



Real-time Training Guidance and Better Athlete Relationships

with Jaime Fernandez, Assistant Director of Olympic Sports - University of Arizona

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Welcome to the Firstbeat Sports Podcast where we talk with coaches and sports scientists to explore the latest in performance monitoring and how it is making a difference in NCAA and pro sports alike.

Speakers:

Jaime Fernandez. Jaime is the Assistant Director of Olympic Sports at the University of Arizona where he works specifically with the Wildcats Women's Basketball program.

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Transcript:

[Introduction]

On the line today is Jaime Fernandez, Jaime is the assistant performance enhancement coach for the University of Arizona Strength & Conditioning Program, specifically working with the Wildcats women's basketball program. Among the topics Jaime will discuss will be the importance of being persistent, diversity of the coaching staff and team, role of technology in strength and conditioning, return to play protocol with Firstbeat Sports, this year's historical final four and championship game appearance and matching the intensity from games in drills. He will also go into building relationships with athletes, coaching and support staff.

Now here's Benjamin Jensen [Ben], host of Firstbeat Sports Podcast.

[Ben] All right. Jaime, Thanks for coming to speak with us today. Appreciate you taking the time.

[Jaime] I appreciate it, Ben. Glad to be here with you guys. I'm excited for this.

[Ben] OK, so let's go ahead and start the way we always do. Give us a little background and talk us through how you ended up on the University of Arizona staff.

[Jaime] I'll give the very brief version. So, I was born in Mexico in the state of Chihuahua. Most of my childhood was there and went back and forth as I got older to Colorado a lot. My dad worked in construction, so he had a seasonal job. Eventually, we moved to the United States permanently. My mom was tired of going back and forth, and she just wanted the whole family to be together.

So I attended a high school in Colorado, got into sports, played soccer there. You know, I played it in Mexico, but I started getting a little bit into weightlifting. I was not a good weightlifter. It was pretty sad, 155. And that kind of started my interest in just sports in general.

Once I graduated high school, went to... not a community college, a smaller college there, Fort Lewis College, and went through a degree through a variety of majors that I thought I wanted to do, eventually went back home, attended a community college.

I got married when I was 20. So both my wife and I got married shortly after our associate's degree. We



[Jaime] moved out. We're around for a while. And then we eventually ended up at BYU Idaho in 2012. So I got married in 2008, didn't get back to school 'til 2012. When I was applying at BYU Idaho you had to declare your major. And I didn't know what I was going to pick. But as I was scrolling through the options, I saw exercise physiology that caught my eye. And I declared as that. One of the first classes I had there was strength and conditioning and I had a really good teacher. He mentored me a lot as far as kind of guiding me to where I what I should do, where I should go. But it piqued my interest when he talked about, well, one of the things you could do with this degree is go on to be a strength coach.

And he'd talk to me about there's strength coaches like private side, military, college, professional sports. The college one caught my eye. So as I was there, I started putting out feelers and trying to just research what it would take to get to this level.

And what I started doing was reaching out to institutions that had a good kinesiology program or exercise phase or something related. I got accepted into Wisconsin, and as soon as I got accepted, I started bugging the director at the time. His name is escaping me right now, but he's currently still there. He's just a different role. John Dettmann, here we go. So I started bugging him. And this was like... I got an acceptance in April of 2014. And right away I started emailing him. I think I eventually just irritated him. He got back to me and he said: "Hey, you know what? Just come and see me when you're on campus." As soon as we got to campus, I went inside his office and found him. And I told him, like... "I don't know if you remember me emailing you like a bunch of times." He's like... "Oh, yeah, yeah." So he had me send him in my resume again. Did that. I didn't hear back from the guy. And he said: "I'll reach out after, around Thanksgiving." I did the same thing. I started bugging him over and over and he eventually called me before Thanksgiving. He's like... "Why don't you come over? We'll talk." I didn't know at the time, but it was kind of like a semi formal interview. I interviewed with him and an assistant that was there, they told me: "Well, we'll bring you on for the spring semester for soccer to help us out. I was like..." "Oh, that's cool." And I was very naive as far as I didn't have anybody to help me get into the field in a sense, you know, it was sheer bugging him. I just was very persistent because later on I found out that myself and another intern, we were kind of backup options. They had some people there that they didn't work out for one reason or another. They had committed... last second, they pulled out. So that kind of got my foot in the door.

