

Player Improvement

A consultation paper on the introduction of a Long-term Player Development pathway, and its implications for strengthening the infrastructure of Scottish sport.



Contents

Executive Summary	3
Section 1	
The need for a Long-term Player Development pathway in Scotland	5
• Introducing the concept	5
• How effective is our current infrastructure and delivery?	7
Section 2	
The Long-term Player Development pathway	13
• The benefits	14
– Consultation	19
Section 3	
The infrastructure to deliver	20
• Getting the LTPD pathway in place	20
• The sports academy concept	20
– Consultation	21
• A regional sports structure	22
– Consultation	22
Working together for Scottish sport: the delivery agencies	23
References	25
Glossary of Terms	26
Key Contacts	28

Executive Summary

Research has concluded that it takes 10,000 hours of training to be world class at anything¹. That equates to three hours every day for 10 years. Clearly, a long-term plan is required for an individual to reach their fullest potential in a sporting career.

A pathway that looks beyond short-term results will ensure that participants and coaches are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to help maximise an individual's potential at ALL stages of their development.

The twin ideals of sporting excellence and mass participation are not mutually exclusive. The drive to achieve medal-success on the world stage – and improve the health of the nation – can be part of the same integrated pathway.

Such a pathway, featuring appropriately structured and monitored programmes, is required to provide a stronger foundation for physical activity and sport in young people. It is required to promote long-term physical activity, and a positive approach to healthy living for all. And it is required as the driving force for high performance in competitive sports.

The concept of Long-term Player Development recognises that development is a multi-staged progression, related to the important biological, psychological and social development periods in a young person's life.

The process starts with helping the youngest of children develop basic psycho-motor skills, like agility, balance, co-ordination and speed. It goes on to help develop the sporting skills and knowledge that will encourage individuals to participate in life-long physical activity and recreational sport. Ultimately, for those with potential, it can provide the platform for elite performance.

The Long-term Player Development approach will define roles for all delivery agencies within Scottish sport, creating a common framework to guide thinking and practice.

Key to the approach is the emphasis placed on fostering a basic 'physical literacy' among young children. The early stage of the model is not sport-specific, concentrating instead on the generic skills and knowledge required to engage in – and appreciate – all forms of sport and physical activity.

However, creating a coordinated approach to the infrastructure of Scottish sport can also help bridge other gaps in the current system.

There are implications, too, for coaching. Currently, higher level governing body coaching qualifications tend to prepare candidates to work with older or better athletes. In conjunction with the UK Coaching Certificate, the development of a Long-term Player Development pathway will create a multi-tiered system, allowing professional advancement at every level.

For the Long-term Player Development approach to succeed, a structured process will be required to allow athletes to progress from schools and clubs to local development groups, up to the national squads and the Scottish Institute of Sport programme.

¹Ericsson et al, 1993; Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Salmela, 1998.

To that end, this paper recommends the creation of a network of sport-specific academies to sit within an overall regional structure. The academies would support, and be supported by, Scottish sport's governing bodies, local authorities and Area Institutes of Sport.

They would be managed at regional level to lead players from their local environment to Area Institute of Sport programmes.

The establishment of regional infrastructure is, therefore, crucial: allowing the key delivery agencies to work together in a co-ordinated manner, with the scope to address local problems, while using the experience available nationally.

The main purpose of this paper is to inform and engage our key partners in these proposals, thereby generating discussion and stimulating input to inform their further development. The development of a coordinated and effective Long-term Player Development pathway is a priority for **sportscotland**, with the ultimate aim of improving the standard of individual capabilities across the sporting continuum. We believe the concepts outlined in this paper can strengthen the infrastructure of Scottish sport and make a significant contribution towards achieving the shared targets of Sport 21 Shaping Scotland's Future 2003-2007.

However, we can't develop these proposals and turn these concepts into reality on our own. We need the expertise, input and buy-in of our key partners, for only by working collaboratively can we hope to find solutions to the many questions raised in this paper.

We've outlined the consultative process below, and specific venues, dates and times for the workshops and meetings will be confirmed shortly.

We look forward to working with you to make these concepts a reality.

Consultation Process

Distribution of LTPD pathway consultation paper	October 2004
Consultation workshops and meetings	October – December 2004
Draft recommendations on a model for Regional Sports Infrastructures and Sports Academies	February 2005
Feedback opportunity on draft recommendations	February 2005
Final recommendations for Regional Sports Infrastructures and Sports Academies	March 31 2005

Section 1

The need for a Long-term Player Development pathway in Scotland

Introducing the concept

Long-term Player Development (LTPD) is a participant-centred approach, enabling individuals to fulfil their sporting potential, whatever that might be. It is suggested that the process of achieving optimal development contains a staged progression, with each stage related to the important biological, psychological and social development periods in a person's life.

These stages start with helping the youngest of children develop generic psycho-motor skills, such as agility, balance, co-ordination and speed.

From there, the approach helps develop the sporting skills and knowledge that will allow an individual to participate in life-long physical activity, recreational sport or achieve elite performance.

The whole pathway should emphasise the role of quality preparation and delivery. It focuses on performance over the long-term, rather than winning as a short-term objective (e.g. "peaking for the weekend").

This pathway will impact on all seven of **sportscotland's** priority investment areas and will be driven by the Developing Potential team, with the support of both the Widening Opportunities and Achieving Excellence teams.

Defined roles for all agencies at each stage of progression will be mapped onto a player development pathway, which in turn will guide their thinking, practice and service delivery. In time, this long-term player development pathway will aim to fulfil the potential of every individual involved in sport.

How will this be achieved?

Long-term Player Development will be centred on the individual athlete and led by coaches, instructors and other deliverers of Scottish youth sport.

It will recognise the wide variation in the physical, psychological, emotional and social development between children, and acknowledge how these factors have a large impact upon how sport can influence them, and how they feel about participation.

Taking part or playing to win?

"The health and well-being of the nation, and medal-success on the world stage, can be products of an effective and integrated sports system"

Istvan Balyi, world-renowned expert in athlete development

Simple participation in sport and elite performance need not be mutually exclusive, and can be part of the same integrated sports system. This is particularly true in the early years, when helping children develop basic skills such as running, jumping and throwing can underpin that individual's decision to participate in life-long physical activity OR set them on the road to becoming elite performers.

