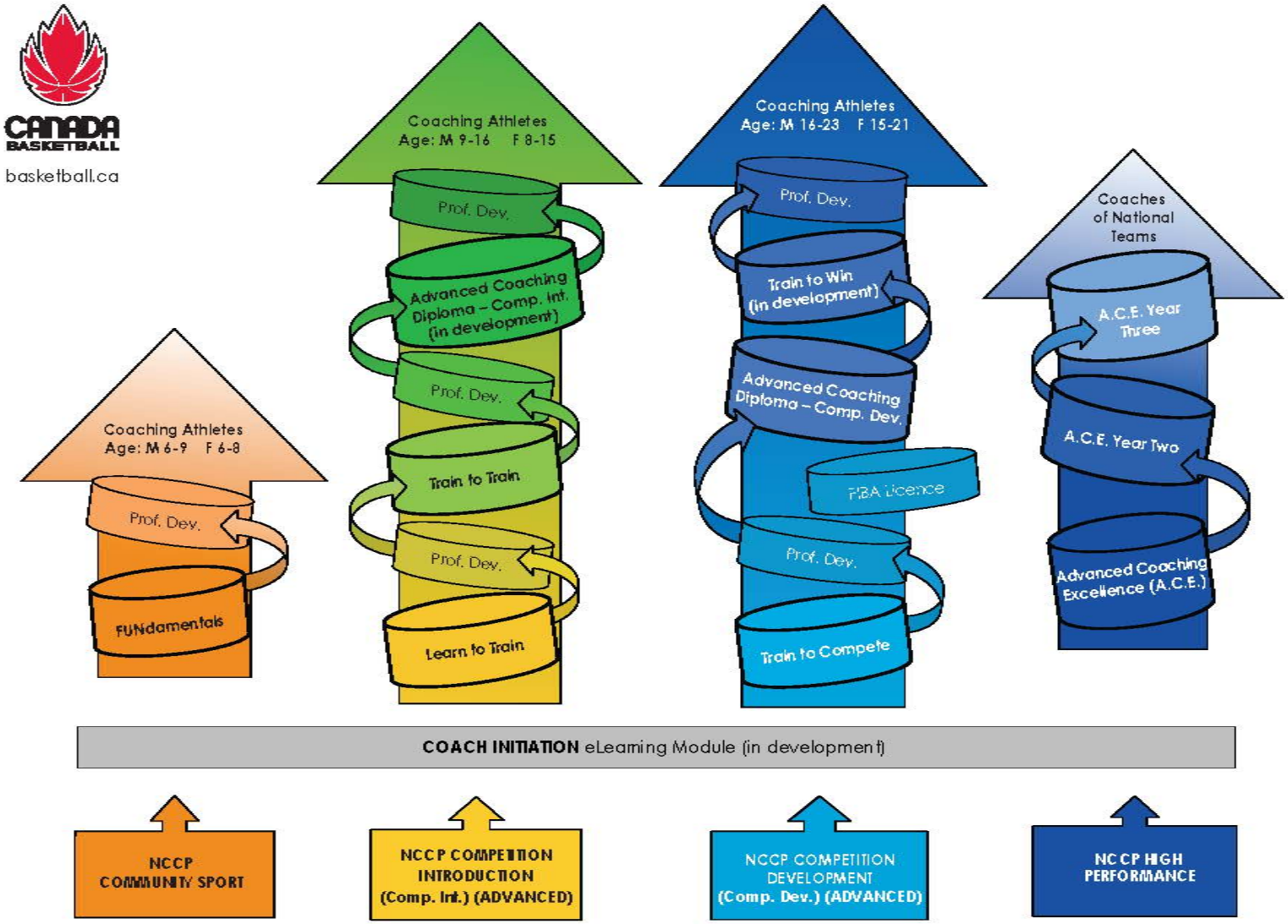
CB's - Train to Train

NCCP- Competition Introduction Advanced

REFERENCE MATERIAL

www.basketball.ca

basketball.ca



Canada Basketball NCCP Coach Education Model

Unit: BASIC MENTAL SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

This document covers five mental-skills topics:

- Spotting focus and anxiety problems
- Improving attentional control
- Improving emotional control
- Setting goals
- Planning for mental preparation

The field of mental preparation and sport psychology is vast. Many excellent suggestions for further reading are presented in the section *References*, at the end of this document, and you are encouraged to consult them.

What Is Mental Preparation and Why Is It Important?

As a coach, athlete, or parent, you may have asked yourself one of the following questions at one time or another or heard others discuss them:

- Why do some athletes perform better than others who seem to have greater technical and physical abilities?
- Why do some athletes perform perfectly in practice but fail to meet their expectations in competition?
- Why are some athletes able to put forward a best-ever performance at a critical time while others seem to choke or perform well below their capabilities when it really counts?

By and large, the answers to these questions lie in the area of mental preparation. Mental preparation is about training the mind to work *with* the body in sport situations and training it *not* to work against the body.

Components of Performance

Sport performance has four major components:

- Physical component
- Mental/emotional component
- Tactical component
- Technical component

Failure to train all four components may result in less than optimal performance. While it is common to do too little mental-skills training, successful coaches and athletes often report that purposeful mental training was instrumental to their success.

IPS

Every athlete has an *Ideal Performance State* (IPS), a state in which he or she is completely prepared and poised for perfect performance. The IPS is a reflection of the athlete's preparation in

all four areas listed above. Developing the mental-training skills of the athletes you coach is therefore critical to helping them achieve their IPS at key competitions.

Mental Strategies Used By Successful Athletes (Weinberg and Gould, 1999)
❑ To enhance confidence, successful athletes practise specific strategies to deal with adversity during competition. ❑ They practise routines to deal with unusual circumstances and distractions before and during competition. ❑ They concentrate wholly on the upcoming performance, blocking out irrelevant events and thoughts. ❑ They use several mental rehearsal methods before competition. ❑ They don't worry about other competitors before a competition, focusing instead on what they can control. ❑ They develop detailed competition plans. ❑ They learn to regulate arousal and anxiety.

The Role of the Coach in Mental Preparation

Your responsibilities in the area of mental preparation include:

- Building a psychologically healthy environment with athletes.
- Making basic mental skills part of regular training or finding someone who can assist in this area.
- Helping athletes integrate mental-skills training into their performance preparation.
- Helping athletes prepare for all possible events and situations.
- With athletes, using goal setting to map out a journey to success.

Although you can set up the framework, conditions, and process by which the athletes you coach can develop their mental abilities, athletes will be successful in the long term only if you help them develop independence and self-direction in all areas of mental preparation.

SIGNS OF FOCUS AND ANXIETY PROBLEMS

Signs of Focus Problems

- ❑ Is easily distracted by noise, other competitors
- ❑ Eyes wander
- ❑ Concentrates on the wrong thing
- ❑ Misses cues from the environment (e.g. gets hit by a flying ball he or she should have seen coming)

Signs of Anxiety Problems

- ❑ Fidgets
- ❑ Bites nails
- ❑ Is jumpy
- ❑ Is hypersensitive to noise and sights
- ❑ Talks more than normal
- ❑ Talks less than normal
- ❑ Yawns a lot
- ❑ Feels nauseous (butterflies)
- ❑ Is short of breath
- ❑ Withdraws from others
- ❑ Sticks to others
- ❑ Has cold, clammy hands
- ❑ Needs to urinate a lot
- ❑ Sweats a lot
- ❑ Talks negatively about himself/herself
- ❑ Has tight muscles
- ❑ Has a headache
- ❑ Feels as if he or she is going to vomit
- ❑ Has a dry (cotton) mouth
- ❑ Has difficulty sleeping

Some of the signs listed above can apply to both focus problems and anxiety problems.

While some signs occur in many athletes, each athlete will tend to show focus and anxiety problems in his or her own way. One of your key responsibilities as a coach is to learn the tell-tale signs of each athlete you coach so that you can spot when intervention might be needed.

WHAT IS ATTENTIONAL CONTROL, AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO PERFORMANCE?

Attentional control is the ability to actively direct one's attention to relevant cues in the environment, to maintain that attention for the necessary period of time, and to be fully aware of the situation. The words *attention* and *concentration* can be used interchangeably, though researchers tend to prefer the word *attention* and practitioners tend to prefer the word *concentration* (Weinberg and Gould, 1999).

All athletes and coaches know that the ability to concentrate on a task for its duration is very hard to do and that it requires regular practice to be able to do so. Athletes therefore need to be fully aware of all the things that get in the way of a successful performance, and they need to control their response to such distractions.

Athletes develop *attentional control* by learning to select and concentrate on task-relevant cues and factors and to dismiss any irrelevant stimuli. Concentration in sport may be thought of as a relaxed state of being alert, allowing rapid changes in focus as the flow of the game or competitive situation changes. Concentration represents a natural, relaxed state of mind that allows athletes to receive and interpret relevant information. Successful athletes don't have to strain to pay attention, and they can narrow their focus to the *relevant* factors or stimuli at any given time during a game or performance.

Concentration is the ability to pay attention to *relevant* stimuli or internal or external performance cues.

Focus is the ability to concentrate on the present while performing as opposed to the future or the past.

Refocus is the ability to focus on a task again following a break in concentration.

Attentional control is the ability to concentrate, focus, and refocus.

Information processing during performance needs to be *automatic* or consciously *controlled*.

- *Automatic information processing* refers to the ability to process cues easily, rapidly, consistently, and economically. This comes with practice and experience. Athletes do not need to pay *deliberate* attention to perform exceptionally well.
- *Controlled information processing* refers to the ability to *consciously* process information. Athletes do this by paying deliberate attention to the critical phases of skills or tasks. This type of information processing is common among beginners or novices, as well as when skills are more complex and the athlete is not yet totally familiar with the required movements.

Attentional Dimensions

According to Nideffer (1976; 1981), attention exists along two dimensions:

- Width — broad or narrow
- Direction — internal or external

Broad attentional focus is directed toward perceiving and interpreting many cues at the same time.

Narrow attentional focus is directed toward perceiving and interpreting only one or two cues at the same time.

Internal attentional focus is directed inward, toward perceiving and interpreting cues that the performer feels or thinks.

External attentional focus is directed outward, toward perceiving and interpreting cues in the surrounding environment that the performer can usually see or hear.

Athletes often have to shuttle between an *internal* and *external* focus and between a *broad* and *narrow* focus. For example, within a single play, a football quarterback may have to shift his or her attention many times to complete a pass:

1. Narrow, external: Receiving the snap from the centre
2. Narrow, external: Stepping back into the pocket
3. Broad, external: Reading the defence, looking for open receivers
4. Narrow, external: Zeroing in on the intended receiver
5. Narrow, internal: Processing how far/fast to throw
6. Narrow, external: Throwing the ball*
7. Broad, external: Looking for any defence that may be about to tackle him or her

* Recent research shows that, during the execution of a skill, an *external focus of attention* will likely result in better performance than an internal focus (Lee et al., 2001). There is more information on this topic in the NCCP multi-sport module *Teaching and Learning*.

Attentional control can be developed using simple drills such as shuttling exercises, focused visualization, and self-talk strategies.

The Relationship between Mental-Skill Strategies

Mental skills are interdependent. Consider the following:

- Being able to focus and concentrate on a task requires being in control of one's emotional state.
- Visualizing requires being focused.
- Visualizing requires being in control of one's emotions.
- Maintaining an ideal emotional state requires thinking positively about one's performance.

Integrating skills of emotional and attentional control is therefore a critical component of an effective mental training program.

Self Awareness and Mental Preparation

Mental skills are applicable in both sport and everyday life. To perform reliably in sport and life, however, athletes need to be able to identify their ideal performance state (IPS), understand their strengths and weaknesses in terms of their IPS, and develop strategies to build on their strengths and improve their weaknesses. This is true for all aspects of performance, but it is perhaps the hardest to do in the area of mental preparation because it demands that athletes:

8. Understand their inner states (thoughts, feelings, emotions) and typical reactions

9. Understand their beliefs and values
10. Recognize their uniqueness as a performer

In other words, mental-training strategies are different for each athlete because each athlete is a unique person who thinks and reacts in his or her own way. Moreover, developing mental skills is a life-long process that it requires individual self-awareness, self-responsibility, and self-direction.

As a result, when working with individual athletes, most sport psychologists tend to begin by working with an athlete on his or her self-awareness. In other words, to chart out how to get to where you want to go, you first need to know where you are now.

Some National Sport Organizations (NSOs) have developed mental-preparation guides that are sport specific and age specific. Contact your NSO to determine if such a guide is available for your sport

FOCUS SHIFTS

Few Shifts		Lots of Shifts
Individual sports practised/played in a closed environment*	***Individual sports practised/played in an open environment***	***Team sports played in either an open or a closed environment in which more than two athletes are key performers at any given time***
Examples: ❑ Archery ❑ Bowling ❑ Diving ❑ Gymnastics ❑ Trampoline ❑ Triathlon ❑ Weightlifting	**Examples:** ❑ Alpine skiing ❑ Athletics ❑ Badminton ❑ Biathlon ❑ Bobsleigh ❑ Boxing ❑ Canoeing/Kayaking ❑ Cycling, Sprinting ❑ Cross country skiing ❑ Equestrian ❑ Fencing ❑ Figure skating ❑ Freestyle skiing ❑ 4-wall handball ❑ Judo ❑ Luge ❑ Nordic sports ❑ Orienteering ❑ Parachuting ❑ Racquetball ❑ Rowing ❑ Sailing ❑ Snowboarding ❑ Speed skating (except short track) ❑ Squash ❑ Swimming ❑ Synchronized swimming ❑ Table tennis ❑ Taekwondo ❑ Tennis ❑ Waterskiing ❑ Wrestling	**Examples:** ❑ Basketball ❑ Broomball ❑ Field hockey ❑ Football ❑ Ice hockey ❑ Lacrosse ❑ Team handball ❑ Road cycling ❑ Ringette ❑ Rugby ❑ Soccer ❑ Speed skating (short track) ❑ Volleyball ❑ Water polo ❑ Wheelchair basketball
Team sports in which primarily one athlete is performing at any given time **Examples:** ❑ Lawn bowling		

Few Shifts		Lots of Shifts
	❑ Yachting ***Team sports in which two or three athletes are usually the key performers at any given time*** **Examples:** ❑ Baseball ❑ Cricket ❑ Curling ❑ Softball	

* A closed environment is one in which few changes occur (usually indoors or in a highly controlled environment)

** An open environment is one in which many changes may occur within a short period of time; usually outdoor sports or sports where there is an opponent

OBJECTS OF FOCUS

Objects of focus refers to what the athlete is focused on at a given time. Objects of focus can be internal or external, broad or narrow (Nideffer, 1976, 1981).

	Narrow	Broad
Internal **Perceived internally by the athlete; usually sensations of the body/body parts or thoughts**	**Examples:** ❑ Orientation of body in space ❑ Arm/leg position ❑ Posture ❑ Thoughts, feelings, self-talk ❑ Visualizing individual performance	**Examples:** ❑ Visualizing teammates' movements ❑ Visualizing opponent's patterns of play
External **Can be seen, heard, or touched by the athlete**	**Examples:** ❑ Target ❑ Piece of equipment ❑ Start signal ❑ Turning wall ❑ Opponent ❑ Playing surface/terrain/water ❑ Trajectory of ball ❑ Time clock ❑ Landing spot	**Examples:** ❑ Movement of teammates ❑ Fans in the stands ❑ Reading opponents' patterns of play

Recent research suggests that *while they are executing a movement*, athletes should focus on (1) something external to their body (e.g. a target) or (2) the expected effect of their movements (e.g. trajectory of ball). They should NOT focus too much on how they are performing the movement or on what they feel. In motor learning, this type of instruction is called *external focus of attention* (Lee *et al*., 2001).

This information may cause you to rethink how to focus when learning a new skill or performing a learned skill in competition. It may also cause you to rethink some of the strategies you currently use with the athletes you coach. *Errors often happen not because athletes are not focusing, but because they are focusing on the wrong things at the wrong time.*

Note: The *Teaching and Learning* module presents more detailed information regarding what athletes should focus on during their performance.

EXAMPLES OF DISTRACTERS

Sources and Examples of Potential Distracters
❑ Spectators (e.g. heckling, yelling, cheering, waving objects)
❑ Coach (e.g. calling out instructions, yelling)
❑ Other teammates (e.g. chatting, calling out instructions, asking for help)
❑ Competitors (e.g. chatting, trash talking, making physical contact, posturing)
❑ Officials (e.g. poor calls or bias)
❑ Ambient noise (e.g. plane flying overhead, commentary over loudspeakers)
❑ Environmental conditions (e.g. flickering light, gusty wind, uneven field, poor visibility)
❑ Equipment (e.g. rock in shoe, strap too tight, forgotten piece of equipment, broken or torn piece of equipment)
❑ Organization (e.g. poor tournament schedule, late start times)

Anything that has the potential to draw the athlete's attention can distract the athlete.

It is impossible to control for all potential distracters. This is why it is so important to help athletes learn to block out distracters and to refocus if and when they lose their focus.

PROCESS FOR IMPROVING FOCUS

Successful athletes can minimize the effect of momentary losses in concentration. Improving athletes' focus involves the following steps:

Normalization

Helping athletes recognize that losing focus and concentration is normal

Self-awareness

Helping athletes recognize when and under what circumstances they lose focus

Skill Development

Providing athletes with the opportunity to learn basic focusing skills

Simulation (in practice situations)

Encouraging athletes to integrate focusing techniques into sport-specific situations or to develop focusing skills under simulated performance conditions

Implementation (in competition)

Helping athletes implement focusing skills in competition

This process generally takes place over a season.

BASIC SKILLS FOR IMPROVING FOCUS

Athletes need to learn the following basic skills so they can focus effectively during practice and competition:

- **Concentration** — learning to concentrate for a period of time on a particular object or cue
- **Shuttling** — learning to shuttle between *internal* and *external* focus
- **Managing distracters** — recognizing distracters to focus and learning to tune them out

Athletes can also use visualization, positive self-talk, and thought-stopping to improve focus. Sample activities that can be used to improve focus are presented below and in the following pages. Coaches and athletes often find it relatively easy to adapt these activities and to create their own activities for improving focus.

Note: To keep descriptions short, some of the activities presented in the following pages are outlined as though you were leading a group of athletes through them, while others are described as though you were an observer.

Concentration

Concentrating on a Clock Face

- Focus on the second hand of a watch or clock as it makes one complete revolution. Blink your eyes or snap your fingers every five seconds.
- After one complete revolution of the second hand, concentrate on the sweep hand as it makes another complete revolution. This time, blink your eyes or snap your fingers every ten seconds.
- After this second complete revolution of the sweep hand, concentrate on the second hand as it makes a third complete revolution. This time, alternate blinking your eyes and snapping your fingers at five-second intervals.

Practising this exercise a few times a day gradually improves the ability to concentrate.

Concentrating on an Object

- **Choose a concentration word.** For example, if you are in a ball-oriented sport, choose the word *ball*. If you are not in a ball-oriented sport, choose a short, soft, non-distracting word that will help you focus on an object or picture as you concentrate on it, for example, *one*, *run*, *goal*, *lane*, or *arm*. Look at the object, and say your concentration word — repeating a word helps keep the mind from wandering.
- **Look at the object of concentration.** Now begin to examine every detail of the object you are concentrating on. For example, look at a ball's outline, at its surface. Is it rough or smooth? Does it have seams, dimples, printing on it? Are there scratches or scuff marks? Look at its colours and the way the light and shadows fall on its surface. Don't try to stop yourself from blinking. Relax.
- **Feel the object.** For instance, pick up a ball; feel its texture; turn it around, and look at it from various angles.

- **Imagine the object.** With a ball, for example, put it down, and focus your mind and eyes on it. See the ball as fully as you can so that its smallest detail will stand out in your mind. Know the ball. ”Marry it.” Don’t try to overpower the object of your concentration. As you relax and keep your eye on the object, you’ll find it will seem to *come to you*. You must maintain something of a passive attitude in this process, allowing the object of your concentration to enter your mind fully and not simply be something external that you are studying. When you concentrate, you will find that this seemingly mysterious process happens quite naturally.
- **Get the feeling.** When your concentration breaks — as it must — say to yourself, “I have been concentrating on [the name of the object]. This is what it feels like to be concentrating. I am relaxed, I feel good, and my attention is totally focused on [the name of the object]. This is concentration.” Look back at the object.
- **Say the concentration word again.** Now say the concentration word to yourself. Look at the object. Concentrate.
- **Relax.** Use the relaxation technique you are most comfortable with.

Note: This material is based on Tutko (1976); the exercise should take about 10 minutes.

Debrief

Learning to concentrate is a prerequisite of learning to focus on internal and external cues.

Learning to Focus on Cues in the Environment

Baseball Exercise

Phase 1 — The performer has a tennis ball and stands in front of a group; he or she is instructed to throw the ball to the person with *one* hand in the air. This person has been designated by the coach or the members of the group, but the performer does not know who he or she is. On the coach’s command, all group members but one throw both hands in the air. The performer must throw the ball to the individual with only one hand in the air.

Phase 2 — Repeat the exercise — this time one person puts both hands in the air but with thumbs tucked in. All other group members also have both arms in the air, their hands are open and facing the performer, and they sway their arms slowly backward, forward, and side to side. The person instructed to keep thumbs tucked into the hands also sways his or her arms slowly. The performer is instructed to throw the ball to the odd person out, but no cue is given about the nature of the difference.

Debrief

Discuss the conditions under which the person throwing the ball had to perform. Highlight the impact of visual distracters and the need to look for important cues in the environment to make performance decisions.

Shuttling

Shuttling (Internal – External Concentration)

- Athletes are instructed to choose a partner.

- The person who goes first must close his or her eyes; tune in to some sensation, feeling, or thought; and say something like “Now I am aware of a pain in my leg,” “Now I am aware of my breathing,” or “Now I am feeling silly.”
- The person then opens his or her eyes and says “Now I am aware of…,” adding something that is happening outside himself or herself. For instance, he or she says “Now I am aware of the sunlight” or “Now I am aware of your eyes.”
- Repeat the process — first an inside statement, then an outside one — for a few minutes without a break. If the person gets stuck, the partner should help out by asking “Now I am aware of...?”
- The partner does the concentration exercise.
- Later, the exercise is repeated with the eyes open all the time.

Note: This exercise on shuttling is based on Syer & Connolly (1998).

Debrief

The ability to shuttle between internal and external focus is necessary in games such as football, where a quarterback must focus on a set of broad external cues (e.g. the game unfolding in front of him or her), shift to a narrow external cue (e.g. the receiver’s running pattern), and shift to an internal focus (e.g. in deciding how and when to throw the ball.)

Managing Distracters

Managing Distracters and Focusing on Relevant Cues

Focus on the Clock Face

- Focus on the clock face, and click your fingers every 5 seconds.
- Now click your fingers at 5, 10, 15, 5, 10, 15 seconds.
- Now try to maintain your focus and the finger-clicking sequence while faced with a distracting sound such as:
    - Hand clapping by others around you
    - Hand clapping and foot stamping by others around you (increased distractions).

Debrief

- Athletes rarely have the luxury of entirely controlling all elements of their environment. There are always distracters of one type or another.
- Some distractions occur naturally, while others are deliberate, e.g. on the part of opposition or spectators.
- Recognizing and managing distracters is a key to performing successfully.

Visualization Exercise for Improving Focus

- ❑ Sit back, get into a comfortable position, and close your eyes.
- ❑ Think of a particular skill in your sport.
- ❑ Imagine yourself performing that skill.
- ❑ Focus externally on developing a clear and detailed image of yourself performing the skill.
- ❑ Focus on the sounds you might hear as you perform the skill.
- ❑ Focus internally on the sensations or feelings as you perform the skill.
- ❑ Finally, once you have a clear image of yourself performing and feeling the skill, choose an external cue to focus on that is associated with the outcome of the skill.

For example, choose the back of the rim of a basketball net, the bottom right or left corner of the soccer net, the bull's-eye on a target, or a catcher's mitt.

As you perform the skill in your mind's eye, shift your focus to this external cue as you perform the skill.

Positive Self-Talk and Thought-Stopping

Key Points

- Negative thoughts (e.g. "I may lose this game because…") are distracters that decrease the ability to concentrate and to focus on important environmental cues.
- To become aware of negative thoughts, the athlete must first recognize their existence. The thoughts may occur very rapidly and be automatic. Personal awareness of these thoughts and of their nature is essential to stopping and replacing them.
- You may ask the athletes to 'listen' to their internal thoughts the next time they have performance-related anxiety and to record them.
    - What are the thoughts?
    - What conditions do they typically occur in?
    - How do these thoughts make you feel?

