

FULL-COURT FITNESS

Point guards can cover lots of ground, a running test finds. Basketball players cover about 4½ miles a game on average, but they shouldn't train like distance runners, says Bruce Pearl, Tennessee U.'s head coach.

1 Take it outside

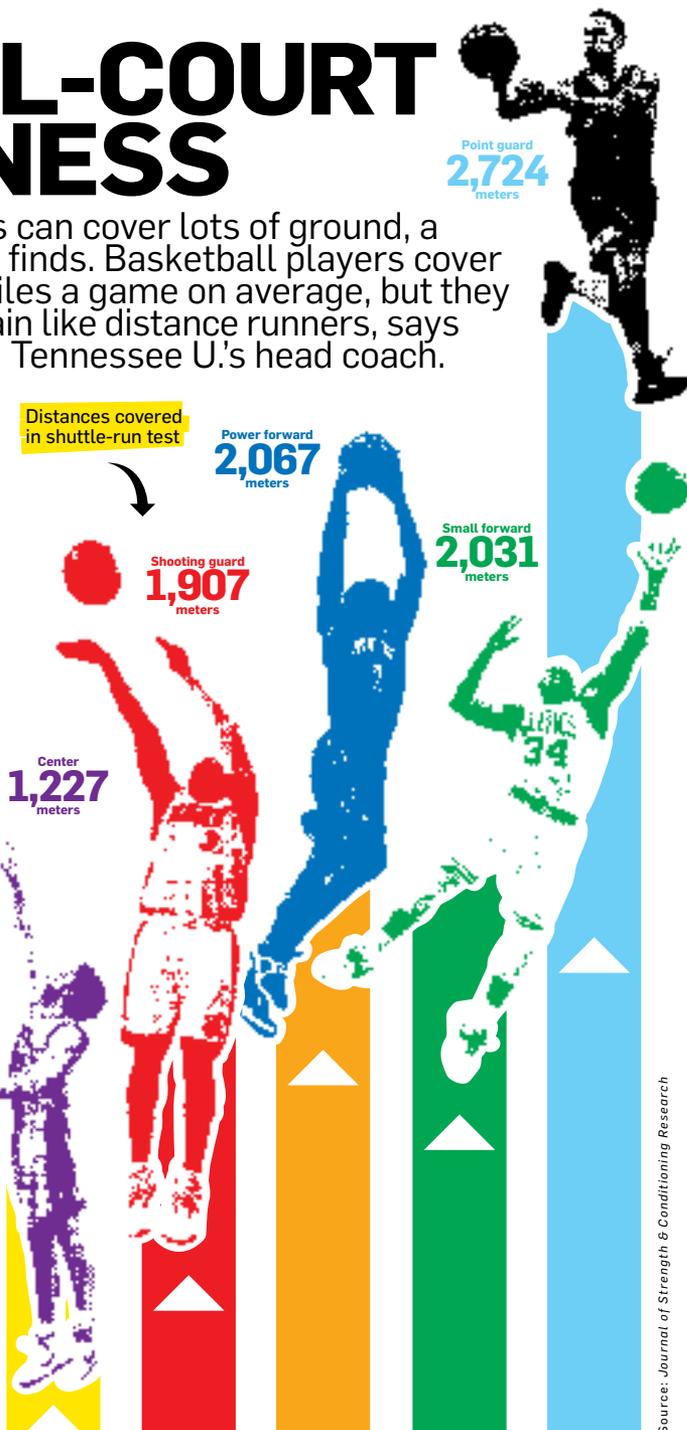
Each Monday in the preseason, the Tennessee Volunteers run sprints uphill to a Neyland Stadium gate. It's less pounding on the joints than running downhill or on level ground. Try it on a 50-yard hill with a slight incline.

2 Go soft

Bounding drills (skipping, single-leg jumps, broad jumps) can bolster your legs, but do them on a soft surface. "We don't do a lot of preseason training on hardwood because the wear and tear can take out your knees," Pearl says.

3 Time your breaks

"Don't play to exhaustion—play to fatigue," says Pearl. "If you're hyperventilating, you'll have to sit out a whole lot longer." When you need a blow, wave in a sub, rest for a minute or two, and then jump back in, he says.



19

PERCENTAGE OF GAME TIME A BASKETBALL PLAYER IS ABOVE 95 PERCENT OF HIS MAXIMAL HEART-RATE ZONE

Source: Journal of Strength & Conditioning Research

SMART MEATHEADS

Carbs give you endurance, but protein may boost mental toughness. In a recent British study, cyclists who doubled their daily protein intake performed better in a time trial after intense training than cyclists who took in a normal amount. They also showed fewer symptoms of mental stress. Study author Oliver Witard, Ph.D., says amino acids from protein may reduce levels of perceived exertion and increase availability of carbs.



ON OUR RADAR

Fish oil and swimmers

Swimmers who take fish-oil supplements are 2.6 times more likely to accumulate fluid in their lungs than swimmers who don't, a new study from Texas Tech University reveals. Fish oil may thin the blood, making it easier for fluid to pass into your lungs, says study author Charles Miller, Ph.D. Less than 2 percent of swimmers suffer the full-blown condition, but partial symptoms may be more prevalent. Lay off the pills for 3 or 4 days before an event, particularly if you have high blood pressure.

MAGIC POWDER?

Baking soda can sharpen your late-match skills on the tennis court, a new Taiwanese study reports. Tennis players who drank water with baking soda before and during a simulated match showed less of a performance decline than players in a placebo group. Bicarbonate may alleviate the fatigue-induced slowdown of nerve signals to muscles, scientists say. Try half a tablespoon in 3 to 4 ounces of water, and sip during practice to see if it helps.