This is reflected in recently-released plans for the building of a network of world-class training and competition facilities across Scotland. While primarily designed to support the needs of Scotland's elite athletes, these facilities will be available for community use, providing increased opportunities for young people to take part in sport and physical activity.

A good LTPD pathway can positively influence the areas of sports participation and performance by providing children with physical competence, self-confidence and a positive perception of their ability to participate.

This is because in the early stages of the pathway (see page 13), the emphasis is placed on a child acquiring a basic 'physical literacy', arising from the ability to perform fundamental and specialised movement skills, together with the knowledge, understanding and ability to take part in sport and physical activity. The lessons learnt to date from work in 'Basic Moves'¹ and the 'Developing Potential of Young People in Sport'² research indicated that the creation of appropriate development environments could enable the child to have a positive perception of their ability to undertake any physical activity of sport (Collins & Abbott, in press).

Should children later decide not to compete, the skills they will have acquired in their early experiences of sport should still benefit them when they engage in recreational sporting activity.

Indeed, it is anticipated that they are more likely to choose to participate in such activities because of their positive disposition towards the benefits of the activity and their competence to perform it. In doing so, individuals are likely to remain active – with an enhanced quality of life and health – for longer (Stratton, Ward & Smeeton, 2002; Collins & Abbott, in press).

Therefore, despite having the potential to foster world-class performance, the LTPD pathway has been designed to positively influence the whole of Scottish sport and contribute strongly to the health of the nation.

1 Funded by **sport**scotland in partnership with Edinburgh University.

2 Funded by **sport**scotland with joint intellectual property rights with Edinburgh University.

Why is there a need for a Long-term Player Development pathway?

The National Physical Activity Strategy, Let's Make Scotland More Active, Feb 2003 has indicated that an increasing number of Scots are characterised by a sedentary lifestyle and highlights the policy changes required to address this. The population is becoming increasingly overweight and inactive.

In response, the Scottish Executive, through its Health Improvement Policy, is committed to improving levels of physical activity and helping turn the tide of growing obesity levels.

Major investment has been made to develop and expand the Active Schools component of the Healthy Living agenda, and the recent Physical Education Review committed all Scottish schools to at least two hours of PE each week for all pupils by 2008.

These recommendations will lead to significant improvements in both the level of participation in PE and in the quality of provision. In addition, an integrated and systematic approach is required to provide a stronger foundation for:

- Physical education and school sports activities for young people
- Life-long physical activity and a positive approach to healthy living
- High performance and competitive sports

Key to this is the encouragement of previously discussed physical literacy-orientated experiences among young people, and the fostering of positive self-perception and physical competence.

“Children who possess inadequate motor skills are often relegated to a life of exclusion from organised and free play experiences of their peers, and subsequently to a lifetime of inactivity because of their frustrations in early movement behaviour”

(Seefeldt et al., 1979)

Building on the good work that is being done through Physical Education in Scottish schools and the emerging Active Schools network, it is therefore essential that all children be given the opportunity to develop their physical literacy to suit their preferences and capacities.

It is equally important to recognise the positive effect of successful sporting role models in encouraging involvement in recreational and competitive sport.

Furthermore, successful sportsmen and women should be encouraged to remain in sport after retirement, by getting involved in recreational sport, coaching or administration.

How effective is our current infrastructure and delivery?

There are currently some localised and sport-specific examples of good practice. However, in common with other countries (National Coaching & Training Centre [Ireland] consultation paper: Building pathways in Irish Sport, September 2003), issues exist within the Scottish sports infrastructure.

During the development of this paper the following issues have been highlighted. The consultation process outlined in this document will be an opportunity for the key delivery agencies of Scottish sport to engage in the solutions to these perceived issues through the LTPD and regional sports infrastructure concepts.

1. Physical literacy

- The HMIE (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education) report, "Improving PE in Primary Schools" (2001) and the "Report of the Review Group on Physical Education" (2004), highlighted the absence of well-implemented and specialised physical education within the primary school sector and the taught curriculum. The reports drew attention to the dearth of specialist training for the delivery of PE within the Scottish primary school sector. They also highlighted the need to implement a more comprehensive programme of physical education at secondary school, where the focus should be one of development; building upon the levels attained in primary school years.
- The athletic ABCs (Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed), the basics of athleticism (running, jumping and throwing) and the basics of sporting skill (body awareness, gliding, catching and striking) are not implemented in the coaching of sport in a structured or systematic manner.
- Exposure to activities that promote motor-skill development and physical literacy among children is not at a level which supports participation, performance, excellence and health objectives.
- Development programmes for primary school-aged children by sport's governing bodies tend to focus on the equipment and skills required for their particular sport, rather than encouraging the development of physical literacy and fundamental skills.
- Children tend to specialise in one sport from an early age, rather than being positively encouraged by all delivery agencies to learn fundamental skills and gain as wide experience as possible. Early specialisation has been linked to the development of immature motor patterns and early sport drop-out (Harrison et al, 1983). Successful athletes often excel in sports different from those in which they were initially involved because they developed a broader base of transferable motor abilities (Moore et al, 1998).
- Sports compete for a percentage of the child population, rather than co-operating to develop fundamental skills and physical literacy. Ironically, these sports would benefit from having more confident and competent children at a later age, with broader skill ranges and abilities.

2. Philosophy of practice and competition structure

- The importance of practice to the development of a person can often be misunderstood in British sport (Abbott, Collins, Martindale and Sowerby, 2002). Parents and coaches in many sports approach training with an over-emphasis on results, and the need to peak for game-day. This short-term approach to training and performance can be detrimental to the development of children as athletes and individuals.
- Competition structures, and pressures within many sports, typically caused by early specialisation, can result in burn-out and premature retirement (Harrison et al, 1983; Moore et al, 1998).
- There are few clear guidelines available to parents or delivery agencies about the volume and nature of competitions in which a child should be taking part to maximise their physical literacy and development potential.
- Chronological age, rather than an individual's stage of physical and emotional development (replaces biological/maturational) often dominates training and competition from the age of 11 to 16 (Abbott, Collins, Martindale and Sowerby, 2002).
- The emphasis on appropriate psychological development within British sport is often minimal (Abbott and Collins, 1998). However, Kane (1986) stated that an individual's unique personal and behavioural dispositions are likely to be the biggest predictors of how he/she will translate potential into performance.



How old is a 13-year old?

