

The training of the best decathletes

By Zdeněk Váňa

In recent years the Czech Republic has become one of the leading producers of top class decathletes. Tomas Dvořák set a World Record in 1999 (8994 points) and won the World Championships in 1997, 1999 and 2001. In 2001, Roman Šebrle became the first decathlete to score more than 9000 points when he set the present World Record of 9026. The two athletes were both members of a training group coached by Zdeněk Váňa (though Šebrle has since left the group). This article is the text of a presentation given by Váňa at the High Level Coaching Seminar 'Combined Events' (Prague, Czech Republic – 27-30 September 2002). In it, he discusses the dynamics of his training group and their contribution to the success of the athletes, gives his views on the training process for the decathlon and then focuses on his group's approach to training for the throwing events. The majority of the presentation covers the ups and downs experienced by Dvořák and Šebrle in the 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 seasons and includes extensive detailed examples from the group's training diary for various periods within each season.

ABSTRACT

Zdeněk Váňa was born on 2 February 1939 in Liben. As an athlete he achieved bests of 10.6, 20.4 and 47.4 and competed in the 1960 Olympic Games. After leaving military service, he attended the Czech coaches school and was awarded a first class license. He coached young athletes until 1982 then worked with senior sprinters and hurdlers until 1988 when he began coaching decathletes.

AUTHOR

Introduction

It took me quite a long time before I decided to make this appearance. I really don't know where to begin a speech in front of a group of coaches who work at the same level as I do. I really don't like being here as a lecturer – like a teacher in front of students. I myself don't like lectures or seminars, because I never learn anything interesting. A person learns more from a friendly conversation than from an official meeting. I think you will agree with me. I'm very lucky to work with people who want to accomplish something.

Today, I will speak of the athletes who were in my training group up till 2001 and could be called world-class:

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|----------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Dvořák:, Tomas (CZE) b. 1972 | 8994pts |
| 2. Šebrle, Roman (CZE) b. 1974 | 9026pts |
| 3. Podebradsky, Jan (CZE) b.1974 | 8342pts |
| 4. Damasek, Kamil (CZE) b.1973 | 8256pts |
| 5. Komenda, Tomas (CZE) b.1976 | 7764pts |
| 6. Soldos, Petr (SVK) b.1973 | 7967pts |

My motto for this group is: No competitor comes before the others – all of are of the same importance. I have always been reassured that a group has its own specific power, which keeps everyone within it working. If it weren't so, neither Dvořák nor Šebrle would be where they are now. They have both beaten the fabled record of Dan O'Brien and the World Record has moved to Europe. On top of that, Šebrle has broken the 9000 point barrier.

During this short presentation I would like to share some general thoughts on training, talk about the throwing events and describe the training we completed in recent years, including 2001, the year of Roman's World Record and the World Championships in Edmonton where Tomas won for the third time in a row.

The training process

I believe that success in the decathlon is based firstly on speed and then on strength and technique. Technique changes with increasing speed and the development of strength. That is why it is important to control the technique, so that it does not get out of hand and force you to start from the beginning again. There is no time for new beginnings in the decathlon.

During the 2001 season – due to the good results compared to the previous seasons – we planned to participate in 3 decathlons at the most, which would count towards the Grand Prix. We had not planned to compete in individual events. However, athletes like to compete in individual events that are part of the decathlon – it's necessary for the improvement of the over-all performance in the whole decathlon.

After many years of experience in long-term training camps abroad where fitness centres were not equipped with heavy barbells and after having many injured athletes with back-pains, we started exercising in fitness centers on machines, which are more appropriate for development of both general strength and dynamic strength. Of course, it is impossible to exclude the bar completely in all of the train-

ing seasons. I would like to refrain from describing the amount of exercises and repetitions on separate machines. I will say that we repeat the exercises with small variations in amount and execution during the whole year. The number of repetitions differs due to the condition of the athlete and his will to complete them. Thanks to the fact that the athlete is in the group, his effort to be better than the others is a lot more intensive than if he trained alone. It is more or less a game for all of them and this also transfers to all the other events. I don't restrict the amount of attempts for throwing and shot putting. Almost every practice ends up in a spontaneous throwing contest. The athlete, even if he has worked very hard, isn't as tired as he would be if he trained alone and he does not go home from practice physically or mentally exhausted.