Recognizing, Stopping, and Replacing Thoughts

- Sit quietly, close your eyes, relax, and recall any situation that evokes negative thoughts that have affected your sport performance.

- Sense the feelings and actions that accompany these thoughts.
- Think *Stop*, and immediately replace negative thoughts with more appropriate ones. *Sense* the feelings and actions accompanying these new thoughts.
- Think about how the feelings and actions associated with the old thoughts differed form those associated with the new thoughts. Think about how this experience relates to the competitive situation.
- Record your responses in the following chart.

What negative thoughts run through your mind before a performance in which you are anxious you might not do well?	***What words might you use to stop these thoughts?***	***Write down positive thoughts to replace the negative thoughts.***
List them below	**List them below**	**List them below**
What negative thoughts run through your mind when you are experiencing difficulties during sport performance?	***What words might you use to stop these thoughts?***	***Write down positive thoughts to replace the negative thoughts.***
List them below	**List them below**	**List them below**

WHAT ARE EMOTIONS, AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT FOR PERFORMANCE?

Emotions or feelings are an important component of total human functioning and they are extremely significant for team and individual sport performance (Hanin, 2000). They can provide the athlete with the energy that triggers the joy and ecstasy of performance, or they can shift drastically toward despair and hopelessness when things go wrong or expectations are not met. Emotions can be easily observed; as a result, they can be used to the performer's advantage or disadvantage, the opponent's advantage or disadvantage.

Intensifying emotions requires a stimulus (or trigger); once the trigger is removed, the performer can usually return to a more normal emotional state. Athletes need to understand the causes and consequences of their dominant emotions and moods, and they need to know how to control them effectively.

The ideal emotional state (IES) is the condition in which the athlete experiences appropriate feelings and maintains them at optimum levels of intensity and functioning in a way that enhances performance. Eight emotions have been identified as important in sport: anxiety, anger, shame, guilt, hope, relief, happiness, and pride (Lazarus, 2000).

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety can be a *positive* emotion when it reflects excitement or eagerness to perform well because the athlete feels well prepared and because he or she has coping responses in place to meet the demands of the task. But anxiety can be a *negative* emotion if it reflects feelings of apprehension; such feelings usually occur because the athlete does not feel well prepared.

Types of Anxiety

- *Somatic or physical anxiety* is a positive or negative set of physiological responses to performance usually experienced immediately before the start of the competition. This anxiety takes the form of feelings of excitement, increased heart, increased breathing rate, etc.
- *Cognitive or mental anxiety* is a positive or negative response that indicates excitement or worry, depending on how the athlete perceives the demands of the task. For example, the athlete may feel uncertain or apprehensive, worry, or experience self-doubt regarding the performance process or outcome.
- *Trait anxiety* is a tendency to respond to a threatening situation, person, or event with high or low levels of anxiety. It is a personal character trait to be more or less anxious (apprehensive or excited).
- *State anxiety* is the feeling of apprehension or excitement that an athlete perceives in the *here and now*, i.e. at this precise moment in time and given the present situation.

Why is Anxiety Relevant to Sport Performance?

- Anxiety can be **functional** — it can improve performance by facilitating appropriate thoughts or actions.
- Anxiety can be **dysfunctional** — it can detract from performance by causing inappropriate thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

Anxiety states are *normal*, and every athlete experiences both positive anxiety and negative anxiety in competitive or evaluative settings.

Each athlete should seek to identify and understand the specific **causes** of his or her anxiety and the resulting **consequences** for performance. Athletes should also learn coping mechanisms that will help them manage their anxiety and therefore improve their performance.

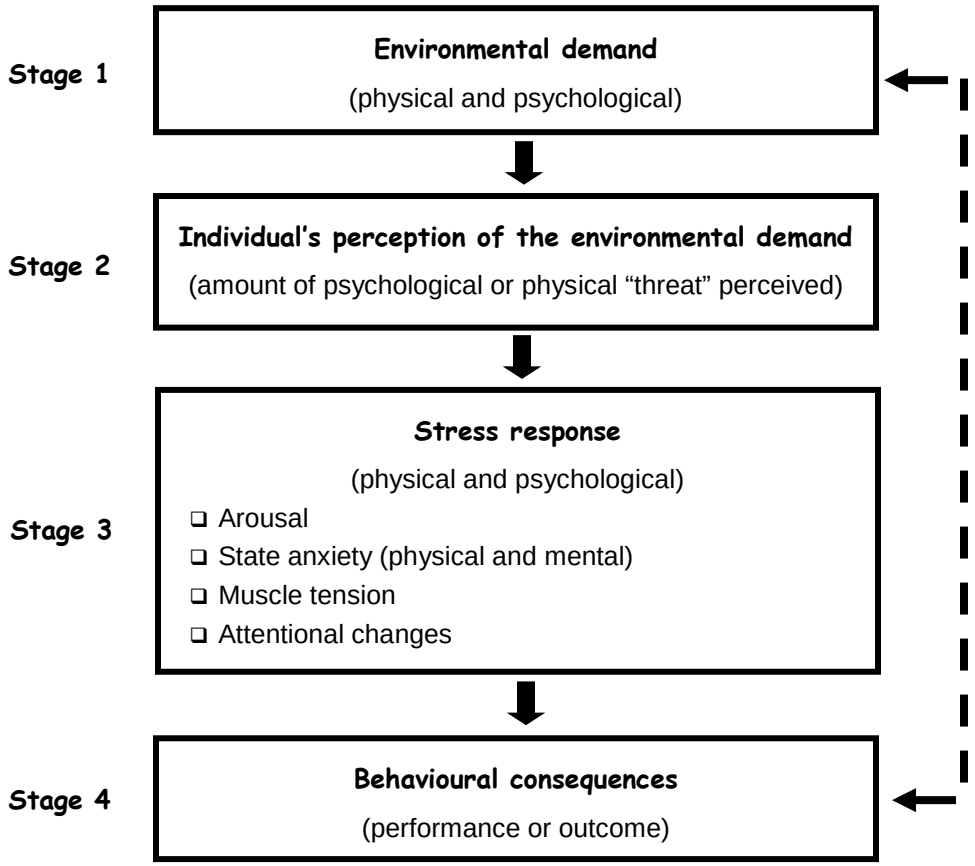
Several skills can help athletes control their anxiety, including breathing control exercises, mind-to-body relaxation exercises, body-to-mind relaxation exercises, visualization strategies, positive self-talk, and thought-stopping techniques. These may be developed individually and then combined into routines that athletes can develop, refine, and implement in practice.

WHAT IS STRESS, AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO ANXIETY?

Definition of Stress

Competition is about testing an athlete's abilities against an opponent or the clock in a particular environment. By its very nature, competition may cause stress. Stress is "a substantial imbalance between demand [physical and/or psychological] and response capability, under conditions where failure to meet that demand has important consequences" (McGrath, 1970, p.20). An athlete experiencing stress is therefore (1) recognizing a challenge and (2) perceiving that he or she may not meet the challenge.

McGrath (1970) breaks the manifestation of stress into four stages, with anxiety in Stage 3:



Myths about Stress

Myth #1: Stress is bad

Stress can lead to anxiety: being excited, being uneasy, being worried. But anxiety can be **positive** (excitement that contributes positively to performance) or **negative** (worry that detracts from performance). When athletes become overly anxious and their anxiety level exceeds their coping abilities, performance in competition may suffer. However, stress may also be positive, and stimulate athletes to excel or surpass previous performances.

Myth #2: Some athletes don't experience stress

As the figure above shows, all athletes may experience the stress of competition, and anxiety is a common and natural response to such stress. However, some athletes don't become overly anxious when exposed to stress; instead, they experience heightened awareness and usually can hardly wait for the competition to start. This is positive anxiety.

Negative anxiety usually occurs in athletes who dwell on things that are very difficult or impossible for them to control or who don't feel prepared for the challenge they are facing. Negative anxiety is often linked to fear about what others will think of the athlete if he or she does not perform well.

Common Causes of Negative Anxiety

Somatic (physical)

- Tiredness/loss of sleep
- Poor/lengthy travel arrangements or other organizational problems
- Changes in environmental conditions
- Chronic adrenalin rush
- Physical tension/tightness
- Changes in physiological states (e.g. increased heart rate, pulse rate)

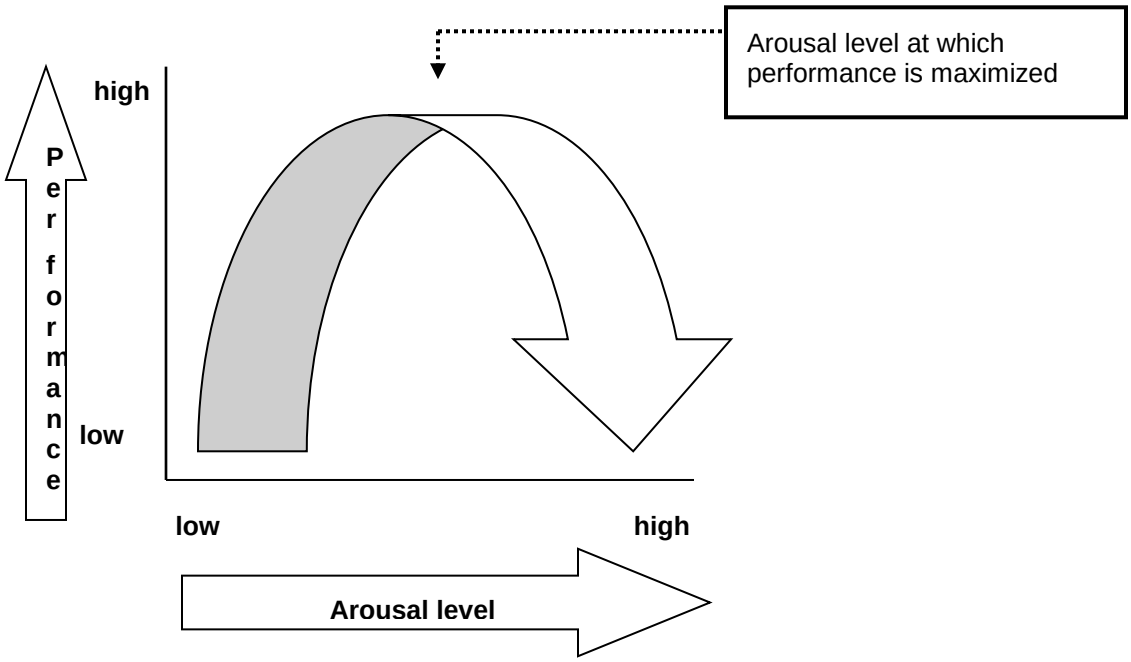
Cognitive (mental)

- Fear of disappointing others (e.g. mom, dad, teammates, coach)
- Fear of making a fool of themselves by failing at the task, especially when others are watching
- Fear of not being skilled enough or fit enough to meet the challenge
- Fear of not making a team selection, event selection
- Fear of injury
- Perceived importance of the competition
- Poor travel arrangements or other organizational problems
- Changes in variables not in the athlete's control
- Other aspects of life that cannot be successfully "parked"
- Interruptions from others before or during competition (e.g. media, significant others)
- Poor decisions by officials
- Lack of social support

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AROUSAL AND PERFORMANCE

Inverted U Theory

Arousal is “a general physiological and psychological activation of the organism that varies on a continuum from deep sleep to intense excitement” (Weinberg and Gould, 1999). For years, sport psychologists have described the relationship between arousal and performance as an inverted U, as shown below:



This figure shows that there is an *optimal arousal level* at which performance is maximized. If an athlete is not aroused enough or if the athlete is too aroused, performance will probaby not be as good as it might under conditions of optimal arousal.

The theory of optimal arousal also suggests that, on the contimuum from low to high arousal, the point corresponding to the *optimal arousal level* may vary according to the type of task the athlete is performing or the sport situation he or she is involved in. Here are some general findings about the relationship between arousal and performance:

- **A high arousal level** is usually most conducive to successful performance if (1) the physical demands of the task are high, (2) the conditions in which the athlete performs are relatively simple and predictable, (3) fine motor precision is *not* critical, and (4) the athlete has to make few decisions (e.g. linemen in football; throws events in athletics; weightlifting).
- **A moderate arousal level** is usually most conducive to successful performance if (1) the physical demands of the task are moderate, (2) the conditions in which the athlete performs are complex and unpredictable, (3) fine motor precision *is* important, and (4)

the athlete mau have to make decisions quickly, (e.g. most team, racquet, and combative sports).

- **A low arousal level** is usually most conducive to successful performance if (1) the physical demands of the task or situation are low, (2) the conditions in which the athlete performs are predictable, (3) fine motor precision *is* critical, and (4) the athlete does not have to make decisions quickly (e.g. precision sports such as archery, golf, and shooting; precision positions such as skip in curling).

Individualized Zones of Optimal Functioning

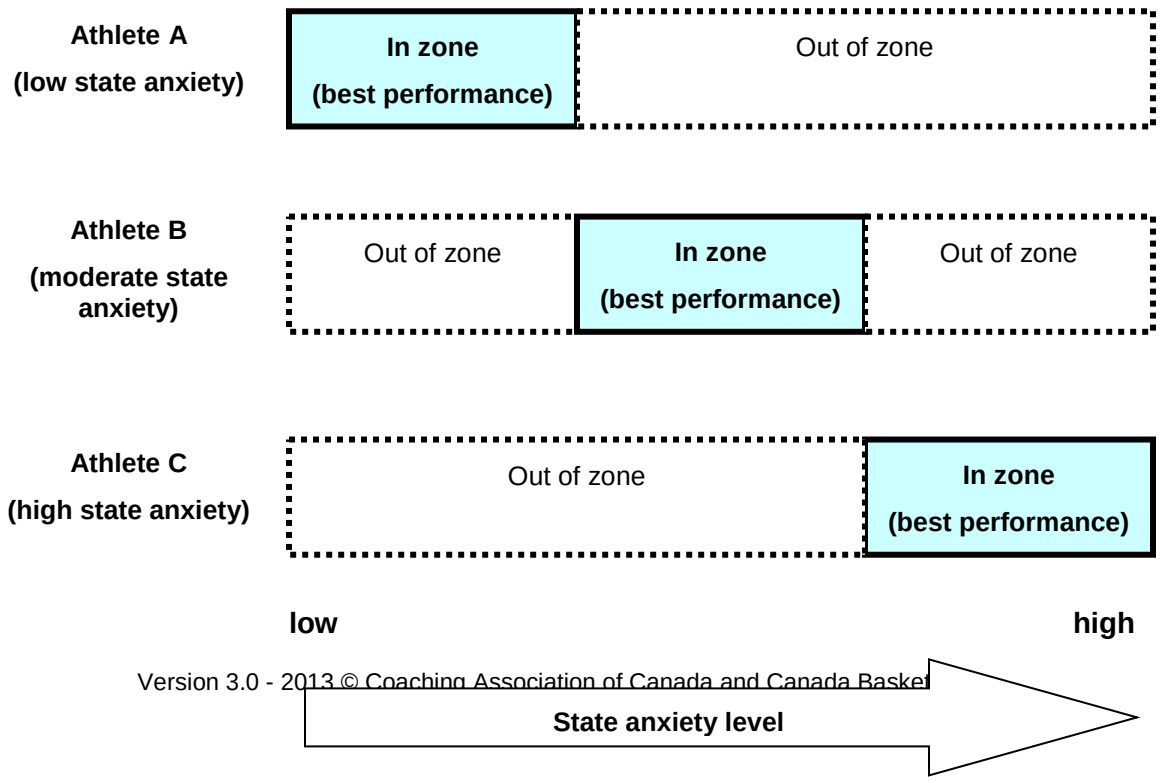
Sport psychologists have proposed several alternatives to the inverted-U theory. These researchers have the following reservations about the inverted-U theory:

- Athletes don't always experience optimal arousal in the middle of the arousal continuum
- The findings about arousal and the type of task being performed listed above may not apply to all athletes.

One alternative to the inverted-U theory is called *Individualized Zones Of Optimal Functioning* (IZOF); this theory was proposed by Hanin (1980,1997).

This model suggests that athletes may differ with regard to the level of state anxiety at which they perform best. *State anxiety* refers to "moment-to-moment changes in feelings of nervousness, worry, and apprehension associated with arousal of the body" (Weinberg and Gould, 1999).

Individualized Zones of Optimal Functioning



There are plenty of views in the sport psychology literature with regard to arousal and anxiety and their effects on performance. However, most sport psychologists agree on the following:

- Athletes and their coaches must learn what the *ideal arousal or anxiety level* is for each athlete and seek to create conditions that reproduce that level to increase the probability of achieving the best possible performance.
- How athletes *interpret* their arousal and anxiety levels around a competition (e.g. “it is a bad thing and I am going to fail” or “it is a good thing and I will perform better as a result”) greatly influences whether their performance will improve or deteriorate as a result of that anxiety.

Weinberg and Gould (1999) offer the following practical guidelines regarding stress, arousal, and anxiety:

- Identify the optimal combination of arousal-related emotions needed for best performance.
- Recognize how personal and situational factors interact to influence arousal, anxiety, and performance.
- Recognize the signs of increased arousal and anxiety.
- Tailor coaching and instructional practices to individuals.
- Help athletes become more confident; it will help them cope better with stress and anxiety.

PROCESS FOR MANAGING ANXIETY

Helping athletes manage the anxiety associated with sport performance requires a series of steps similar to those presented earlier for improving focus. They are as follows:

Normalization

Emphasizing to athletes that performance anxiety is normal but may harm performance if unrecognized and unmanaged

Self-awareness

Helping athletes recognize when they experience sport performance anxiety, how it affects performance, and what they can do about it

Skill Development

Helping athletes learn to manage their anxiety level by developing a series of skills and practicing them regularly

Simulation (in practice situations)

Encouraging athletes to integrate anxiety-reducing techniques into sport-specific situations or skills in simulated performance conditions

Implementation (in competition)

Working with athletes to transfer skill simulations to competition

This process can be implemented gradually, over the course of a season.

The exercises described in the following pages deal with the *skill development* and *simulation* steps.

TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING ANXIETY

Before You Begin: Pulse Rate

Record your radial (wrist) pulse rate for 15 seconds. Do this twice, and take the average value (count in-between pulses at the end of the 15-second period as one-half a beat). Then multiply by 4 to obtain your heart rate in beats per minute. This is your heart rate; it will be affected by your arousal or anxiety level, as well as by coffee consumption, recent meals, etc.

Through the following series of exercises, we will attempt to lower your heart rate significantly.

Breathing Control

In addition to heart rate, breathing rate and depth are indicators of anxiety. Managing breathing rate and depth is a prerequisite of relaxation. Relaxation is in turn a prerequisite of visualization, a mental-preparation technique that we will explore later in this document.

Controlled Breathing — Kinesthetic Controlled Breathing:

The technique for this type of controlled breathing is as follows:

- Close your eyes.
- Feel your stomach move out; keep your chest and shoulders steady.
- Slowly inhale, feeling the air in your chest increase and your shoulders rise.
- Hold your breath.
- Slowly exhale, feeling a release in tension as your shoulders and chest drop and your stomach relaxes.
- Now shift to listening to your breathing.

Controlled Breathing — Audio-controlled Breathing

The technique for this kind of controlled breathing is as follows:

- Close your eyes.
- Hear yourself slowly inhale and exhale air as you breathe.
- Slowly inhale.
- Hear the air pass through your mouth and nose.
- Feel the build-up of tension in your chest.
- Slowly release the air.
- Hear the sound of air passing through your nose and mouth.

Debrief

Note that you are also focusing on certain cues (kinesthetic and auditory). In other words, focus and relaxation skills are mutually dependent.

The Relaxation Response

Key Points

- Athletes often need to relax quickly and bring their body and mind under control rapidly to perform well (e.g. a biathlete preparing to shoot part after skiing).
- There are two techniques for producing a relaxation response:
    - Mind-to-body control. Mind-to-body control is often used simultaneously with the concept of a rapid relaxation response.
    - Body-to-mind control. Body-to-mind control is often referred to as progressive relaxation.
- We will use a mind-to-body technique and demonstrate one aspect of body-to-mind control.
- Relaxation is a prerequisite of effective visualization.

Mind-to-Body Control

The technique for mind-to-body control is as follows:

- Select a quiet environment.
- Get into a comfortable position, and close your eyes.
- Low lighting or a dark area may help you as you perfect this technique.
- Concentrate fully on taking two or three deep breaths (don't hyperventilate; breathe under control).
- Become aware of your breathing. While breathing out, repeat a word or phrase, like a mantra, e.g. "slow, easy, calm, relaxed." Breathe in . . . out, and repeat; continue for 10 to 20 minutes.
- Adopt a passive attitude; allow any distractions that enter the mind to pass through. Let thoughts that arise slip through your mind like the credits at the end of a movie. They are there, but you pay little attention to them as they scroll by.
- Allow relaxation to occur at its own pace.
- Over time, the relaxation response will occur more quickly.

Body-to-Mind Control

Key Points

- Demonstrate this technique with shoulder contractions to differentiate it from the mind-to-body technique.
- **Important –** it is strongly suggested that you modify the contraction-relaxation phase of the exercise for individuals who are hypertensive or who recently suffered a cardiovascular injury such as a heart attack or a stroke. Ensure that anyone with such conditions **gently** flexes and relaxes their muscles. Under no circumstances should such individuals engage in progressive maximal tightening/contraction exercises.

The steps are as follows:

- Select a quiet room with dim lighting, and make sure there will be no distractions or interruptions.
- Check to see that athletes are warmly dressed and that their clothing is dry and comfortable.
- Spread athletes around the room so that there is at least one metre between them.
- Explain the principle behind relaxing:
    - Relaxation is important.
    - Relaxation will help you rest and sleep.
    - When you contract a muscle and then relax it, the muscle returns to a more relaxed state than it was in before the contraction took place.
    - Body-to-mind relaxation requires progressively contracting and relaxing your muscles to produce whole-body relaxation.
    - The first session will take approximately 30 minutes.
- "Start in the anatomical position. Lie on your back with your arms at your side. Check these features:
    - The middle of your head is touching the mat and you are looking straight up.
    - Your shoulders are pressing on the mat.
    - Your buttocks are pressing equally on the mat.
    - Your calves are pressing equally on the mat.
    - Your heels are pressing equally on the mat."
- "You should be lying straight on the mat. Your spine should be straight, your thighs and calves are close together and touching lightly, and your arms are extended by your side with your palms facing slightly up. Check for the last time that you are straight and relaxed and that the pressure of your body parts on the mat is equal on both sides of your body. You will find this easier if you lightly close your eyes."
- Now walk among the athletes to see that their position is correct. It is preferable that athletes not use head pillows or wear shoes.
- "We are now going to do a series of exercises. Each exercise will involve a very hard contract-hold- release sequence. The hold is for a period of 4-5 seconds. Then slowly relax the body part/muscle you contracted. When you do the exercises, contract only the muscles involved in that exercise".
- It is good practice to do a preliminary practice exercise involving the shoulders (tension is often present in this part of the body).
    - "Contract! Shrug your shoulders, and progressively tighten the muscles, nothing else; three-four-five, relax slowly to your side. Feel your shoulders relax; they may tingle a little; they may feel heavy, and they may feel warm."
- It may be necessary to remind athletes to contract only the muscle or body part mentioned in the instructions.
- The exercise routine progresses from the toes to the top of the head. After the first two exercises, introduce concentrating on breathing control. By the time the exercises are finished, the focus should be on breathing control and the total heaviness of the body.

Visualization Exercises

Key Points

- Feeling relaxed is a prerequisite of effective visualization.
- Begin with a familiar image to help athletes buy in.
- *Visualization* and *imagery* are often used interchangeably. However, there are subtle differences. Visualization generally involves *seeing* the actual skilled performance or routine. Imagery is more creative and often combines an image such as a graceful swan or a powerful animal or machine with powerful words that in themselves create images.

Learning to Visualize

Stage 1: Find a comfortable position, take two or three deep breaths, and say *Relax* as you breathe out. Once you feel relaxed, go to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Visualization exercise for all the senses.