- Current systems of competition can be typically based on tradition and convenience, rather than a rationale grounded in player development knowledge. Competitive calendars often inhibit, rather than support, the optimal training and development of athletes.
- Young, developing athletes are often exposed to adult competition schedules. This can result in too little time being spent learning the fundamentals and sport-specific skills.
- Young athletes can be encouraged to have an inappropriate focus on winning, rather than development. What an individual or team does in order to win may detract from the quality training experiences required to develop athletes in the long-term.
- It can be detrimental to development when adult training sessions are applied to young athletes, without regard to the principles of childhood development (Stone, 2004a).
- The critical stages of physiological, social and emotional development in the female athlete can often be ignored if they are exposed to male or generic training programme (Stone, 2004b).

3. Coaching

- Current coaching systems generally result in the most experienced and technical coaches working at the elite level. At younger age groups, where physical literacy and general skill development is most required, volunteer or novice coaches predominate. This can result in the least experienced coaches operating at the stages most critical to long-term sporting development. Ideally, experienced coaches should lead well-organised sessions of age-appropriate activities.
- Current coach-education structures encourage coaches aiming to progress up the qualification ladder to work with older and more experienced performers. Conversely, this may also prevent coaches from seeking professional development opportunities because of the perception that it may take them away from the age group that encouraged them to become a coach in the first place.
- Financial and other tangible rewards, such as public recognition, are gained from coaching elite athletes, rather than from delivering quality coaching at all levels, especially developmental environments.
- Coach education and development programmes are mostly designed around methods of delivery and the technical elements of sport. Very little emphasis is placed on understanding the physiological, psychological, sociological, emotional development and decision-making patterns – and needs – of children (Abbott, Collins, Martindale and Sowerby, 2002). Similarly, there is rarely an emphasis placed upon the creation of a development environment within a coaching context that would enable an individual to achieve their full potential. The damage done by inappropriate coaching practices at an early stage, when a child is at the optimum age to receive skill or fitness-development programmes, may not be fully recoverable at a later in life.
- There does not appear to be sufficient focus and investment on the early phases of development, including physical literacy, within coaching and coach-education in Scotland.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit, educate and deploy volunteer coaches and leaders in the sports community. This is exacerbated by concerns about bureaucracy and litigation, and time pressures from other areas of life. There are also few volunteer coaches for and from the disabled, and from ethnic minorities. A structure that recognises the role of individual variation in skills and experience must, therefore, be seen as a priority.

4. Player development pathways

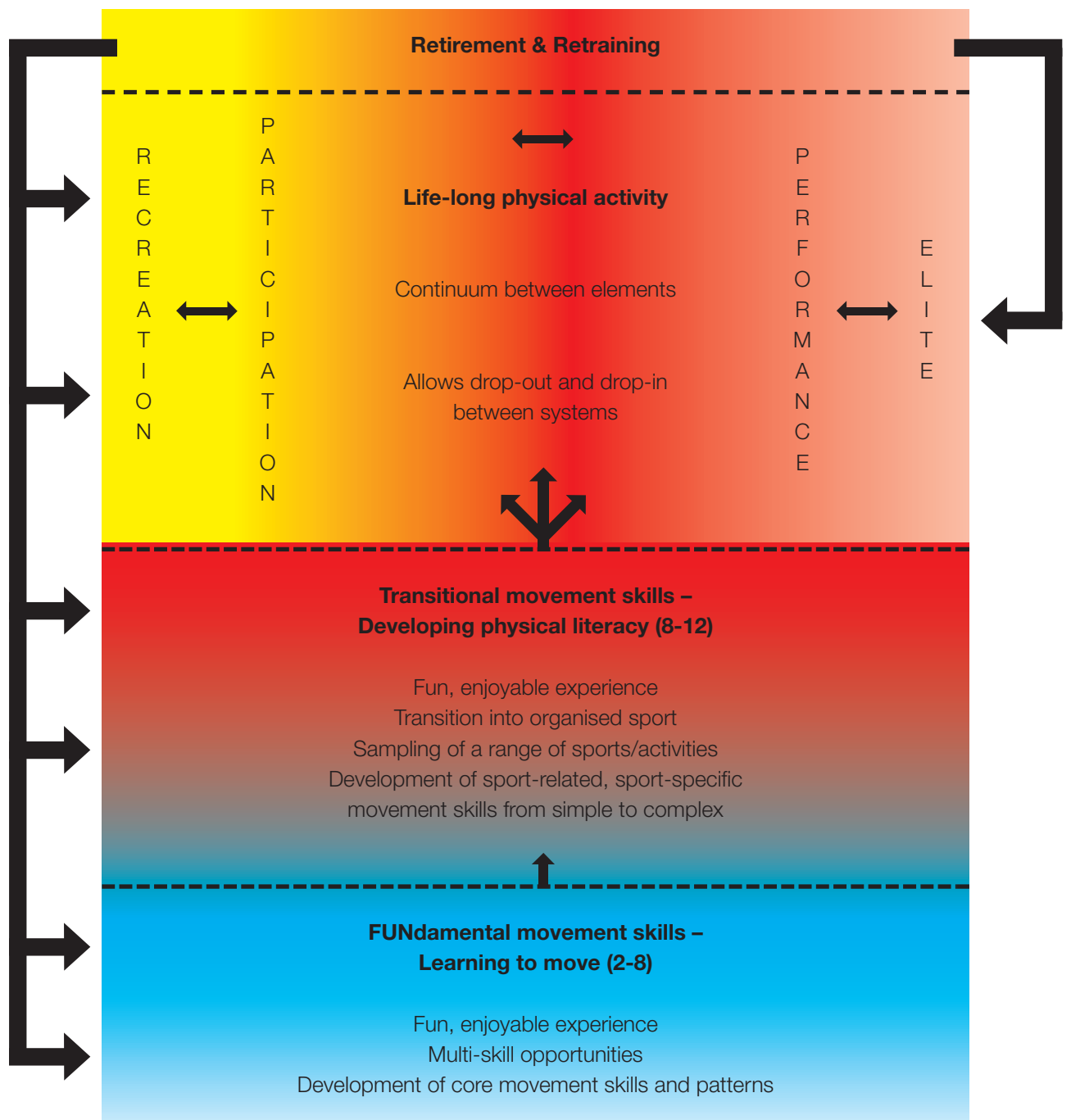
- The absence of a clear model for player development within and between Scottish sport's delivery agencies, and a lack of a systematic and coordinated approach in current player-development programmes, is generally recognised.
- Player recruitment and coaching is currently focused on training for competitive performance, rather than on development and future potential. Too much emphasis on competition, rather than training, can inhibit individual athlete development.
- Sophisticated support programmes and financial packages at the elite level are unlikely to compensate for the lack of appropriate training and development at earlier stages of an athlete's career. Early investment in athletes will increase the success of the Institute network programmes.
- There have been recent advances in coach education and Institute personnel development, and practical examples of good practice in this field. However, the integration between sport-specific programmes (technical and tactical objectives) and support programmes (for example strength and conditioning, sports science and the Performance Lifestyle programme) can be improved.
- The Junior Groups Programme Review (Thompson, Lyle and Morrow, 2004) highlighted the disparities in Scottish governing body (SGB) and regional delivery structures, and identified clear contextual factors that influenced effective practice. The absence of a coherent structure and strategy between local, regional and national bodies, and across public, voluntary and national sectors, will be an inhibitory factor in putting in place an effective player-improvement pathway,
- There is presently no systematic approach for the tracking of individuals, by providing accompanying documentation to record planning activities, specific advice and details of training, to help ongoing development (Thompson, Lyle and Morrow, 2004).