Brief information on the throwing events

Training for the throwing events takes place as follows:

Shot put:

- ◆ 2-3x per week, mostly before going to the fitness centre; during the competition season, it is practiced after running and jumping events. In other words, it is a part of the usual training model for the decathlon.

Discus:

- ◆ 2-3x a week, for a long time we searched for the best option for the training of this event and decided that discus training should follow hurdle practice.

Javelin:

- ◆ As often as necessary, mostly after pole vault training, the training of this event, despite the fact that it is our finest event, does not occur very often.

Key points of the training are as follows:

Shot put:

- ◆ Occurs during the preparatory season as well as the competition season, shot put of 6kg.

- ◆ The number of attempts is up to the athletes discretion, if he feels he can do more he does, if he can't - he can't and we just leave it as we do not want to do more damage than good.
- ◆ 6-8 attempts from a stand, and 12-16 with forward movement

Discus:

- ◆ During the preparation phase the athletes practice with a small ball of 3kg, during the competition season they use a 2kg discus.
- ◆ 6x without a turn, 10-16x the whole motion.

Javelin:

- ◆ Easy throwing on the grass, and then with a run up, the technique is our main focus.

To summarize:

- ◆ Shot put – either before the fitness-centre or after long jump or take-off exercises after the athlete is partially tired.
- ◆ Discus – after hurdle race.
- ◆ Javelin – more or less within the warm-up and if there is any time left, after pole vault.

The 1999 season

In the year 1999, despite a new World Record and Tomas's victory at the World Championships, I could be only contented, as

the pleasure was partly spoiled by Roman's dragged-on injury and a DNF decathlon.

Examples of training:

Last week before Dvořák's WR		
Monday	AM	WRT+RE, warm-up with javelin, 1x50m/5,4, 3x long jump with full run- ups +discus 6x from standing position, 12x with a turn
	PM	Off
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, snatch– 6x30, 3x70, 2x80, 1x95kg, bench 6x60, 4x80, 3x100, 2x120kg, ankle take-offs 4x(3x20kg), knee bends 2x(5x60kg), muscle flex and extension machines, Step by step 2x20m with 30kg bar
	PM	Off
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, ABC hurdles,1x1, 1x3, 1x60m hrdl HS/12.29 + high jump – from 3 steps + from complete run-up 3x190cm
	PM	Off
Thursday	AM	Off
	PM	
Friday	AM	WRT+RE, 3x30m LS in shoes, easy, jumping run 2x50m with a run-up, 3x30 ankle exercises (vertical jumps)
	PM	Off
Saturday		Decathlon- Prague 1st day score – 4645 pts
Sunday		Decathlon- Prague 1. Dvořák: 8994 (WR)

Key:

- WRT Warm-up exercises, runs of 1200m – 800m, three flat runs
- RE Running exercises
- HS From a high start (standing start)
- LS From a low start (crouch start)

The 2000 season

In early training for the 2000 season we were free of serious injuries and infectious illnesses. As a result we didn't have to change the training programme, as we had to do the previous year. We remained lucky and at the Indoor European Championship Tomas set a new European record. Roman placed second. What more can a coach wish for?

We did not underestimate anything before the main season. You probably don't know that Tomas suffers from bad allergies, asthma, and is also colour blind. In spite of this he is the best all-round athlete in the world. However, in some periods of the year his health problems get worse. They certainly did not help his performance, but still we followed a plan aimed at the 2000 Olympic Games without any big changes.

We went through a spring preparatory period on Grand Canary in Maspalomas. This training camp lasted a month, from the middle of March to mid-April. We were then in Formia from 16 April until 6 May. Our first competition was in Gotzis. We wanted to prove our condition was good and confirm that our preparation was sufficient by winning this prestigious competition. Tomas won the meet with 8900 pts. Roman placed second with his personal record of 8757 pts.

After this competition Tomas started having pains in his abdomen but, because they soon disappeared, he stopped paying attention to them. The next competition took place in Talence at the end of July. Looking back at it, I have a feeling that we shouldn't have participated even though the results were good. Tomas placed first with 8733 pts and Roman placed fourth with 8228 pts. After the competition Tomas's abdominal pains reappeared.