Now you are feeing relaxed, imagine a place you might go when you want to get away from it all; a place that was/is special to you either as a child or adult; a place with which you associate good feelings; a place in which you feel peaceful and safe.

- Imagine the scene in your mind; add as much detail in your mind as you can.
- Focus on the sounds you might hear in the situation you "see" in your mind.
- Focus on the sensations you would experience in your body (e.g. touch).
- Focus on the smells associated with the image in your mind.

After you finish, take a few moments to write down the factors you found easiest to see, feel, smell, hear, etc., and those that were hardest. These will be the important visualization cues that you can use as you build your images in practice or in skill rehearsal.

Debrief

Note that you are also training focusing skills, e.g. focusing on feelings, sounds, etc. In fact, creative imagery and visualization both double as a focusing skill.

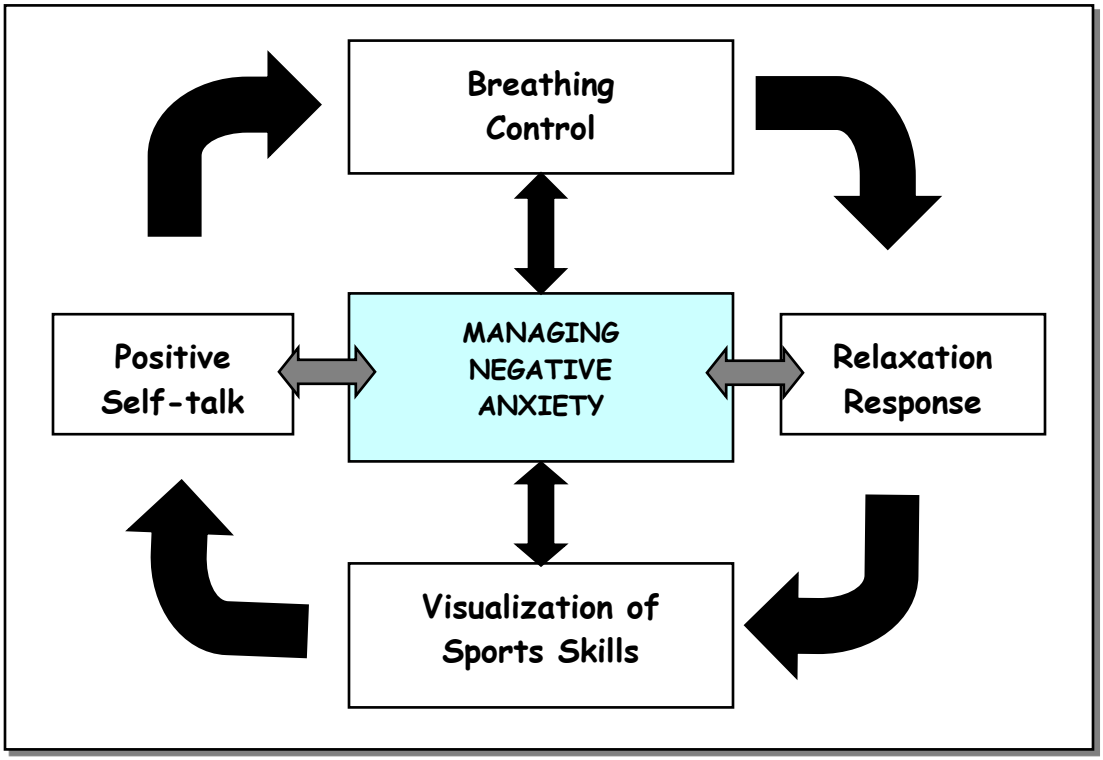
Alternative Exercise Combining Relaxation and Visualization for All the Senses

The following exercise helps athletes visualize a scene by telling them the sensations they will experience:

- Get into a comfortable position and use the mind-to-body approach to invoke the relaxation response.
- Visualize yourself sitting on a sandy beach leading to a pebbled shore; waves gently wash ashore. Ahead you can see the horizon; on your right are cliffs and a rock outcrop; seagulls fly above; feel the soft warm sand between your fingers.
- Now add the sound of the waves.
- Now add relaxing music.
- Pause at each step, and have athletes check that they are feeling relaxed and comfortable.

COMBINING EMOTIONAL AND ATTENTIONAL CONTROL AND ENERGIZING FOR PERFORMANCE

The diagram below illustrates how emotional and attentional control skills are interrelated.



Key Points

- Emotional and attentional control exercises are mutually dependent.
- Some techniques may be used for gaining emotional control, increasing focus, and energizing.
- Relaxation and focusing skills can be combined into one routine.

Emotional Control

Phase 1: Get into a comfortable position. Take three deep breaths. Now, focus on feeling and listening to your breathing every two or three breaths.

Phase 2: Use the mind-to-body approach to invoke the relaxation response:

- Focus on controlling your breathing.
- Focus on your relaxation words, e.g. “calm, easy, relaxed.”
- Focus on repeating your “mantra”.

Focus and Energize

Phase 3: When you are feeling relaxed and calm, imagine yourself performing your sport. You may be performing a particular move or a sequence of moves. You may be practising or performing in a competition. You may be scoring a point or a goal, making that perfect save, or saving tackle.

As you perform:

- Focus on the *image* of your performance. Carefully add detail to the performance. Focus externally as if *watching your body perform*.
- Focus on the sounds you might *hear* as you perform.
- Focus internally on getting the *feeling* as you perform the skill.
- Run through your successful performance several times until you can *see* and *feel* it.
- Shift your focus to an important external cue in the environment, e.g. the basketball rim, bull's-eye, the opponent's leg, the catcher's mitt, a baseball approaching, a corner of the soccer net.

Phase 4: As you perform the skill in your mind's eye, use a positive phrase or power word to describe the performance as you *see* and *feel* yourself perform successfully.

Phase 5: Run through the skill a number of times, seeing yourself perform successfully. As you perform successfully, notice the contrast in energy level between the first and last part of this exercise.

Debrief

Skills of emotional and attentional control are mutually dependent. In other words, to relax, you have to focus, and it is important to relax if you want to focus. Similarly, to visualize, you need to focus, and it is a great asset to be able to visualize well if you want to focus on excellent performance.

REASONS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN SPORT

In general, people participate in sport for one or more of the reasons listed below. Coaches need to be able to recognize and respect individual differences in this area, because athletes drop out when programs don't match their reasons for being in sport. Put another way, coaches need to work with those they coach to give them a program that meets their needs or recommend a program that will.

A desire for *achievement*

a wish to improve, master new skills, and pursue excellence

A need for affiliation

a desire to have positive and friendly relations with others

A desire for *sensation*

a desire to experience the sights, sounds, and physical feelings surrounding a sport or the excitement in a sport

A desire for self-direction

a wish to feel a sense of control, to feel in charge

Achievement-motivated athletes respond very positively to goal setting, because goal setting gives them consistent opportunities to succeed by meeting the objectives they set.

Here are a few ideas for making sure that athletes' needs for *achievement* are fulfilled:

- Point out individual improvement.
- Keep written records of progress in diaries/logs.
- Schedule competitions with suitable opponents.
- Meet regularly to discuss progress and re-evaluate goals.

TYPES OF GOALS

Goals are statements of what an athlete or team wants to accomplish. They provide both a sense of *purpose* and a sense of *direction* to training and competition.

Athletes will be better able to describe their goals when they ask and answer the following questions:

- What do I really want to achieve?
- How can I achieve it?
- When do I want to achieve it?

There are two main types of goals:

- *Outcome goals*, which relate to outcomes
- *Process goals*, which relate to process

Outcome Goals

Outcome goals are about WHAT you achieve.

- **Competition results** are outcomes of a team or individual sport. These results may include ranking in a league or position in an individual race. These are ABSOLUTE outcomes. Since external factors can affect the athlete's ability to achieve these goals, achieving these goals is not always within the athlete's control.
- **Self-improvement goals** are measurable changes in performance. For example, improvements in fitness levels, in race time, in peak strength, and in maximum bench press are self-improvement goals. These goals may be independent of results-type goals (e.g. you may improve your race time but not win the race); self-improvement goals may be viewed in RELATIVE terms for each athlete. Achieving self-improvement goals is usually more within the athlete's control than achieving competition results. In some sport psychology literature, self-improvement goals are referred to as *performance outcome goals*.

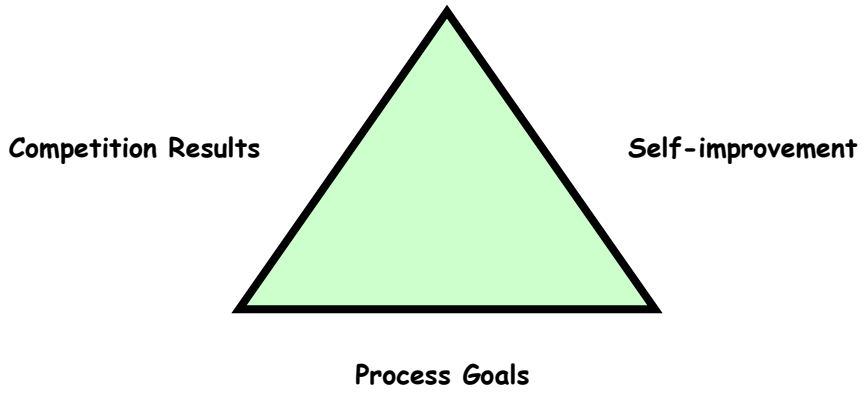
Process Goals

Process goals are about HOW you achieve goals.

- **Process goals** are the means by which goals are achieved, for example, achieving fitness goals by attending all practices, training five times a week, going to weekly meetings, and monitoring fitness monthly. Developing team cohesion to improve the team's standing in the league is another example of a process goal.

As the figure on the next page shows, outcome and process goals are related. For example, to achieve a competition result goal (e.g. improving league ranking and finishing among the top three teams), players may have to improve their fitness (self-improvement goal) and increase the amount of training at critical times during the season (process goal).

The Relationship between Different Types of Goals



To become really meaningful, both outcome and process goals must be related to a time period, either the long or the short term.

Long-term goals are goals that are to be realized by the end of a season (or even later in some cases).

Short-term goals are the small steps taken right away to reach the desired long-term goal.

The types of goals you set and the nature of these goals varies according to the type of sport, e.g. team or individual. As well, some athletes may be part of a team, but their performance is entirely individual, e.g. downhill skiers. In this case, the team may focus on process-type goals designed to improve team atmosphere and cohesion. This creates an environment in which individual self-improvement goals may be set.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with setting long-term dream goals such as making the national team or competing at an Olympic Games. In fact, most athletes who eventually achieve this type of goal did have it as one of their dream goals in their early competitive years.

Setting long-term and short-term process goals that are both progressive and measurable makes it possible for athletes to chart a path toward a dream goal and find satisfaction and motivation along the way.

Athletes Who Use Goal Setting Effectively Tend To:

- ❑ Suffer less from anxiety and stress
- ❑ Concentrate better on the task
- ❑ Show higher levels of self-belief and self-confidence
- ❑ Show greater control over the performance process

HELPING ATHLETES SET EFFECTIVE GOALS

Gathering the following information is a necessary first step in effective goal setting:

- Current status of the athlete/team (i.e. what is *today's* performance level?)
- Record of previous performances by this athlete/team
- Age-group norms for this event/sport
- Training time available
- Type of competitions available
- Type of competitors available
- Performance improvement possible for this age group during a specific period of time (this is hard for novice coaches to gauge — if you're not sure of this, consult expert coaches for the age group you are working with).
- Growth and development considerations for this age group

Remember that you are to be a *facilitator* in your athletes' goal setting. For athletes to take ownership of goals and to feel motivated to achieve them, the athletes themselves must set the goals. Once you gather the information above, you can support your athletes as they set measurable, achievable goals.

Payoffs from Collaborative Goal Setting

- Goals and priorities are clearer.
- Commitment and motivation increase.
- The definition of success is clearer.
- Athletes' confidence and sense of accomplishment increase, and morale improves.
- Coping mechanisms improve because goal setting helps keep winning and losing in perspective and helps athletes manage challenges one step at a time.
- Athletes mature by taking increased responsibility for their directions.
- Problem behaviour decreases as self-responsibility increases.
- Athletes develop an appreciation for goal setting as they benefit from achieving their goals; this often transfers into other areas of life.
- Athletes show increased empathy for the needs and rights of others on the team.
- Communication improves, as goal setting provides a forum to express needs and desires related to sport performance.
- Athletes are happier and have more fun, because having fun in sport is usually directly linked with feeling successful and meeting challenges.
- Athletes perform better because they have achievable, challenging targets to aim for together and individually.

SAMPLE GOAL SETTING

This section outlines a *collaborative goal-setting process* that coaches and athletes might use. It can be used for individual or team goals.

The steps in this process are as follows:

- Establish the importance or meaning of the individual or team experience
- Identify areas that need work, and do this in terms of outcome or process goals
- Specify goals for the season/year
- Determine the criteria for success
- Develop a road map for success
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation process

The table below provides an example of how to apply this process to team goal setting.

Goal-Setting Steps	Notes
1. Establish the importance or meaning of the individual or team experience **Question:** *What does it mean to be a part of this team or this group?*	Athletes: ❑ Reflect on the importance of being involved in the team. ❑ Are invited to share their thoughts and feelings with the group. Coach may *model* if necessary. **Rationale:** A mutual awareness of the relevance of the team experience may increase cohesion and commitment.
2. Identify areas that need work **Question:** *What evidence is there that we need to work on X and Y?*	Identify whether the issues raised apply to: ❑ Competition results, e.g. position of team in the league ❑ Self-improvement goals, e.g. personal fitness level or performance level ❑ Process goals, e.g. the way results are achieved Identify whether the team needs to work on physical conditioning or on technical, tactical, or mental skills. Highlight the relationship between outcome and process goals. **Rationale**: It is important to identify whether goals are related to ongoing behaviours of team members or to outcomes, such as championships.

Goal-Setting Steps	Notes
3. Specify goals for the season/year. **Question:** *What exactly do we want to achieve this year?*	Clearly identify goals. Note whether the goals are: ❑ Competition results ❑ Self-improvement goals ❑ Process goals ❑ Long-term goals ❑ Short-term goals The team "signs off" on the goals, and the goals are posted for the team to see. **Rationale**: Specifying and recording goals and signing off on them is a public record of team commitment.
4. Determine the criteria for success **Question:** *How will we know we have achieved our goals?*	Develop a list of: ❑ Outcome criteria —changes the team wants to see in performance or results ❑ Process criteria — behaviours the team will have to observe to know it's on track **Rationale:** Establishing clear criteria for success is important. It allows team members to self-monitor and to recognize whether goals are being met.
5. Develop a road map for success **Question:** *What behaviours/actions are necessary for us to achieve these goals?*	The team brainstorms to come up with strategies for achieving its goals (outcome or process). Be very specific about the strategies, and record them. **Rationale:** Knowing where you want to be is only one part of the puzzle. Establishing a road map for success is critical to setting and achieving goals.
6. Develop a monitoring and evaluation process **Questions:** *How will we know …* ❑ *We're on track?* ❑ *We're achieving our goals?* ❑ *If we need to adjust our goals?*	Coaches design a monitoring and evaluation process. It could, for example, involve: ❑ Observing athlete behaviour ❑ Holding regular team meetings ❑ Conducting regular fitness or skill assessments ❑ Integrating mental-skill simulations into practices **Rationale:** Establishing a way of monitoring and evaluating progress is critical for motivating athletes and for adjusting goals when necessary.

PLANNING FOR MENTAL PREPARATION WITHIN A SEASON

While there are no hard-and-fast rules about when to develop mental skills within a season, there are some widely accepted general guidelines.

Mental Skill	Time of the Season			
	Beginning	**Middle**	**Around Key Competitions**	**End**
Setting Goals	❑ Team meeting ❑ Identify goals ❑ Set goals ❑ Outcome goals (What do we/I want to achieve?) ❑ Process goals (How do we/I achieve these goals?)	❑ Monitor ❑ Assess ❑ Re-evaluate	❑ Re-evaluate	❑ Team meeting ❑ Debrief ❑ Re-evaluate
Managing Focus	❑ Introduce skill ❑ Develop athlete awareness ❑ Develop basic skill ❑ Assess basic skills ❑ Refine basic skills	❑ Simulation ❑ Develop performance routines ❑ Refine performance routines	❑ Refine performance routines ❑ Implement (performance routines)	❑ Debrief
Managing Negative Anxiety	❑ Introduce skill ❑ Develop athlete awareness ❑ Develop basic skill ❑ Assess basic skills ❑ Refine basic skill	❑ Simulation ❑ Develop performance routines ❑ Refine performance routines	❑ Refine performance routines ❑ Implement (performance routines)	❑ Debrief

PLANNING FOR MENTAL PREPARATION WITHIN A PRACTICE

As was the case for planning for mental preparation within a season, there are no hard-and-fast rules for when to develop mental skills within a practice. And just as was the case for planning for mental preparation within a season, there are some widely accepted general guidelines. There are of course many more options, and the key to successful mental training is to find creative ways to integrate it into your day-to-day practices so that it becomes a habit for athletes.

During the Introduction

- Allow a few minutes for chatting so that athletes can start to focus on the practice.
- Gauge arousal level, and do relaxation or energizing exercises if necessary.
- Set goals for the practice, or remind athletes of their goals for the practice.
- Provide a visual of drills/games that athletes will do during the main part. This helps athletes start to create visual images. Have athletes rehearse what they will be doing (e.g. sprint straight, cut left, turn, and receive).

During the Warm-up

- To stimulate shifts in focus, include a variety of activities that change frequently.
- Make the movements of the specific warm up similar to the movements that athletes will perform in the main part. That way, athletes can get a feel for what they'll be doing while they're visualizing it.
- Check with individual athletes to make sure they understand their goals for the practice.
- Set cue words for the activities/drills.

During the Main Part

- Gauge arousal level and focus before each new activity/drill.
- Ask athletes to visualize successful performance of an activity or drill while waiting for a turn or recovering.
- Say cue words before and during each attempt, and ask athletes to do the same.
- Ask athletes to refocus and visualize after each attempt, especially to re-instill a successful image after a failed attempt.
- Videotape athletes to show them their successful performances and to create images of positive accomplishments.

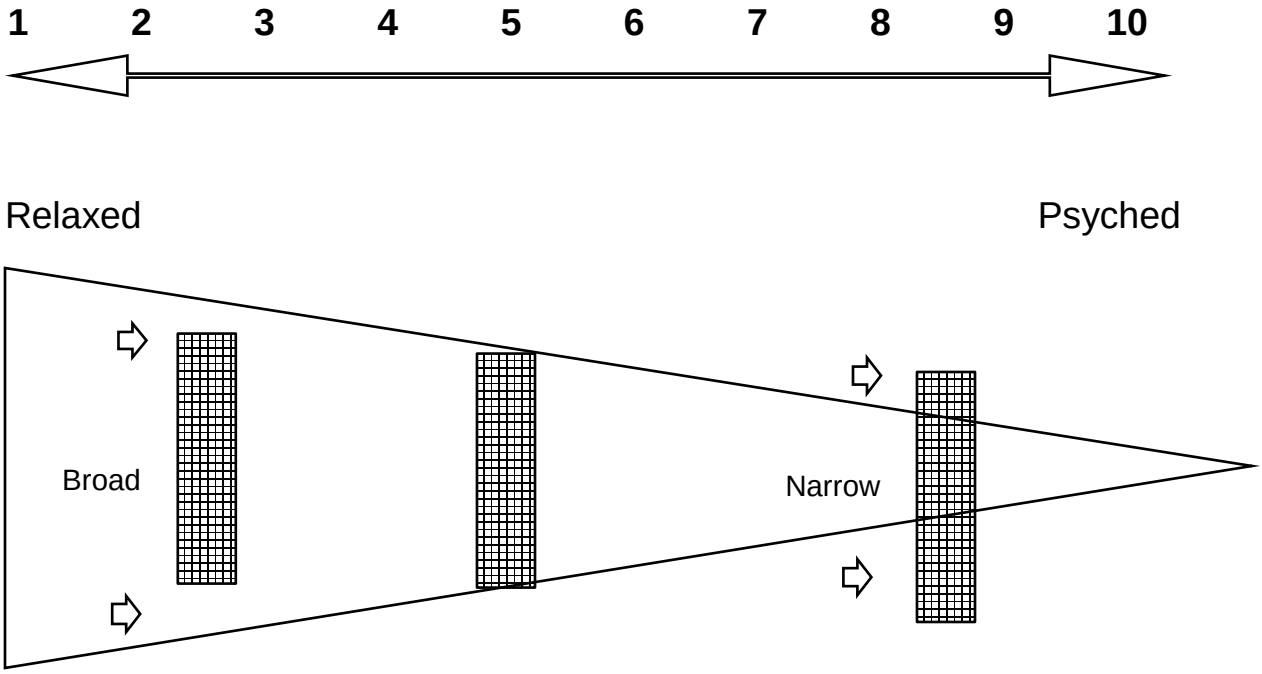
During the Cool-down

- Include relaxation, and return to calm exercises.
- Check if individual and group goals for the practice were met.

During the Conclusion

- Check if individual and group goals for the practice were met (cont'd).
- Ask athletes what went well and what needs improvement.
- Set goals for the next practice/competition.

Arousal level and Concentration



The numbers at the top represent how excited or aroused one is at any given time. Our ability to have broad concentration narrows the more excited we become. The key is to have the right arousal level for the activity we want to perform. Using the example of shooting a foul shot, we notice that a perfect arousal level for this athlete is a 4 (Only you can determine what is best for you). If the athlete has an arousal level of 2 it is too broad. The gaps that exist above the rectangle mean extra information is entering into the mix. These are distractions. The athlete is aware of the crowd and the noises coming from them. If the athlete is too excited, an 8 in our example, she is going to miss information that is important to the process. She is so pumped up she fails to realize that she is violating by standing on the line. By monitoring your performance you can determine the right arousal level for you. If you find you are too excited you may need to relax. If you find yourself under aroused you may need to do some self motivation to pump yourself up.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Main Writers

John M. Hogg, Garry Wheeler, A. J. Woodburn

Contributors

Garry Armstrong, Kathy Brook, Guylaine Demers, Cyndie Flett, Pascale Gauthier, Peter Goodman, Dave Hill, Dave Hubley, Doug Krochak, Daniel Leister, Michael Luke, Alain Marion, Don McGavern, Rob Meckling, Anna Mees, Norm Olenick, Diane Oligny, Ian Reade, Bill Redden, Thérèse Saulnier, Tony Simmons, Jean Vaillancourt

Production

Lucie LeBel, MATRA ● gs Translation Services Inc., Tressa Sorochan, Louise Wood

REFERENCES

Bandura, A. (1986). Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Benson, H. (1975). The relaxation response. New York: Avon Books.

Boutcher, S.H. (2002). Attentional processes and sport performance. In T.S. Horn (Ed.), Advances in sport psychology (pp. 441-457).

Botterill, C. (1995). Emotional preparation for the Olympic Games. Coaches Report, 26-30.

Carron, A.V., & Hausenblas, H.A. (1998). Group dynamics in sport (2nd Edition). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.

Crocker, P.R.E., Kowalski, K.C., Graham, T.R., & Kowalski, N.P. (2002). Emotion in sport. In J.M. Silva & D.E. Stevens (Eds.), Psychological foundations in sport (pp. 107-131). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Gould, D. (2001). Goalsetting for peak performance. In J.M. Williams (Ed.), Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance (pp. 190-205). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, (4th Edition).

Hanin, Y.L. (1980). A study of anxiety in sports. In W.F. Straub (Ed.), Sport psychology: an analysis of athlete behavior (pp. 236-249), Ithica, NY: Mouvement.

Hanin, Y.L. (1997). Emotions and athletic performance: Individual zones of optimal functioning. *European yearbook of sport psychology*, 1, 29-72.

Helmstetter, S. (1987). *The self-talk solution*. New York: Pocket Books.

Hogg, J.M. (1997). Mental skills for young athletes. Edmonton, AB: Sport Excel Publishing, Inc.

Hogg, J.M. (2000). *Mental skills for competitive swimmers* (2nd Edition). Edmonton, AB: Sport Excel Publishing, Inc.

Jackson, S.A., & Czikszentmahalyi, M. (1999). Flow in Sport: The keys to optimal experiences and performances. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Krauss, D. (2001). Mastering Your Inner game. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Lazarus, R.S. (2000). How emotions influence performance in competitive sports. The Sport Psychologist, 14, 229-252.