5. Support structures for Scottish sport

- Basic sports science principles are not usually introduced to training and practice at the earlier development phases of young players and athletes prior to achieving elite levels.
- There is a need to maximise the access to, and the use of, existing resources and expertise within sports systems, and to develop new technologies and expertise as these systems evolve.
- The education of administrators is generally neglected when it comes to some of the essentials of the development programmes.

Addressing the issues

In conjunction with the Scottish Executive's overarching health improvement strategy, these identified gaps in the system and the associated issues raised, could be addressed by the progressive development of an integrated development structure within Scottish sport. This would begin with an emphasis on the early stages of development, including physical literacy, where there should be clear roles and responsibilities established for national, regional and local agencies so that the long-term player development model can be applied (within and between sports), in a manner that is specific to the context of Scottish sport.



What is needed: a generic route map for Scottish sport development.

Section 2

The Long-term Player Development pathway³

FUNdamentals	Learning to play	Playing & development	Training to compete, playing for life	Training to win
Chronological age	Chronological age	Chronological – biological age	Chronological – biological age	Chronological age
Males: 2 – 9 Females: 2 – 8	Males: 9 – 12 Females: 8 – 11	Males: 12 – 16 Females: 11 – 15	Males: 16 – 18 Females: 15 – 17	Males: 18+ Females: 17+
FUN and participation General, overall development ABC's of Athletics run, jump, throw ABC's of Athleticism: agility, balance, coordination, speed KGBS of sports: Kinaesthesia, Gliding, buoyancy, striking F: Foundation, Fantasy U: Uplifting, Understanding, Uncomplicated N: New, Nurturing Introduction to simple rules of ethics of sport	FUN and participation Generic sports skills All basic sports skills should be learnt before entering next phase Mental – cognitive and emotional development Introduction to mental preparation Medicine ball, Swiss ball, own body strength exercises Introduce lifestyle management understanding Introduce concepts relating to warming up and cooling down	Development and sport specific skills Generic strength and conditioning (Olympic weight lifting) techniques Individualisation of training programmes Major fitness development phase (manipulation of training variables especially strength, in relation to the onset of peak height velocity) Flexibility training introduced Mental – cognitive and emotional development Develop further mental preparation Develop further lifestyle management understanding Frequent musculoskeletal evaluations during peak height velocity	Participation – performance differentiation Individualised event & position specific physical conditioning Event, position specific technical tactical preparation Sport, event position specific technical and playing skills under competitive conditions Advanced mental preparation Optimise ancillary capacities (nutrition, hydration, environment, equipment, regeneration)	Performance Optimisation of physical capacities with tapering to peak performance at target competitions Further development of technical, tactical and playing skills Modelling all possible aspects of training and performance Frequent regeneration breaks Maximise ancillary capacities
Nurturing environments	Creation of development environments	Sport selection	Sport specialisation	High performance
Well structured, single emphasis programmes encouraging sport and physical activity all year around	Well structured, single emphasis programmes encouraging sport and physical activity all year around	Double periods of training and competition emphasis	Multiple periods of emphasis: focusing on training periods and competition periods, each with a specialist individual focus	Programme structured to facilitate optimum competition performance
Physical activity 5 – 6 times per week	Sport-specific training 3 times per week, participation in other sports 3 times per week	Sport-specific training 6 – 9 times per week:	Sport-specific technical, tactical and fitness training 9 – 12 times per week	Sport-specific technical, tactical and fitness training 9 – 15 times per week
Training/ competition ratios 50:50	Training/ competition ratios 75:25	Training/ competition ratios 60:40	Training/ competition ratios 40:60	Training/ competition ratios 20:80

³To aid the readers' understanding, a glossary of terms can be found at the end of this paper.

It should be noted that the ages described in this paper are general guidelines. The individual tempo of development/maturation will influence how individuals will reach the various phases of long-term development.

“All young people follow the same pattern of growth from infancy through adolescence but there are significant individual differences in both the timing and the magnitude of the change in (body) structure.”

Armstrong and Welshman (1997)

Some early-maturing athletes may have as much as a four-year physiological advantage over their late-maturing peers. The same may be said of the mental (cognitive) and emotional development of the individual. All these factors need to be incorporated into the long-term plan if the child is to develop the physical competence, positive self-perception and self-confidence to participate in sport.

“The key to maximising and sustaining talent over the long run is to plan the correct mix of training loads prior to physical maturity, and to plan for continued improvement after physical maturation through technique development and proper training.”

Bill Sweetman, Performance Director, British Swimming (2001)

From an equity point of view, the LTPD pathway applies to all, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin or social status. However, there are additional issues to be considered. For your people and athletes with a disability, unique adjustments to the pathway would be required depending on individual circumstances.

The Benefits

1. The implications for coaching

There has never been a better time to address the barriers to coach-development. In conjunction with the implementation of the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate, the LTPD pathway provides opportunities to create new coaching awards, improve professional development for all levels of coach – and provide some exciting new opportunities.

For more information on the UK Coaching Certificate, visit the Sportscoach UK website at www.sportscoachuk.org or contact Linda Low (**sports**scotland programme manager) at linda.low@sportscotland.org.uk

The proposed changes will allow a curriculum structure to be put in place, putting appropriate emphasis on the fundamental, learning-to-play, playing and development stages. The LTPD pathway will be linked with coach-education opportunities that focus on understanding and improving child development, within and through sport.