And then I started with working with men's soccer that first semester. That semester after that, John Dettmann stepped out to a different role and they brought in Erik Helland as the director of strength and conditioning. And Kevin Schultz as the director of Olympic sports. And I started working with different teams. So they had me work with volleyball over the summer. I guess I'd done a good enough job with soccer that they allowed me to have the lightweight rowers to program for. So that was kind of fun. I spent a semester doing that and then the whole pretty much academic year of 20... by this point it is 2015, 2016, I went to the call center and worked with men's basketball with Erik Helland and men and women's hockey with Jim Snider. So that's the first time I got to meet him and women's basketball with Renee. Spend some time there until I graduated, got my master's degree. I foolishly thought that I would just have a job lined up. That was not the case. After talking with Snider, with Kevin Schultz, I quickly realized that I'm going to have to do another internship at a different location to just grow my resume. So, what I did is I sent about seventy emails to different power five schools that I would like to intern for.

It was the same context to everybody. I said: "Hey, I have a family by this point. We had two kids, so I can't just go for a summer and then come back like I can commit to you for a year if you allow me to just work part time and allow me to have a job so that I could provide for my family. But I'll give you some hours. One of the first schools that reached back was Arizona, and they were pretty cool about it. This was



[Jaime] like in September of 2016. I heard back from a couple of schools, but eventually we felt like... "Ok, we'll do Arizona." It felt like the right place. But as time got closer, as we turned the year 2017, they called me again and they said: "Are you really going to come?", "like, yeah, I'll come over."

I remember having a talk with Jim Krumpos. He's a senior associate athletic director and director of strength and conditioning here now. But he called me because later on I found out, he really didn't think I would move. He didn't believe I was going from Wisconsin to Arizona for an unpaid internship and moving my family.

So it was rough, but I got a really good understanding of the person he is, because the first conversation I had with him was he said: "Hey, man, you're qualified to have a full time position and I want you to look for that. If you can't find anything then we'll be your backup." And you know things... I didn't find anything. So we moved to Arizona in May 2017, came in, great staff here at the time it was Jim Krumpos, Robert Harris. He's now gone, but they helped a tonne, man and I moved right place, right time. Once I got here, Jim told me there's a likelihood that we're going to open up another full time position in August. "You keep doing what you're doing. You're the main candidate." You know, things worked out.

I applied for it, interviewed. And he gave me the position, offered it. We took it in August of 2017. So I became full time, started off with crosscountry and I was his right hand man for baseball for that first year. A year after, things started shifting around, football staff that was here got let go. They had some of the Olympic team. So we took them over. I took over tennis teams, jumpers, eventually the sprinters, and then... it's an ever changing world. Last year, I took over women's basketball. I had some of the teams taken off my plate. But it's a process.

[Ben] Yes, you've already had a variety of teams just at University of Arizona, it sounds like.

[Jaime] Yeah.

[Ben] And I'd say, yeah, just from the strength and conditioning world, I'd say you had probably one of the best opportunities to learn from Coach Helland and from Jim Snider up at Wisconsin. I mean, those are two guys that just really well respected. And of course, we know both of them, Firstbeat clients.

[Jaime] Yeah, absolutely. Snyder is, he's like a mad scientist man, like the way he thinks. He's awesome. He's one of the smartest individuals I know, and he's very detailed and one of the biggest things he taught me was to always have a 'Why'. You know, it might not be the right answer, but as long as you know why you're doing something that's important. So him and Kevin Schultz. They were probably the two that impacted the most my career from Wisconsin. I still keep in touch with both of them.

[Ben] Nice. Yeah, I've noticed one thing with Coach Snider. You know, we connect to talk about Firstbeat, and I literally just turn into the sponge. I mean, I can answer some basic questions for him about the system, but other than that, I just love listening how he's just implementing training data with these guys. And you always learn something from him.

[Jaime] Absolutely.

[Ben] So, for the four years you've been there, what are some of the the jobs that you've done? I guess one of the biggest things on campus is recruiting now. So, are you involved in the recruiting process with the women's basketball team?



