

Casey, Sean, 2011, Interview with the expert: Ian King - Part 2 of 2, Case Performance, March 09, 2011

For the past 25+ years, Ian King has been one of the leading minds in the physical preparation field, training athletes in every summer and winter Olympic games since 1988, as well as every Commonwealth games since 1984.1 He has coached athletes from around the world and mentored many aspiring physical preparation coaches along the way. I first started reading Ian's work 5-6 years ago and quickly appreciated his willingness to give practical advice, drive for excellence and willingness to speak out against the trends that are destroying the physical preparation industry (plagiarism, etc)

In Part I of this interview Ian discussed his background, training myths and issues he has with today's training "experts."

A little bit more specific now with respect to training athletes...

As an individual ages, their body and response to a training stimulus changes. How does the age, both from a chronological as well as training perspective, influence program design?

A lot. I can't do justice to that in a few paragraphs. That's volumes. But put simply the less training background you have, the more age affects you. The more CONTINUAL training background you have, the slower aging affects you. Either way, work capacity and recovery is down.

Is this a reason to not train? Not at all. Take on the goal to be in the best shape of your life irrespective of age!

When do you implement advanced lifting techniques, such as wave loading, etc, into an athletes training program? Are these techniques just as effective for someone with $\leq 1-2$ years of training experience as they would be for someone $\geq 3-6+$ years of training experience?

There are many more variables than time. There is factors such as are they in an early or late specialization sport? There is the quality of their coaching, their maturity, cultural and sub-cultural values and influences. This is the holistic approach I take and teach. You could get a great answer to this question from a text book, but it is not likely to be a holistic one.

Advanced techniques are rarely as effective for less experienced trainees.

Do I use them in some cases with people in their first 1-2 years of lifting? Yes. Are there cases where I don't? Yes.

If you are intimate with my post 2000 publishing's you may have come upon a concept I released that the optimal repetition bracket or number in strength training reduces as the training age increase. Theories like this are worthy of consideration.

Are there any differences that you take into account when training males vs. females?

Yes. Less than you may think however. Sport scientists and left brain educators like to give you the 'War and Peace' of physiological differences. I take a different approach. Even when women compete only against women, they still compete against men for the marketing/endorsement dollar. This needs to be remembered and considered.

Hey, I just caught myself talking in sports terms. Guess I just got found out – I am not a personal trainer! You didn't pose this question relating to sport, it was just my instincts.

Just like a tall and short basketball player. You can get the Karma Sutra of exercises and methods 'specific' (or now it should be 'functional') to both categories – but for me, the ball is the ball, the ground is where the ground is, the hoops stays in the one sport – get over it. But that wouldn't create many books for publishers, or niche markets for experts!

There is always a fine line between maximizing one's floor time and giving their body enough time to recover for a later workout. Have you found any non nutritive recovery techniques (cold water therapy, contrast water therapy, massage, etc) more useful than others with respect to accelerating the recovery process?

The ones you will find useful are the ones you do, find useful, and do with discipline. I could get more expansive on the trends that spike use of different modalities. Or the ones that get done less because of the power of trend.

Here's what I have found – the most effective ones are not always the most time-efficient ones. So that's not an easy sell in the US. So they don't get popularized. Additionally, the methods that don't include much equipment sales also don't get much airplay relative to the ones that equipment distributors can have their unofficial 'authors' spruik.

What I like to do first is learn what you do, why, how you find it – confirm that its your thoughts, and not the standard conditioned response to like what you get marketed – and then test your value system for willingness to change, and willingness to commit time.

You see I can have the athlete spend as much time in recovery methods as training, if not more. But it's a mute point until I learn how they think, why they think, and what they think – and shift

this so it is an expression of their true experiences and intuition, rather than the echoes of conditioned thinking or regurgitation of a collection of other peoples thoughts.

On a final note...

As you've stated multiple times, the past 10 years or so has become the "Decade of the Bullshi*ter", willing to do anything to make a dollar[3]. With the current For those TRULY interested in improving their athletic development skills, which coaches/books/resources would you recommend they pay close attention to?

A. Gee you ask a lot of questions Sean! I've been typing all day! I guess if it servies one person, its been worth it. Forutnately they took the drip out of my left elbow and have put it in my right forearm, and I'm only on low level analgesics not morphine or pethidene! Although I have written chapters in books under those circumstances...

Back to your question – if anyone wants to learn how to train athletes, they need to understand they will reject more books/authors/seminars etc, than accept, because no longer can you believe what is written.