Paediatric physiology, growth and maturation, together with emotional and psycho-social development will form the mainstay of these educational opportunities. Similarly, techniques to recognise and best develop potential will replace the traditional emphasis on talent-identification which predominates in current sport systems, and which promotes the early-maturer above a later-developing individual with greater long-term potential.

There is an opportunity, therefore, to build on the findings of the “Developing Potential of Young People in Sport” programme, which was conducted by Edinburgh University in conjunction with **sportscotland**, to develop aspects of the model.

2. LTPD and the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate

One of the exciting consequences of the UKCC and LTPD developments is the creation of a multi-tiered system of coaching, within which opportunities for professional advancement are possible.

Currently, with a few exceptions, an individual wishing to advance their coaching experience through qualifications will be required to attain governing body coaching qualifications which prepare the candidate to work with older or better performers.

Unfortunately, this has the effect of removing experienced coaches from the fundamental and development stages of coaching where, in accordance with the LTPD model, there remains a definite need for high-quality coaching provision.

The current system also discourages experienced performers from seeking coaching qualifications, as the initial stages relate to working with the most basic sport-specific skills.

For example, an international-standard athlete may not require information relating to sport-specific skills. Indeed, in many sports, the technical knowledge of the elite performer will outweigh that of the person writing coach-education courses. However, the best performers in the world may only become good coaches if they know how to coach. What is required, therefore, is the development of their coaching ability and related skills, such as planning, interpersonal skills and performance-analysis techniques.

For a sport to achieve the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate endorsement, both of the above issues must be addressed. This will involve each sport’s governing body working to develop up to five levels of qualification to reflect the competence of the coach, rather than the level of performance achieved by the athlete. For instance, Level One would be attained by an assistant coach, and Level Five gained through cutting edge practice.

Therefore, a coach delivering fundamentals to the youngest age group would have the opportunity to develop their coaching experience and qualifications up to Level Five while remaining with children of that age.

This also means that international athletes can, if they wish, become assistant coaches to international performers and develop their coaching qualifications and experience accordingly. In doing so, they can offer their developed expertise to athletes aspiring to reach international performance levels. Of course, such assistant coaches may become involved at any other level of performance.

The coach-education system for a governing body which has UKCC endorsement, and fits within the principles of the LTPD system, would look like this:

Fundamental	Learning to play	Playing to develop	Learning to compete	Playing to win
Assistant coach (level 1)	Assistant coach (level 1)	Assistant coach (level 1)	Assistant coach (level 1)	Assistant coach (level 1)
Master coach (level 5)	Master coach (level 5)	Master coach (level 5)	Master coach (level 5)	Master coach (level 5)

There will be further flexibility in the system for individual sports to develop, at the “Learning to Compete” and “Playing to Win” stages of development; education strands that enable the differentiation between coaches who are working with the participation-orientated (sport as a hobby) and those who are working with pre-elite, elite or professional sports people.

This multi-tiered system also offers individual sports the opportunity for the role of the development coach to be recognised and promoted in the wider community.

Traditionally, it is only coaches of international and professional athletes who get recognition, either through public acknowledgement of their efforts or by their financial reward for their expertise. In fact, many hours of expertise, from a number of coaches, will have gone into developing a performer to a point where he or she is able to be coached at elite level.

Within the integrated sports system, there is an opportunity to recognise and reward the contribution of coaches at all levels.

3. Scottish governing bodies

The implementation of an integrated LTPD system into Scottish sport offers great opportunities and potential advantages for Scottish sport’s governing bodies (SGB). For the first time, all SGBs could follow a programme which, particularly in the early stages, will emphasise similar skills, fitness developments, coaching techniques and lifestyle management/ancillary capacities. Coaching awards and development opportunities, player development pathways, competitive structures and the management of local, regional and national programmes will all be based within this set curriculum.

There will also be a managed delivery process, incorporating all agencies that would interact to deliver the SGB programme, such as local authorities and Area Institutes of Sport. Further details on this component of the model can be found later in this paper.

The structured process will provide a framework around which all the activities of the SGB can be built, as all the aspects of the governing body’s work become tailored to a participant-centred, coach-led integrated system.

This provides a basis for strategic planning and decision-making, upon which funding applications, programme audits, development pathways and competitive structures can be based.

An LTPD programme-led pathway provides a clear means of attracting more people to the individual sport, enabling all to reach their full potential. This, in turn, would lead to increased retention of participants, as well as higher and more sustained levels of success.

4. Clubs

Feedback from initial consultation indicates that clubs within sports need to understand their strengths, weaknesses and limitations. The integration of the SGB development plans with the LTPD framework can have a significant role to play in the development of clubs.

It may be that there are very few sport-specific clubs with the capacity to deliver all stages of the LTPD framework. Therefore, there is an increasing need for clubs – in conjunction with their governing bodies and local delivery agencies – to provide a system for the local provision of quality training and competitive opportunities to meet the needs of participants.

5. Sports working together for sport

There will be a need for each sport to develop a programme that will focus on developing the full range of fundamental and generic sports skills. This will be produced from a generic fundamentals manual that the sports themselves should develop, in conjunction with **sportscotland** and other agencies.

A UK steering group, hosted by SportscoachUK, is currently hosting these discussions in conjunction with the home nations' sports councils. This so-called FUNdamentals resource would include fun activities that can be incorporated into remedial activities for older age groups, and be utilised within warm-ups for sport specific training sessions.

Given the common programme that will exist between sports, and the need for the development of fundamental and general sports skills at the early stages, there is a tremendous opportunity for sports to work together. This might involve common delivery mechanisms for fundamental skills, generic coach-education opportunities, and also the potential for the creation of multi-sport activity camps within a local region.

If all agencies were working together for sport, it could ultimately lead to the formulation of a cross-sport charter for the implementation of the LTPD pathway within Scotland. This would lead to greater co-operation in the scheduling of training sessions and competitions, with the objective of having cross-sport, planned delivery to the age of approximately 15.

At that stage, plans for participation and the path towards excellence can be put into operation within and between individual sports. This would help prevent sports competing for participants within the same marketplace, and could ensure a win-win situation for all sports.

