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Featuring knowledge from:

**-Allan Johnson is the Sports Performance Director at Velocity Sports Performance in Mount Pleasant, SC. A former Strength and Conditioning Coach of 24 years at Ohio State University, West Virginia University, and the Baltimore Orioles. Allan is a motivational, corporate speaker, coach, consultant and serves on several national strength and conditioning and editorial boards and is available for speaking and consulting opportunities.**

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## FOOTBALL SEASON 2008 STAYING STRONG AND FINISHING STRONG

The game of football is a very tough, demanding sport that each player must work hard to be successful. That work to be done is not only on the field, but off the field each player must **work to maintain 85-90% of their off-season/pre-season strength levels by season's end** to stay strong and injury free. Those teams fortunate to play beyond the regular season usually are the teams that have done everything to prepare and maintain physically throughout the season. When you're talking about losing strength improved in the summer months and Pre-season, it doesn't take long to begin to lose the strength that you have worked so hard to gain. Too many times coaches and athletes think that the work they did in preparing for the season in terms of strength, power, flexibility, speed and conditioning will stay with them the entire season regardless of what they do once the season begins. **The research shows that in terms of strength alone that the strength levels begin to decrease at less than 1% every 72-96 hours of inactivity.** From a coaches perspective the in-season program serves two purposes, 1) to maintain strength levels (to keep performance levels high), 2) injury prevention (the healthier the team stays, the better the opportunity for success). Even with the additional time constraints and the heightened physical stresses induced by practices and games, it is vital to administer an effective strength-training program for the duration of the season.

While there are never any guarantees, a progressive strength program can help sustain performance and serve as an injury deterrent over the course of the season.

### Early Season

Once you get out of camp and into the weekly routine of game preparation, the schedule becomes more structured in terms of allowing set designated days to lift weights. Coaches will normally pare-down the practice duration and intensity as the week progresses. An ideal scenario is to get a **minimum of two workouts in per week**. Optimally, after playing a Friday night game it would be best to bring your players in on Saturday mornings for light conditioning, stretching, and lifting. **The goal is to attempt to reduce the muscle soreness and flush the lactic acid (waste products) out of the body as quickly as possible after competition.** The faster the body recovers and regenerates the quicker the athlete is able to compete for the next game.

One example of an in-season lift is as follows:

- 4-Way Neck Machine - 1 x 8-10 each direction
- Shoulder Shrugs - 2 x 10
- One of the following multi-joint movements: Back Squat, Front Squat, Front Squat-Press, Dead Lift, Leg Press - 3 x 8-10
- Romanian Dead Lifts (commonly referred to as "straight-leg" dead lifts) - 2 x 10
- Incline Barbell Bench Press - 3 x 6-8
- High Lat Pulls/Rows - 2 x 8
- Dumbbell Standing Military Press - 2 x 8
- Horizontal Rows - 2 x 8
- Dumbbell Supine Bench Press - 2 x 8
- Grip Work (varying exercises) - 2 x 10-15
- Core Targeting (various exercises) - 4 x 1 minute of continuous reps

**“The only place where hard work comes before success is in the dictionary”**