Developing Effective Environments for Children in Sport

TALENT IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH SPORT: IS IT APPROPRIATE AND HEALTHY?

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Supported by

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union
Session Objectives

This session will...

1. Introduce the concept of Talent Identification and Development Systems (TIDS) in Youth Sport

2. Pose the question (and the evidence) whether TIDS are...
   a) APPROPRIATE
   b) HEALTHY

3. Challenge coaches to consider strategies for improving the holistic development of children and young people regardless of playing ability
Youth Athlete Development: The Goal is Clear

‘Develop healthy, capable and resilient young athletes, while attaining widespread, inclusive, sustainable and enjoyable participation and success for all levels of individual athletic achievement.’

Youth Athlete Development

ABSTRACT
The health, stress and other advantages of youth sports participation are well recognized. However, there are considerable challenges for all stakeholders involved—especially youth athletes—in trying to maintain inclusive, sustainable and enjoyable participation and success for all levels of individual athletic achievement. To address these challenges, a new evidence-informed approach to youth sport development is presented. This approach considers the current state of science and practice in youth sport development and presents recommendations for developing healthy, resilient and capable youth athletes while providing opportunities for all levels of sport participation. The authors declare a lack of youth athletes in the field and propose 10 recommendations for action. These recommendations can be summarized as follows:

1. Highlight key concepts and practical applications.
2. Create guidelines and create a model for youth sport development.
3. Develop health and performance strategies.

INTRODUCTION
The goal is clear: delivering healthy, capable and resilient youth athletes while ensuring widespread, inclusive, sustainable and enjoyable participation and success for all levels of individual athletic achievement. Yet, this is a considerable challenge for all stakeholders in youth sport—parents, coaches, athletes and administrators.

Contributing factors such as overtraining, travel and burnout are well recognized. There are also expert needs to ensure that youth athletes develop to reach their full potential.

HEALTH

PERFORMANCE

LONG-TERM ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT, PART 2: BARRIERS TO SUCCESS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

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For further information see end of article.

International Olympic Committee consensus statement on youth athletic development

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Talent Identification & Development Systems (TIDS)
TIDS: An easy sell?

+ MDT Support (S&C, Physio)
+ High Quality Coaching
+ Education
+ Facilities
+ Intensified Training
+ Enhanced Competition
But.... Resource Optimization

1) How do we decide who gets these opportunities?
2) What about those young people that are not identified?

3) How effective can the system be?
4) Is it healthy to be part of a TIDS?

Key: Selection = (S); Non-Retention = (NR); Transfer-In = (T);
Withdrawal/Dropout/Transfer-Out = (WDTO).
Are Youth Sport Talent Identification & Development Systems Appropriate & Healthy?
1. How do we decide who gets these opportunities?

What is Talent?

1. Write down your definition of talent on a post-it.
2. Watch the video
Nature vs Nurture...

From:
"It's because we have ice in our veins"
“They say we have an extra hockey-chromosome in our DNA, it's called a hockeysome"
"I was a skating foetus"

To:
"I started skating at 6 weeks"
"they say we love hockey more than our parents"
"I Sleep on a frozen pond"
"We'll keep training until we control theirs"

What about your post–its?
Talent

Talent = (Ability × Internal Factors) × External Factors

UK Coaching, Talent foundation series, 2015
1. How do we decide who gets these opportunities?

How do we Identify Talent?

1) If you were asked to identify a talented athlete from the athletes you coach – who would you pick? and Why?

2) In your sport – How is talent typically identified and selected?

3) With the person next to you discuss – what are the biggest challenges in terms of talent identification?
1. How do we decide who gets these opportunities?

How is talent identified?
- Based on specific characteristics of adult elite athletes
- Often anthropometric, physical or physiological qualities
- 1 specific moment of selection, one-off performances?
- Subjective ‘observations’ – Potential is difficult to see (and measure)
- Identification occurs within ‘annual-age groups’

Problem?
- Talent is multi-dimensional and does not look the same for everyone
- Development is non-linear (RAE, ups and downs)
- Does not account for previous opportunities/training history
- Psychological characteristics of excellence are often not considered or deemed ‘hard to measure’

Abbott et al., 2002; Vaeyens et al., 2008)
2. What about those young people that are not identified?

- Progression across levels involves removal of large numbers of players from the system (and possibly from the sport)

- Once a player has been de-selected from a talent route, it is often difficult or impossible to return to it

(Bailey & Collins, 2013)
3. How effective is the system?

Talent ID & Development Systems

**EFFECTIVENESS**

= *Achieving the intended results*

- TIDS criticised for being not optimally valid, reliable nor effective
  (Abbott, Collins, Martindale & Sowerby, 2002)

- Limited research evidence: but effectiveness is ‘low-to-moderate’ at best
  (Vaeyens et al., 2008, Vaeyens et al., 2009; Güllich & Emrich, 2012)
3. How effective is the system?

