

Long Term Athlete Development

LTAD a brief overview

- A model developed in the 1990's by a Canadian scientist Istavan Balyi
- It is a multi stage training, competition and recovery Pathway
 - Guides an individuals experience in sport and physical activity
- The model imposes a plan which focuses on developing the correct technique.
- Emphasises the importance of training rather than competing.

Stages of LTAD



Active Start

- 0-6 year old

FUNdamental

- Girls 6 – 8, Boys 6 – 9

Learning to Train

- Girls 8 – 11, Boys 9 – 12

Training to Train

- Girls 11 – 15, Boys 12 – 16

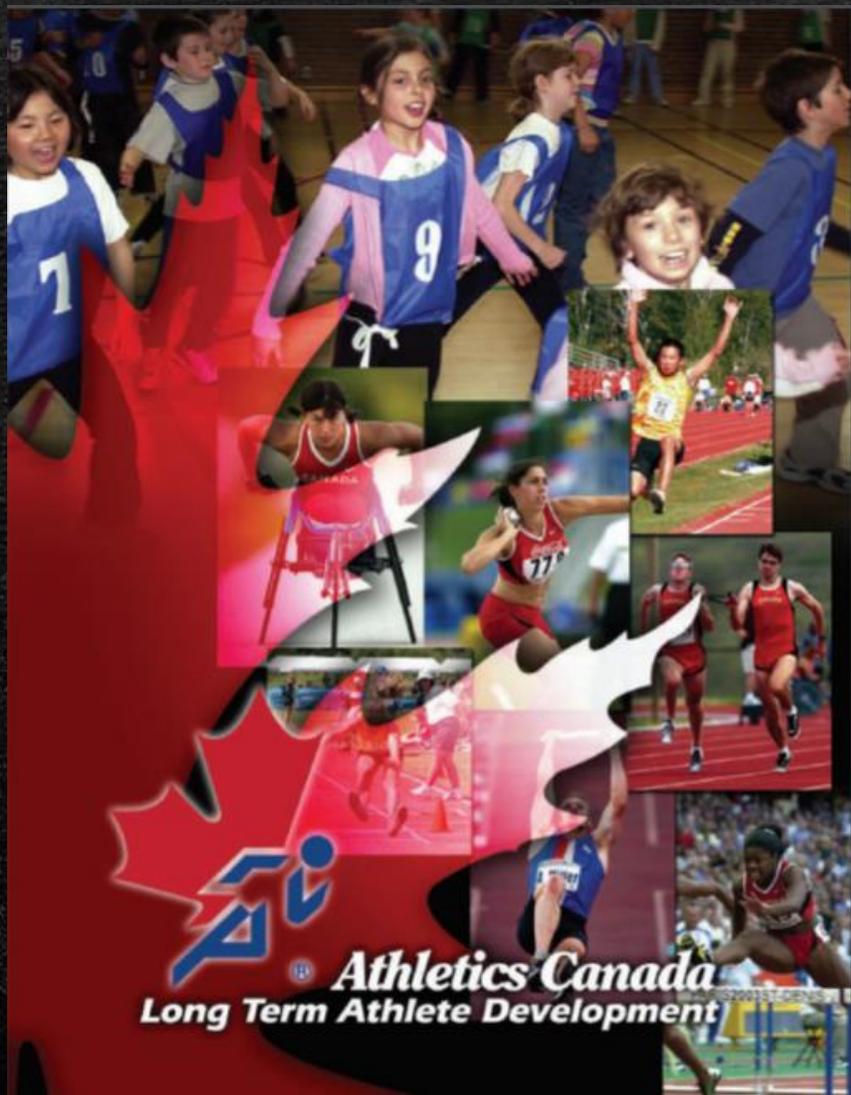
Training to Compete

- Girls 15 – 21, Boys 16 – 23

Training to Win

- Girls 18+, Boys 19+

Active for life



.....or just use your favourite search engine and search for the terms "LTAD Athletics"

https://athletics.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/LTAD_EN.pdf

The 9 Stages of Long Term Athlete Development

STAGE 1: ACTIVE START STAGE

Chronological age:

- Males 0-6, and
- Females 0-6

Objectives:

- To make play and physical activity fun and exciting and an essential component of daily routine throughout life

In the earliest years parents are the primary support system for their children. Later daycares, kindergarten and community programs have a significant impact on children.