[Jaime] To a certain degree, I am. It depends on the recruit. One of the recruits we have coming in for 2022 - it was a verbal commit - is Maya Nnaji, sister of Zeke. So, she's our highest rated recruitment in the history of the program. Her dad is very involved and interested in strength and conditioning. So for them, it was a big piece. So, you know, I played a role with that. We did a couple of presentations for them, for the family, and I had to set up a PowerPoint and just discuss how I use my time in the weight room, what my process is throughout the year, how I lay out the different cycles and what we do during each phase. There are some recruits that that they don't need me for that. So, you know, I'm just available to the coaching staff. If they need me, I'll be available for that. Similar role that I played with other teams a little bit when I was helping out with baseball a lot. Sometimes we played a little bit of a role. Sometimes we didn't.

[Ben] Okay, cool. And you kind of have an interesting roster there with the Wildcat women's basketball program. So almost half of the roster being from foreign countries. Is that planned and how you recruited or is that just kind of how it panned out?

[Jaime] I think partially it pans out that way. However, like with coach Adia, her husband, Coach Salvo, he's from Italy. So he has a lot of international ties, and he's got a pretty good recruiting system from Europe. He has a lot of connections over there. So I think that helps us greatly with his background. Like I said from over there, he's he's got connections to a lot of the coaches, youth coaches to that area. So they like some of the foreign players. They like girls from Spain, you know, we've had a good amount of Spaniards on the team. Ends up being pretty good, though the dynamic of the team is awesome once they get here.

[Ben] And so being a native Spanish speaker, have you ever had any friendly debates with the players from Spain about who speaks the more pure form of the language?

[Jaime] (laughing) We haven't gotten into that, but it is nice to connect with some of them in Spanish, like when they come in, some of them obviously Spanish is their first language. So if they're not as comfortable speaking English, it's almost a sense of... they have another person they can connect with a little bit more when they learn that I speak Spanish as well. It's fun. It's allowed me to make some deeper connections with some of them. And sometimes that helps out. Whether it be the coaching staff or athletic trainers just to help relay messages, sometimes they can get lost in translation when they're talking to them as far as maybe they're not delivering the message they actually wanted, the players not hearing what the trainer is saying or the coach is saying.

[Ben] Yeah, I would think that would be a huge value. I mean, it's already you know, college is a big enough shock for everybody coming in. And if you're going to come from halfway across the world too and the whole language barrier. That's definitely a valuable skill to have there.

So if we look in kind of over the last, let's say, four or five years, what have you seen in the strength and conditioning as far as like the role of the technology for the sport science side?

[Jaime] It's becoming more and more ingrained in the field, and I don't think it's going away anytime soon. What I've seen is that it's almost like an arms race if you get too caught up with that. It could be, I don't want to say detrimental, but I've heard and been around some coaches where they say that they bought this piece of technology just because they're trying to outdo their rival college, but they don't get a proper use out of it.

If you get good value from it, if it creates conversations, that's one of the main goals for us. You don't want



[Jaime] to be stretched out too thin though, where you're just doing data all day, but not actually having the opportunity to apply it.

I think speaking to that right, you're seeing that there's more and more colleges that are hiring directors in sports science. Whereas I feel like, that position was nonexistent maybe 10, 15 years ago. And they're now having individuals that are solely gathering data, giving it to the coaches in a way that they can understand it and how to make changes or implement new programs or new training strategies based on it.

[Ben] Is it something you enjoy kind of having both roles as far as you're physically in the gym doing strength and conditioning while also assisting with the sport science?

[Jaime] Yeah, I've gotten to learn about a tonne of different technologies that I didn't know were out there, but it's provided value. Like I said, it's growing. I mean, if you see job postings now, there's people that will ask like, well, if you have experience with Catapult or with Firstbeat or with something specific, they prefer that. It's being used and it's not going away. It's been enjoyable. Initially, when I first got into it, I was very much impressed by every technology. I was like... "Oh, man, this is cool. We could definitely use this. This is also pretty cool." And it became very clear, very fast... It's like, you've got to slow down and really pick and choose what's really going to help you and cause on a scale where we have a lot of athletes. So some thing can be used easily with multiple teams, multiple athletes and get good data from it.

[Ben] Definitely. There's always going to be something newer and shinier coming out. It's yeah, there's always going to be that.

[Jaime] Yes.

[Ben] I mean, first off, it's a bit late, but congratulations on the season. I mean, final four run, national championship game. Well done.

[Jaime] Thank you.

[Ben] So with this definitely not like a normal season. Just how was it to coach through this season? I know, you've been through a lot of different seasons before.