Example:

Scottish Gymnastics currently supports more than 260 qualified pre-school assistant and club coaches, currently delivering to 112 non-local authority clubs and 2600 children. There is also a network of local authority clubs that deliver to, for example, 1500 children a week in Glasgow, 400 in Stirling and over 1000 in Aberdeen. Despite being organised and based upon gymnastics, such classes are activity-focused rather than sport-focused.

With such a delivery mechanism in place, with scope for expansion, there is the potential for key sports to work with gymnastics technical officers to develop a programme that provides the key FUNdamental skills and generic sports activities for all.

6. Challenges and opportunities for the governing bodies:

The opportunities provided by a Long-term Player Development approach cannot be developed without a great deal of hard work and cultural change within sports. However, hard work in the short-term will provide long-term benefits. A review of programmes, coaching, coach education and competitive structures must take place within each sport, based on the principles and objectives of the LPTD pathway. Much of this will take place with the implementation of the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate.

Following the appointment of a lead officer within each SGB to oversee the creation of a sport-specific LPTD pathway, a significant cultural change within all sports – at both strategic and governance level, and among those delivering to every age group and stage at a local level – will be required.

For example, coaches will be required to think about developing an individual towards reaching their optimum potential in the future, as opposed to working with them to produce short-term results.

sportscotland has committed to support the work of the SGBs and to help facilitate the implementation of any changes, in whatever capacity is required. This will include the development of generic materials to be put, where possible, at the disposal of all sports. **sportscotland** may also assist sports in recruiting more professional staff to support the implementation of the LPTD programme.

Moving into development: a suggested way forward

It is suggested that the following process will effect the implementation of LPTD pathways with SGBs. Initially, the process will take place with a pilot group of selected sports. However, as capacity and experience increases, more sports are likely to be added.



The end product of the SGB source group for LTPD will be to produce a framework that will align the following elements of player improvement delivery to the stages of the LTPD model:

Player improvement:

- Physiological development requirements
- Psychological development requirements
- Technical coaching requirements
- Tactical coaching requirements
- Decision making considerations
- Lifestyle management and education considerations

Coaching improvement:

- Planning and periodic requirements
- Coach education requirements

Infrastructure:

- System of competition
- A coordinated delivery mechanism to deliver the principles detailed

Consultation:

Many questions relating to the LTPD pathway must be answered if the flexibility to deliver its outcomes is to be achieved:

- What would be required for all delivery agencies to work together to deliver a common programme of fundamental skills?
- How can SGBs best integrate with local authorities to encourage learning through diverse experiences?
- Will the current structure best deliver the outcomes? Can these outcomes be better delivered and managed within a regional partnership structure?
- How can sport continue to engage with education to influence physical education professionals operating in schools on the need to build on – and further develop – current physical literacy experiences?
- Further to the growth of the Active Schools network and implementation of the recommendations from the PE review group, how can this contribute to the development of the LTPD pathway?
- How can delivery agencies begin to ensure that the principles of the framework are implemented at all levels of sports provision throughout Scotland? How can existing practice and philosophies be changed to mirror the LTPD model?

These are some of the issues that would need to be solved before this evidence-based concept could become a reality.

In order to obtain a clearer picture of views on these issues, and help develop solutions to any delivery barriers, **sportscotland** will be arranging and facilitating a series of consultations to which representatives from delivery agencies will be invited and asked for their input.

Section 3

The infrastructure to deliver

Getting the LTPD pathway in place

If it is accepted that the LTPD model should be the basis upon which the development of players and athletes is planned and implemented, local sport-specific player development pathways would be required. These would enable individuals to develop within a sport from the “playing and development stages” through to the “training to win” stages.

Ideally, there would be a structured process from school and/or development club to Scottish Institute of Sport programmes. As a result, a coordinated operational structure to incorporate local players into regional or area structures and, ultimately, national programmes, would be required.

While the progression of the individual must be kept in mind at all times, the system must evolve in such a way that it encourages those who do not achieve success as performance athletes to stay involved in the sport. Alternatively, individuals may be encouraged to move to a sport they’d prefer, or to one in which they could excel. Evidence suggests that most people who are elite in one sport were previously pre-elite in another (Abbott, Collins, Martindale and Sowerby, 2002).

To address these issues, and develop a fully-integrated system, it is proposed that two major developments take place within the infrastructure of Scottish sport: sports academies; and a regional sports structure.

The sport ‘academy’ concept

It is proposed to develop a network of sport-specific academies to sit within an overall regional structure. The academy network would support, and be supported by, SGBs, local authorities and Area Institutes of Sport.

The system would link school sport programmes to clubs, the academy programme and the Area Institute, with a seamless transition between levels for a player moving up (or down) the player development pathway. It would allow the Area Institutes to focus resources and time on the development of the very best athletes in a region, with the aim of promoting these athletes into the Scottish Institute.

The academy programme would also provide a vehicle for the delivery of central skills, such as strength and conditioning, to developing athletes who may not currently be receiving support through the Area Institute network.

This means that those athletes who are sufficiently proficient in their sports to be considered for promotion to Area Institute level will be working on developing their sport-specific strength and endurance, rather than focusing on learning new skills and techniques.

The objective of the regional sport academy concept would be to provide a sport-specific development pathway, managed at regional level, to lead players from their local environment to Area Institute of Sport programmes.

This would build on previous work in this area, and would help integrate local authority, SGB, club and Area Institute components of sport and support service delivery.

1. Identifying potential

The academy programme would also be charged with the role of developing future potential, rather than focusing resources upon current talent. Currently, initiatives such as the Talented Athlete Programme, can favour early-maturing performers

The Talent Identification and Development work undertaken at Edinburgh University, and supported by **sportscotland**, highlighted that talent is a multi-dimensional construct, and a dynamic and interactive concept which changes with time and circumstances. (Abbot et al., 2002)

Excellence can only be fostered in an environment which facilitates the individual's capacity to develop. This means that movement skills and thought processes (psycho-behavioural factors) will determine the extent to which an individual will take advantage of the opportunities afforded them.

For more information on this work, refer to the executive summary on the **sportscotland** website (www.sportscotland.org.uk).

2. Developing potential:

The Regional Junior Group Programme Review (Thompson, Lyle & Morrow, 2004) identified the need for a sustainable programme that is:

- Not purely outcome focused
- A managed programme for athletes to progress through or be channelled back into sport (rather having acceptance of a high drop-out rate)
- A system that has elements that are transferable between sports.

The Academy concept should help address these issues.