Roman's performance decline was probably caused by his dropping out of some events and by his tiredness from previous training. This competition took away much of both competitors' power and Roman's old groin injury

reoccurred. A two-week holiday at the seaside with relaxation and mild activity followed this competition. Then we went for a two-week training camp in Tata, in Hungary. Tomas's abdominal pains started to appear more often. He was under constant medical care.

The next training camp was in Brisbane, Australia, where we stayed until the beginning of the Olympic Games. This period of time was full of troubles for Tomas whose abdomen was very painful. The physicians were uncertain about his condition and we only hoped that everything would turn out well. Roman didn't have any problems but was very exhausted.

In spite of Tomas's problems, which were increasing, we hoped that he would win and that Roman would place at least third. Everything turned out differently: Roman placed second and Tomas placed sixth. He couldn't manage with his injury. He had been suffering since the first event and only his willpower allowed him to finish that decathlon. Roman fought for both, himself and Tomas.



Examples of training:

Autumn preparation - 1st week (from 27/11/99)

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, 6x600m int. 3-4min, pace 2min
	PM	Fit-center, machines
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, 2x300m/50; 500m/1:40; 3x1000m/3:30; 500m/1:30, 300m/46
	PM	Off
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x30HS (high start), 4x150m hills, 3x30m skip, 4x150m hills, 4x30m skip, 2x100m HS
	PM	Fit-center
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, game 1 hr, med-ball throws (150x), intensive swimming
	PM	Off
Friday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x20m HS, 3x200m/28; 2x400m/1:05; 500/1:25; 400m/1:04; 2x100m/12-11.8
	PM	Different throws with the ball + Fit-center
Saturday	AM	WRT+RE, 6-8km jogging, take-offs 200x, 4x50m jumping run
	PM	Off
Sunday	AM	Off
	PM	

Autumn preparation - 2nd week

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20m HS, 3x150/21; 200m/28; 3x600m/1:50; 3x100m/12 – int.2min
	PM	Discus throws with a ball, weight-room, 4x50m acceleration runs, easy, technically
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, gym 1 hr – game, starts from different positions 10x, med-ball throws 150 + intensive swimming
	PM	Off
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 2x60m HS/7.2; 3x300m/47; 100m/11.8; 2x300m/44; 100m/11.5; 300m/42
	PM	Off
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, pole-vault drills + weight-room
	PM	Off
Friday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x60m HS/7.2-6.8; 2x60m HS/7
	PM	Various throws with the ball + Fit-center
Saturday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x100m sled/7.5kg, 3x100m tap take-offs, 3x100m continuous – 100m in between
	PM	Off
Sunday	AM	Off
	PM	

10 day preparation before the European Indoor Championship (15/2/00)

Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, pole-vault + weight room
	PM	Off
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS (low start), 1x60m/6.5; 300m/ 34.5 + shot put
	PM	Off
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, high-jump + take-offs 120x
	PM	Off
Friday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, ABC hurdles, 2x2, 1x3 a 2x60m hrdl/ hard, 150m/15.6
	PM	Off
Saturday	AM	WRT+RE
	PM	Off
Sunday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20m HS, 1x60m HS/6.5; long jump from full run-up, finish at least one attempt (735cm), 1x120m HS – hard 12.4 , 2x30m jumping run
	PM	Off
Monday	AM	WRT+RE, easy weight room
	PM	Off
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, ABC hrdl. 2x1, 1x60m HS, 1x150m/15.4
	PM	Pole-vault competition
Wednesday	AM	Off
	PM	
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, 4xLS technically, 1x50m easy, 2x50 jumping run
	PM	Off
Friday	-	EC heptathlon - Gent
Saturday	-	EC heptathlon - Gent
		1. Dvořák: 6424 ER 2. Šebrle: 6271

Summer preparation (from 3/20/00)