How was it with this season with, you know, kind of Covid restrictions and everything like that?

[Jaime] It was extremely difficult. I hope we don't have a year like that ever again, but I'm glad to have experienced it, you know, for better or worse, I think it made me a better coach in a lot of aspects.

One of the things we did here initially was became the issue of, well, how many people can we have in a certain area because of the spacing rules. So we kind of made some makeshift weight rooms in a couple of places. We have an indoor facility that is pretty big. We took some equipment there. We took med balls, we took ladders, and we were able to space out our athletes a little bit more there. So that served as a training area. And the football stadium, on the concourse area, that's pretty open. We took squat wrecks to that spot.

And one of the things that we did and we brought along Firstbeat for this was, we got a good amount of heart rate monitors to use for those first couple of weeks when the athletes were back. One of our biggest concerns was the transition to returning to play, because a lot of these kids had been not doing anything,



[Jaime] let's be honest, since March when we kind of shut down. And, you know, by this point, it's like August, September. So it's been five, six months. If they haven't done anything, that was a big concern for our medical department. So, what we did is we used Firstbeat for the first couple of weeks just to look at heart rates. You know, if they were getting to a zone too high, and if they weren't recovering, we were pulling them. We had athletic trainers with us working very closely. And we really wouldn't have gotten through it if honestly, if we didn't have some of those tools and if we didn't have a very good inner-department collaboration. We we came up with tests and we have them do whatever... a run, they got to a high heart rate zone. We gave them three or five minutes to recover and see if they could do the next bout. If they weren't, they were being pulled.

We also, as a department, implemented a couple of years ago that 50, 40, 30, 20 10 rule that came out from the NSCA, it is kind of a joint effort that they've done. It's worked pretty well for us. We want to minimize a lot of soft tissue injuries, and those tend to happen in the first couple of weeks when you return, especially if you're upping the volume too aggressively.

[Ben] It sounds like you just had some great collaboration between strength staff, athletic trainers. A lot of times you don't see that. So, it sounds like you just had a really good situation there to move forward with that.

[Jaime] Absolutely. And it continued throughout the year. Once we got... I'm going to go specifically to basketball, but pretty much every team went through this, right? As we got into the season and there's always the threat of games being canceled because of a positive or something like that. We had false positives. The girls got into, once we got into games, I mean, they were testing pretty much almost every day.

And I know that was hard on them. It's your day off, well, you're still going to have to come in and test early in the morning and behind the scenes, those are our athletic trainers running that, our athletic trainer for basketball, Jessie Johnson. She did an awesome job, administered more tests than she probably cares to do it in her whole lifetime in one game. But it was hard in that aspect, like testing every day, wearing the masks for practices, for the weight room and in a way we have to become the 'mask police'. It was not fun, but, you know, slowly things started to open up. But even in the weight room, it was... we have a big facility here in Arizona. It's about thirty two thousand square feet for the Olympics weight room.

So, we were used to being able to handle five teams in here at once. Well, that number got drastically reduced. So part of it was scheduling. We had to be very strategic with scheduling times when teams were going to be in here, making sure everybody had their mask on. The way we were sanitizing after teams were done. And except for basketball practices, too, those girls having to wear masks for two or three hour practice, that's rough. And they got through that and they said credit to them because it was a long season. It was a lot of testing. And thankfully, we got through it. We got all the way to the end. So I don't think we would have expected that at the beginning.

[Ben] Yeah. And kind of continuing on that. So while you're in the bubble for the entire NCAA tournament, obviously was a unique experience. Did this make your job any easier or was this a lot more difficult being in the bubble?

[Jaime] No, being in the bubble was in a lot of aspects easier. There were some aspects that are pretty hard. So one of the things I never dealt with this, but I know for for like our athletic trainer standpoint, for Jessie's standpoint. She didn't have to worry about setting up the testing. So, you know, we had testing times that we were told we had to be there every day to test and so forth. Other areas that were kind of rough was just... it was very restrictive. And I understand why they were the fear of having to cancel the tournament



[Jaime] because it was positive or something like that. When we first got to the bubble, the first like... I want to say four or five days is we had one meal as a team. The other two meals had to be by yourself in the hotel room.

[Ben] Oh, man.

[Jaime] So we spent a lot of time staring at four walls. After that, then we started having two meals a day where we could be together in a meeting space. You saw... I don't know if you did or probably saw the whole fiasco with the weight room stuff.