Consultation:

There are currently a number of academy programmes operating within Scottish sports at national and regional level. There are also a number of examples where sport-specific coaches are operating at a number of different levels to provide a service to sports people at a number of performance levels, from club through to international-performance standards. Lessons from these initiatives can be used to inform the academy consultation process.

The consultation process must address how the delivery agencies (the Area Institute of Sport network, SGBs, clubs and local authorities) will interact in a coordinated manner to operate an efficient and effective Academy system. Key issues might include the following:

- What is the role of each delivery agency within an academy structure?
- Are full-time academy managers or sport-specific coaches required, or can the process be run through existing positions?
- What are the capacity issues?
- What is currently in place within each region that works well and should be retained within the academy concept?
- How can the role of other supporting structures (such as clubs) be maximised to ensure that there is growth throughout the player development pathway?

With this in mind, **sportscotland** will be arranging and facilitating a series of consultations to which representatives from delivery agencies will be invited and asked for their input.

sportscotland also plans to form an advisory group to develop the Academy concept. The group will comprise members of **sportscotland** staff and representatives from the delivery agencies within Scottish sport. Input from delivery agencies, in particular, will be crucial in determining how the concept can be operated to improve performance standards.

A regional sports structure

The second proposal is to explore the establishment of a regional infrastructure to enhance the delivery of sport within Scotland. The local delivery of national programmes could be coordinated regionally, allowing the key delivery agencies within sport to work together at a manageable level for the greater benefit of Scottish sport.

The regional infrastructure could potentially be the focus for **sportscotland** investment decisions, thereby establishing a coordinated approach between agencies, and defining clear roles and responsibilities at each stage of the LTPD pathway.

The model would build on local structures, maximising resource allocation. In this way, there would still be scope to address local problems and utilise the experience available locally and nationally.

A proposed regional infrastructure

One option for implementing the model could be through ‘regional sports partnerships’, with representation from **sportscotland**, local authorities, selected governing bodies, Area Institutes of Sport and the higher/further education sector.

This group would work together to develop a shared vision that could:

- Support the delivery of Sport 21, particularly in the Developing Potential area
- Provide a strategic framework for key agencies to work together
- Clarify roles and responsibilities throughout the LTPD pathway
- Provide a means of connecting local and national plans for sport
- Enable better management and targeting of resources into joined-up sports development programmes
- Create a more sustainable long-term sports infrastructure
- Establish equality of opportunity and access across the player development pathways
- Raise standards of play and performance, and deliver best value locally.

Consultation

There are a number of examples of regional partnerships operating within Scottish sport, as well as in France, Canada, England, New Zealand and Australia. However, the purpose of this paper is to stimulate discussion, and gather input from the delivery agencies within Scottish sport on the best method of delivering a regional concept that strengthens the existing infrastructure to ensure that the targets of Sport 21 are met.

One of the priority issues to be addressed is to identify the best way for key agencies to work together in order to operate an efficient and effective delivery system for local, regional and national sport – and to determine how it could be most appropriately managed.

It is important to recognise that this consultation is not proposed solely to explore the establishment of another layer – or, indeed, a regional layer – of bureaucracy. Rather, it is intended to explore how agencies can come together to manage, invest in, and deliver a plan for achieving common goals at both local and national levels, on a regional basis.

During the period of October to December 2004, **sportscotland** will consult with a wide range of delivery agencies as to what a regional infrastructure might look like. This will be done in conjunction with dialogue on the academy concept.

sportscotland will therefore be arranging and facilitating a series of consultations to which representatives from delivery agencies will be invited and asked for their input.

Working together for Scottish sport: the delivery agencies

The emphasis on learning fundamental and transitional sports skills prior to specialisation, and the ability to transfer skills between sports as a key factor in talent development, means the interaction between individual sports and delivery agencies is crucial.

Traditionally, Scottish sport has relied on many agencies to achieve its aims relating to mass participation and performance. This will continue to be the case in the future. However, one of the constraining issues has been the lack of coordinated delivery networks between agencies.

Scottish governing bodies

Each Scottish governing body has its own particular regional and local structure. Each SGB governs its sport, and provides the standards, policies, procedures and frameworks for the operational delivery of any aspect of the sport. These aspects include, among other things, coach qualification and deployment, player pathway development, and ethical practice.

sportscotland still sees these bodies as being of prime importance in the development and delivery of national programmes for each sport, and will continue to work strategically with them to ensure a modernised and effective delivery of sports throughout the country.

However, **sportscotland** also believes that there is still much more to be achieved by SGBs genuinely working together to create a sustainable infrastructure for Scottish sport as a whole. Therefore, the willingness of SGBs to work together, particularly in the development of regional plans and a regional infrastructure that will help achieve the objectives of Sport 21, is crucial.

Local authorities

Local government provides the critical building block for sport, with substantial resources underpinning sports development, facility provision and service delivery. **sportscotland** will continue to work with local authorities and local strategic partnerships to develop strategies for sport, physical activity and health within the context of local community plans.

Scottish Institute of Sport

The Scottish Institute of Sport, supported by six Area Institutes of Sport, provides leaderships and services to sport at the highest level, helping athletes to succeed on the international stage. It will continue to be supported by the Achieving Excellence policies of **sportscotland**.

Physical Education

The network of Physical Education teachers in schools across Scotland play the lead role in ensuring that all young children are provided with foundation skills and knowledge to prepare them for a lifetime of activity. The outcome of the PE Review will ensure that significant new resources are placed at the disposal of schools in the drive to increase the time commitment for PE within curriculum time. The LTPD model would benefit from the leadership that the Physical Education profession can offer through a developing curriculum, particularly in the area of physical literacy, and the influence it may wish to have in other aspects of delivery.

Active Schools

Active Schools is a key component of the Healthy Living Campaign, and **sportscotland** is coordinating the introduction of the programme's staffing network throughout Scotland. Active Schools is key to helping young people start in sport, and take the first steps on the road to lifelong participation in sport and physical activity.

The coaching network

sportscotland has developed, and will continue to build, in conjunction with partners, a network of coaching development officers. These positions will liaise between local authorities, Scottish sport's governing bodies and the Institute of Sport network to educate and develop coaches at local and national levels. The purpose of the network will be to integrate the coaching strategies of SGBs and local authorities to ensure that the education and development of coaches is achieved strategically.