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, 3x600m/1:50, 2x1000m, 5x600 + shot put 6kg
	PM	Fit-center, weight machines
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, ABC hurdles (10 hurdles, joint agility) + 200m of multiple jumping (20 at once), discus throws with a ball of 2kg
	PM	WRT+RE, high jump from 1 step, from 4 steps
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x30HS, 3x500m/1:25; 800m/2:25; 3x100m/12.2 continuous, 100m jogging in between + javelin – easy throwing + drills
	PM	Shot put – various throws + Fit-center, machines
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, ABC hurdles 10x10 hrdl + pole vault
	PM	discus, discus throws with a ball + Fit-center, machines
Friday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x20m akceleration starts, 5x400m/1:05-58 + javelin
	PM	Fit-center, machines

Saturday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x30 LS technically, 150m/18.5; 300m/42; 150m/18.2; 600m/1:39, 2x100m/11.2; 2x60 HS/6.7
	PM	Beach, soccer in the sand 40 min, 8x50 jumping run
Sunday	AM	Off
	PM	

The 2001 season

Preparation for the year 2001 started in 2000 and was focused on the World Championships. Because of the various unhealed injuries, we did not plan to participate in the Indoor World Championships.

Our preparation started gradually during a 14-day training camp in the Canary Islands towards the end of November and beginning of December. A training camp in South Africa followed from 6 January to 4 February and we trained in Africa again from 26 February to 28 March. We then spent some days at home with our families and left for Italy – Formia from 1 April until 20 April. During the last week of this camp Tomas came down with back pains and had to be hospitalized. The training was interrupted for one week.

The first meet was on 27 May in Gotzis. We planned to prove good form and possibly qualify for the World Championships. Tomas, again, had serious health problems, which appeared during the high jump and he finished with the score of 8527 pts and Roman set the new World record of 9026 pts.

The next preparatory camps took place in Nymburk, Czech Republic, with only minor health problems. On 16 July we left for Canada where we were supposed to take part in the Francophone Games in individual events and confirm our form before the World Championships. The good form, however, was not yet apparent. We were behind with performances in the technical events, especially in the shot put and discus.

In Edmonton, the competition itself started to evolve quite well for Tomas. After the first day (10.62 sec - 8.07m - 16.57m - 2.00m - 47.74 sec) I believed that he could set a new world record. On the second day (13.80 sec - 54.51m - 5.00m - 68.53m -4:53.13) we were disappointed by the discus and javelin. The overall score of 8902pts brought him the third gold medal in a row.

The next meet was the Grand Prix in Brisbane where Tomas, despite inconvenient weather, defended his first place in the meet as well as in the whole Grand Prix.

For Roman, the matters were worse. His dragged-on injury bothered him all he way through the final preparation. The previous year's situation was repeated - only in a reversed order. Roman's training process over the last week could not be as as targeted and had to be changed everyday according to his individual feelings. The sad part was that previously that same year he had set the new record and beat Tomas. He was the first man on the planet to make over 9000 points. At the championships, we got the gold medal, but our expectation of the silver medal, however, was not realized and Roman, who suffered right from the beginning of the competition finished in 10th place.

Unfortunately, the end of this season also marked the end of our training group. Roman and Jan left for a different training group. Our group has always been a model, considered almost ideal and followed by the others. Even today, I still don't understand what led these athletes to the decision they made.

Examples of training

Preparation I – 1st week (from 20/11/00)

Monday	-	WRT+RE, 4x100m inbetween 100m, 4x200m IB 200m, 4x100m IB 100m
Tuesday	-	WRT+RE, med.150, various throws, weight room – machines
Wednesday	-	WRT+RE, 3x150m hills + intensive swimming
Thursday	-	WRT+RE, 6x1000m + take-offs II 200
Friday	-	Game 30 min, circle practice – 9 stations, game
Saturday	-	4x2km outdoor, 6x50m jumping run
Sunday	-	Off

Preparation I – 2nd week

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, 2x300m, 500m, 4x600m, 2x300m, 3x40m high frequency
	PM	med.150x + weight room
Tuesday	-	WRT+RE, 2x300, 4x1000, 500m, 300m, 3x40m high frequency
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x30m HS from skipping., 3x150m hills, 3x30m skip, 3x150m hills, 3x30m skip, 3x150m hills, 2x100m
	PM	150 med + weight room
Thursday	-	intensive swimming
Friday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x20m HS, 3x200m, 2x400m, 500m, 400m, 2x100m
	PM	game + weight room
Saturday	-	Jog – outdoors 6-8 km continuous running + take-offs 150
Sunday	-	Off