Lee, T.D., Ezekiel, H.J., Wishart, L.R., Letho, N.K., & Marley, T.L. (2001 and 2002). The Physiotherapy Client as a Problem Solver (parts 1-4), Physiotherapy Canada.

McGrath, J.E. (1970). Major methodological issues. In J.E. McGrath (Ed.), Social and psychological factors in stress (pp. 19-49). New York: Holt, Reinhart & Winston.

McGraw, P.C. (1999). Life Strategies: Doing what works; doing what matters. New York: Hypersion.

Moran, A.P. (1996). *The psychology of concentration in sport performers*. Hove, UK: Psychology Press, Publishers.

Murphy, S.M., & Martin, K.A. (2002). The use of imagery in sport. In T.S. Horn (Ed.), *Advances in sport psychology* (pp. 405-439). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Nideffer, R. (1976). Test of attentional and interpersonal style. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 34, 394-404.

Nideffer, R. (1981*). The ethics and practice of applied sport psychology*. Ithica, NY: Mouvement.

Orlick, T. (1986). *Psyching for Sport*, Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Orlick, T. (1990*). In Pursuit of Excellence*, Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics (2nd Edition).

Schmid, A., Peper, E., & Wilson, V.E. (2001). Strategies for training concentration. In J.M. Williams (Ed.), *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance* (pp. 333-346). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing (4th Edition).

Syer, J., & Connelly, C. (1998). *Sporting body, sporting mind: An athlete's guide to mental training*, London, UK: Simon & Schuster.

Tutko, T. (1976). Sport Psyching: Playing your best game all of the time. New York: J.P. Tarcher.

VanRaalte, J.L., Cornelius, A.E., Brewer, B.N, & Hatten, S.J. (2002). The antecedents and consequences of self-talk in competitive tennis. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 22, 245-356.

Vealey, R.S., Hayashi, S.W., Garner-Holman, G., & Giacobbi, P. (1998). Sources of sport confidence conceptualization and instrument development. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 20, 54-84.

Weinberg, R.S., & Williams, J.M. (2001). Integrating and implementing a psychological skills training program. In J.M. Williams (Ed.), *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance* (pp. 347-377). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing (4th Edition).

Weinberg, R.S., & Gould, D. (1999). *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology* (2nd Edition). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

National Coaching Certification Program

coach.ca
REACH HIGHER

Unit: Planning for the Development of Basketball Players

CANADA BASKETBALL

www.basketball.ca

Athletic Abilities		Developmental Age in Years														
		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Aerobic Power (intense, short efforts of 2-10 min)	**F**	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹				☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√
	M	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹				☺	☺	☺	√	√	√
Aerobic Endurance (long efforts)	**F**	☹	☹	☹	☹		☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
	M	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹		☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√
Speed-Endurance	**F**	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹			☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√
	M	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹			☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Strength-Endurance	**F**	☹	☹	☹			☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
	M	☹	☹	☹			☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√
Maximum Strength	**F**	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹			☺	☺	☺	√	√	√
	M	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹		☺	☺	☺	☺	√
Speed-Strength (muscular power)	**F**	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹			☺	☺	☺	√	√
	M	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹				☺	☺	☺	√
Flexibility	**F**	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	M	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Speed (efforts of 8 seconds or less)	**F**	☺	☺	☺			☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
	M		☺	☺	☺				☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Speed (fast cadence of movement, short efforts)	**F**	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	M	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Agility/Balance/ Coordination	**F**	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	M	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Basic Techniques	**F**			☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	M				☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
More Advanced Techniques	**M F**							F	FM	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√
Tactics and Decision-making	**F**	☹	☹	☹					☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	M	☹	☹	☹					☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Legend: ☹ Should be avoided ☺ Optimal training age ☐ Not a priority

☐ In moderation √ As needed by the sport

F Female M Male

ATHLETIC ABILITIES

Definitions and Key Points

To succeed in his or her sport, the athlete must have and seek to improve certain abilities that support performance. These athletic abilities (sometimes called *performance factors*) can be grouped into four general categories: physical, motor, technical/tactical, and mental.

Category	Athletic Abilities Required in Most Sports
Physical abilities are determined by the rate at which energy and force can be produced by the muscles, and by the range through which the movements can be executed	**Speed**: The highest rate at which a movement or a series of movements can be executed, or the ability to cover a given distance in the shortest possible time during an all-out effort of very short duration *(8 seconds or less).* **Speed-Endurance**: The ability to sustain efforts at near-maximum speed for as long as possible *(normally, very intense efforts lasting between 8 and 60 seconds).* **Aerobic Stamina**: The ability to sustain a dynamic effort over an extended period of time *(normally, efforts lasting several minutes or even hours).* ***Note****: Intense efforts lasting between 2 and 10 minutes require a subset of this athletic ability referred to as maximum aerobic power.* (Aerobic stamina is a broad term that is sufficient for most sports. In endurance sports, however, the more specific terms aerobic power and aerobic endurance are used.) **Maximum Strength**: The highest level of tension generated by a muscle or muscle group during a maximum contraction, regardless of the duration of the contraction. **Speed-Strength**: The ability to perform a muscle contraction or overcome a resistance as fast as possible *(normally, very brief efforts of 1-2 seconds).* **Strength-Endurance**: The ability to perform repeated muscle contractions at intensities below maximum strength *(normally, 15-30 repetitions or more).* **Flexibility**: The ability to perform movements of large amplitude about a joint without sustaining injury.
Motor abilities support the controlled execution of movements	**Agility**: The ability to execute movements or to move rapidly, with precision, and with ease. **Balance**: The ability to achieve and maintain stability. There are three types of balance: (1) **static balance**: adopting a controlled body position in a stable environment; (2) **dynamic balance**: maintaining control during movement or stabilizing the body by performing muscular contractions to offset the effect of an external force; and (3) the ability to **keep an object or another body under contro**l in either a static or dynamic manner. **Coordination**: The ability to perform movements in the correct order, and with the right timing.
Tactical abilities support effective decisions	The ability to analyze a situation and produce a correct response, i.e. one that gives a competitive advantage or increases the probability of a good performance (**read and react**). It is also the ability to read cues from your opponents and your environment and to select the best response option (**associative solutions**), to develop an **inventory of responses** in order to face the same situation and to be able to **vary the response** when facing a similar but slightly different situation.
Mental skills enable the athlete to be in the proper state of mind to perform successfully	**Attentional Control**: The ability to pay attention to what is important in a given situation and avoid negative influences or distractions. **Emotional Control**: The ability to consciously maintain a high level of control over one's feelings when in stressful conditions. **Goal Setting**: The ability to identify clear goals and priorities that will guide future actions and decisions.

Basketball Skills	**Developmental Age in Years**															
LTAD Stage *	**FUNdamentals**					**L2T**		**T2T**			**T2C**				**L2W**	
	5	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**
Basic Skills																
Start, Stop, Pivots				F	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
Lay ups				F	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
Shooting				F	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
Ball handling				F	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
Passing				F	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
Technical																
1 on 1	☹		F		☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
2 on 2	☹	☹			☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
3 on 3	☹	☹			☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
4 on 4	☹	☹	☹		☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
Strategies																
5 on 5 Offence																
Conceptual offence																
Attacking the basket	☹	☹	☹	☹		☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Penetration principles	☹	☹	☹	☹		☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Passing and cutting	☹	☹	☹	☹			☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Screening	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹				☺	☺	☺	√	√	√
Set plays	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹			☺	√	√	√	√	√
Defence																
Player to player																
On the ball	☹	☹				☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Help	☹	☹					☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Deny	☹	☹						☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Zones	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√
Pressure Defence																
Full court pick up	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹			☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Double teaming	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹		☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√	√
Zone Pressure	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹		☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√
Transition																
2-1	☹	☹			☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
3-2	☹	☹	☹		☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Conceptual fast break	☹	☹	☹	☹		☺	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Patterned fast break	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹			☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Tactics																
Game adjustments	☹	☹	☹							☺	☺	√	√	√	√	√
Scouting reports	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹				☺	√	√	√	√	√
	Developmental Age in Years															
LTAD Stages *	**FUNdamentals**					**L2T**		**T2T**			**T2C**				**L2W**	
	5	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**
Mental Training																
Enjoyment	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Confidence	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Concentration								☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Goal setting								☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Competition management	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹				☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Social support	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Life skills																
Responsibility						☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Communication						☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Trust						☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Leadership						☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√
Self-reliance						☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	√	√	√	√

Legend: ☹ Should be avoided ☺ Optimal training age ☐ Not a priority

▢ In moderation √ As needed by the sport

F Female M Male

*Developmental age varies between males/ females and within a gender. Remember the difference between developmental age and chronological age. This causes fluctuation in the actual LTAD Stages that a given player may be in at a given time.

Basketball Skills Definitions and Key Points

For an in-depth explanation of the requirements of each stage of development refer to the Canada Basketball LTAD model provided with your reference material CD.

Basic skills

At the early ages of the FUNdamental stage (5-7) the analytical teaching of basketball skills needs to be avoided at all cost. These skills may be used in playful activities that are emphasizing motor skill development. At the end of the stage the players may be introduced to these skills in a general form. [1]

The basic skills are the how and why of performing a skill. There are many variations of these basic skills. The art of coaching is deciding when the individual athlete is ready to be loaded with a greater degree of difficulty:

- Improving vision.
- Using both sides of the body.
- Increasing distance
- Adding movement.
- Changing direction
- Changing speed
- Faking
- Adding guided defenders.
- Using in a game like situation.

Starts, stops and pivots – a basic athletic stance and learning how to avoid traveling.

Lay ups – proper footwork, vision and hand for both the left and right hand lay up.

Ball handling – controlling the ball with either hand with the eyes up. Knowing how to dribble with speed and control.

Shooting – starting in the proper position with the eyes up, generating power from the legs and finishing in the proper position.

Passing – transferring the ball from one teammate to another, receiving/tracking skills while stationary and moving

Technical

Technical involves decision making. Players need to know when to use the various basic skills. When dealing with the FUNdamental stage children will be playing the base games of 1 on 1, 2 on 2 etc. but the emphasis is on learning to play and be active. The emphasis on the skills comes more at the end of the stage and the learn to train stage when they are able to start to work on the sport specific skills.

1 on 1 – all of the decisions and concepts needed to play against one other player. This would include:

- Proper stances
- Defensive footwork
- Faking
- Reading

2 on 2 – the decisions and concepts required to play with a teammate against two defenders. I.e. pass and cut, penetration.

3 on 3 - the decisions and concepts required to play with two teammates against three defenders. I.e. pass, cut and fill, pushing and pulling on penetration.

4 on 4 - the decisions and concepts required to play with three teammates against four defenders. I.e. spacing, rebounding and defensive coverage on a shot.

Strategies

Strategies are the overall plan for how your team will play. They may be conceptual in nature or have set roles and responsibilities. In general you will have strategies for offence, defence, transition and special situation (inbounds, jump balls, foul shots).

5 on 5 offences

Conceptual offence – is based on teaching the players principles of plays rather then set plays. It is also ensuring that players develop the skills necessary to execute the concept:

- Global player vs. specialist – every player learns all of the skills of the game.
- Attack the open basket – this entails running the floor and the movement and spacing needed keep the basket open to allow players to attack the basket with the dribble, pass or cut.
- Penetration principles – the movement and spacing of players that occurs as the ball is dribbled at the basket.
- Pass, cut and fill – the movement and spacing that occurs when the ball is passed to a team mate.
- Screening – using screens to create scoring opportunities whether these be on ball screens (picks) or screens away from the ball.

Set plays – where players are assigned designed assignments based on a specific position and skills. Inbounds plays, fast break, press breaks, special situations and ½ court offences are included. Set plays can be very conceptual in nature if players are given the freedom to read and react. Continuity offences are still considered set plays if the players are not give n the option to read and react. At the L2T stage a coach may provide the athletes with a basic formation for such things as inbounding the ball. The formation by itself is not a set play. If the players are encouraged to explore and create out of this formation it would fit under conceptual offence. It is when specific players are assigned specific roles with no deviation that meets our definition of a set play.

Team defence

Player to Player – the defender is assigned to a particular player to defend for that possession or shift. Player to player defence involves:

- On the ball defence – proper stance, moving to stay between the player you are guarding and the basket, funneling, turning and boxing out.
- Help defence – the proper stance, positioning and movement in order to defend a player other than your check who has the opportunity for an easy score.
- Deny defence – the proper stance, positioning and movement to prevent the ball being passed to your check.
- Rebounding – communication, stance, positioning and movement to go after the ball.

Zone defence – the defender is designated an area in which to defend.

Pressure defence

Full court pick-up – the defender defends the offensive player from one end of the court to the other.

Double teaming – One defender leaves his/her check to put two defenders on one offensive player.

Transition – changing from offence to defence or from defence to offence. Both the offensive and defensive concepts need to be taught.

2 -1 – two offensive players attacking one defensive player. This could be from a full court, 3/4 court, ½ court, ¼ court or from small spaces.

3-2 – three offensive player attacking two defenders. This could be from a full court, 3/4 court, ½ court, ¼ court or from small spaces.

Conceptual fast break – players outlet the ball, break out dribble and fill lanes by concepts and principles. All players are taught the skills required and the principles of play.

Patterned fast break – the players are assigned roles and responsibilities based on specified positions and a pattern of play.

Tactics

Tactics are the adjustment you make to your strategies for a specific game.

Game adjustments – these are the slight alterations you make as the game develops. It usually involves an action to stop what an opponent on defence. On offence it involves actions to counter the actions of the defence to improve your ability to score. These are not skill adjustments.

Scouting reports - This is when the coach has prior knowledge of an opponent's strategies and uses practice time or pre-game meetings to discuss or practice adjustments.

Mental Training

Mental training deals with the areas of an athlete's development that revolve around the player's thinking and feelings. Their social / emotional stability also plays a major part in this component.

Enjoyment – is the athlete having fun? This is a deep self-satisfaction from knowing I have accomplished something. It is also the fun of working with a group of people to accomplish something that I could never have done by myself. Coach should be aware that athletes in different stages and gender (girls will often have a greater need for socializing factors than boys), may have different needs when it comes to enjoyment.

Confidence – confidence comes from three areas:

- Physically – developing skills
- Mentally – developing knowledge
- Emotionally – feeling safe

With this information in mind coaches must be alert to all three areas when trying to develop the confidence of the athletes. Of the three, skill development is the most important. With out the skills to back up the knowledge and safe environment the athlete can develop false confidence and be lead to failure when asked to perform in competition.

Concentration – this is the ability to focus on a specific task for a specific length of time. One must also acknowledge what is the appropriate task to focus on at any given time. Athletes must learn to deal with distraction and when to narrow or broaden their concentration. The impact of anxiety or emotions also has a strong impact on ones concentration.

Goal setting – all great athletes have set goals at one time or another. This can range from simple daily goals to dream goals of competing for ones country in the Olympic Games. Athletes can also work on setting outcome goals (I will score ten points in my next game), or process goals (I will maintain my stance when playing defence). Coaches need to work with athletes to ensure that the goals being set are appropriate for the athlete and their stage of development.

Competition management – here the athlete is developing routines that lead to an ideal performance state. At the earliest stages it is making sure I have my sneakers with me when I leave home. At the highest level it is a pathway of planed actions that the athlete flows that leads them to success. The coach helps the athlete build positive routines, but also making the athlete self-reliant.

Social support – The impact of the people around an athlete and the constancy of these relationships has a profound impact on the mental and social emotional stability of the athlete. Consistency has proven to make for superior athletic performance. Changes in relationships prior to performance have been known

to sidetrack many an athlete. It is important that coaches get to know the other people in the player's world.

Life skills

We want to build a well rounded individual who can be a successful in many areas of their life. By only focusing on basketball we have steered many athletes for failure when this avenue is no longer available. It is more important to develop good people who can contribute to a healthy society.

Responsibility – athletes need to learn that they must be responsible for their actions. Blame and excuses are not signs of successful individuals.

Communication – Clear concise communication is crucial in completive situations. Also athletes must learn to communicate with other people in a positive way. It starts with giving people your eyes and ears.

Trust – All great relationships are built on trust. Truth over harmony is a cornerstone for success. Athletes need to be taught the importance of telling the truth.

Leadership – there are four levels of leadership that athletes will go through:

- Lead your self – be responsible.
- Give energy to the group.
- Know when to follow.
- When you have mastered the first three then you can lead others.

Self-reliance – as athletes move through the various stages of development they should take on more and more responsibility for their improvement. There has never been an exception to this rule. To be successful you must spend time on your own perfecting your craft. Too often as coaches we shelter athletes from learning valuable skills that they can learn from sport. Such a simple things as how to checking into a hotel.

[1] Basketball for young Players: Guidelines for Coaches, FIBA, 2000

Growth and Development Considerations, 12-15 Years

General

- ❑ Period where major growth spurts occur; in each gender, large differences in physical maturation may be observed in individuals of the same chronological age; in general, girls develop earlier than boys
- ❑ During this period, there often exists a large difference in maturity between boys and girls
- ❑ Acquires moral concepts, values, and attitudes that make it possible to relate meaningfully to society; positive role models are important
- ❑ Opinion of friends tends to be more important than that of the coach; athletes want to look like or be perceived as competent performers
- ❑ This is a period of major change during which athletes are likely to challenge authority, be very critical, question decisions, and ask for justification
- ❑ Competition becomes increasingly important to some athletes; time devoted to general training should be greater than time spent training specifically for a sport or time spent competing

Psychosocial

- ❑ It is important to separate boys and girls for activities and competition
- ❑ Emotional instability may be observed because of the rate at which physiological changes occur
- ❑ Shows a greater desire for independence; this can be a time of rejection of parental authority and, in general, a period when there is a high degree of confrontation with adults
- ❑ Develops close relations with individuals of both sexes; enjoys being more independent and having more responsibility; a great deal of interest in sexuality is observed toward the end of this period
- ❑ This period is important for the development of values such as respect for others, fair play, and a work ethic

Learning

- ❑ Begins to think like an adult; it is important to take into account the different maturity level between boys and girls; interests and abilities differ between the genders; challenges are often very appealing
- ❑ Needs change on a regular basis; is highly curious; capacity to concentrate increases (can stay focused for 20 minutes or more at a time); increasingly capable of abstract thinking
- ❑ This is a good period to consolidate the development of fine motor skills, to teach more complex tactical notions, and to encourage decision making in specific situations
- ❑ Specialization by sport and for a position can begin; however, participation in a variety of sports that have different demands should be encouraged

Physical

Girls: The development of secondary sexual characteristics (pubic hair, breasts) begins around 11-11.5 years of age. On average, the growth spurt begins shortly after that. Maximal growth rate (or peak height velocity, PHV) is normally observed between 11.5 and 12.5, and menarche (first menstruation) occurs approximately one year after PHV. During this period, body fat content tends to increase progressively, and typical female body forms (hips) appear because of the effect of hormones. As a result of these changes, performance often plateaus or may even decline for a short period of time. In addition, for a period of several months following menarche, girls may have difficulty sustaining heavy training loads. Girls should be counselled that this phenomenon is normal and that their performance will continue to improve after this temporary phase.

Boys: The development of secondary sexual characteristics (pubic hair, testes, penis size) occurs progressively around age 11. On average, the growth spurt begins at age 13, and PHV is reached at around age 14-15. Significant gains in muscle mass and in strength typically occur one year after PHV (i.e. at around ages 15-16) because of higher levels of testosterone; this age represents a good time to initiate strength training with heavier loads if this athletic ability is important in the sport.

- ❑ During the growth spurt, feet and hands tend to grow first, followed by the legs and arms; long bones

are fragile during this time; growth is accompanied by an increase in body weight throughout the period

- ❑ As a result of the rapid growth spurts that occur during PHV, body parts can be disproportionate; this can have a direct effect on coordination and the ability to perform certain skills that had already been well mastered
- ❑ This period is well suited for the development of aerobic fitness, as well as flexibility
- ❑ Strength and speed-endurance training can begin toward the end of this period

Preferences

- ❑ Enjoys challenges and the opportunity to accomplish individual feats
- ❑ Accomplishment of actions that are likely to be looked at or admired by peers/friends
- ❑ Activities that contribute to the development of fine skills/dexterity and that do not require too much strength, team games, situations where some form of competition exists

To avoid

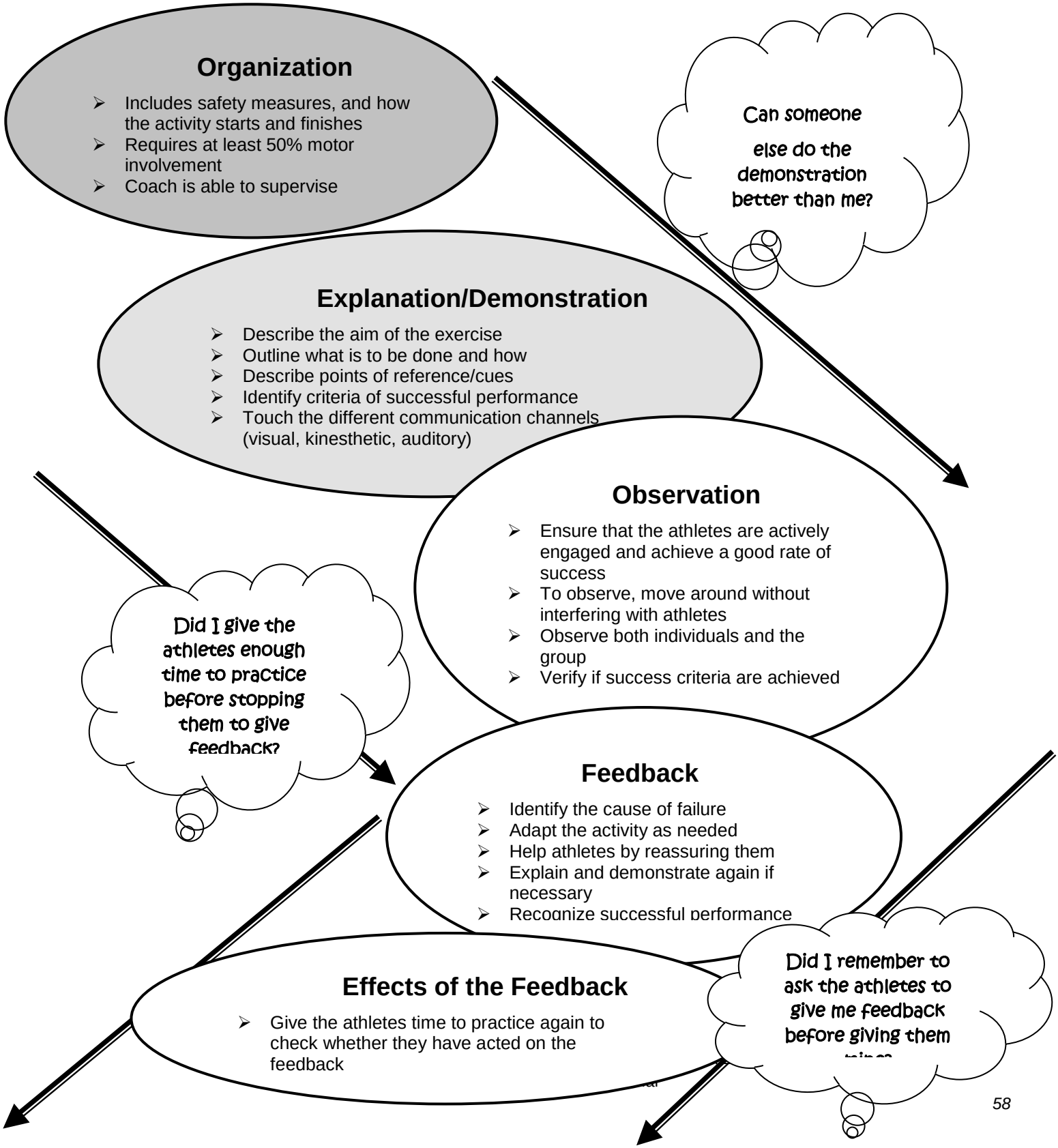
- ❑ Repetition of all-out efforts lasting between 20 and 120 seconds before or during PHV; work against high resistance; prolonged aerobic endurance efforts that involve impact on the joints (i.e. running on a hard surface such as asphalt)
- ❑ High mechanical stress (compression forces) on the long bones and the backbone, e.g. lifting heavy weights
- ❑ Programs where the number of competitions is greater than the number of practices
- ❑ Pressure to perform
- ❑ Negative competitive experiences

Suggestions

- ❑ Time when athletes are actively involved in activities during a practice should be as high as possible
- ❑ Acquisition of more complex or sport-specific techniques; explanations can be more elaborate where appropriate; a high number of repetitions during drills is possible
- ❑ Give the opportunity to take decisions and to problem-solve
- ❑ Correct execution of movements must be emphasized if strength training is performed.
- ❑ Appropriate supervision of training activities is important to prevent unnecessary risks that adolescents may take
- ❑ Games emphasizing skill and dexterity
- ❑ Opportunities to meet or interact with sport role models (athletes or coaches); competitions or tournaments that involve trips; social activities among the team/training group
- ❑ When an athlete who has reached puberty experiences pain in the joints (e.g. shoulders, elbows, knees) or if he or she now seems to have difficulty completing workouts that previously posed no difficulty, training loads (amount-frequency-intensity) may have to be decreased to avoid undue stress on the athlete's body
- ❑ Depending on the maturity level, involvement in roles such as officiating or leading certain activities (e.g. leading a warm-up or cool-down)

REPRESENTATION OF THE TEACHING PROCESS

Note: The “Organization” process as well as the introduction of “Explanation/Demonstration” is covered in the *Planning a Practice Module*.



