

## **Heart Rate Monitors**

Consider having your athletes wear Heart Rate Monitor during practices.

It is a tool to help your athletes stay within their Target Heart Rate Zone rather than training below it (doing no good) or being above it (which can be damaging to their health, primarily their heart). It can provide the coach (and the player) with vital statistics about the effort level of that particular player.

Beth Kirkpatrick was the person to push for these to be used in classes and athletic practices. She did a study with one of the college teams that was very interesting. The coach had been yelling at one of the centers/forwards for not working hard enough, slacking-off, and not “making the time”. This player was always last back to the line, always complained of being tired, wanted to rest, and showed a “lack of effort”, according to the coach. The same coach was positively reinforcing one of the guards for working hard and being so quick, etc. This player would huff and puff and always made a big scene like she was working so hard she may drop on the spot. Beth put Heart Rate Monitors on the entire team for 7 practices, downloaded the stats, printed them out, analyzed them, and shared them with not only the Head Coach but the entire coaching staff and later the players. What it showed was the center/forward, who the coach thought was never working very hard, was actually above her Target Heart Rate Zone for 90-95% of the practice, whereas the stats showed the guard was under her THZ for almost the same amount of time. The coach was shocked. Here she was screaming at that player for not working hard when she should have been having this player resting more yet she was giving kudos to the player who was not working hard at all! Sure did change that coach’s opinion about who is and who is not working during practices.

It is for the benefit of the athlete and that we want them to be working at the appropriate levels so they do not have negative long-term effects on their health. It may be a bit of inconvenience at first but eventually you don’t even notice it, it just becomes habit. Hopefully you will see the possible benefits for your athletes. You can get more information regarding the HRMonitors from myself; Beth Kirkpatrick; or Polar (company that makes the monitors).