Preparation I – 3rd week

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x30m acceleration, 3x150m, 1x200m, 3x600m, 4x100m
	PM	game + take-offs 200-II
Tuesday	-	WRT+RE, game + med. 200 + weight room, intensive swimming
Wednesday	-	WRT+RE, 2x60m HS, 3x300m, 100m, 2x300m, 100m, 300m
Thursday	-	game, starts from various positions + weight room
Friday	-	WRT+RE, 4x60m zig-zag, 5x400m, 3x60m zig-zag
Saturday	-	WRT+RE, 4x100m sled(10kg, 3x) 3x100, tap take-offs
Sunday	-	Off

Preparation II – 1st week (from 26/2/01)

Monday	-	WRT+RE, 8x100m change of rhythm, javelin
Tuesday	-	WRT+RE, ABC hurdles, weight room, KSK 3x80
Wednesday	-	WRT+RE, 4x20m acceleration, 2x300m, 3x200m, 2x300m + shot put

Thursday	-	WRT+RE, pole vaulting drills , high jump
Friday	-	WRT+RE, ABC hurdles, 3x60 int. 2min + discus
Saturday	AM	WRT+RE, 2x80m, 3x150m, 2x100m, 4x30m
	PM	shot put + weight room + KSK
Sunday	-	Off

Preparation II – 2nd week

Monday	-	WRT+RE, 5x20 HS from skip., 2x200m, 2x400m, 500m, 2x100m + discus
Tuesday	-	WRT+RE, javelin, ABC hurdles, weight room
Wednesday	-	WRT+RE, 2x60m HS, 2x300m, 150m, 300m, 150m, 300m, 2x100m + shot put
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, pole vault + high jump
	PM	javelin, weight room, KSK
Friday	-	WRT+RE, 5x30HS, 3x400m, 2x80m, 3x120m + discus
Saturday	AM	WRT+RE, ABC hurdles, 10 hrdl., 1x 500 briskly
	PM	shot put + weight room + KSK
Sunday	-	Off

Preparation II – 3rd week

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x20m NS, ABC hurdles, 8hrdl./1step, 4x60m finish running till 100m + javelin
	PM	discus + weight room + KSK
Tuesday	-	WRT+RE, 3x40m with run up, 2x150m, 100m, 60m hard + shot put
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20 NS, ABC hurdles, 3x110 hrdl./ 5 steps–12m gaps, 3x60m HS
	PM	high jump + weight room
Thursday	-	WRT+RE, pole vault + shot put
Friday	AM	WRT+RE, ABC hurdles, 4x60m hrdl finish running to 110m + discus
	PM	shot put + weight room + KSK
Saturday	-	WRT+RE, 4x30m accel, 150-200 (3x), 3x30m high frequency + javelin
Sunday	-	Off

Specialized preparation – 1st week (from 9/4/01)

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, ABC hrdl, 3x12hrdl/3steps – 8.0m, 2x60m, 1x200m
	PM	discus + weight room
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, pole vault + javelin
	PM	shot put + high jump

Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, ABC hurdles, ABC hrdl, 3x12 hrdl (7.7m) 1m, 3 steps, 2x60m, 100m, 300m
	PM	discus + weight room
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, pole vault + 3x200m
	PM	Off
Friday	AM	4x20m LS, 1x60m, 5x LJ run-up – imitation, 2x60m, 1x120m
	PM	shot put – weight room
Saturday	AM	WRT+RE, pole vault, javelin
	PM	WRT+RE, 2x160m, 300m, 200m, 100m
Sunday	-	Off

Specialized preparation – 2nd week

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, 1x60m HS, 6x LJ run-up – imitation, 1x60m HS, 100m, 150m, 100m
	PM	shot put + weight room
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, pole vault, javelin
	PM	High jump, sled 5x50m
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, ABD hurdles, 2x10 hrdl (3+5+3 steps etc. – gap 11.70m- 8.00m), 2x60m, 300m
	PM	High jump + weight room
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, 2x50m acceleration, 2x100m, 500m, 2x80m
	PM	shot put + take-offs / if necessary - off
Friday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, ABC hrdl 3x2hrdl, 4x60m hrdl high, 2x150m
	PM	javelin + weight room
Saturday	AM	WRT+RE, pole vault, discus
	PM	off/supplementary exercises
Sunday	-	Off