The volunteer network

sportscotland is working strategically in partnership to develop an infrastructure that will sustain and develop volunteering in sport in Scotland. Key anticipated outcomes are policy and practice guidance for volunteering in sport, systematic recruitment and retention of volunteers, research, effective communication and appropriate education and training opportunities.

References

- Abbott, A. & Collins, D. (1998) British clients perspectives of sport psychologists in A. Abbott, D. Collins, D., R. Martindale & K. Sowerby, (2002) *Talent identification and development: An academic review*, A report for **sportscotland** by the University of Edinburgh
- Abbott, A., Collins, D., Martindale, R. & Sowerby, K (2002) *Talent identification and development: An academic review*, A report for **sportscotland** by the University of Edinburgh
- Armstrong, N. & Welsman, J. (1997) *Young People & Physical Activity* Oxford University Press, Oxford
- Collins, D., & Abbott, A. (In press) *Talent Identification and Development in Sport: A Multidimensional Framework for Theory, Research and Practice* The Sport Psychologist, (Submitted December 2003)
- Ericsson, K.A., Krampe, R.T & Tesch-Romer, C. (1993) *The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance* Psychological review pp 363 – 406
- Ericsson, K.A. & Charness, N. (1994) *Expert performance: Its structure and acquisition* American Psychologist August 1994 pp 725 – 747
- Harrison, A.J., Watkins, J. & Farrally, M. (1983) *Developing the fundamental motor abilities in young children with special reference to jumping ability* Scottish Journal of Physical Education 11 (1) pp 11–16
- Kane, J.E. (1986) Giftedness in sport: in G. Gleeson (ed) *The growing child in competitive sport* Hodder & Stoughton pp. 184-204
- Moore, P.M., Collins, D., Burwitz, L. & Jess, M.C. (1998) *The development of talent study* English Sports Council
- Salmela, J.H., Young, B.W. & Kallio, J. (1998) *Within career transitions of the athlete-coach-parent triad* in P. Wylleman, & D. Lavelle (Eds.) *Career transitions in sport: A source book for practitioners and researchers* Fit Publication, Morgantown, VA
- Seefeldt, V., Haubenstricker, J. & Reuschlein, S. (1979) *Why Physical Education in the elementary school curriculum?* Ontario Physical Education & Health Education Association Journal 5 (1) pp 21-31
- Stone, M.H. (2004a) *Individualising training for your athlete* 4th Annual **sportscotland** Strength & Conditioning Conference, Inverclyde National Sport Centre, Largs; May 2004
- Stone, M.E. (2004b) *Training the female athlete* 4th Annual **sportscotland** Strength & Conditioning Conference, Inverclyde National Sports Centre, Largs; May 2004
- Stratton, G., Ward, P. & Smeeton, N (2002) *Foundation Sport Skills Top line Report*, Sport England

Glossary of terms

Biological age The individual's stage of development in relation to maturity. The integrated nature of growth is influenced by the interaction between genes, hormones, nutrients and the physical and psycho-social environments in which an individual lives. This complex interaction regulates the child's growth patterns, neuromuscular and sexual maturation and general development during the first 20 years of life.

Chronological age The number of days, months and years that have elapsed since birth. Children within the same chronological age banding can differ by several years in their level of biological maturation.

Cognitive Thought and decision-making processes that underpin the application of sporting skills

Competition: training ratio The ratio that should be applied to the player's development in terms of achieving a balance between the time spent focusing on training (i.e. improving) and performing (executing the skills through competition). Sports-specific models will also address the type of competition that players are subject to at each stage, the appropriate level of competition for players at a certain stage of development and also how training is approached in order to allow peaking for performance will also vary within each stage of the model.

Flexibility The range of motion possible about a joint or a series of joints

Fundamental skills These are observable as movement, manipulation and stability skills. These basic skills underpin all other sporting skills. A player with well-developed fundamental skills will have the basic ability to develop a wide range of sporting skills in a number of activities, leading to an increased chance of either becoming a life-long recreation participant or an elite performer.

Individualisation Designing training programmes to suit the specific needs of an individual

Kinaesthesia The body's internal sense of body awareness and positioning in relation to the environment. If an individual closes his/her eyes, a well developed kinaesthetic sense will allow them to be able to stand on one leg, or touch their nose with their hand.

Lifestyle management Capacities associated with the holistic management of a healthy lifestyle (for example, nutrition and hydration). These later build into ancillary capacities, which are holistic factors that impinge directly upon all aspects of sports participation and performance but which are not directly attributable to physical, psychological, technical or tactical performance variables.

Mental Capacities associated with the psychological demands of sport (for example, concentration, motivation and goal setting, ability to visualise, etc)

Participation: performance differentiation Some individuals will move onto a player development pathway which will allow them to participate in a sport to the best of their ability on a recreational level. Others with the necessary potential and desire to achieve success on a national/international level will be able to move onto a performance pathway that will enable them to achieve this potential.

Peak Height Velocity (PHV) The maximum rate of growth in height during the adolescent growth spurt

Peaking The process of optimising preparation to provide the player-athlete with the best chance of achieving the most effective performance in target competitions

Tactical The application of skills in a performance context

Tapering The reduction of training volume (but not usually intensity) as competition approaches in order to allow the player – athlete to peak for target competitions

Technical The skills and techniques of a particular sport

Training variables Training can be altered by the manipulation of the volume (how much is done), frequency (how often the training stimulus is applied), intensity (how hard the player – athlete is worked) duration (how long training stimulus is applied) or load (how much work is performed). Collectively these are known as the training variables.

Key Contacts

Name	Position	Telephone	Email
Colin Pearson	Director: Developing Potential	0131 472 3268	colin.pearson@sportscotland.org.uk
Clive Brewer	Lead Officer: Long-term Player Development pathways and sports academies	0131 472 3336	clive.brewer@sportscotland.org.uk
Nick Rennie	Lead Officer: Regional sports partnerships	0131 472 3264	nick.rennie@sportscotland.org.uk
Linda Low	Lead Officer: UK Coaching certificate	0131 472 3295	linda.low@sportscotland.org.uk
Bill Bell	Lead Manager: Developing Potential	0131 472 3271	billy.bell@sportscotland.org.uk



sportscotland, Caledonia House
South Gyle, Edinburgh EH12 9DQ
t 0131 317 7200
f 0131 317 7202

www.sportscotland.org.uk

This publication is also available on disc and
in large print format. For further information,
contact our marketing department.

ISBN 1 85060 471 1