

Travel & Training

It's Summertime: Get Off The Couch and Play!

By Teri Saylor

Kalep Kanode just can't get enough.

On a recent steamy night in June, he left a grueling workout at HPC Sport and reported for a training session at Cary Christian School, where he's a rising senior and plays soccer year-round.

"My coach suggested we go to the gym twice a week to boost our game," Kanode said. "I will try to go three times a week, now that school's out."

August 2nd is the official start of the fall sports training season, but most coaches don't want to wait that long.

"We don't need to wait until August 2nd to get in shape," said Wayne Bragg, head football coach at Panther Creek High School. "Most of our returning kids do stay in shape year-round."

Bragg incorporates circuit training with cardio and body weight exercises, such as crunches and push-ups. The training is challenging for his players, but simple enough to incorporate the exercises at home or on vacation.

"We give guys tools and encourage them to use them," Bragg said. "They can put a set of golf clubs on the ground and jump over them. They can run on the beach and swim. Aqua running is also good."

Mike Young, director of sports performance at HPC Sport, offers strategies for off-season athletes to stay in shape.

"Starting out, don't overdo it. Long term gains equal a minimum risk of injury," Young said.

Back at HPC Sport's indoor gym, five local high school athletes are stepping over hurdles and climbing underneath them. Proving that appearances can be deceiving, the simple-looking exercises extracted plenty of sweat; the sound of huffing and puffing echoed above strains of motivational music.

It was **Deandre Byers'** first workout at HPC.

Byers, a rising sophomore at Panther Creek, is training in anticipation of trying out for the varsity football team. He gave his workout a five-star review.

"I'm a little sore, but it was fun," he said a few hours after training ended.

At some point this summer, Byers, Kanode and other high school athletes will be vacationing at beaches, campsites and other destinations that will take them away from their regular training routines. While many trainers will agree that a couple of days off won't destroy months of hard work, a week or two could yield a major set-back.

"If you are gone for two weeks, there's no excuse for inactivity," Young said. "You can work out for an hour a week and still keep fairly fit, but you have to be comfortable with making yourself very uncomfortable."

Kanode's summer schedule includes maintenance chores at his high school, and he will take time out to attend a soccer camp in July. He's also planning to go to a church camp and a mission trip in West Virginia, where he'll help repair houses.

"While I'm gone, I sometimes will go for runs in the mornings," he said. "It's not as efficient as training, but the hard work we will be doing on the houses will help keep me in shape."



Deandre Byers (center) a rising sophomore at Panther Creek High School, and Jordan Feuerhelm (right) a rising sophomore at Green Hope, maneuver a hurdle exercise at HPC Sport in Morrisville (Photo by Teri Saylor).

Rayna Yvars, a rising sophomore at Green Hope High School who plays soccer and runs track, plans to carve out time for exercise during her upcoming vacation at Myrtle Beach.

"I want to stay in shape and get better," she said. "In Myrtle Beach, I definitely will have to run so I won't die at practice when I get back."

Yvars plans to run track all summer. She pole vaults and is learning hurdles.

Michael May, a rising senior at Middle Creek High School, is looking forward to his trip to the beach and family visits in Williamsburg, Va.

"I will take a break for a couple of days, but will run twice a day, in the morning and evening while I am on vacation," he said. As a forward and midfielder on his high school and club teams, running is his forte.

With limited time available, vacationing athletes striving to stay in shape need to make every moment count.

"You have to get a lot of bang for your buck," Young said.

Bragg tells his players to not simply lie around and watch TV. While the big games are on the tube, a few sets of pushups and crunches will do the trick.

Even recreational activities – biking, jumping off a diving board, and playing Frisbee or volleyball on the beach – are better than being a couch potato.

"Most of my players are self-motivated," Bragg said. "We encourage them to develop a passion for football."

And then there is peer pressure.

"Kids police each other; they know how to get on each other pretty good," Bragg said.

Young agrees. "If you are not self-motivated, find a training group," he said. "Then you are held accountable for showing up and training. Some people need more structured training."

Whether structure is best, or free form exercise is the way to go, staying in shape all summer will enhance performance and prevent injuries later.