I usually tell people to do their homework before choosing their source of learning, however I appreciate that with the thickness of the smoke and mirrors used, they would just about need a PI to get to the truth.

So here are some helpful tips:

Tip 1 - Marketing skills vs. coaching. If they suck at marketing, they are in the short list. If they are sharp at marketing, they should be off the list. If I was to list the top 10 coaches I have met in my time, none of them were much good at marketing. Some were downright awful. Most were interested. Now this criteria alone makes it tough – if you disregard marketing, how do you find the coach?

Tip 2 - You need to be willing to look hard to find coaches to learn from. They are not likely to be coming to your area to do a seminar. If they do seminars, they will do very few. They don't get that much out of working with you compared to working with athletes. To find them, you are going to need to follow a trail. Let me give you now. I had the fortune of meeting America's top 2 most successful S&C coach, if you judge that by how many championship rings. I travelled to meet both. One I would not have heard of, and still would not have heard of, had I not asked questions of coaches – who in your opinions are coaches work learning from. It wasn't easy to meet either coach. One of them was like

getting in to Fort Knox. And you probably don't even know who I am talking about, because they don't do many seminars, and book writing – well I'm not sure if either have a book.

Tip 3 – You had better have done your homework. You had better have read everything they have written and know their career history. Because nothing pisses them off more than you asking questions that show you didn't even bother to read what little is out there.

Tip 4 – You want to know their achievements anyway so you can determine if that is what you want to achieve.

Tip 5- Ensure their values are aligned with theirs- It took me many years to learn this, as a coach educator. That many want the perception of what I have, not what I have. I have high level coaching skills, as determined by the track record. And I thought that was what everyone who choose to study from me wanted. I have had to accept – many want the perception of what I have – to be known, to be revered, to be considered a guru, to be able to charge top dollar – all that bullshit. When I learnt this, it made me sick. I have made it a lot tougher now to enter my coaching program. I would rather have a few genuine people than a bunch of glory how-many-hits on my website-what do people think of me-how can I enhance my image people. The few coaches I work with really care about people. They are totally committed to being the best coach they can be. They love working with athletes. They don't care if you don't know who they are or if they are 'popular' or considered a 'guru'. They would all run circles around the self-proclaimed gurus of the Bullshitter Era but that's of no concern to them. They know their rewards will be correlated to the value they bring to the market, to the life's of the athletes they work with.

Tip 6 – Understand that you absorb more from your mentors than their professional knowledge. You will model their values and beliefs, and ultimately model their outcomes. In life, relationships, family, happiness etc. So be careful

Tip 7 - Develop the ability to say yes or no quickly. I can open a book and within seconds tell you if I want to invest my time in it. It may take you a while to develop this skill, and it may take you longer to conclude, but you need to get started. If you adopt the dominant belief that you should take a little from a lot of people – you will join the majority, who lack direction, lack any idea, are confused, and have no path.

Tip 8 – Stop being a jack of all schools, master of none. This will help with Tip 7. Don't be average. Average thinks diversification. If I get a bit of info from a lot of different people I will be ahead. No – master something. If you feel that has shortcomings them move on and master something else. Taking an idea or a book or a seminar from here and there serves only to keep you lost.

Tip 9 – Trust you own intuition. If only you realize that you have, now, today, innate abilities to ascertain the value to you of anything. If you retained that connection to your intuition and spirit guides, you would achieve Tips 7 and 8 very quickly. Seek to regain your trust in and full use of your intuition.

Tip 10 – Learn only from personal experience. Stop being a collection of other peoples thoughts. Decide to learn for yourself, without fear or favour, utilizing your objectiveness and intuition, based on your OWN personal experiences. They are the only ones that matter.

In conclusion, you note I didn't give you the answer. I sought to guide you to your own answer, to teach you how to fish, not give you the fish – the clearly published teaching philosophy for our company.

You all have the answers. You just don't know yet you have the answers, in part because you have been taught the way of the guru – only the guru has the answers! As you can see, this is not a self-empowering mentality that has been conditioned into you – rather one that perpetuates the servant-master relationship our entire society and economy is currently based on.

Is there any last bits of advice/thoughts you'd like to share with the readers here at CasePerformance?

I think I may have said too much already!

I realize that thoroughly answering these questions takes a lot of time and effort on your part. Thus, on behalf of the readers here at CasePerformance, I want to once again thank you for taking time out of your busy day to join us. It was a true pleasure to have you hear with us today. For those looking to find out more about your work, where can they look?

You are welcome!

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References.

Interview with Sean Casey

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