It is extremely important that adults surrounding children are educated regarding nutrition and the importance of daily physical activity to allow for optimal development.

Children should be continually active without being sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping. Growth and development should be enhanced through playful exploration of risks and limits within safe environments.

There is no introduction to coaching in this stage.

Ideally children begin to be exposed and focus on proper basic fundamental skills such as running, jumping, wheeling (for children in wheelchairs), twisting, kicking, throwing and catching. Some organized physical activity is desirable to help provide an active movement environment combined with an introduction to well-structured gymnastics and swimming programs.



STAGE 5: LEARNING TO COMPETE (“CHALLENGE OF COMPETITION”)

Chronological age:

- Males 16-18 plus, and
- Females 15-17 plus

Objectives:

- To develop event specific area physical preparation
- To introduce event specific protocols to identify strengths and weaknesses
- To implement event area specialization
- To integrate physical, mental, cognitive and emotional development

This is a stage of more specialization and competition.

Single or double periodization is typically used. Coaches should however evaluate and modify as needed.

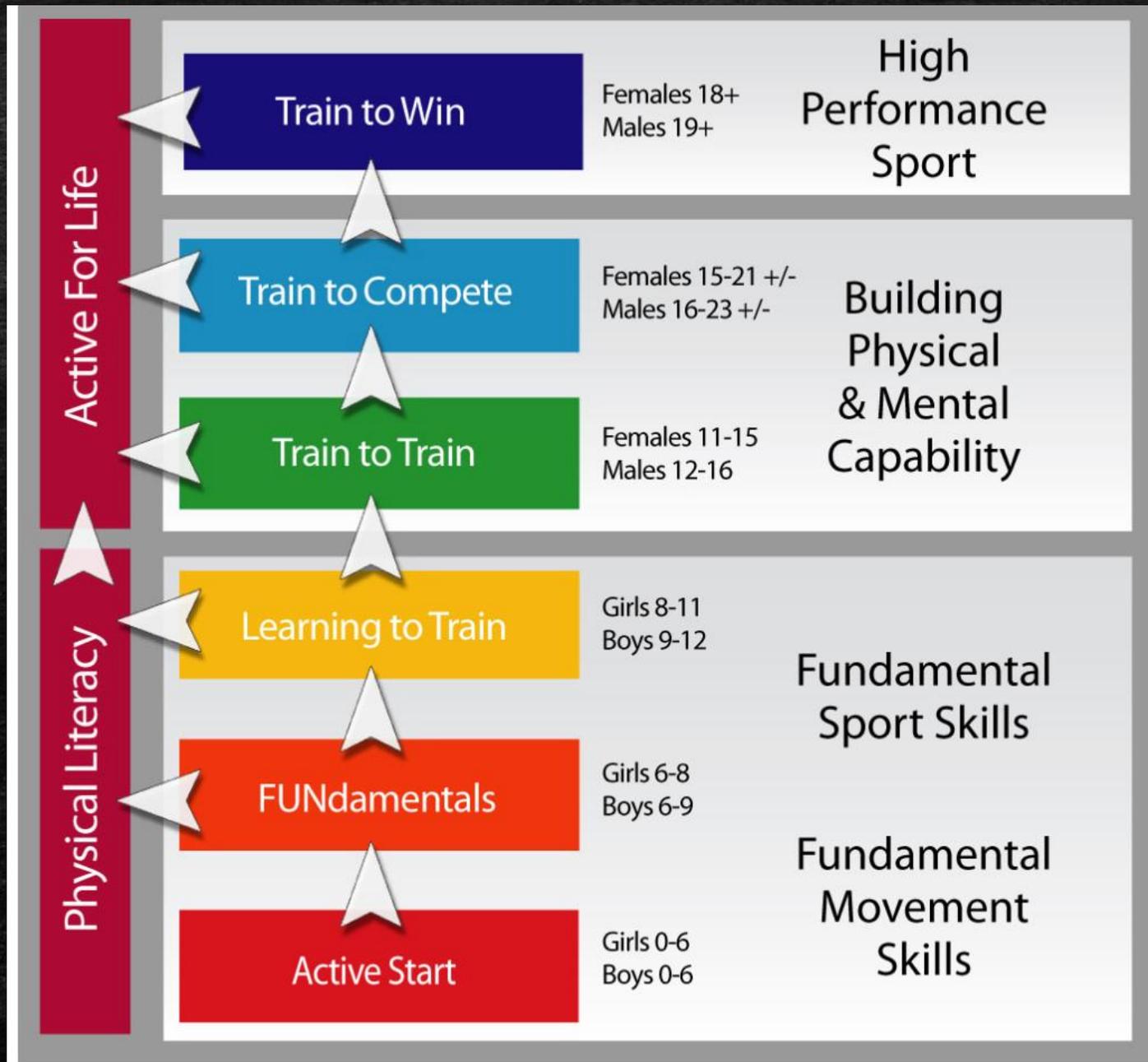
Streaming of athletes into one event group area (throws, jumps, sprints, endurance) or specific event, should be done as advanced motor skills become evident. Speed, strength, aerobic capacity and power are optimized as required; however, in the case of specific speed endurance, further development should be based on event specific requirements.