Competition season (from 14/5/01)

Monday	-	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, 1x60m LS, 4x LJ run-up, 1x60m HS, 1x130m HS + shot put
Tuesday	-	WRT+RE, pole vault + javelin, afternoon weight room
Wednesday	-	WRT+RE, 3x20m LS, ABC hurdles, 3x3, 2x60m hrdl HS, 1x60m, 1x150m HS hard + discus
Thursday	-	WRT+RE, high jump
Friday	-	WRT+RE, regular warm-up before competition
Saturday	-	Track meet: 110m hrdl, pole vault, discus
Sunday	-	Off
Monday	-	WRT+RE, 5x20m LS, 1x60m HS + discus
Tuesday	-	WRT+RE, ABC hurdles, 4x20m LS, 2x80m HS, 1x60m HS + discus

Wednesday	-	WRT+RE, pole vault + weight room
Thursday	-	Off
Friday	-	Regular warm-up
Saturday		Decathlon– Gotzis
Sunday		Decathlon– Gotzis 1. Šebrle: 9026 WR 2. Dvořák: 8527

Training season (from 2/7/01)

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x20m accel. starts, 2x100m, 150m, 300m, 100m (running shoes)
	PM	Shot put
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, ABC hurdles, 4x60m HS, 2x500m, 3x40m high frequency
	PM	Javelin + weight room
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x20m LS, ABC hurdles, 3x110m hrdl
	PM	Discus
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, sled 10kg, 4x50m(-2x),
	PM	High jump + weight room
Friday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x20m LS, LJ run up. + rhythms, 3x150m HS(17)
	PM	Shot put
Saturday	-	WRT+RE, pole vault + 5x50m jumping run, 2x100m tap take-offs
Sunday	-	Off
Monday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, ABC hurdles, 2x110m hrdl, 2x60m HS, 300m(34.2)
	PM	Javelin, med-ball 150x various + swimming
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x30m accel starts, 6x LJ run-up, 60m, 100m, 150m HS
	PM	Shot put
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, pole vault + high jump
	PM	Discus + weight room
Thursday	-	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, ABC hrdl, 3x110m hrdl on a shot from a starting pistol
Friday	AM	RRR+ BC, pole vault, javelin, 3x50m sled
	PM	Shot put + weight room
Saturday	-	Off
Sunday	-	WRT+RE, ABC hurdles, 3x60m hrdl LS, 1x60m HS, 150m hard

Rough draft of training two weeks before the World Championships

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, pole vault + shot put
	PM	Weight room
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, 3x20m LS, ABC hrdl 2x2, 3x60m hrdl, 2x200m int. 3min
	PM	Discus

Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, javelin, weight room, 2x100m int. 2min,
Thursday	-	Off
Friday	-	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, ABC hurdles 1x60m HS, 300m, 2x40m with run up + shot put
Saturday	-	WRT+RE, javelin + high jump
Sunday	-	WRT+RE, 3x20LS, ABC hurdles 3x2 hrdl, 1x60m hrdl, 1x60m HS, 1x120m HS + discus
Monday	-	WRT+RE, high jump + easy weight room
Tuesday	-	Off
Wednesday	-	WRT+RE, 4x20LS, 1x60m HS, 4xLJ run up, 2x40m with run up, 1x120 HS hard + shot put
Thursday	-	WRT+RE, weight room
Friday	-	WRT+RE, 3x20m LS, ABC hurdles, 2x2, 1x60m hrdl, 1x60m HS, 1x150m hard
Saturday	-	Off
Sunday	-	Regular warm-up
Monday	-	WC Decathlon– Edmonton
Tuesday	-	1. Dvořák: 8902



Tomas Dvořák / Photo: © Getty Images

The 2002 season

In the year of the indoor and outdoor European Championships, we seriously considered the option of skipping the indoor season so that we could focus on the preparation for the main season and the EC. The reasons why we wanted to do this were personal and health problems. The body does work as it used to and regeneration and recovery of physical strength takes more and more time.