[Ben] Oh, yeah.

[Jaime] Once we got a weight room, once we got some weight areas, that was kind of nice because we were able to schedule a lifting times every day. And to be honest, like I scheduled those a lot of times... it was mostly the staff that would go because of the nature of how close the games were. There were I think... we did a couple of lifts as a team.

But mostly it was the staff. And I understand, you know, to give you a chance to get out of your room, do something else, get your heart rate up, get a little workout in. They did allow us to schedule some things. We went out to like the San Antonio Zoo. We went out on the river close by. So that was kind of nice. Took us on a little boat tour, but it was easier in some aspects like I said, a little bit harder with others. The harder part, I think was more psychologically being in there for so long without a lot of communication to the outside world in a way.

[Ben] Yeah, well, sounds like you guys obviously handled it really well. Yeah, that was nice to see with the whole weight room fiasco. How I mean, just how many people rallied around that to make something happen quickly because that was subpar I would say.

[Jaime] Yes, to say the least, to say the least.

[Ben] So what was the atmosphere like with the team? You know, we just made it to the championship. All right, ok, we got to play Stanford for the third time in three months. I mean, was it excitement, was it happy to go into it or was it more like kind of annoying to play this team again for the third time?

[Jaime] Initially, I think when, you know, when Stanford won their game against South Carolina, we were like, yeah, of course, it has to be Stanford that's there. But once we took care of business, I think there was a lot of excitement from the team.

I don't think a lot of people saw us beating UConn in the final four, especially in the manner that we did. And the team as a whole, the athletes were really hyped up. They were excited. They had the mentality of there's no way we're going to let Stanford beat us three times in the year.

I mean, ultimately it happened, right? It was a good game. We kept it close. We had an opportunity to win it, and I don't think you can ask for much more than that.

[Ben] Yeah, definitely. And going back to a little bit before the bubble and everything. So, you did have one gap where four games in a row were canceled. PAC 12 games, which gave you over two and a half weeks without a game. How did you handle that? What did you do during that time?



[Jaime] During that time, we try to keep a schedule as much as we could. Coach Adia did a great job of having some practices that were hard to try to get their heart rates up, to try to get them to be more game like, if you will, to so we wouldn't miss a beat once we got back to it.

The harder parts were that was just the uncertainty of what we don't know when we're going to get to play again. And, you know, as far as weight room it did give me, that was a time where it gave me a little bit more, I want to say more priority to the weight room, because we knew at least, ok, we're not going to play this week. So we have at least this much time until the next game. We were able to get into the weight room, lift a little bit harder and a little bit higher intensities, slightly more volume.

Throughout the whole year, we used Firstbeat to gauge recovery and stuff like that and what heart rate zone they were hitting. So it was very crucial during that time, especially for practices where I was relaying that information to either one of the assistant coaches or to Coach Adia herself. "Hey, these players are getting to this certain load, just letting you know", and she would either pull them aside or they're going to do something different. It was a time of at least just managing the athletes, managing load and just trying to keep them fresh for whenever the next game was.

[Ben] So, yeah, that's an awesome situation, I have to say, because for the head coach to have the confidence, to listen to what you and the other staff members have to say about, you know, how practice is going, if anybody needed to possibly be out or cut back on practice, I mean, that's a huge deal.

[Jaime] I 100 percent agree. And I think that's at least for me, what I've seen is that one of the biggest values of technology is if you can get your coach to have that confidence in the data that you're giving them, it makes a world of difference. It creates conversations with her. And that happened this whole year where I don't think there was a single practice where we had to do conditioning or extra conditioning after she bought into the data for heart rate. And we use that pretty much year-round during the whole season.

[Ben] I'm sure the players didn't mind not having the extra conditioning. That would just be my assumption.

[Jaime] Oh, yeah, they're not a fan. If you have to do some more running. Practice is pretty hard.

[Ben] Yeah, we're going to hit the quickfire round. So, I'm just going to fire some questions off and hopefully get some answers from you.

[Jaime] Ok.

[Ben] All right. Favorite Arizona food?

[Jaime] Mexican food here. Anything with carne asada, they do it really well.

[Ben] All right. Sporting hero growing up?

[Jaime] Sporting hero growing up. Zinedine Zidane.

