

“Capacity vs Skill: Training to Expand the Field of Affordances”

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The distinction between an action capacity and a skill is very often confused in sports. A skill is an information-driven, coupled movement solution that allows a performer to achieve their goal given the set of constraints. An action capacity is a characteristic of an individual which constrains the set of movement solutions that are available to achieve that goal. This relationship manifests itself in the perception of affordances – an individual with greater action capacity perceives more opportunities for action in their environment. Where we often get in trouble in sports training is when we treat skills (e.g., agility, attentional control) like they are capacities that can be developed in an out of context, decoupled manner. In this presentation, I will use some examples from baseball to illustrate how I think training focused on capacities and skills can work together - from the weight room to the field – expanding the field of affordances available to a performer.