Modifying the Game to Help Athletes Learn

In the games approach to practices the coach will allow the players to play a game, or a slight variation of it, in order to learn more skills and more quickly. Within these games coaches will put in place rules or intervention strategies within the rules of the actual game in order to have the players focus on a something specific.

The big fallacy is that a games approach is 'free play' and no learning takes place. This is not true. It is the successful *interventions* by the coach that lead to *guided learning*. It is very important to take advantage of the 'teachable moment" immediately when it occurs.

Theory behind a games approach:

1. Every child should have the opportunity to participate in fun and challenging sporting activities.
2. The object is to remove the idea that play must become work in order to improve.
3. Mastery of the skills is not a prerequisite to continue playing the game. This reduces the number of children dropping the sport and the children get to play the game before a certain skill is mastered.
4. It gets beginners playing a game, although not necessarily the real game, as quickly as possible.
5. If you play the game early in the session the child has the chance to appreciate the fundamental nature of the game.
6. Through play the children are far more likely to be actively and purposely involved.
7. It clearly identifies the technical skill that is holding back play. Children are more likely to want to improve that skill so the game may continue.
8. It encourages cooperation.
9. It allows players to be more creative and innovative.
10. It promotes decision making by the participants. They learn strategies not systems.
11. It develops participants to be more reflective about their play.
12. Small sided games mean players take on more roles and develop a more 'global' understanding of the game.

The Three Fundamental Practices of a Games Approach:

a) **Shape play** – by using different rules you 'shape' the direction in which the game develops. For example; everyone must touch the ball before a shot is taken, shapes the game to involve more passing.
b) **Focus play** – by "focusing' on specific aspects of the game the coach can guide improvement in a certain area. For example; using the rule that everyone must touch the ball before a shot the players must focus on passing and getting open for a pass.
c) **Enhance play** – enhance learning by making improved performance appear important and meaningful. Present challenges (how many passes in a row, make one more than last time), time restraints (perform the passes in a shorter period of time), handicap teams or individuals (play with only two defenders if the defense is stronger than the offense, use weak hands to dribble)

Putting the Theories Into Practice

The following are particular interventions that can be placed within the rules of the game to encourage players to focus more on certain aspects of their play.

1. **Freeze replay** – freeze the group. Explain a concept and then rewind and allow the play to continue. Do not over use. The coach should make use of "what" and "how" questions, instead of telling the child what to do and how to do it. What could you have done differently to make a better pass? How would you do it differently?
2. **Stop the game** and work on a concept. When the coach realizes that the lack of a certain skill is hindering the game, stop the game, quickly work on the skill and then return to the game.
3. **Debrief** the game. Take time at the end of the game to ask the players what they learned and what can be improved for the next game.
4. **Change the number** of offensive and defensive players. By providing a one (or more) player advantages to the offense and defense you can shape the nature of what you want the players to learn.
5. **Alter the size and shape of the playing area**. For example; restricting the area from which players can shoot, can only play defense within certain areas, using a smaller court.
6. **The nature of the goal**. For example; lower basket, hit the back board, pass to a team mate in a certain position, and score for the number of passes completed.
7. **Primary and secondary rules**. Primary rules are the rules which clearly define the game (the travel rule in basketball). Secondary rules are rules that can be changed without disrupting the nature of the game (three seconds in the key). Start with as few rules as possible. Add the secondary rules as they become necessary. Use a teachable moment.
8. **Conditions applied to the game**. Add secondary rules that may not be part of the 'real game' to shape focus or enhance the play. For example; you must complete five passes before you are allowed to shoot; it is a violation if you do not pivot to face the basket when you catch the ball.
9. **Control and develop the good player**. Children want to play on "fair' teams. Make sure there are players of equal ability. You will sometimes have to restrict the movement and actions of the 'good' player to promote equal play, but also develop some other aspect of his or her development. Give the good player leadership roles, make him /her dribble with his /her weak hand.
10. **Differential scoring**. Give different point to different shots, 3 point for shot from a certain distance, 2 points from closer and 1 point for a lay up. Another way is to reward points for completing an action; a point for every pass that preceded the shot.
11. **Playing time**. Every player should have an equal amount of time. By using shorter games the players can play more intense. Multiple short games also give the chance for a team to be reborn.
12. **Tactical timeout**. The coach can use freeze replays to direct the learning and it allows players to work out problems for themselves
13. **Friendly equipment**. Use small balls that are appropriate for the child or soft balls for teaching catching

Practical Applications of Recent Research

in Motor Learning:

Key Points on Giving Instructions

Recent research in the area of motor learning has focused on the effectiveness of different ways of giving instructions. Among others areas of interest, researchers have tried to determine what athletes should focus on *during* the execution of a motor task: (1) on the way the movement or skill is performed (internal focus); or (2) on an external element or the anticipated effect of the movement (external focus). The key points from these studies are summarized below.

- **To promote learning, instructions should be given in such a way as to focus the athlete's attention on some external factor and/or the anticipated effect of his/her movement, rather than on the way the movement is executed**

  11. Focusing too much on the way to perform a particular movement, e.g., focusing on the position of the elbow and how to make a flick of the wrist at the end of the movement, can be detrimental to motor learning. During the execution of the movement, it seems to be more effective to draw the athlete's attention to some external factor, (e.g., the target to hit, or the expected outcome of the movement like the particular trajectory to impart to a ball) rather than internal elements (e.g., feeling each phase of the movement during its execution). Research on this topic is known as "focus of attention".

  12. There is ample evidence to suggest that instructions whereby the athlete is asked to focus attention on some element external to his/her body have a positive impact on both short-term performance (i.e. during the practice session) and longer-term performance; this type of instruction therefore appears to promote both learning and retention of skill. In addition, instructions of this type appear to be effective for most sports skills, and whatever the level of the performer. Finally, the positive effects of this type of instructions on both performance and learning do not appear to affect negatively the *form* of the movements; in other words, the quality of the execution does not appear to suffer.

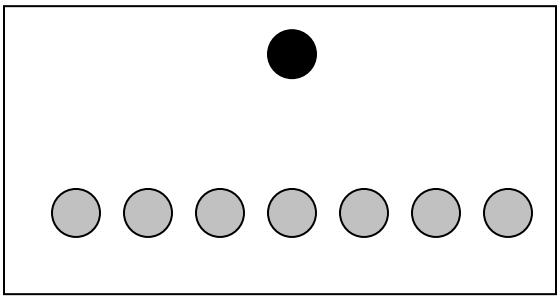
- **If possible, external focus should be directed towards an element, and anticipated effect, or an outcome which is far from the performer's body**

  Current research suggests that the most effective approach requires the learner to focus on an expected outcome situated as far as possible from the athlete's body, but which can nevertheless still be directly linked to the movement itself.

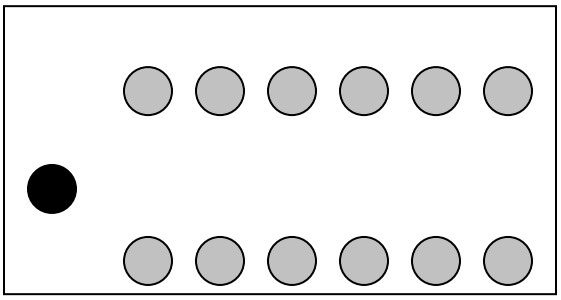
Choosing a Formation for Giving an Explanation or a Demonstration

It is important to choose an effective formation in order to be seen and heard by the athletes. The choice of formation depends on the space available, the kind of message (information, explanation, demonstration) and the number of athletes. The diagrams below show common formations.

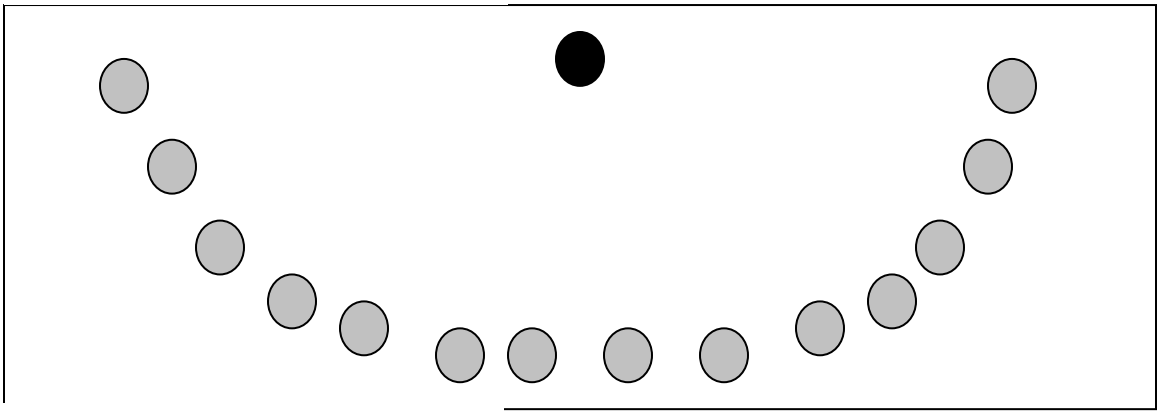
Straight line



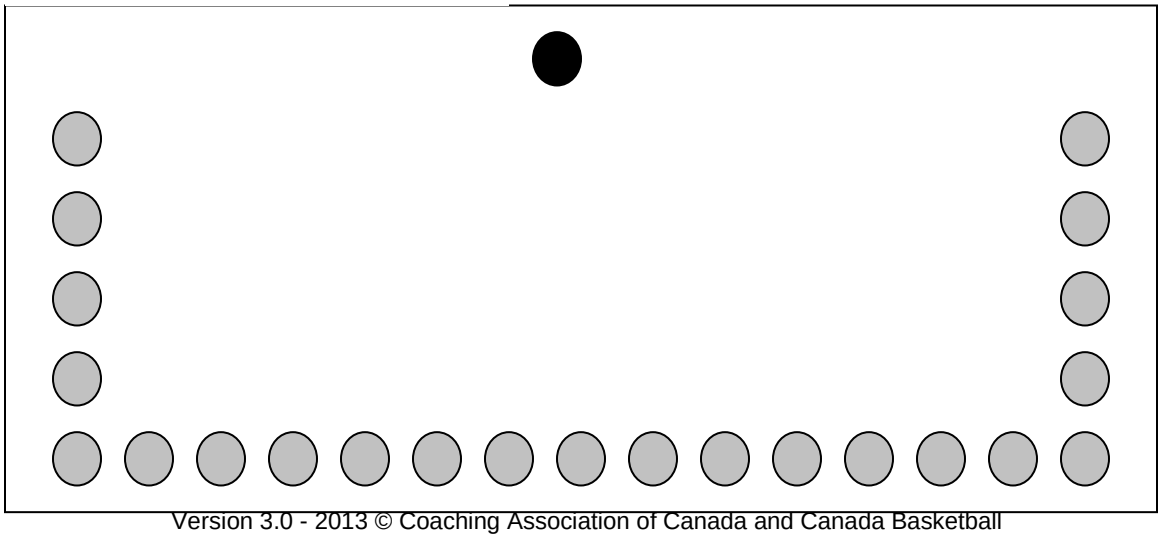
Two lines



Semi-circle



U formation



Adapting the Basic Formations

These basic formations can be adapted to meet the needs of larger groups, for example:

- Make two rows: the front row kneeling or sitting, and the second row standing.
- Make three rows: front row sitting, the second kneeling, and the third standing.

Control Distractions

The athletes must be arranged with potential distractions removed or secured. For example:

- Parents/Guardians
  - at the back of the athletes.

- Basketballs or other equipment
  - held, sat on or neatly placed away in its “home”.

- Other athletes in the group
  - can all be seen by the coach.

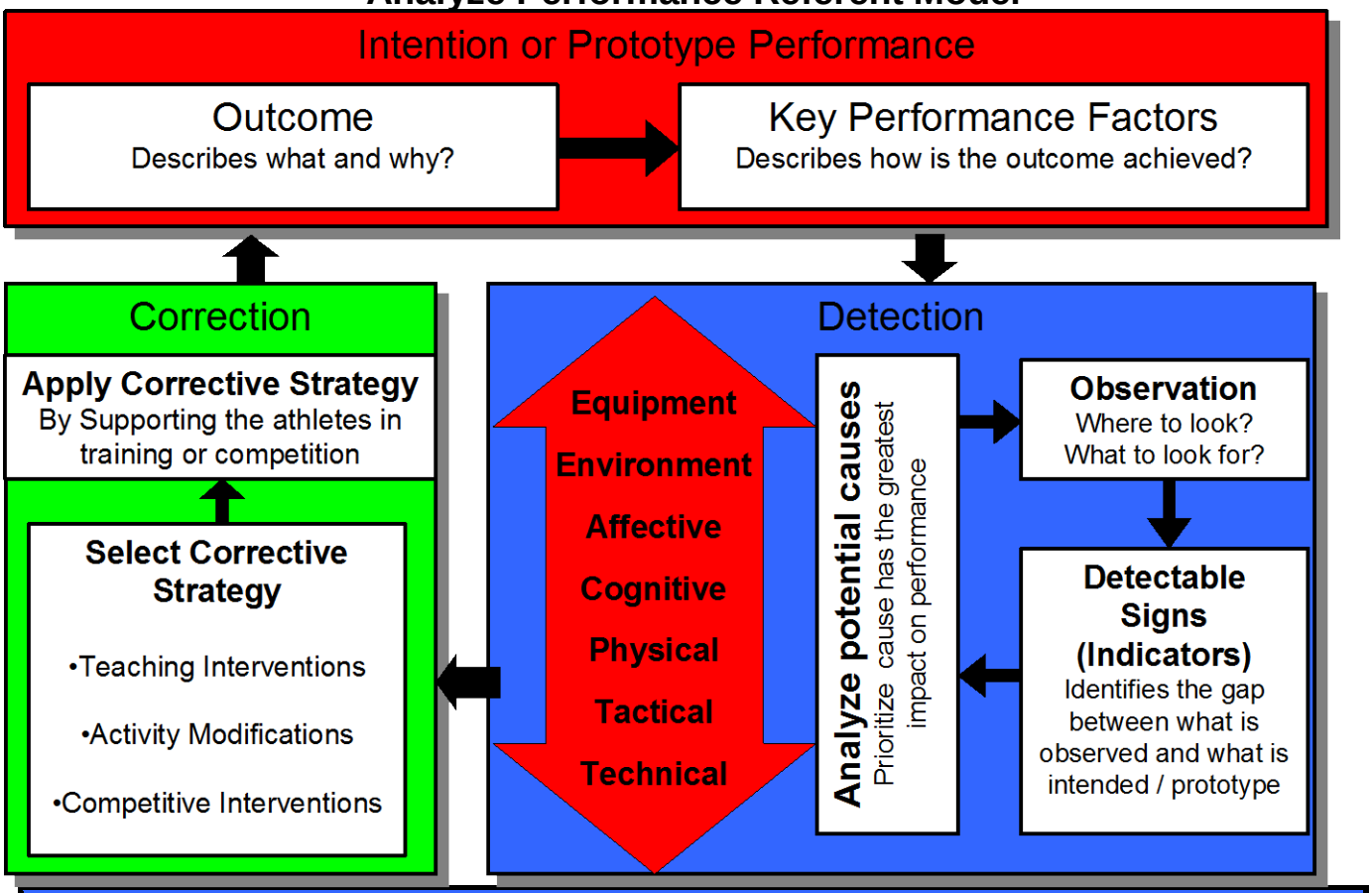
Note: All of the eyes and ears must be given to the coach during this step.

Choose a Good Vantage Point for the Athletes

It is important to ensure that the athletes have a good vantage point to watch the demonstration. Think of the best vantage points for the athletes in relation to the formation you have chosen **before** you begin the demonstration

If you need to, turn 90 or 180 degrees and do the demonstration again so that everyone can have several views of the demonstration, and has the opportunity to observe from the best vantage point. However, avoid doing the demonstration too many times as it may take too much time, and the athletes who have already seen it enough may “switch off”.

Analyze Performance Referent Model



Analysis of Potential Causes

Equipment	Environment	Affective	Cognitive	Physical	Tactical	Technical
• Fit • Tuning • Type	• Weather • Surface • Lighting • Altitude • Pollution	• Fear • Motivation • Self Efficacy • Belief • Interest	• Understanding • Knowledge • Concentration • Focus • Arousal control • Cue recognition • Perception	• Strength • Stamina • Speed • Suppleness	• Decision making • Competition plan • Selection	• Phases of movement • Biomechanical principles

Corrective Strategies

Teaching Interventions	Activity or Drill Modifications	Competitive Interventions
• Help or reassure • Explain or ask questions • Simplify – Reduce number of variables to process, or use examples • Use mental skill strategy (ie. Re-focusing, visualization or goal setting) • Demonstrate or model correct performance • Provide Feedback or results	• Adjust equipment • Adjust task demands or repeat • Adjust progression • Adjust speed or timing • Adjust space or change environment • Adjust work/rest ratios or intensity	• Adjust equipment • Changing tactics or game plan • Making substitutions • Change selection • Use mental skill strategy (ie. Re-focusing, visualization or goal setting) • Provide Feedback or results

Identifying Common Corrective Measures

	SKILL	OUTCOME	Key Performance Indicators / Factors
1	Passing Receiving	The athlete selects the proper pass (chest, push, overhead, one, two hand bounce etc.) and passing "*window"* to deliver the ball so it can be easily caught by a receiver The completion of the pass.	Completion of the pass to a designated target (can be a specific spot on the receiver or to a space leading the receiver in a particular direction.) Ability to identify the open *"window"* *"Look through"* he defender to determine the target Evidence of the *"universal release"* Follow through to target

Analysis of Causes	**Priority H / M / L**	**Key indicators for intervention (GAP)**	**Common Corrective Measures**
Equipment	L	Ball is flat or has no air pressure Ball is the wrong size / weight	Ensure balls are properly inflated
Environment	L	N/A	
Affective	M	Receiver places hands and forearms in front of face rather than presenting hands for a target. Receiver turns head away from passer when ball is delivered. Steps back and moves away	Slow down the activity (walking or Stationary) until confidence is gained Bounce pass first Self passing to a wall Change equipment – Softer ball or lighter ball Provide encouragement and reassurance
Cognitive / mental	H	Poor selection of • Timing (when) • Type of pass • Window • Target • Why to pass	Show a demonstration Explain the purpose of the pass Modify the drill or activity i.e. move passer and receiver closer together. Properly "*load the drill"* to meet the cognitive ability of the athlete Ask questions to check for understanding Use visualization strategy to create an image of the skill

Physical / Motor	H	Passer and receiver are unable to execute skill at a quick pace. Many passes are dropped Differences in strength (physical maturity) Poor release Poor positioning for generation of power Inability to track the ball Improper hand position In ability to absorb the ball	Using a "*variety of pairings"* based on the desired outcome Give participants a break between bouts of activity Modify the drill or activity i.e. move passer and receiver closer together Change the ball (tennis ball, weighted balls, etc) Use softer passes, bounce
Technical	M	Passer does not read the *"three levels"* of defense Evidence of the *"universal release"* Follow through to target	Ask questions to check for understanding (i.e. What did you see?) Where was the defender? Drills or games that enable the athlete to work on decision making Show a demonstration Adjust speed of execution until tactic is understood.
Tactical	H	Completion of the pass to a designated target (can be a specific spot on the receiver or to a space leading the receiver in a particular direction.) Ability to identify the open *"window"* *"Look through"* he defender to determine the target	Provide specific feedback based on key technical factor that indicates how to correct performance Show a demonstration. Modify the drill or activity i.e. move passer and receiver closer together Use questions to assist participant to identify area for technical correction.

Step 3: Observation

- Ensure that the athletes get involved in the activity quickly (rapid transition).
- Always ensure athletes have a clear understanding of the task at hand, in view of the instructions that were given.
- Always ensure that the activity or drill is appropriate for the skill level of the athletes, and that it is not beyond their current abilities.
- Always ensure that there is a good rate of success among the athletes, i.e. most of the athletes are able to achieve the desired outcome.
- Be actively involved in the supervision of the athletes, so that you get to see ALL the athletes during the activity. Scanning the activity and moving around to watch what is going on from different vantage points enable you to be actively involved. *(Note: During sport-specific workshops, find out about the best way of moving around and observing athletes without interfering with them).*
- Be sure to watch individual athletes so that you can be aware of the individual differences in performance, and can then provide individualized feedback.
- Find out if the athletes have fun, or if they are not bored or discouraged.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS → DURING AND AFTER THE PRACTICE

Did my supervision enable me to:

1. Keep the athletes actively engaged in the activity?
2. See all the athletes as a group and individually?
3. Observe key reference points and success criteria from different vantage points?
4. Be sure everyone is safe?
5. Evaluate the athletes' degree of success in the execution of the activity or drill? (See *Challenge Zone* on the previous page.)

Step 4: Giving Appropriate Feedback

In this section, we will present several steps to enable the coach to give appropriate feedback.

First step: Success or Failure? Before providing any feedback, the coach must first identify whether or not the athlete is succeeding in the activity.

Second step: Categories of Intervention Once an evaluation of the athlete's performance is made and the coach has determined whether or not the athlete is experiencing success, an appropriate type of intervention must then be chosen. Various types of interventions are listed in Table 1. The first type of (inhibiting) is obviously not appropriate, and therefore should not be used. Among the other options, some are more effective when the athlete cannot perform the task successfully, and others when he/she can.

Table 1

Five Types Of Intervention [1]

Types of Intervention	Behaviours or Actions by the Coach
A. Inhibiting	1. Do nothing. 2. Shout, rebuke.
B. Repeating	3. Repeat instructions. 4. Demonstrate or repeat previous demonstration.
C. Explaining	5. Explain how to do it right (verbal or reference point).
D. Helping	6. Reassure, encourage. 7. Have the athlete start again.
E. Adapting	8. Use different equipments or practice areas. 9. Reduce difficulty level or give more time.
F. Observe	10. Describe what the athlete has just done
G. Question	11. Ask the athlete to explain or demo (how and what questions)

[1] Adapted from Target, C. and Cathelineau, J. (1990). *Pédagogie sportive*. Vigot. Collection Sport et enseignement.

Third step: Saying the Right Thing. Thus far, we have seen that the coach must first determine whether the athlete is succeeding or failing, and then decide what kind of intervention is best in either case. We will now see what each type of intervention sounds like in words.

Types of Feedback

Types	Definitions	Examples
Evaluative	The coach assesses the quality of the performance; he/she makes some kind of assessment or judgment	• That's fine! • Good job! • No, not like that! • Not good enough!
Prescriptive	The coach tells the athlete how to execute the skill next time	• Use your legs more! (general) • Point your elbow higher! (specific)
Descriptive	The coach describes to the athlete what he/she has just done	• The movement was too slow (general) • Your arm were really extended (specific)

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS DURING AND AFTER THE PRACTICE

Was my feedback:

1. Specific, not general, for example: "You did _____perfectly!" instead of "That's fine!"?
2. Positive and constructive, not negative and humiliating?
3. Directly linked to the skill or behaviour to be improved?
4. Informative and relevant to the most important performance factors?
5. Balanced, i.e. it contained information on what has been done well, and also on what still has to be improved, for example: "Your _____(movement) is better than last time. The next thing to do would be to _____ (add another level of complexity to the movement, or a particular piece to refine)"?
6. Clear, precise and easy to understand by the athlete, e.g. were the words I

Debriefing

1. "I" debrief – take time to think for yourself
a) What did I do well?
b) What do I need to improve?
c) What did I learn to do again?
d) What did I learn to not do again?
e) What next?

