



Based on my experiences the past few years in monitoring elite referees and assistant referees via a web-based platform, I provide below a number of very practical examples of 'best practice' (DOs or what referees should do) on the one hand and typical examples of what referees should not do (DON'Ts) in terms of physical training on the other. Finally, I also mention what is interesting and what is not so important.

DO's

- Identify any potential fitness-related weaknesses and prioritize them in your training routine
- Make sure you have a clear and correct objective for all of your training sessions
- Appropriate balance between HI & SE sessions (min 3 to 4 of each per month), or
- Minimum 1 HI and 1 SE session per week
- Appropriate balance between rest days (6-8 max per month) and HI/SE sessions
- The day after HI or SE sessions, only consider active recovery or LI/MI/MP/STR
- Injury prevention & strength training: 2 to 3 x a week, 15 min
- Do 2 x per week a speed & agility exercise after the warm up (secondary training objective)
- Integrate regularly the Yo-Yo based training exercises as scheduled in the training plan and also mention these under 'Training objectives' (not only until 15:8, but stepwise up to 18:2 and beyond)
- Respect, follow, and comply with the training plan as scheduled
- Use a football field for training (specific areas for R & AR), as much as possible
- Organize your weekly schedule according to the day of the match(es)
- Plan a match preparation session the day before a match
- Consider an active recovery session the day after a match
- Take a rest day (passive recovery) two days after a match



DON'Ts

- Do not train when injured (maybe obvious but some might ignore little injuries when they should be sorted out immediately)
- As a rule of thumb, do not plan HI & SE sessions on consecutive days
- It is not recommended to do a HI & SE session the day before or after a match

- Avoid refereeing 2 matches in 2 or even 3 days (72 hour rule)
- Do not referee too many matches in 1 month (8 or more)
- Avoid training peaks towards the end of the week

- It is not wise to run a fitness test the day before or after a match
- Never start a training or a match in a dehydrated state (check your urinary colour)

INTERESTING

The demands of a match are so much more in terms of calories and heart beats compared to a intensive high intensity or speed endurance session. Refereeing does require significant perceptual-cognitive demands in addition to the physical demands. Now that the most recent heart rate watches also provide GPS-based information about the distance travelled in the various speed zones, the impact of refereeing at elite level will become even more obvious.

If you did not referee in the weekend and you want to have the same overall training load, then this means you should do intensive training sessions.

WHAT IS NOT IMPORTANT

The Polar RPI is not so important to look at. It is better to consider the overall number of heart beats and the time distribution in the various zone, as expressed by the HRload.

A strength session in the gym is not so demanding from a cardiovascular point of view. It is normal that your heart beats do not increase as during a typical HI or SE training session.