Currently less than 1% of the 10,000 youth footballers in academies progress to being a Pro player.

Only 180 of the 1.5 million boys who play organised youth football in England will become a Premier League pro. That’s a success rate of 0.012%
“How we see the world depends on the lens we look through”
How would you define Effectiveness?

vs.
Moving Towards..

‘have a strong effect on someone or something’
4. Are TIDS healthy?

You are divided in two teams.

Left side of the room ‘Sport Cynics’

Right side of the room ‘Sport evangelists’
4. Are TIDS healthy?

“Health is a state of complete positive physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (Seligman, 2008)

Subjective

Feeling Great!

Biological

Excellent Physiological capacities

Functional

Functioning well and/or being productive in daily life

**TASK:** Using the above definition of health, in your team prepare a rationale to support your answer to the question above.
The Literature suggests...

**+ Physical**
Improved physiological capacity, Enhanced body composition, Increased skill, Long-term health

**+ Psycho-Social Impact**
Increased self-esteem & confidence, Increased self-regulation, Positive self-concept, Character development, Peer relationships, Development of life skills, Enjoyment

**+ Education**
Academic high achievers, Higher graduation rates

**- Physical**
Overtraining, Injury, Illness, Long-term health (e.g., joint health, CTE), Sleep, Muscle Soreness

**- Psycho-Social Impact**
Decreased self-esteem & confidence, Mood, Excessive pressure, Burnout, Athletic identity development and foreclosure, Social isolation, Engagement in unhealthy behaviours

**- Education**
Educational sacrifice, poor performance, career options

The Media says...

Despite what football clubs say, the support for rejected boys is not there

David Conn

What is football doing to our kids? Is it worth the fractured families I’ve found? Is it worth the blighted lives it can create? What is the cost of the dream?

MICHAEL CALVIN
NO HUNGER IN PARADISE

The potential for a wide range of – performance and personal, positive and negative, intended and unintended, short and long-term – (health) impacts
The Question is...

1. Are these concerns warranted?

2. Do the opportunities for positive development and growth hold up for TIDS?

3. Should we/parents/athletes/coaches accept that TIDS are challenging & selective environments?

4. In that light; is it about minimising harm, maximising growth .... or both?
Psycho-Social Health & Wellbeing


**Similarities**

- Stress & Recovery
- Physical well-being, Psychological well-being and Parent Relationships (HRQoL)
- Basic Psychological Needs (Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness)
- Education – Maths & English

**Differences**

- Greater in School Children:
  - School-related Quality of Life
  - Social & Peer Support
- Greater in Academy Players
  - Athletic Identity
  - Education (Science)
Psycho-Social Health & Wellbeing


In-time & Over-time Perspectives

• Generally very positive about experience and what the academy offers! They’d do it again!

• Enjoy being at the academy & feel cared for. It’s the people that make or break the experience

• Are learning a lot, both on and off the pitch. Ahead of their ‘normal’ age group peers

• The academy is a challenging, performance driven environment.

Challenges:

• Managing pressure and uncertainty of academy setting
• Combining training with other ‘life commitments’
• Not getting carried away and ‘sacking off’ education. Value Education
• Social relationships could be under pressure
• always being watched
What about your context?

1) Thinking about your context, write down the main risks and opportunities for positive (health) impact.

2) Discuss this list with the person next to you and try to decide on your top three risks and opportunities. This can be based on what you think is most important to influence, but also where you may have most control/power to do so.
So, are Youth TIDS Appropriate and Healthy?

Talent ID & Development Systems are neither inherently **good** or **bad**. Instead, their impact reflects how well they are **designed, implemented and managed** so that youth athletes systematically secure **positive health outcomes**.
Welfare & Wellbeing

‘For the welfare and well-being of youth, long-term athletic development pathways must be administered and monitored carefully by practitioners responsible for the overall development of the child or adolescent.’

DDOs are successfully driven by staff who align their **day-to-day routines and practices** to not only deliver key business outcomes but also to prioritizing the **personal development of individuals**.

Caring and authentic relationships

**High quality facilities + expert support services**

High quality people – staff as role models

Focus on ‘responsible autonomy’

**Clear values and expectations**

**Deliberate Developmental Organisation**
Your strategies for holistic development

Think about what you already do, and what you can do in addition in regards to:

1) Mitigating your top three of risks

2) Maximizing your top three opportunities for positive impact

Consider your WHAT you do (in terms of content, what you are delivering, your messages), WHO you are coaching (what are their most relevant needs?) and HOW you deliver your coaching and structure the environment.
Summary

• TIDS have been questioned for their appropriateness and healthiness

• We suggest TIDS have multiple aims and attempt to measure Positive Health impacts (rather than effectiveness)

• Research evidences positive and negative impacts of TIDS (although the evidence is generally limited)

• The design, implementation and management of TIDS influences their impact

• Careful administration and monitoring of TIDS is needed for optimizing positive health outcomes
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