An "I" debrief is when you are debriefing yourself. You are critically reflecting on your actions and what you can do to make a difference in the future. I can only change me. Have you tried to 'fix" anybody lately?

Grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can change, and the wisdom to know … it is me!

2. "You " debrief – tell someone else (be a camera)
a) What you did well?
b) What you can do to improve? How?

A "you" debrief is when you are debriefing another person. You are making comments about strengths and areas to grow. The debriefer must be careful that it is taken in the spirit of helping the person grow, not as blaming. "She is the reason that we didn't win."

3. "We" debrief – what the group did collectively
a) What did we do well?
b) What do we need to improve? How?
c) What did we learn of a positive or negative nature?
d) What next?

A "we" debrief is when you are debriefing a group or organization. You are again using this as a means to promote growth, not as a means to establish excuses. "Because CB didn't fund us properly we could not be successful."

A teammate is someone who can look right through you and still enjoy the view. Appreciate people's gifts and strengths just as they are. That is the function of teamwork. Be careful that people end up substituting the language of teams (we and us) for the language of personal accountability. We can hide behind the team with thoughts that become excuses.

Too many coaches start with the "you" debrief which isolates the players and very often puts them in a defensive posture. If a 'we' debrief is done before the players have a chance to do an "I" debrief the "I"

debrief is tainted by the coaches comments. The players will say what the coach wants to hear or will not speak to the contrary. Little personal growth and reflection will takes place.

Practice debriefing

1. Have players discuss with teammates “I’ debrief. Part of cool down. Each player makes I statements about the practice. The teammate can make “you” statements if something is obviously missing from the “I” debrief. Switch up so both players have a chance.
2. Small group do a ‘you” debrief. For example; the guards meet with a coach to discuss guard play.
3. “We” debrief the whole team at the end.
4. Debriefs work best when you use what and how questions. Why questions can lead to excuses. Who questions can lead to blame. Draw from the athletes don’t tell them.

"Don't ask *what* are questions, ask *what do* questions, don't ask *why* questions, ask *how* questions"
Sir Karl Popper

5. Conclude with what next actions.

TLC

In order for a coaching staff to running more effective practice coaches need to apply a little TLC.

T- Teaching activity – the intensity will be low, the concentration will be high on the chosen key performance factors (KPF). There needs to be an agreement among the coaching staff as to what those KPF will be and how they will be emphasized. One problem that occurs during the teach time is that different coaches will load the athlete differently and cause confusion or frustration for the athlete. Discussions also need to be held prior to training as to how the “loading” of the drill will occur. Will the load be physical, mental or emotional or a combination? Roles should be designated as to what each coach will observe during the activity. In teaching activities coaches should feel free to stop the activity when a teachable moment presents itself.

Example: Players are being introduced to the jump shot for the first time. The following have been discussed by the staff as performance factors for the jump shot of the dribble

- Proper grip
- A high release point
- Eyes on target
- Freeze the follow through
- Load the legs
- Quick feet (1-2)
- Diagonal lifting of the ball
- Jump (pop the hips)
- Hard last dribble
- Get under the ball, don’t reach
- One piece motion

For the introductory drill the coaches have agreed that the KPF will be:

- A high release point
- Load the legs
- Jump (pop the hips)

These are the areas that the coaches give feedback on. All coaches can make feedback on these areas. Each coach has been assigned a couple of athletes to work with. The head coaches oversee all of the athletes. Later on the coaches may agree as to what areas each individual can concentrate on as shooting is very individual.

L- Learning activity – In a learning activity the intensity is approaching game like. The concentration is on the application of the skill. When to use this skill now enters the activity. There may be guided defence/offence involved which forces the athlete to make a decision. Feedback is given on the fly. Ensure that the athletes get multiple repetitions. Agree on the KPF. Also each coach should know what he/she is watching. One problem that occurs is that coaches will be coaching little details that are not KPF. For example; if we are working on the decision to drive right or left based on the position of the defence it is the decision that we should be focusing on not the footwork. The only time the drill should be stopped is when the majority of the athletes are struggling with a concept. If an individual is having problems pull him/or her to the side to correct. Keep the activity flowing.

C – Competition activity – In a competition activity the intensity and concentration are game like. The players need to treat the activity like the game. Coaches should not stop the activity accept at the designated time. For example; start at one basket and play out two transitions. Feedback would be similar to the type given in the game. It is very important to debrief the activity to draw from the athletes any key learning's. Coaches may act as officials to simulate the game.

Stages Of Skill Development And Needs Of Athletes At Each Stage

	BEGINNER		INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED	
	Initiation	**Acquisition**	**Consolidation**	**Refinement**	**Creative Variations**
Key points to look for in assessing the stage the athlete is at	The first contact the athlete has with the skill. The athlete may have no idea of what to do in order to perform the skill.	The early stage of learning where the athlete becomes capable of (1) coordinating the key components of the movements and (2) executing them in the correct order, thus performing a rough form of the skill. The movements are not well synchronized or under control, and they lack rhythm and flow. The execution is inconsistent and lacks precision. The athlete has to think about what he or she is doing during the execution. Both form and performance tend to deteriorate markedly when the athlete tries to execute the movements quickly, or is under some pressure, as may be the case in a competitive situation.	The athlete can execute the movements or the skill in the correct form. Movement control, synchronization, and rhythm are good when performing the skill under easy and stable conditions. The movements can be repeated consistently and with precision under easy and stable conditions. Some elements of performance can be maintained when the (1) athlete is under pressure, (2) conditions change, or (3) demands increase, but performance remains inconsistent. The athlete begins to develop a more personal style.	The athlete can execute the movements in a way that is very close to the ideal model in terms of form and speed. The performance is very consistent and precision is high, even under very demanding conditions and in situations that are both complex and varied. Only minor fine-tuning may be necessary to achieve optimal execution, and a fairly definitive personal style is established. All components of the movement have been automated, which enables the athlete to focus on the environment during the execution and to make rapid adjustments as necessary. The athlete can reflect critically on his or her performance to bring about corrective measures.	This stage is achieved only by the best athletes in the world. The movements can be performed according to the ideal model, and the athlete has developed a personal style that is efficient. Personal interpretation of movements or personal movements can be combined into unique patterns in response to specific competitive situations.

Planning guide: at this stage, athletes need to…	Have a clear mental image of what a correct execution looks like. Understand the fundamental positions, stances, and patterns of the sport or skill. Feel safe when performing the skill. If necessary, reach a comfort level with some movements or feelings that may be unfamiliar, and that are part of the skill to be learned.	Understand clearly what they have to do, and have a good mental representation of the task. Perform a lot of repetitions at their own pace and under conditions that are stable, easy, and safe. Practice on both sides, if appropriate. Find some solutions by themselves through trial and error, based on some feedback from the coach.	Be exposed to a variety of situations, and perform a lot of repetitions under varied conditions. Be challenged by more complex and demanding tasks or conditions, and find more solutions through trial and error, based on less frequent feedback from the coach. Have the opportunity to practice the movements or the skill in conditions where fatigue prevails or that replicate competitive demands, and do so by having to deal with the consequences of errors.	Be exposed to complex or demanding competitive situations that require the skill to be executed at a very high level. Be trained on how to develop solutions to the problems encountered entirely on their own.	Be exposed to complex or demanding competitive situations that require the skill to be executed perfectly. Develop their own solutions.

Activity Planning Guidelines For Various Stages Of Skill Development

Recommended practice conditions	Stages of Skill Development				
	Initiation *First contact*	**Acquisition** *Movement patterning*	**Consolidation** *Correct execution in variable conditions*	**Refinement** *Minor improvements*	**Creative variation** *Inventing new movements*
Surrounding environment	Stable and predictable, free of distractions	Stable and predictable, free of distractions	Increased variability and distractions in the environment, but not to the point where movement patterns deteriorate	Competition conditions	Conditions similar to those encountered in the highest level of competition
Decision-making, or uncertainty of the situations in which athletes are involved	No decision-making or options to choose from	Simple decision-making, maximum of 2 options	More complex decisions to make, increased frequency of decision-making, and more options (3-4)	Complex decisions, as many options, and at the same frequency as in a competition	Conditions similar to those encountered in the highest level of competition
Speed of execution	Slow and controlled	At athlete's own pace	Increased, variable, and close to competitive demands	Similar conditions in competition	Similar to highest level of competition
Importance of being precise and consistent	Not important	Moderately important	Precision and consistency are sought	A high degree of precision and consistency are sought	Perfection is sought at all times
# of repetitions, or opportunities to execute the movements	As needed, depending on athlete's general motor development	High	High	As many as possible	As many as possible
Risk factor and consequence of error	Completely safe conditions, errors of no consequence	Low risk conditions	Less than or similar to what is encountered in regular competition	Similar to a high level of competition	Similar to highest level of competition
During training, the emphasis should be on…	Basic stances and positions; getting the idea of what the movements are about, look like	Global execution and general form of the movement	Maintaining the form of movements and some performance consistency under a variety of conditions and under stress	Creating conditions that stress the specific elements that need adjustments	Generating new and unfamiliar situations

IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL AND MOTOR ABILITIES BY SPORT FAMILY

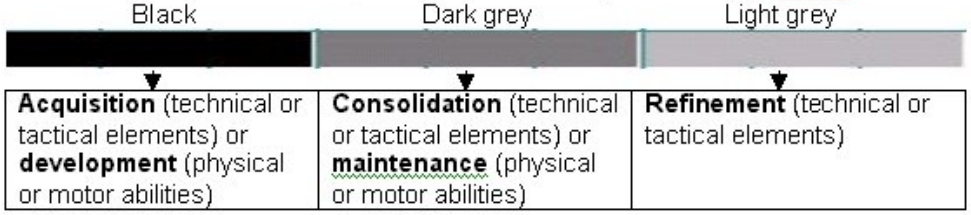
This information is presented as general guidelines only; the importance of a given athletic ability may vary according to the discipline, player position, level of competition, selected tactics, etc.

Sport Family	Physical Abilities							Motor Abilities	
	Speed	**Speed-Endurance**	**Aerobic Stamina**	**Maximum Strength**	**Speed-Strength**	**Strength-Endurance**	**Flexibility**	**Coordination**	**Balance**
Team Sports Soccer *Ice Hockey Basketball Lacrosse *Volleyball	High	High *Moderate	Moderate	Moderate *High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Very high	High to very high
Cyclical Sports – Long Duration *Speed Skating > 5 km Road Cycling Running > 5 km *Cross-Country Skiing Distance Swimming	Moderate	High	Very high	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate *High	Moderate *High
Cyclical Sports – Medium Duration *Speed Skating 1.5-5 km *Speed Skating short track Track Cycling 3-5 km Swimming 400-800 m Rowing Running 800-3000 m	Moderate *High	High to very high	High	Moderate to high	Moderate	High to very high	Moderate	Moderate *High	Moderate *High

Sample Program, Competition – Introduction Advanced Basketball

The **training emphasis given to a specific athletic ability** is shown by the thickness of the band:

The **training objective for a specific athletic ability** is shown by a colour code:



ACTIVITY PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR VARIOUS STAGES OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Recommended Practice Conditions	Training Objectives			
	Initiation First contact	**Acquisition** Movement patterning	**Consolidation** Correct execution in variable conditions	**Refinement** Minor improvements
Surrounding environment	Stable and predictable, free of distractions	Stable and predictable, free of distractions	Increased variability and distractions in the environment, but not to the point where movement patterns deteriorate	Competition conditions
Decision-making	No decision-making or options to choose from	Simple decision-making, maximum of 2 options	More complex decisions to make, increased frequency of decision-making, and more options (3-4)	Complex decisions, as many options and at the same frequency as in a competition
Speed of execution	Slow and controlled	At athlete's own pace	Increased, variable, and close to competitive demands	Similar to conditions in competition
Number of repetitions	As needed, depending on athlete's general motor development	High	High	As many as possible
Risk factor	Completely safe conditions, errors of no consequence	Low-risk conditions	Less than or similar to what is encountered in regular competition	Similar to a high level of competition
During training, the emphasis should be on…	Basic stances and positions; getting the idea of what the movements are about, look like	Global execution and general form of the movement	Maintaining the form of movements and some performance consistency under a variety of conditions and under stress	Creating conditions that stress the specific elements that need adjustments

Summary Table: Training Methods

Athletic Ability	Training Objective	Number of Weeks Required for Significant Improvement	Training Frequency	Training Time (Minutes)	
				Minimum:	Up to:
Technique	Initiation	1-2; variable	3 or +	30	60
	Acquisition	4-6	3 or +	30	60-90
	Consolidation	3-4	2 or +	20	60-90
	Refinement	Variable; probably several months or more	2-3 or +	??; most likely at least 20-30	60-90
Tactics	Acquisition	4-6	2	20	45
	Consolidation	Variable; 3-4	2	20	45-60
	Decision-making	??; probably several	2	??	??
Aerobic Endurance	Development	6	2-3	20-30	60-75
	Maintenance	*Not applicable*	1	20-25	60-75
Aerobic Power	Development	6	2-3	20	55-60
	Maintenance	*Not applicable*	1	12-15	55-60
Speed	Development	4	2-3	15	45-50
	Maintenance	*Not applicable*	1	10	45-50
Speed-Endurance	Development	4	2-3	18-20	45-50
	Maintenance	*Not applicable*	1		45-50
Maximum Strength	Development	*Seeking systematic development of this athletic ability in young athletes is NOT recommended*			
	Maintenance				
Strength-Endurance	Development	4-5	2	10	30-35
	Maintenance	*Not applicable*	1	10	30-35
Speed-Strength	Development	4-5	2	5	12
	Maintenance	*Not applicable*	1	5	12
Flexibility	Development	3-5	2-3 or +	12-15	50-55
	Maintenance	*Not applicable*	1	5-8	50-55
Motor Abilities (agility, balance,	Development	??; probably several	2-3 or +	??; probably at least 10-15	??; probably 20-45

coordination)	Maintenance	*Not applicable*	??; probably at least one	??; probably at least 10-15	??; probably 20-45

Notes

- Training time has been adapted for Competition – Development athletes and includes the time of both physical effort/motor engagement and recuperation. The column **Minimum** represents the lowest threshold likely to have a training effect on the athletic ability in a sport context.
- Some of these guidelines may not be appropriate for all sports or may be difficult to implement without modification in sports that take place in an environment that (1) is unpredictable and unstable or (2) requires efforts that are not easily controllable and quantifiable. For example, the guidelines relating to speed or endurance are relatively easy to apply to cyclical sports like running, cycling, cross-country skiing, speed skating, or swimming but are harder to apply to team sports, racquet sports, artistic sports, or combat/duel sports. However, for these sports, the guidelines may still help coaches implement sport-specific activities, particularly as far as work/rest ratios, number of repetitions, and required level of intensity are concerned.
- Most scientific studies on training methods are based on research conducted on adult athletes, so their findings have been modified to take into account that your athletes are, for the most part, children or adolescents. Do not hesitate to adjust the number of sets or repetitions if workouts seem too easy or too hard.
- For sports in which the importance of the athletic ability is High, use the highest weekly frequency proposed, and establish a progression that will enable the athlete to complete the maximum amount of work suggested for each session. It may take several weeks of training to achieve this.
- For sports in which the importance of the athletic ability is Moderate, use the lowest weekly frequency proposed as a starting point, and establish a progression that will still enable the athlete to complete the least amount of work suggested for each session. It may still require several weeks of training to achieve this. If there is enough time during practices, try to have athletes do more work.
- For sports in which the importance of the athletic ability is Low, time restrictions may prevent you from including this type of activity in your program. If this is the case, ensure that the athletes have the opportunity to participate in different forms of sport activity outside your program or during the off-season so that they can still do some work in this area to achieve a balanced athletic development.

Combining Athletic Abilities in Training

In some cases, lack of time may make it impossible to train athletic abilities separately. In other cases, training inevitably involves certain technical elements, as well as one (or more) physical abilities; for example, swimming several lengths of the pool involves doing some aerobic work and working on stroke technique. The following table shows how some athletic abilities can be combined for training purposes, provided the characteristics of the activity and the practice conditions are appropriate.

This Training Priority…	Can be Combined in Training With…
Technical Elements	Some tactical elements and decision-making skills; aerobic endurance; aerobic power; speed; speed-endurance; strength-endurance; agility; balance; coordination
Tactical Elements/ Decision-making	Some sport-specific technical elements; speed; speed-endurance; speed-strength; strength-endurance; agility; balance; coordination
Aerobic Endurance*/Aerobic Power	Some sport-specific technical elements; agility; coordination
Speed	Some sport-specific technical elements; some tactical and decision-making elements; agility; coordination
Speed-Endurance	Some sport-specific technical elements; some tactical and decision-making elements; agility; coordination
Speed-Strength*	Some sport-specific technical elements; some tactical and decision-making elements; coordination
Strength-Endurance*	Some sport-specific technical elements; some tactical and decision-making elements
Flexibility*	Some phases of technical execution
Agility	Some sport-specific technical elements; some tactical and decision-making elements; speed; speed-endurance; coordination
Balance	Some sport-specific technical elements
Coordination	Some sport-specific technical elements; some tactical and decision-making elements; speed; speed-endurance; agility

*Denotes athletic abilities that lend themselves well to individual training outside the practice sessions directly under your control. Ensure that the athletes actually do train as required and that they use appropriate methods (duration of effort, intensity, work-rest ratios).

COMMON ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Some common issues in sport programs are listed below, with possible solutions. If your program does not seem to have such issues, follow the recommendations that appear in the next sections of this document as closely as possible.

Possible Issue in Sport Program	Solutions to Consider
The program is too short to allow any significant athletic development in your sport or discipline	❑ Encourage athletes to participate in other sports with similar demands and in other sports that may help them develop other types of skills ❑ Enrol athletes in sport schools or camps so that they continue their development and avoid losing too much sport fitness
The Preparation Period is too short	❑ Extend the Preparation Period by starting practices earlier before the first regular competitions ❑ Use some of the early season competitions as a continuation of the Preparation Period where results aren't too important
There isn't enough competition	❑ Include simulated competition in your practice sessions ❑ Organize friendly or unofficial competitions
Practice sessions are too short	❑ Do the general warm-up before you go onto the field or into the facility ❑ Train the motor abilities (agility, balance, coordination, etc.) or some physical abilities (flexibility, endurance, strength) outside practice sessions so that you can spend as much of the available time as possible on sport-specific activities ❑ Create workstations or circuits that enable a larger number of athletes to be active at the same time
There isn't enough practice or preparation time to enable significant athletic development in the sport or discipline; not enough training opportunities between competitions	❑ Extend the Preparation Period; i.e. begin practices earlier in the program ❑ Use some of the early-season competitions as a continuation of the Preparation Period where results aren't too important ❑ Increase the number of practice sessions between competitions ❑ Provide athletes with programs for activities they can do on their own between practice sessions so that you can focus on important sport-specific elements during practice sessions ❑ Don't let performance in the most recent competition or preparation for the next competition dictate all the content of the practice sessions; situate the content of practices in a longer-term perspective (several weeks, or the season)

Possible Issue in Sport Program	Solutions to Consider
The Competition Period is too long; too many competitions in the program; too many "important" competitions	❑ Talk to other coaches and administrators responsible for the competition structure and try to reduce the length of the program and the number of competitions ❑ When possible, consider not taking part in certain competitions ❑ Rest some athletes by withdrawing them from certain competitions or not registering them, and give other athletes chances to get competitive experience ❑ Consider some early-season competitions as part of the Preparation Period where results aren't too important (for example, early-season wins get fewer points than wins after a certain date). ❑ Priorize competitions and focus on those that lead to the next stage in the development process
Practice sessions are too long	❑ If possible, reduce the length and increase the frequency of practices ❑ If you can book only long periods of time in facilities, include frequent breaks during practices and plan fun activities
Practice sessions are too frequent	❑ To avoid fatigue, alternate hard training days with easy days during the week ❑ Build in a rest day every 2-3 days of practice ❑ Build in an easy session or a rest day the day after a competition, especially if the competition is particularly demanding ❑ Avoid planning a tough practice session the day before a competition
Selection dates are too early in the program	❑ Don't conduct selection camps that result in the elimination or exclusion of athletes ❑ Delay selection dates ❑ Create different training groups within the same club or team ❑ Provide other opportunities later in the season for athletes who weren't selected
Selection criteria are based on current ability in the sport, not athletic potential	❑ Evaluate athletes on their ability to apply elements from practices to competition, rather than on their performance ❑ Don't conduct trials that result in the elimination or exclusion of athletes ❑ Create different training groups within the same club or team ❑ Provide other opportunities later in the season for athletes who weren't selected
There is too much emphasis on winning or short-term performance	❑ Evaluate athletes on their ability to apply elements from practices to competition, rather than on their performance ❑ Redefine the program's objectives if there seems to be too much emphasis on competition results
Athletes begin to specialize too soon	❑ Don't start to specialize if athletes haven't mastered the basic skills essential to the sport
Motor abilities are not sufficiently developed	❑ Introduce activities to train the motor abilities (agility, balance, coordination, etc.) that athletes can practise in their free time ❑ Maximize active engagement during practices and create activities

Possible Issue in Sport Program	Solutions to Consider
	that call on the motor abilities

TRAINING OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

Types of Objectives in a Sport Program

The table below lists certain types of objectives that a coach can try to achieve in a sport program. Several objectives can be associated with the same activity. For example, athletes can try to improve while having fun, or experiment while trying to do their best or to win.

