for Team Sports")* of this part is exclusively dedicated to some particularities the training program must present in the case of team sports. It is a chapter with an evident practical content and relevance, because in addition to other key information and knowledge it instructs the readers how to model different types of the so called "microcycles", depending on what is planned to happen during the respective week or weekend; be the case of a show game, of one or two league games, or of a weekend tournament.

The next part is exclusively dedicated to the best "*training methods*" recommended to scientifically develop and improve separate or combinations of physical abilities, as follows: *strength* (chapter 8), *strength and power* (9), *speed* (10), *agility and flexibility* (11), and *specific endurance* (12). The last part contains *selected concrete exercises* for all these physical abilities, i.e. for strength, power, agility, speed, and flexibility.

To be mentioned that apart from the printed book, Human Kinetics offers an Online Credit Education Course, at the price of $54.50. It is a course which includes an online study guide, which reinforces the content from the book, and helps those interested to prepare for passing an online continuing education exam, and print the respective certificate for continuing education credits.

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