The number of athletics sessions per week will increase to 5-9 as participation in other sports declines to 2 or less sessions per week.

The practice to competition ratio is 90/10 and the length of the Athletics season can be anywhere from 8 weeks to 10 months. The number of competitive opportunities in the season becomes event-specific and dependant upon the type of periodization. If single periodization is used the number of competitions should be 10-15. If double periodization is used the number would be 12-18.

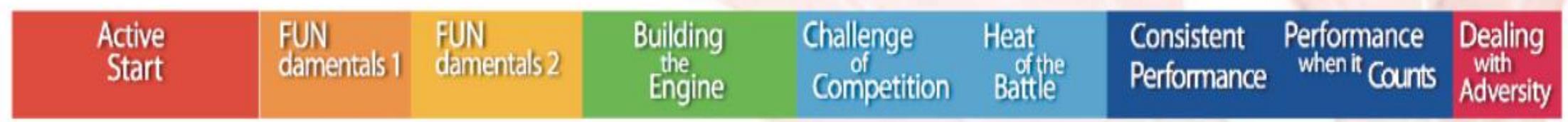
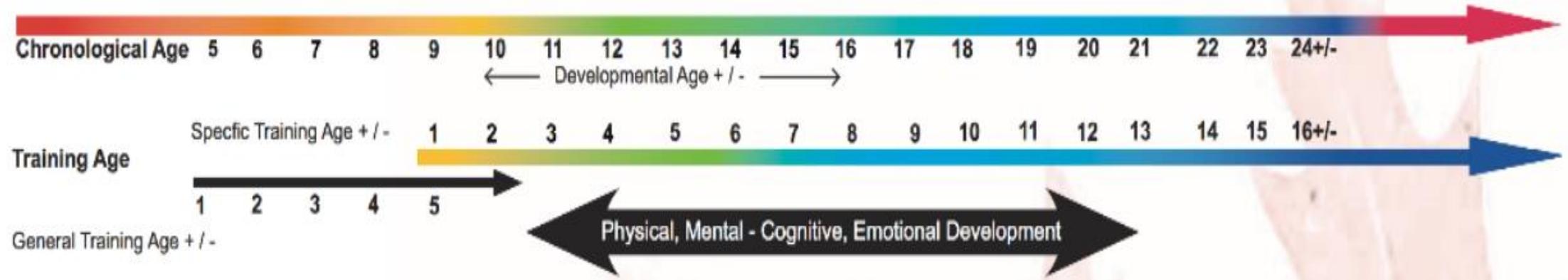
The athlete is introduced to the concept of the Performance Enhancement Team towards the end of this stage.