Objective	Comments
General	
Participate	Take part in the event; the performance and result are not important
Gain experience	Experiment with new things; the performance and result are not important
Have fun	Above all, make the experience enjoyable and pleasurable
Athletic, Physical, and Motor Abilities	
Develop/Improve	Try to raise the level of the athletic ability
Maintain	When a given athletic ability is considered to be sufficiently developed, maintain it at that level and prevent it from declining
Technical Elements Specific to the Sport	
Acquire new skills	Learn how to correctly perform new movements and skills
Perform the skill correctly	Execute movements well and with correct form
Consolidate the skill	While still maintaining good form in the movement, try to reach a high level of efficiency or precision under variable conditions, which are more difficult and unpredictable
Increase the success rate of skills execution	Try to reach a high level of efficiency or precision while still maintaining good form in the movement; here, the outcome of the action becomes important
Tactical Elements Specific to the Sport	
Read a situation and react appropriately	In a given situation, observe the right cues, analyze them, make a decision, and carry out the appropriate motor response
Vary motor responses according to the situation	Try to increase the number of motor responses in a given situation
Performance	
Do one's best	Try to do as well as possible, whatever the outcome or result
Personal best	Try to do something better than before
Win	Try to win, to finish in first position
Finish among the first N positions	Try to attain a particular ranking with respect to other athletes in the competition

Objectives of Periods and Phases of Seasonal Sport Programs

Period	Phase	Objectives And Priorities	Training Methods
Prepar-ation	General Preparation Phase Recommended length: 6 to 8 weeks, or more	❑ General development of physical, motor, and mental athletic abilities ❑ Acquisition of new technical abilities and skills ❑ Consolidation of already acquired technical and tactical abilities ❑ Progressive increase in the quantity of work done during practices ❑ Improvement of athletes' weak points ❑ Development of interpersonal bonds within the group ❑ Establishment of general objectives related to athletic development	❑ Large proportion of general activities and exercises; small proportion of specific and competition activities and exercises ❑ Training and practice conditions fairly stable and predictable, or controlled by the coach ❑ Average intensity lower than that of later phases
	Specific Preparation Phase Recommended length: 3 to 5 weeks, or more	❑ Progressive development of physical conditioning adapted to the sport ❑ Specific development of the primary physical, motor, and mental athletic abilities required in the sport ❑ Improvement of athletes' weak points ❑ Consolidation of already acquired technical and tactical abilities ❑ Acquisition of new tactical abilities and knowledge ❑ Progressive increase in the quantity of work done during practices ❑ Progressive increase in activity intensity, approaching competition-level intensity toward the end of this phase	❑ Greater proportion of specific or competition exercises, decrease in the proportion of general activities and exercises ❑ More specific and less predictable training and practice conditions; conditions controlled by the coach more frequent than random conditions
	Pre-Competition Phase Recommended length: 2 to 3 weeks, or more	❑ Preparation of athletes for future competitions ❑ Maintenance of physical, motor, and mental athletic abilities of low or moderate importance in the sport ❑ Specific development of the primary physical, motor, and mental athletic abilities required in the sport ❑ Consolidation of already acquired technical and tactical abilities ❑ Increase in activity intensity, to be at competition-level intensity toward the end of the phase ❑ Stabilization of the quantity of work done during practices ❑ Identification of more specific performance objectives ❑ Stress management and emotional control when outcome is important ❑ Cooperation within the group ❑ First selection activities (if applicable)	❑ Large proportion of specific or competition exercises, and small proportion of general activities and exercises ❑ Specific training and practice conditions ❑ Conditions controlled by the coach more frequent than random conditions ❑ Participation in a few preparatory and "non-official" competitions

Period	Phase	Objectives And Priorities	Training Methods
Competition	Regular Competition Phase Length: variable	❑ Validation and confirmation of learning and progress made by athletes during training ❑ Achievement of performance goals ❑ Maintenance of the primary physical, motor, and mental athletic abilities required in the sport ❑ Consolidation of already acquired technical and tactical abilities; maintenance of recently acquired ones ❑ Stabilization of or decrease in the quantity of work done during practices and maintenance of an intensity similar to that found in competition ❑ Stress management and emotional control when outcome is important ❑ Acquisition/implementation of game/combat/race plan ❑ Cooperation within the group ❑ Other selection events (if applicable)	❑ Very large proportion of specific or competition exercises, and very small proportion of general activities and exercises, unless the latter are required to correct persistent shortcomings ❑ Specific training and practice conditions similar to those of competition; conditions controlled by the coach less frequent than random conditions ❑ Practice simulation of situations likely to be encountered in major competitions ❑ Use of specific competition situations or of less important competitions as difficult practices or as tests in which athletes experiment; include psychological stress during training only when athletes have a high success rate in the execution of technical skills
	Major Competition Phase	❑ Implementation of game/combat/race plan with the aim of achieving a performance in competition ❑ Achievement of performance goals when the stakes or competition level are higher ❑ Stress management and emotional control when outcome is very important ❑ Recovery from fatigue and stress due to participation in regular and major competitions ❑ Rather than trying to increase the length of practices, make sure that their frequency is maintained and the intensity remains high ❑ High success rate when performing actions in training (precision and consistency); high cooperation within the group ❑ Final selections (if applicable)	❑ Very large proportion of specific exercises ❑ Random conditions more frequent than conditions controlled by the coach ❑ Exercises and activities intended to refine preparation ❑ Insertion of frequent breaks in practices so as to avoid fatigue and maintain a high degree of intensity

Period	Phase	Objectives And Priorities	Training Methods
Transition	Length: variable (2 to 8 weeks)	❑ Recovery and regeneration ❑ Healing of injuries sustained during the Competition Period ❑ Decrease in the length, frequency, and intensity of sport activities	❑ Active rest ❑ Very large proportion of general activities and exercises ❑ Participation in activities other than organized competitive activities ❑ Participation in sports with different physical and motor requirements, with or without competition, without stress

TYPES OF EXERCISES AND THEIR USE IN DIFFERENT PHASES OF A SPORT PROGRAM

Training exercises are usually divided into three main categories:

1. General exercises
2. Specific exercises
3. Competition exercises

Each type of exercise has its own training effects on athletic abilities. The general characteristics of the main types of exercises are described below.

General Exercises

General exercises, or general physical preparation, have no elements specific to a sport or competition movement. They are a series of exercises borrowed from various forms of physical activity or other sports. General exercises serve as a general physical preparation for motor abilities. They can also be used when the athlete needs to do active physical or mental recovery, e.g. after a difficult competition or a series of particularly demanding practices.

Examples of general exercises are push-ups, sit-ups, skipping, hopping and bounding, rolls, swimming for gymnasts, badminton for cyclists, and so on.

Specific Exercises

Specific exercises contain elements of the sport, as well as certain parts of movements performed in competition. Consequently, the muscle groups used in the sport are recruited to reproduce some of the demands of competition, for example, movements, execution speed, and duration of effort.

Specific exercises are not necessarily carried out in conditions that are *perfectly identical* to those of competition, particularly concerning the intensity, duration, and environment. For example, a sport-specific movement can be repeated several times at a lower than competition intensity or by taking breaks that are shorter or longer than those of competition. The movements specific to a sport can also be performed in an artificial context; athletes might swim in a river rather than in a pool, run in the woods rather than on a track, practise with an object that is heavier or lighter than the one used in competition, carry out certain movements with no opposition or against reduced opposition as compared to competition situations, etc.

By definition, specific exercises contribute directly to the development of the physical conditioning essential to a sport.

In the case of team sports, technical effectiveness and specific physical preparation are closely related; consequently, this type of exercise helps athletes acquire sport-specific skills. For example, the vertical jump, which requires muscular power, is important to executing a smash in volleyball; vertical jumps imitating the smash therefore constitute a specific exercise even when there is no ball to hit.

Some specific exercises relevant to team, technical-artistic, combat, and racquet sports are briefly described below.

Simple Specific Exercises

In simple specific exercises, the athlete performs a technical movement in keeping with the rules of the sport. However, the conditions are such that there is only one predetermined motor response to perform.

The exercises usually focus on a particular component of the movement or a precise technical element. Used especially during the introduction or acquisition stages of a new skill, simple specific exercises are used to acquire the mechanics of a movement. The athlete is put in artificial, easy, constant, and predictable conditions. He or she then learns the precise mechanics of the movement. The exercises require executing a large number of repetitions at a sub-maximal physical effort. Simple specific exercises can also contribute to reinforcing or maintaining a technical movement in keeping with competition demands.

Complex Specific Exercises or Serial Skills

Complex specific exercises or serial skills are exercises in which athletes execute several different movements in the correct order. The athletes know in advance the motor-ability task they must accomplish. When executing the exercises, the athletes try to perform each movement correctly. The purpose of the exercises is to ensure a smooth transition from one movement to another; the sequence of movements must therefore be the same as in competition. The speed of execution can be somewhat lower than that of competition, but it should get closer to competition speed over time. These exercises contribute to the development of variants of basic skills and foster the consolidation of technical movements.

Competition Exercises

Competition exercises (or simulated competition) are the most specific form of preparation there is for an athlete. They consist of executing movements or tasks in the same conditions as those that will be encountered in competition and taking into account particular aspects such as rules, equipment used, environmental conditions (surface, lighting, temperature, time of day when the activities are performed, etc.), and opponents' level, etc. A cross-country skier who skis 10 km at race speed, volleyball players who make passes that finish with a smash at the net against defenders using unpredictable tactics, a gymnast who executes the elements of a routine in sequence and at competition speed, and a tennis player who practises volleys at the net after an exchange are all doing competition exercises.

Competition exercises lead to complex adaptations because they simultaneously bring into play physical, motor, technical, mental, and decisional elements. For this reason, they are important to the development and maintenance of sport form during the Competition Period. When the conditions created during training replicate the demands of competition, this type of exercise represents an effective way of preparing and stabilizing sport form for actual competitions. This type of exercise can also be used to reinforce technical movements, foster tactical learning, or make very specific modifications to technique. In this case, the exercises can be done at a slightly lower than competition intensity.

Note: With young athletes, general and specific exercises should be used most of the time, not competition exercises. This is particularly true during the first weeks of a program.

Simulated Competition Exercises

In this type of exercise, athletes are placed in competition-like conditions and must solve a problem. The conditions call upon the athletes' perceptual abilities (read and react). In certain

sports, simulated competition exercises bring into play the concept of cooperation and synchronization with other partners against active opposition. In team sports, the conditions created by the coach for this type of exercise may involve 2, 3, or 4 players who are engaged in a partial phase of the game. The practice usually focuses on running through the team's tactical combinations and tries to develop organization and cooperation among the players.

To solve the problems encountered in simulated competition exercises, the athletes must: (1) quickly analyze the situation by taking in the relevant information about the intentions (behaviour) of the partners and opponents, (2) make a decision about solutions to the problem, and (3) carry out the appropriate motor response. This last aspect requires the correct technical execution, conducted with precision at the right time and at the right speed, all of this in a changing or dynamic situation.

The objective of this type of exercise is to develop the athletes' self-reliance during the execution of various competition tasks. In the case of team sports, this type of exercise also fosters the capacity for collective organization and emphasizes the completion of important phases of a game. Team members therefore try to:

- Take advantage of the team’s strong points
- Limit the effectiveness of their opponents' strong points
- Take advantage of their opponents' weak points and shortcomings

Competition Exercises – Modified Game

These are competitive situations such as 2 against 2, 3 against 3, 4 against 4 on a smaller or normal playing field. Regular rules can be used, or the coach can modify them if necessary (e.g. make at least three passes before shooting).

Competition Exercises – Directed Game

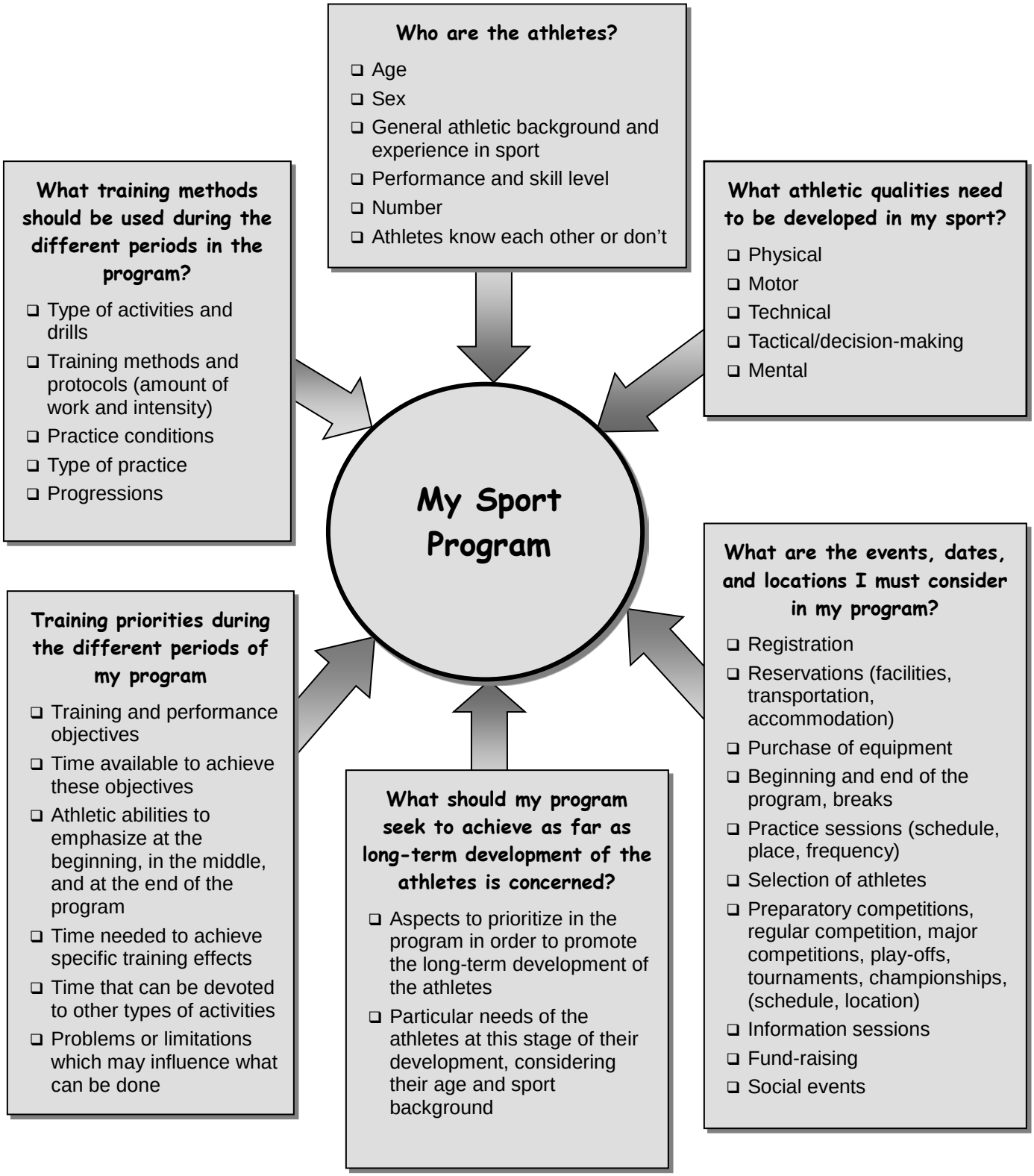
A directed game involves the whole team, with or without opponents, going through a partial phase of a game. The coach's input is essential if tactical learning is to occur in this type of exercise. Two points are particularly important. First, the tactics practised must take into account the players' current physical and technical abilities and be achievable in the immediate future. Second, for athletes to acquire and master the tactics, the coach must provide specific feedback regarding the aspects that require correction.

Inter-squad games during practices with specific directions being given to certain players in some situations is an example of a directed game. In fact, the game often unfolds along well-defined lines, and the coach can intervene at any time to make corrections or changes.

Competition Exercises – Exhibition Game

An exhibition game takes place against a real opponent. It is used to verify athletes' performance capability in terms of technique and tactics. It is also used to evaluate athletes' attitude in stressful situations, to determine the skill of the competitors, and to assess athletes’

Major Questions to Consider When Putting Together a Sport Program


Who are the athletes?
Age
Sex
General athletic background and experience in sport
Performance and skill level
Number
Athletes know each other or don't
What training methods should be used during the different periods in the program?
Type of activities and drills
Training methods and protocols (amount of work and intensity)
Practice conditions
Type of practice
Progressions
What athletic qualities need to be developed in my sport?
Physical
Motor
Technical
Tactical/decision-making
Mental
My Sport Program
Training priorities during the different periods of my program
Training and performance objectives
Time available to achieve these objectives
Athletic abilities to emphasize at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the program
Time needed to achieve specific training effects
Time that can be devoted to other types of activities
Problems or limitations which may influence what can be done
What should my program seek to achieve as far as long-term development of the athletes is concerned?
Aspects to prioritize in the program in order to promote the long-term development of the athletes
Particular needs of the athletes at this stage of their development, considering their age and sport background
What are the events, dates, and locations I must consider in my program?
Registration
Reservations (facilities, transportation, accommodation)
Purchase of equipment
Beginning and end of the program, breaks
Practice sessions (schedule, place, frequency)
Selection of athletes
Preparatory competitions, regular competition, major competitions, play-offs, tournaments, championships, (schedule, location)
Information sessions
Fund-raising
Social events

STRUCTURE OF A SPORT PROGRAM

Periods and Phases of a Sport Program

Knowing the general pattern according to which sport form evolves in the short term allows us to divide a sport program or season into periods. Periods promote the progressive development of athletic abilities and prepare athletes for the major competitions they will participate in.

The periods of a sport program are Preparation, Competition, and Transition.

Period	Beginning	End
Preparation	First practice of the program	First "official" competition of the program
Competition	First "official" competition of the program	Last competition of the program
Transition	Last competition of the program	Last structured training activity of the program

To describe more precisely the major characteristics of a program, each period is usually subdivided into smaller units called phases.

The **Preparation Period** is usually divided into three phases:

4. General Preparation Phase (GPP)
5. Specific Preparation Phase (SPP)
6. Pre-Competition Phase (PCP)

The **Competition Period** is usually divided into two phases:

7. Regular Competition Phase (RCP)
8. Major Competition Phase (MCP)

Whether the phases of the Competition Period are completely distinct or the regular and important competitions overlap varies from sport to sport.

The **Transition Period** is usually not divided into smaller units. The Transition Period generally occurs after the last competition of the season. It is a time for physical, mental, emotional, and social recuperation. It follows a period of high intensity in training and competition. This recuperation can be achieved by complete rest or active rest, where athletes drastically reduce their training volume and intensity, as well as participate in other physical or sporting activities just for fun.

Note: The main characteristics of each period and phase of a sport program and the priorities and objectives of each are covered later in this document.

Types of Sport Programs

There are three main types of sport programs. They can be defined by the number of Competition Periods that occur every year:

- Sport programs based on single periodization

- Sport programs based on double periodization
- Sport programs based on multiple periodization

As its name indicates, a sport program based on single periodization has only one Competition Period per year. This usually ends with one or several major events, e.g. a league that has regular games in the fall and winter and playoffs in the spring, or regular competitions followed by a championship at the end of the season.

Double periodization consists of two distinct Competition Periods each year, e.g. a sport that has a summer season and a winter season.

Multiple periodization consists of more than two distinct Competition Periods, as well as several times when the athlete must achieve high-performance goals.

For athletes in the Competition – Introduction context, the sport program should be based on single periodization.

The next page presents an example of a single-periodization sport program.

DETAILED GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING ATHLETIC ABILITIES

Guidelines for Developing Speed

- Activities must be dynamic (i.e. involve movement and changes of position) and be highly sport-specific; they must also closely replicate the particular movements for which increased speed is desired (adaptations are very specific).
- Movements must be performed at maximal or near-maximal speed.
- For speed to remain high, each repetition must be relatively short (approximately 5-8 seconds).
- Rest between repetitions has to be long enough to allow for sufficient recovery; this will enable the athlete to perform other repetitions at a high speed. Rest intervals can be as many as 12-15 times longer than work periods (e.g. 5 seconds of sprinting followed by 60 seconds of rest).
- Rest periods should consist of very light activity involving the muscles used during the work periods (e.g. a slow walk if the athlete was sprinting.)
- The total number of repetitions must not be too high; approximately 10-12 is the norm, as speed tends to decrease thereafter because of fatigue. It is a good idea to divide repetitions into sets (e.g. 2 sets of 5 repetitions each).
- To avoid injury, athletes should be well warmed up before performing intense exercise.
- Activities aimed at improving speed should be scheduled at the beginning of the main part of the practice session, when athletes are not yet tired.

Guidelines for Developing Speed-Endurance

Note: The systematic development of speed-endurance is **not** recommended before puberty.

- Activities should be dynamic (i.e. involve movement and changes of position) and be highly sport-specific; they must also include the particular movements for which increased speed-endurance is desired (adaptations are very specific).
- The movements must be performed at high speed, but *slightly below* maximum speed. Although high, speed should also be controlled so that it is possible to sustain the effort for between 10 to 45-60 seconds without any significant drop in intensity. For short efforts (e.g. 10-20 seconds), the controlled speed should be close to maximum speed; conversely, if the effort is longer (e.g. 20 seconds and more), speed will have to decrease.
- Rest between repetitions has to be long enough to allow for sufficient recovery; this will enable the athlete to perform other repetitions at a high speed. Rest intervals can be as much as 5-8 times longer than work periods (e.g. 20 seconds of effort followed by 2 minutes of rest; in this case, the duration of the rest period is 6 times the duration of the intense effort).
- Rest periods should consist of very light activity involving the muscles used during the work periods (e.g. jogging or walking after an intense run).

- For intense efforts lasting approximately 15 to 30 seconds, the total number of repetitions should be between 6 and 12. It is a good idea to divide the repetitions into sets (e.g. 2 sets of 6 repetitions each).
- For intense efforts lasting approximately 30 to 45 seconds, the total number of repetitions should be between 4 and 8. It is a good idea to divide the repetitions into sets (e.g. 2 sets of 4 repetitions each).
- It is also possible to develop speed-endurance in sport-specific situations by alternating high-intensity efforts of approximately 30 to 45 seconds with longer active recovery periods at a much lower intensity.
- To avoid injuries, athletes should be well warmed-up before engaging in intense efforts.
- Activities to develop endurance-speed should take place when the athletes are not yet tired.

Guidelines for Developing Aerobic Stamina

- The effort should be dynamic, and it should involve large muscle masses (running, cycling, swimming, skating, etc.).
- The sport itself can also be used to develop aerobic stamina (e.g. soccer, basketball, volleyball, judo); in this case, however, it might be necessary to modify the normal competition conditions of the sport to achieve the desired training effect (see below).
- The effort must be sustained for a few minutes (3 to 5, often more), and the athletes have to be active for most of that time (e.g. moving as much as possible).
- The speed of execution (i.e. the intensity) can vary, but it should not be lower than what would be considered a moderate intensity for the athlete's age.
- The same intensity or speed of execution may not be suitable for every athlete; it is important to recognize that work intensity may have to be individualized.
- The activity or exercise can be continuous (i.e. no rest periods) or intermittent (alternating periods of work and recovery).
- Fatigue may occur during low- to moderate-intensity efforts (e.g. 30 minutes of cycling or 20 minutes of running) because of the longer duration.
- If the efforts are intense, active rest periods may be included between periods of activity (e.g. 2 minutes of effort followed by approximately 1 minute of less intense effort, repeated for a total period of 15 minutes, or 1 minute of effort followed by approximately 30 seconds of rest, repeated for a total period of about 10 minutes); this type of intermittent effort usually allows athletes to maintain a relatively high intensity without causing too much fatigue.
- The same principles can apply to team sports, where athletes are asked to play non-stop in a limited area for 5 to 10 minutes; in this type of activity, all athletes must be moving at all times. Coaches should have extra balls, pucks, etc., on hand to keep the level of activity high and to minimize recovery periods during the activity when the control implement is lost.

Guidelines for Developing Coordination

- The activity must involve a sequence of actions that are performed in a given order.

- The level of difficulty of an activity aimed at developing coordination is determined primarily by the number of movements or actions that must be performed; beginners and children should not have too many movements or actions to perform in sequence (2 or 3 are sufficient).
- The actions or movements can be general in nature, or specific to the sport, depending on the desired goal. For young children, priority should be given to general coordination activities instead of sport-specific ones.
- Basic motor patterns must be mastered **before** the athlete tries a more complex sequence of actions. For instance, if athletes are not able to control basic motor patterns (e.g. running, jumping, rolling, turning, throwing and catching, jumping on one leg while maintaining balance, or lifting an arm and the opposite leg simultaneously), they should not attempt more advanced coordination activities.
- Sequences of movement can be designed for specific body parts (e.g. arms only, or legs only), for several body parts at a time, or for the entire body; coordination activities can also take the form of agility games (e.g. “follow the leader”).
- It is important to ensure that the sequence of movements is correctly executed, as the neuromuscular system tends to memorize motor patterns as they are learned in practice; for this reason, movements should be performed at low speed or intensity during the initial learning phase and then progressively accelerated to full speed.
- It is desirable to create conditions that require athletes to perform movements in various directions or use their weaker side.
- An activity can be made more challenging by:
    - Increasing the speed of execution
    - Adding new movements
    - Modifying the order in which the movements must be performed
    - Combining various actions already mastered but performing them in an unusual manner (e.g. dribbling the ball while squatting; running in the snow, sand, or water)
    - Adding restrictions (e.g. less time, less space, increased accuracy, unstable environment)
    - Adding uncertainty (e.g. performing the action with the eyes shut)

  These variations have to be presented gradually, and only after the basic sequence of actions is mastered
- It is better to repeat movement sequences more frequently for less time than to repeat them less frequently for more time; in other words, learning tends to be more effective if you have two 5-minute motor sequences four times a week than if you have one 40-minute practice session once a week.

Guidelines for Developing Balance

- Although their primary focus is slightly different, some coordination or general motor development activities may also contribute to the development of balance.
- In general, developing balance requires creating conditions in which the athletes assume an unusual position or posture (e.g. stand on one foot, stand on one foot and crouch,

jump on a low bench and stay in position, hopping on one foot, on the spot, forward, backward) and are asked to maintain it for a specified period of time.

- It is also possible to develop balance by performing normal movements in unusual conditions, for instance walking backward, with eyes closed, on heels, on a slope or a narrow and unstable surface (by drawing a line on the ground or placing a rope on the floor), etc. However, it is important to avoid excessively difficult situations that could cause falls or injuries.
- The use of large exercise balls (stability balls) can also present interesting motor challenges and can help develop balance. By using such balls, athletes make simple everyday activities such as sitting, standing, or trying to maintain a horizontal body position much more difficult. Again, it is necessary to take appropriate safety measures to minimize the risk of a fall.
- To improve static balance and stability, athletes must lower their centre of gravity (for instance by bending the knees or flexing the hips), make the base of support larger (for instance by widening the legs), increase the number of contact points on the ground if this is possible (for instance by putting one hand on the ground), and ensure the weight is evenly distributed on each contact point.