[Ben] I'm a bit surprised, though, being from Mexico. You know, you chose a Frenchman.



[Jaime] That was the first World Cup I saw. '98 and I was like, wow, this guy's good. That's what started me into soccer.

[Ben] He was a baller, that's for sure. Your biggest mentor in career to date?

[Jaime] I can't pick one, man. I have four, if I'm honest, Kevin Schultz, Jim Snider, a current boss, Jim Krumpas and Robert Harris.

[Ben] All right. That works. Guilty music pleasure?

[Jaime] Latin music.

[Ben] All right. If you could have been a pro in one sport, what would it be? I'm guessing I can assume from your earlier response, but I'll still let you go on this.

[Jaime] 100 percent, yeah, soccer. Football, yeah.

[Ben] Biggest fear?

[Jaime] Oof, this one touches deep, man. I'll make it brief. Just having kids is... having seeing your child or a loved one go through something where you cannot help them.

[Ben] I hear you. Sporting highlight that you've been involved in?

[Jaime] 100 percent the bubble, final four and getting to the national title with women's basketball this year

[Ben] Awesome. Favorite TV show?

[Jaime] I have a few, but I'll say Friends is one that I can go back to and rewatch over and over.

[Ben] All right. What is that on right now? I forget who paid the 200 million to get the streaming rights?

[Jaime] HBO Max currently has it.

[Ben] OK. All right.

[Jaime] My wife got me into that show and yeah, it's pretty good, man, I'll rewatch it.

[Ben] Nice. All right. We kind of flip over a little bit more to the Firstbeat side of things.

I'm always interested to hear how teams got started. So kind of how did you hear about us and what was the reason you decided to go with Firstbeat?

[Jaime] A lot of it came from the pandemic. Like I said, we we had kids not doing anything for five or six months. So we felt as a staff that we needed something to help us transition these kids back into sports safely, into practice safely. So, one of the things that was out there, well, is heart rate monitors. That's an easy one. Let's research them. We had experience using a couple of other systems before and we weren't impressed. So Jim had me look up different ones. So we settled on Firstbeat. Like I said, we brought him quite a bit of



[Jaime] units. And I think if I'm not mistaken, football had been using them right before us and they had a good experience. So we're like, well, hey, listen, let's try Firstbeat. So that's what got us into it, was we wanted to make a safe transition for our athletes. And we were going to base it off working heart rate during practices, during weightlifting sessions. After that, we... I set apart some units for women's basketball that I used throughout the whole year.

[Ben] Ok, cool. And kind of on that same note, what are like the specific features? And again, if we stick to women's basketball, what are the features or which data points are the most important for you on a daily basis.

[Jaime] On a daily basis, the ones I look at are going to be the load. Load itself during the day or the TRIMP score, but also acute to chronic ratio.

The one I relayed to the coaches more was obviously just kind of the weekly load, and if they were going up or down. And eventually, after a tonne of practices, it was kind of nice because I was able to gather enough data points to know a certain athlete is usually here, certain athlete is usually at this level to see those deviations. You can individualize it in the reports. One of the coaches, Coach Salvo, particularly was interested in the acute to chronic. Once I explained to him what it is and how we can use that to our advantage. So I would say those were the three: TRIMP score for the day, the weekly one and then the acute to chronic.

[Ben] Ok, excellent. And I know you've already mentioned it previously, like when you had the two and a half weeks off where you trying to get the high intensity. Did you ever use, like, TRIMP per minute to try to see the intensity that you'd have of drills to try to match what you'd seen in games?

[Jaime] As the season went on not as much, but only because during the first two months of practice in games, I documented like as many drills as I could. And what I did for those drills was I put in what the average TRIMP per minute was. And that was a very valuable tool because I was able to tell coach Adia "Hey, you want to hide a drill, that's going to get their heart rate up? Here's what we've seen in the past that got their heart rates up. So, that she would kind of choose from that.

I would still keep an eye on TRIMP per minute, but I wasn't to a degree... I wasn't making notes of that data anymore because I knew what got their heart rates up, what didn't. Well, yeah, TRIMP per minute... So, yeah, I'll go back and say that was actually one that was very very crucial for the whole season.

[Ben] So it sounds like with that catalog, you could almost look at a practice plan and have a pretty good idea what the load would be for that day.