We started the preparation at the end of October 2001 in Sierra Nevada. The next training camp took place between 1 and 15 December at Grand Canaria. From 18 March to 19 April 2002 we were in Sierra Nevada again. This training camp had to be shortened due to the absolutely inconvenient weather. The final special preparation was in Italy from 20 April to 14 May. We were unlucky and the weather wasn't any good there either. The old injuries started to come into the picture again. The practices had to be rearranged all the time, which can't be done forever and it certainly affected the good spirit.

After a long evaluation of the situation we decided to take part in the indoor European Championships in Vienna regardless of the problems with the shortened LJ run-up and problems with the ankle. Except for the high jump and pole vault we were contented with the results but we were less than satisfied as Tomas's health worsened.

The summer season was focused on the decathlon in Ratingen and the European Championships in Munich. We went to Ratingen with a pessimistic feeling and we were afraid of the possible

injuries. This meeting was also an opportunity to qualify. We qualified, the performances in each individual event were satisfying, but we couldn't be satisfied with the overall score of 8226 pts.

Even this year, we could not avoid health problems. Once we believed that we were getting into a good condition right before the European Championships, ankle and achilles tendon pains started to bother us together with drowsiness from a very intensive cure of allergies and asthma. The only option was a week of rest on crutches. We left for the Championships with mixed feelings, hoping that everything would turn out well. It didn't. Each event was connected with some kind of an ache: ankles, achilles tendons, elbow, etc. After a second day and an over-all exhaustion, he didn't finish. Tomas's very first words after the meet were: I shouldn't have come here at all...



Roman Sebrle / Photo: © Getty Images

Examples of training

Preparation – 1st week (from 29/10/01)

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, easy jogging outdoor, 3x15min + moving ankle (jumping rope)
	PM	WRT+RE, throws with med + fit center + easy acceleration starts + swimming
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE. 6x30m HS. from skip, 3x100m high skipping., 3x30m high frequency, 2x100m high skipping., 5x6 frog hops
	PM	WRT+RE, shot put, various throws, 6x100m change of rhythm + swimming
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x20m falling starts, 5x600m change of rhythm (200-200-200), 3x40m high frequency, easy jog 1000m
	PM	WRT+RE, throws with med-ball, Fit-centre, 5x30m acceleration runs
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x60m hills, 3x30m high frequency, 5x60m hills, 3x30m high frequency, 5x60m hills, 3x100m tap take-offs, easy jog 800m
	PM	Off
Friday	AM	WRT+RE, throws with a shot ball, fit-center, 4x100m KSK, 3x50m easy long pace
	PM	WRT+RE, 4x10min, easy jogging + swimming
Saturday	AM	WRT+RE, 6x30m falling starts, 3x150m hills, 3x30m high skipping., 3x100m hills, 3x30m high skipping, 3x150m hills, 3x100m running tap take-offs , easy jog 1000m
	PM	Off
Sunday	-	Day off, a trip, recreation

Preparation – 2nd week

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, gym, 8x starts from a base, throws with a med-ball, high jump – introduction + Fit-centre, 5x30m KSK finish running till 50m
	PM	WRT+RE, 2x150m cont/IB 100m, 3x200m cont/IB 100m, 3x100m cont + swimming
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x30m accelerated starts, 3x150m, 2x200m, 1x500m, 4x100m HS, short intervals
	PM	WRT+RE, multiple-jumps over 20, 4x100m tap take-offs, 6x6 frog leaps for length, moving ankle (jump rope) + swimming
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, 3x60m HS, 2x300m, 1x100m VH, 2x60m HS, easy jog 1000m
	PM	WRT+RE, shot put, Fit-centre, KSK 4x50m finish running till 100m + swimming
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, 3x300m hills(3x), 4x60m high skipping
	PM	Off

Friday	AM	WRT+RE, 3x60m zig-zag (2x), 2x400m HS, 3x100m HS long pace, easy jog 800m
	PM	WRT+RE, high jump, throws with med-ball, Fit-centre 5x50m easy accelerated starts + swimming
Saturday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x30m falling starts, 4x60m jumping run, 3x100m continued 3x
	PM	4x5min easy jog + relaxation
Sunday	-	Off