Athletics Canada - Long-Term Athlete Development - Periodization

(Balyi, Gramantik, Gmitroski, Kaye and Way, 2006 ©)



Principles of LTAD

- Two ways in which performance improves
 - Growth and Development
 - Training

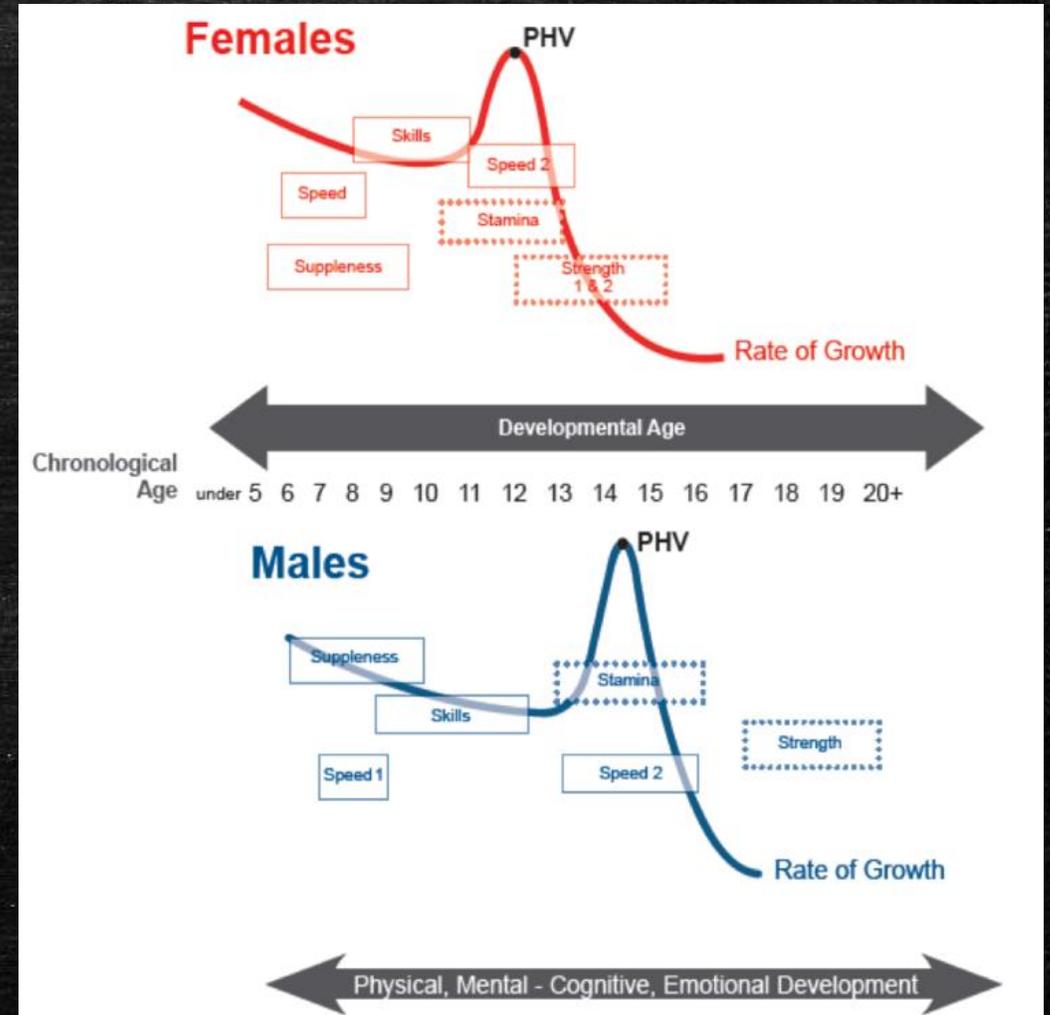
- A centralised rule of the 10000 hours of practice to succeed
 - “It takes 10 years of extensive practice to excel in anything” (Simon & Laureate)
 - “10 years or 10000 hours” (Ericsson, Charness et al)

Growth and Development

- Training Windows

The chart shows “optimal” windows of opportunity for trainability.