[Jaime] Yes, and that's one of the things we talked about hopefully going into next year, is be able to give the coaches a little bit, almost, if you will, like a menu. Obviously, I want them... that's their job to write out the practice plans. But if they asked for my for my input, like these are the drills that we want to get them into is this heart rate zone. If we're trying to train maybe more aerobic or anaerobic system, here's what we want.

And for them to have that ability to see... "Ok, we could do this, we could do that." It's been pretty valuable.

[Ben] Nice. I have to say, you've gotten a lot out of the system for your first year. A lot of teams are just kind of record data that first year and look at it the next year. But you guys just went right away to implementing this data.



[Jaime] Appreciate that, Ben. But I've got a lot of help, and I think you guys have a great support system. And whenever I reach out, I've gotten an answer in some of this stuff came from speaking with just people at Firstbeat and, it sucks that I can't remember who told me that, but they told me just document drills for the first couple of weeks and get an idea of the TRIMP per minute so that I use that, like I said, throughout the year. And it was huge.

[Ben] I wish I could claim that, but I'm not going to. So have you kind of seen any... are there any differences that jumped out at you position wise? I've been lucky enough to work with a lot of different sports. So in football, you're always looking at skill players versus linemen. Soccer, are we looking at attacking players training load versus what the defenders might be? Did you see anything that jumped out at you as far as the positions on the court?

[Jaime] Yeah, there's... it did. And definitely like our players that played the one, the two were always going to be higher. Usually were higher pretty much throughout the the game. I can't say if it's specifically positional. It could be just the way we play, right?

Because our one was Aari McDonald for most of the year, the entire year. So she played heavy minutes. So I said our one or two and Sam Thomas played a lot of minutes, too. So she was always high.

If you want to say positionally, yes, there was a difference between what we traditionally say guards and bigs. And like nowadays, the game is so...

[Ben] Yeah.

[Jaime] There's almost like a position list [in] basketball. Sometimes we would play small, sometimes we'd play big. And to an extent, yes, there is going to be some difference guards to bigs. But that almost depends on the game. It depends on the opponent and what type of approach you're going to have from the head coaches. Are they going to press more or are they not? So, yeah.

[Ben] A lot of different factors then for sure.

[Jaime] Yeah.

[Ben] And we haven't touched on this. So obviously great communication with the coaching staff and within the other, you know, sports med staffs. How about the athletes, though? How did they accept this data? How do they interact with this data?

[Jaime] They eventually trusted it that this data was for their benefit. If you backtrack a little bit, that might not work if you don't build a good relationship with them.

I would like to say I think most of the team, if not all, trusted what I was doing in the weight room and I was doing with the data for them. They got annoyed as far as when I'd give them the heart rate monitors, especially towards the end of the season. They knew what it was, they knew what it was for.

[Ben] Yeah.

[Jaime] Communicating, it's a huge part of this field is being able to build relationships with your athletes or coaches and your support staff.



[Ben] One tool we have always used to help you guys out was I did have a picture of a belt that was labeled Curry on it, because we've worked with the Warriors. So whenever any of your players said... "Oh, well, this is throwing off my shot.", you just need to show them that picture and say... "No, it's not."

[Jaime] You know, once they got going, they didn't even notice it. So it's more the annoyance putting it on. I understand that.

[Ben] Yeah. Perfect. Before we head out, just kind of one last question that may help some of our listeners. What would your top piece of advice be for any strength and conditioning coaches or sport scientists looking to make their way in the industry?

[Jaime] You have to be very persistent. You have to be patient as well. Become very good at listening and building relationships with people. My current boss, Jim Krumpos, says this is becoming a people business. Treat people the right way, treat people the correct way, earn their respect, and you will get athletes that will run through a wall for you and you will get head coaches that listen to you and your build relationships with your athletic trainers to overall help out the athletes. Because we're here to help them succeed. My approach is, I want them to succeed. I want to take lessons that they can take it to their life, not just the weight room, but things that can apply outside of the weight room one day.

[Ben] Awesome. Well, that's a great approach. Well, you're obviously whatever you're doing is working out there in the desert. So I just want to thank you again for stopping by, spending some time with us and obviously, we will be watching you next year. And best of luck for the next season.

[Jaime] Thanks very much, Ben. It's been awesome and I appreciate this opportunity.

[Ben] All right. That wraps things up for this episode. Thanks again, Jaime, for taking time out to speak with us.

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