Preparation – 3rd week

Monday	AM	WRT+RE, 5x30m LS, ABC hurdles, 6x6 hrdl. (1 step), 3x60m HS, 7x100m HS, easy jog 1000m
	PM	WRT+RE, med – various throws, shot put, Fit-centre, 4x30m KSK finish running till 50m + swimming
Tuesday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x30m HS, 2x150m(2x), 2x100m fast, 1x60m hard, easy jog 800m
	AM	WRT+RE, high jump, take-offs / long jump, over 70-jump (multiple jumps), moving ankles in the sand, 4x30m jumping run
Wednesday	AM	WRT+RE, ABC hurdles, 6x20m LS, 6x6 hrdl. (5 steps), 4x120m HS high knees in the end
	PM	WRT+RE, shot put + Fit-centre, 5x40m accelerated starts + swimming
Thursday	AM	WRT+RE, 3x60m sled (3x) bigger load, 3x100m tap take-offs, 5x6 frog leaps, 2x100m cont. (2x)
	PM	Off
Friday	AM	WRT+RE, 3x40 LS, 3x200m, 300m HS (2x), 1x500m brisque with control, long pause, 1x100m HS as well
	PM	WRT+RE, throws with med-ball, Fit-centre, 5x30m KSK finish running 50m, 2x100m jumping run, easy jog 800m + swimming
Saturday	AM	WRT+RE, 4x60m zig-zag, 2x, 3x150m cont 2x, easy jog 1000m
	PM	off + supplementary exercises
Sunday	-	Off

Winter competition season – First 2 weeks (from 4/2/02)

Monday	-	WRT+RE, 3x20 LS, 4x LJ run-up + pole vault
Tuesday	-	Track meet: 60m hurdles + 60m (7.85 sec + 6.94 sec)
Wednesday	-	WRT+RE, shot put + weight room
Thursday	-	Off
Friday	-	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, 2x40m with run up, 4x LJ run-up, 1x60m HS, 1x200m
Saturday	-	ABC hurdles, 3x50m sled 2x, 3x100m tap take-offs, 2x100m cont/IB 100m
Sunday	-	Off

Monday	-	WRT+RE, 3x20m HS, ABC hurdles 2x3 hrdl, 3x60m hrdl, 1x60 HS, 150m/16.1
Tuesday	-	Track meet: pole vault (4.80m) + 60m (7.07 sec)
Wednesday	AM PM	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, 6x LJ run-up + shot put weight room
Thursday	-	WRT+RE, pole vault
Friday	-	Regular warm-up
Saturday	-	Track meet: National Championships 60m hrdl (7.82 sec, 7.81 sec)
Sunday	-	Track meet: National Championships shot put (15.13m)

Winter Competition Season – 3-4th weeks

Monday	-	WRT+RE, easy weight room
Tuesday	-	WRT+RE, pole vault
Wednesday	-	WRT+RE, 4x20m LS, 2x2 hrdl., 2x60m hrdl. on a shot + high jump
Thursday	-	WRT+RE, 3x30m HS, 1x60m HS (6.58), 1x300m (34.1) + shot put
Friday	-	WRT+RE, 3x30m HS, sled 4x60m (10kg), 1x100m – 10.86
Saturday	-	Off
Sunday	-	WRT+RE, 3x20LS, 4x LJ run-up, 1x60 run through, 1x100m (10.50)
Monday	-	WRT+RE, weight room
Tuesday	-	WRT+RE, 3x20 LS, ABC hurdles, 2x3 hurdles, 1x60m HS (6.46), 1x150m HS (15.8)
Wednesday	-	Off
Thursday	-	Regular warm-up before competition
Friday	-	EC Heptathlon - Vienna
Saturday	-	2. Dvořák: 6165

Conclusion

People say that I am a coach-maximalist, but that is not true. I guess I am getting old, sometimes I wanted to ease off the practices and cut down the amounts, but the guys wanted to hear nothing of it.

In the end I would like to thank all of those present for their attention. I am just an ordinary coach, I started coaching youths and then the sprints and hurdles. I was very lucky and fortunate with the choice of athletes, who wanted to work hard so we made it to world-class performances and breaking the mythical 9000 point barrier in the decathlon, the royal event of track and field.

Thank You.