The theory is that there exist various times in an athlete’s developmental life where certain physical and psychological components are best trained and progressed.



.....however

- 10 years or 10000 hours is:
 - 20 hours per week.....for
 - 50 weeks of the year.....for
 - 10 years.
 - That equates to just under 3 hours per day!
- Mastery has been shown in less than 10000 hours
- Mediocrity has been shown in far more than 10000 hours



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Where do we fit all this training in?

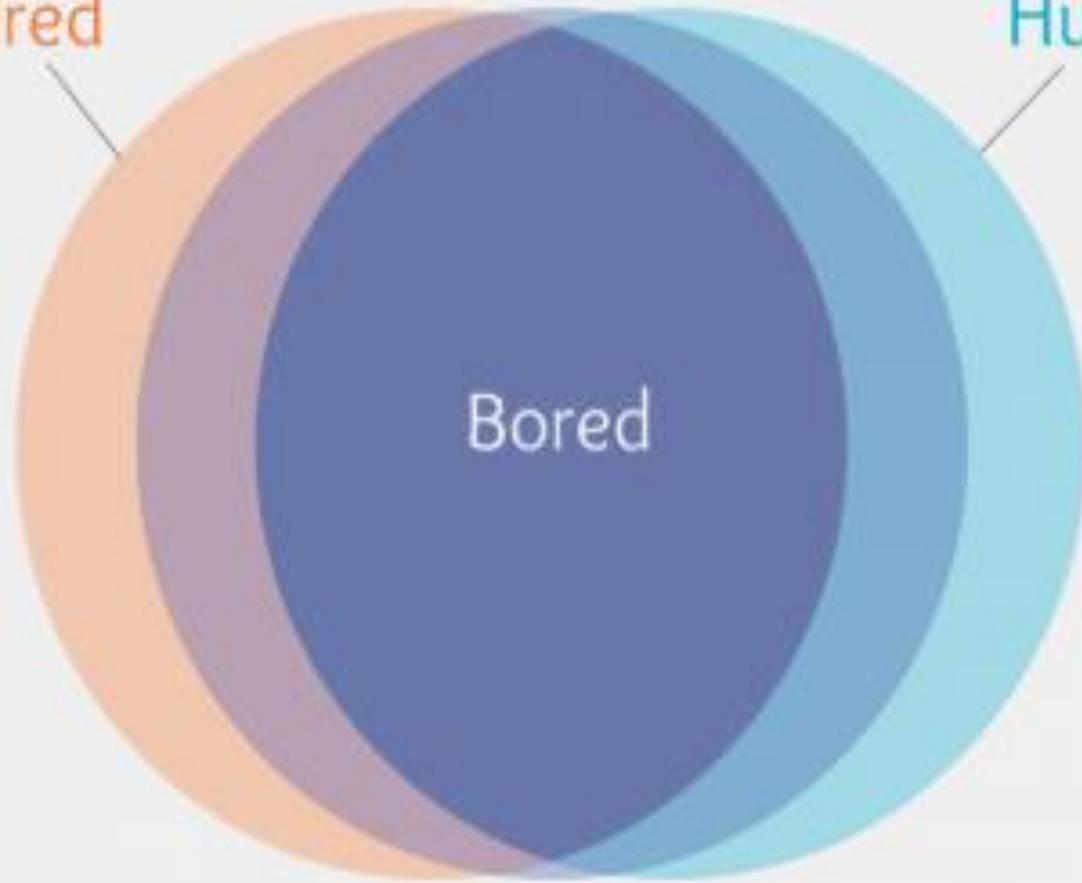


Tired

Hungry

Bored

Watching
Netflix



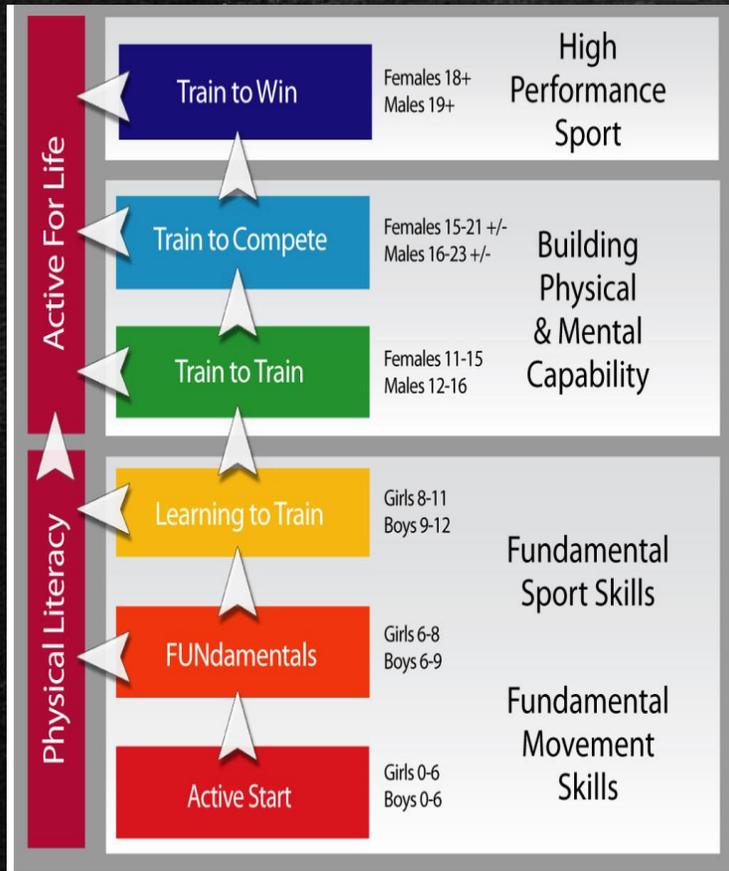
LTAD – one evaluation

Ross Tucker (2013) made some conclusions about the LTAD model

- LTAD is a sound conceptual model for the management of youth development
 - It should not be seen as literal or prescriptive
- Sporting success is multi-faceted and LTAD doesn't always fully recognise innate / genetic contributions to sport.
 - Those naturally genetically gifted and those who have talent and are self motivated to work hard.
- Early exposure is probably crucial
- However delayed specialisation improves chances of adult success



Assumptions:



- The LTAD model assumes that everybody, talented or not talented, following the plan will become a successful elite.
 - The development of a talent is a complex process. (Johnson 2016 – Critical Analysis of the LTAD Model)
- That all start in the sport at the same point.
- That all grow, develop at the same rate.
- That all are motivated by the same things (e.g. strive to become “elite”).

“LTAD or the idea of a linear pathway for athlete development was implemented to give clarity to administrators and board members”

(anon 2019)

It isn't all bad...is it?

Excellent Coaching Practice along the pathway (Justine Allen et al 2012)

- Emphasis on learning and development
- Guided by the “bigger picture” that allows for flexibility
- Fostering a positive environment focused on learning and encouragement
- Developing quality coach-athlete relationships with relaxed, open, two-way interaction
- Planning for sessions and seasons whilst allowing for adaptation and flexibility
- Use of competition and game like periods
- Well developed interactive instructional techniques.

10000 hours.....



Short Term Athletic Engagement

"There is no long-term development without short-term engagement! The two go hand in hand."

O'Sullivan (2018)

O'Sullivan suggests

- Before we start in the long-term deliberate practice aspects of sport (i.e. focus on what today's training will provide to an athlete 5 years from now)
- We must simultaneously engage our athletes in the short term.
- Some critical qualities that every experience, on a weekly basis, should include are as follows:

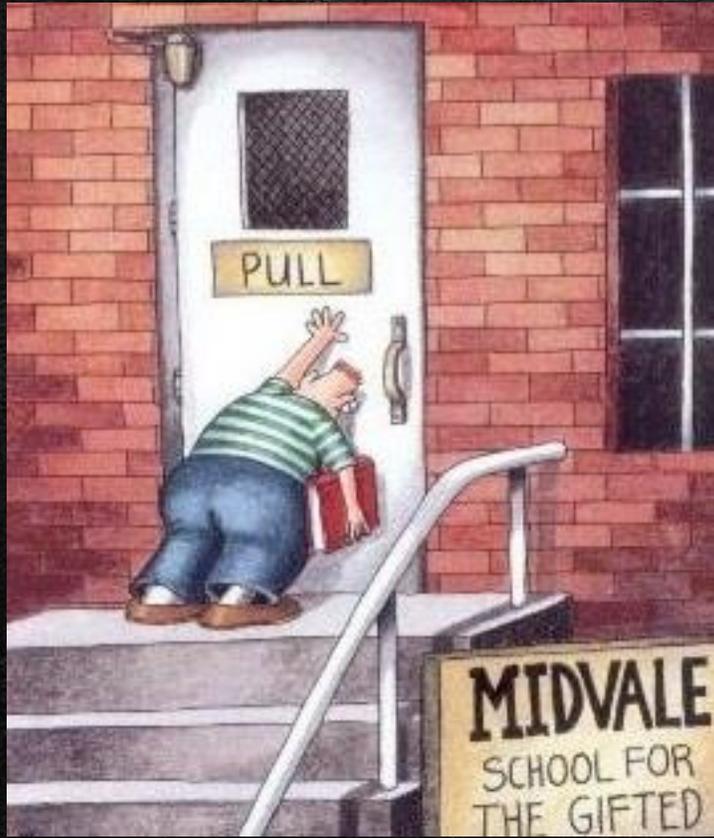
ENJOYMENT

This is the cornerstone of any long-term participation.

Kids, especially young ones, will not voluntarily continue to pursue something they do not enjoy. Telling a 7-year-old "This will matter when you are 18" means nothing. It may be true, but it does not make it relevant to him or her. But working on those aspects of development in an enjoyable manner will keep them engaged. The best way to do this is playing lots of games, and ditching the lines and overreliance on unopposed activities. Let them play, add constraints and conditions, manipulate numbers and space, but let them play!



DEVELOPING / NURTURING COMPETENCE



Kids need to see and feel themselves improving.

A quality, engaging sports experience has to teach technical and tactical aspects of the sport, and help children on the path to improvement and mastery. We can teach through games, and kids will develop competence quicker than blocked, repetitive training of a single skill in isolation.

A child who works hard and sees improvement gains confidence.

Our job as coaches and parents is to ensure our athletes are growing in confidence, not by shouting false platitudes at them, but by helping them have a growth mindset, teaching them to embrace the process of improvement, and never letting our words and actions in emotional situations – such as the ride home – sap their self-esteem and belief. We can teach, correct errors, and still help athletes believe in themselves.

GIVING KIDS AUTONOMY

The experience must become theirs
.....and not ours.

We can introduce them to sports, however it must be their dreams, their goals, and their intrinsic motivation to play, not those of the adults. Be aware of your kids' goals for playing, be in tune with when they might need a break or some time away, and pay close attention that sport is something they do, not who they are.

Lets work as a team and do it my way!



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(Balyi, Gramantik, Gmitroski, Kaye and Way, 2006 ©)