Guidelines for Developing Flexibility

Note: The points below relate to the method of developing flexibility called static stretching. Examples of stretching exercises for the main muscle groups are provided on the following page.

- Flexibility exercises should be preceded by a light warm-up involving continuous, dynamic efforts (e.g. light running for 5 minutes).
- The exercises are performed without the help of a partner and without the application of external force on the limb or joint.
- The muscle or muscle group must be stretched in a controlled and gradual manner, without any interruption of the movement, until a slight tension is felt. Once the muscle is slightly stretched and relaxed, the athlete must hold the position for 20 to 40 seconds.
- The athlete should breathe slowly and deeply when performing a stretch.
- Exercises should be performed on both sides.
- Each exercise can be repeated 2 to 4 times during a practice session.
- Quick, sudden movements should be avoided when stretching, especially when the muscle is not sufficiently warm.
- The cool-down period of a practice session is a good time to perform flexibility exercises because muscles are normally adequately warmed up at that point, and flexibility does not involve intense effort. While athletes are stretching, the coach can gather feedback concerning the practice session and can provide his or her feedback or information as required.

Guidelines for Developing Strength

In most sports, development of the various types of strength (maximum strength, speed-strength, strength-endurance) is difficult to achieve through the sport or activity itself. In addition, certain guidelines must be followed to avoid injuries, particularly among children and beginners.

Specific strength-development methods, as well as particular safety measures that must be considered and implemented, are covered in other NCCP workshops. The following considerations are provided for guidance, and they are aimed at young athletes getting started in strength training.

Examples of strengthening exercises using body weight and light weights are provided on the next page.

- In general, exercises involve localized muscle masses. In most of these exercises, the resistance is provided by the body weight of the athlete or by relatively light weights.
- It is recommended that athletes avoid heavy loads. Ensure that athletes are able to perform at least 12 to 15 consecutive repetitions of each exercise. Under such conditions, strength-endurance becomes the primary ability trained.
- The speed of execution must be moderate and controlled; athletes must end the exercise when the quality of execution starts to deteriorate.
- It is possible to use jumping or hopping exercises; the speed of execution and muscle contraction are higher, and these exercises will therefore develop speed-strength (muscle power).
- Avoid exercises that could excessively overload the spine (compression stress).
- While developing strength, aim for muscle balance; for instance, develop both the upper- and lower-body muscle groups, the muscles in front and behind body segments, and muscles on both the right and left sides.

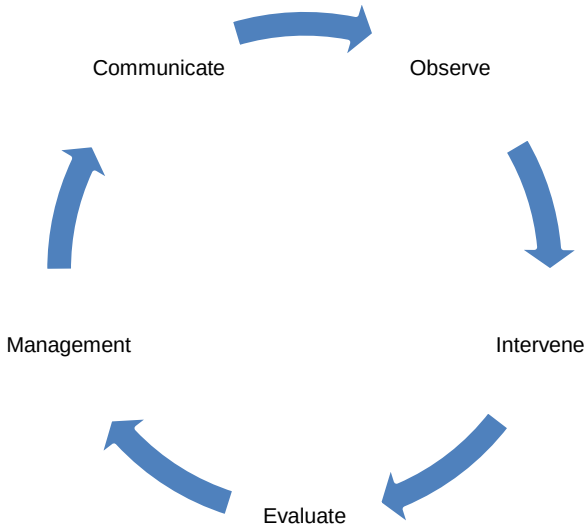
Guidelines for Developing Tactics

- The activity should imitate competitive or real-play situations at athletes' performance level.
- Athletes must have a clear understanding of the desired objective for the situation/activity (e.g. quick transition to outnumber the opponent, surprise an opponent to gain an advantage in a particular situation).
- The situation should involve some degree of uncertainty and should present a number of options to athletes. Avoid stereotypical and predictable situations where the athletes do not have to think or focus.
- Athletes should be encouraged to be creative.
- The activity should be performed at game speed; in some cases, especially in the first few trials or to ensure that athletes have a clear understanding of the intent of the activity, the pace can be somewhat slower.
- Ask athletes about their choices or decision-making process to help them discover the options available to them. This approach requires athletes to reflect critically on their choices.
- Some examples of questions include:
    - What did you see in the situation?
    - What choices did you think you had, and what did you think would have been the possible outcomes of each?
    - What clues did you use to guide your choice(s)?
    - What were you hoping would occur as a result of your choice(s)?
    - What do you think is the best way to gain an advantage over the opponent in this situation? Why?
    - What can you do to hide your intentions from the opponent for as long as possible?
    - What actions can you take to make the opponent unsure about what you want to do or about where and when you will do it?

UNIT: SUPPORT THE ATHLETE IN TRAINING

www.basketball.ca

The Coaching Cycle



Management – "Bring the future to the present so you can do something about it now"

Don't mistake activity for achievement – John Wooden

Outcome – What do you want to achieve?

- **Big picture** (the season) – strategies and schedules for basketball, physical, mental and social / emotional training.
- Goals for the season.

Process – How are we going to achieve our goals?

- **Middle picture** (the practice and games) – tactics, strategies, technical decisions and skills for that day?

  Practice Plan

  - What are we working on today as far as the basketball, physical, mental, social / emotional skills and concepts?
  - Logistics.

  Game plan

  - Logistics.
  - Transition, mid clock, late clock, special situations
  - Roles – players, assistant coaches
  - How we will defend penetration, cutting, screens, transition and post up?
- **Little picture** (the activity).

  Practice

  - Space – how can you best make use of the available space
  - People – how many people in the drill, what is the rotation,
  - Equipment – how will it be distributed, stored, collected
  - Time – how much, when does the drill start, when does it end

- Concepts – what is it you want to achieve from the drill, what is it's purpose, what is it called
- Learning - how can we optimize the learning, what method should be used?
    - Strategic approach – introduce the entire strategy – this could be 5 on 5 (Whole), 5 on 0
    - Hard first – introduce the decisions first
    - Drills approach – break it down into smaller concepts
    - Guided defense / offence – to assist in the teaching
    - Games approach – use of modified games to teach the skills and concepts
    - TLC – is the activity a teaching situation (stop at any time), learning activity (coach on the fly) or competitive (treat it like the game).

Game

- Points of attacks – attacking the weakness of defence, weakness of a defender, strength of offence, or strength of offensive player.
- Points of emphasis – defence, transition, special situations

COMMUNICATE – "GIVE INSTRUCTIONS THAT CANNOT BE MISUNDERSTOOD"

Three parts to communication:

- Telling
  - Inform the participants of the plan
  - Verbal – tell them, visual – show them, feel it – put them in the proper position
  - Body language.
- Listening
  - Eye and ears. Wait until you have everyone's attention before you communicate.
  - One voice at a time.
  - Honor what people have to say.
- Comprehension
  - Have the players repeat the instructions
  - 3C = 5W+ H - Clear concise communication = who, what, when, where, why and how
  - Use a formation that allows you to see everyone. Never put your back to the group.
  - Speak through the drill.
  - Vocabulary.
  - One or two points at a time.
  - Emphasize the last word.
  - Never assume.

OBSERVATION –"DOG AWARENESS" (SEE EVERYTHING THAT IS GOING ON)

Practice

- Error detection / correction
- Pattern first – do the athletes know how the drill rotates?
- Biomechanics – are they on balance, are the using the proper joints in the proper order, do they have a good start and finish position?
- Load – is the activity meeting the proper skill = challenge balance. If too skilled they get bored; if too challenging they get frustrated.
- I.C.E. – intensity, concentration, enthusiasm. Are these elements occurring at the level you want?
- Assigned roles – who watches what in games and practice
- Self –observation – monitor your own vision, thoughts and feelings.

Game

- Roles – players, coaches.
- On ball.
- Off ball.
- Interior, perimeter.
- Offence, defence.
- Your team, opponent.
- Self-observation.

INTERVENTIONS – "BE FUSSY, NOT FLOSSY"

- **Motivate** – clap, positive non-specific feedback. "good job", "way to go"
- **Use of a pre set standard** – make 5 in a row
- **Correct**
    - Explain how to do it right (visual, auditory, kinesthic)
        - On the fly – pull the athlete having the problem out of the group.
        - Whole group – when everyone is having problems.
    - Use of guides or teaching aids – discover how to do it right.
- **Repeat** – repeat key points, demonstrate or repeat the previous demo
- **Observe** – describe what the athlete has just done (specific individual feedback) ("Excellent balance on your two foot stop").
- **Question** – Ask the athlete to explain or demo. Use "what and how" questions not "who and why".
- **Help** – Have the athlete start again, reassure, encourage
- **Inhibit** – Do nothing, shout, rebuke, reductionary talk

In practice TLC.

- Teaching, learning or competitive.
- Roles for coaches.

In game

- Roles of coaches.
- Use of subs.
- Use of timeouts.
- Tactical vs. strategic changes – do you change to another offence or the point of attack. Do you switch to the zone defence or emphasize better help rotation in the man to man defence.

Correct one thing at a time – remember the purpose or desired outcome of the drill. If your outcome is the decision don't make feedback on the skill.

When the athlete doesn't do what you ask:

- Physical – "dunk the basketball" - doesn't have the skills level or the strength to complete the task.
- Mentally – doesn't understand the language you have used.
- Emotionally / socially – doesn't care or is hesitant because of the fear of injury or failure.

In all of these situations it is still the job of the coach to make an adjustment

.

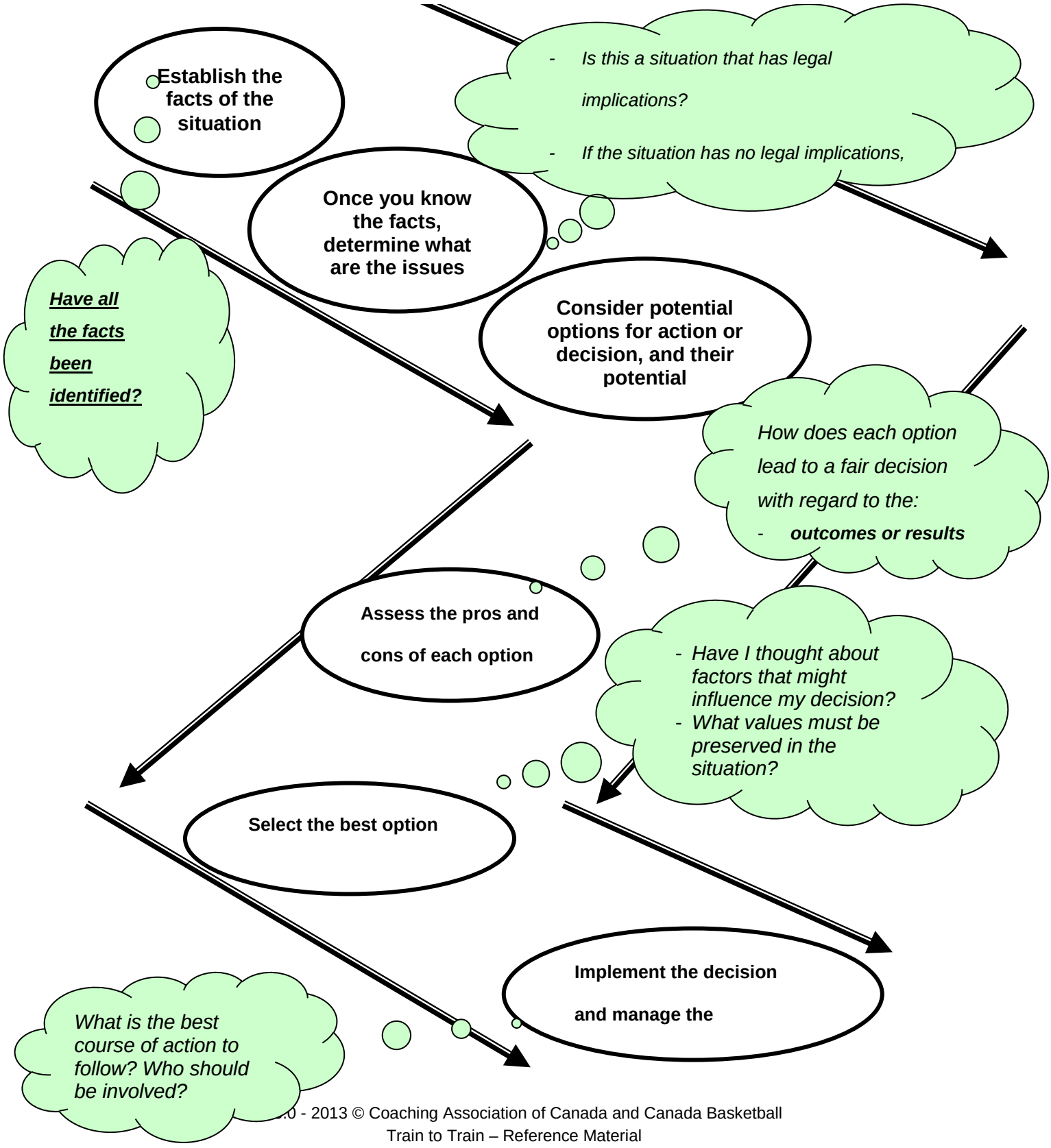
Evaluation – "Self-reflection is the highest form of learning"

- Who does the evaluation – coaches, players?
- When is it done – post practice, post game, post activity, post shift, end of season, mid-season?
- What type of evaluation – written, verbal, video, self, by position.
- Balance between telling vs. listening.

- Balance between outcomes vs. process.
- Use measures able language:
  - I am going to **start**…
  - I am going to **stop** …
  - I am going to **increase** …
  - I am going to **decrease**…
  - I am going to **maintain** …
- One thing.
  - What is **one thing** you learned from today?
  - What is **one thing** you can improve on?
  - What is **one thing** you can practice on your own before next practice?
  - What is **one thing** you can do to be a better (son, daughter, student, or friend)?

- Debriefs
  - "I" debrief – let the player debrief him/her self first
  - "you" debrief – someone else tells the person what he/she did well
  - "we" debrief – summarize for the whole team
  - Leads you back to planning

Analysis and Decision-Making Process for Situations That Have Ethical Implications



Ethical Scenarios

Make use of the ethical decision making process with the following scenarios

1. Your team has a 6:00 PM league game on Friday night in a town two hours away. The team is scheduled to depart from the parking lot, of the gym where you practice, at 3:00 PM. Three cars are scheduled drive the team, your car can comfortably fit four people. One parent has agreed to take six and the other will take five. This covers the 15 people who make up the team. Just as you are about to depart the 17 year old brother of one of the players ,shows up. He claims his father had an emergency and said it was ok for him to take his place and drive the six players.

2. In your preseason meeting with parents and players you had all agree that when travelling the players should "dress appropriately". It was agreed that as a team you wanted to present a positive image. As you are about to leave for a play-off game the last two players arrive. Their dress is somewhat inappropriate. There is no time for the players to return home and change without making the rest of the team late for the game.

3. At the first game of the season one of the parents of your team is shouting at the referees. At first he is just questioning the calls. As the game progresses he begins to make his comments personal, questioning the intelligence and honest of the officials. You notice that this is visibility upsetting his son.

4. As practice begins at 6:00 PM you notice that one of the players is absent. from your competitive team. You ask the other players if they know anything about Sally's absence. Everyone says Sally's was in school. You can tell by the players looks that they know more, but are not willing to divulge any other information. 15 minutes later Sally shows up. You allow her to join practice making a note to talk to her about her lateness. After practice you pull her aside and ask why she was late. After some prodding she explains to you that she has to stay at home and babysit her little brother so her mother can work. She hopes it will only means she is late for practices, but her mother is on shift work at it is at the discretion of her boss. She may have to miss other practices and games.

5. Your team has been picked and has just competed in the first game of the year. Most of the players on the team have been together for a number of years, playing on the same club team. One new boy, Peter, just moved into the area. Peter became a starter replacing Sam. The next day in comes to your attention that Sam has updated his Facebook status with some derogatory comments about Peter.

Trainability

People involved in youth sport must understand that there are windows of opportunity for the optimum training of the various components of fitness. These are biologically based. These windows revolve around a child's Peak Height Velocity (PHV). This is the point when the speed of a child's growth is at its greatest during puberty. If these windows are missed the child will never reach his/her highest potential. Also inappropriate training at the wrong time can seriously harm the child's development. Young children lifting heavy weights is a prime example of training in outside the proper window.

Recommendation(s)

- Education – all parties need to know when are the windows, why these exist, and what is appropriate training.
- Develop resource that make it easy for coaches and teachers to apply LTAD appropriate training
- Make use of the LTAD wall chart to monitor PHV.
- Recognize that males and females grow at different rates.
- Reduce competition schedule to actually allow athletes to train
- Avoid some traditional practices such as; long slow distance running as the only method to improve aerobic capacity, static flexibility training pre and post activity, the use of strength training with heavy weights at in appropriate times, lack of speed training in all phases of training

Rationale

- Every child is an athlete and needs the proper grounding in movement in order to develop an appreciation for physical activity and therefore derive the health benefits. This will also let them make wiser decisions as to which pathway of sport to choose.
- Trainability is based on scientific research.
- It allows our athletes to maximize their potential

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- What are your current programs or practices that are meeting this principle?

Weaknesses

- Where are the biggest problems with meeting this principle?

Opportunities

- To create situations for the three pathways of basketball (health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation) can be delivered in this country

Threats

- What are the biggest roadblocks to implementation of this principle?

Calendar Planning for Competition

The basketball deliver system consists of three streams: health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation. Another stream has creped into the delivery system that is beginning to dominate the development stage. We call it “competitive basketball”. In this stream games between two teams dominate. Players are not receiving sufficient time for training. When practice to competition ratios are at a 1 to 1 or 1 to 2 ratio development does not occur. Coaches may claim that the team improves, but players are not able to work on their fundamental movement and basketball skills. Mental and social/ emotional training often gets ignored. Training is dominated by strategies and tactics in preparation for the next game. In many situations players are not receiving quality playing time. Players therefore do not get an opportunity to use their skills, lose conditioning, lose interest and drop out of the sport at the younger stages. Often these are late maturing athletes. Our children are currently playing too many games without enough quality training. We have adopted adult models for youth sport. All sports must get a handle on this situation. This is the biggest challenge facing team sports in our country.

Recommendation(s)

- Education of all stakeholders in the importance of proper practice to competition ratios
- Develop strategies to access and make better use of facilities
- Share “best practices” that are occurring within the basketball community, but also across sports.
- Develop a positive working relationship with schools in order to work together to implement LTAD.
- Reward programs and coaches who adhere to LTAD. We must ensure that “hidden” messages are not being sent through our competition rules that encourage coaches and leagues to violate LTAD principles. Very often when associations adopt season of play without restricting the number of games, coaches attempt to “load up” with the same number of games as were played in the past.
- Improve coaching education through the New NCCP
- Assist coaches in the concept of “training through competition”. The outcome of all games is not treated as important. Some games are designed as training.
- Coaches also need to recognize the amount of time that can be used for teaching by using warm up and half times as training and teaching time.

Rationale

- In order to allow athletes to develop holistically in all areas they need time to train. Athletes do not develop all of the important skills they need at the later stages of LTAD by playing games
- Sport needs to develop the school model. Students go to class to learn the skills. The game is the time to exhibit their mastery of the skills. Lessons learned at a younger age are built on in a progressive nature leading the developing child to the adult stage of competency.
- Every child, even those who just want to play recreational sports, needs to develop the important movement skills at the right time in their development.
- Too many “adult” like games with the emphasis on winning has been shown in study after study as the main reason for youth to quit sport.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- What are your current programs or practices that are meeting this principle?

Weaknesses

- Where are the biggest problems with meeting this principle?

Opportunities

- To create situations for the three pathways of basketball (health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation) can be delivered in this country

Threats

- What are the biggest roadblocks to implementation of this principle?

Continuous improvement

Sports must continue to respond to research that keeps them up to date. We need input from all partners. Sports are being challenged to form PET's (Performance Enhancement Teams). These are groups of world class experts who provide information to the coach on the most recent and up to date material. Group decisions are made that produce the best possible training for the athletes. No one can be the expert on all areas of a sport. We must also constantly "mine the data" to share best practice within our sport and from other sports.

Change is brought about through improvement and innovation. These must be monitored to evaluate their effectiveness. An example is the implementation of FIBA rules. Many groups want to make modifications because of the assumption that players will not be able to handle the rule. When modifications are made they must be monitored to determine when the modification is no longer required. The players need to be progressing towards the adult game. We currently do this with basket height and ball size. The same concept needs to be implemented in all modifications.

Recommendation(s)

- Advisory committees need to be established to analysis current practices. These committees should be a cross section of the basketball community. It is not wise to have all members from a similar background and specialists in the same stage of LTAD.
- Actions plans are developed to determine implementation strategies.
- Measurements need to be taken to determine the impact of the strategy
- Constant monitoring needs to be done
- Best practices need to be shared across the country.
- Sport specific research needs to be done to explore the concepts and ideas that are currently in use.

Rationale

- LTAD is a living growing document, without constant monitoring it becomes another "flash in the pan".
- By engaging all parties in the process they take ownership of LTAD.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- What are your current programs or practices that are meeting this principle?

Weaknesses

- Where are the biggest problems with meeting this principle?

Opportunities

- To create situations for the three pathways of basketball (health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation) can be delivered in this country

Threats

- What are the biggest roadblocks to implementation of this principle?

Developmental age

We must recognize that not all children grow and mature at the same rate. Girls also mature faster than boys on average. There is a tendency to apply adult models of sport on children and to apply male models on females. Too often it is the early maturing athlete who gets to make the elite teams during the development stages. This is often based on the fact that the early maturing athlete is more aggressive and can physically dominate the other players. Research has shown that very often the late maturing children become the superior athletes since they have more time to develop the fundamental movement skills. Also the early maturing athlete, who relies on aggression and strength, often does not learn the skills at a younger age. They do not develop the coping skills needed to survive elite sport when the physical maturity playing field is level.

Leagues and associations that use chronological age for cut off dates build in a natural bias to players born prior to the cut off date. If the cut off date is January 1st those players born in December are often one year less mature and therefore are often not selected. Statistic form many sports show this bias in their participation numbers. There is a big concern with the dropout rate of females from sport in their early teens.

Recommendation(s)

- Implement the LTAD wall chart to monitor growth
- "Mine the data" – all associations need to look at their data to see if age based biases are being created in their delivery system.
- "Mine the data" to see if male and female biases occur. What impact does co-ed programming have on the retention of females in sport? Special programs must be developed to keep female athletes involved.
- Use single age categories instead of multi-year
- Educate parents, teachers, coaches and administrators
- Give templates to the above parties to allow them to easily implement LTAD appropriate training
- Show coaches and teacher how training of early, late and middle matures can be implemented in a team situation
- Give opportunities for late maturing athletes to be involved in "select" programs
- Re-evaluate and revisit the rationale behind national/provincial championships during developmental ages
- Develop ways to remove the age bias. For example; age on date for competitions
- We must find a balance between what is appropriative for the child in regard to their physical development and their social / emotional needs.

Rationale

- Every child is an athlete and needs the proper grounding in movement in order to develop an appreciation for physical activity and therefore derive the health benefits. This will also let them make wiser decisions as to which pathway of sport to choose.
- Many late maturing athletes are dropping out of our sport before they have a chance to excel
- Too many females are leaving sport

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- What are your current programs or practices that are meeting this principle?

Weaknesses

- Where are the biggest problems with meeting this principle?

Opportunities

- To create situations for the three pathways of basketball (health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation) can be delivered in this country

Threats

- What are the biggest roadblocks to implementation of this principle?

FUNdamentals

All participants need to learn basic fundamental movement skills at the appropriate stages of development. Since the nervous system develops first in children, movement skills that involve the nervous system need to be active at this time. These include agility, balance, coordination and speed. If children do not learn these at the appropriate time in their development, they will never reach their fullest potential in the future. We must recognize the difference between *physical literacy* and *physical activity*. Physical literacy means a child is able to effectively move the body in all planes of the body. It also means the child can track objects which are important in catching and striking skills. The physically active child is energetic and on the go. This is important for maintaining health. The problem is that if a child does not learn how to move properly he/she limits their choices of physical activity at a later stage of LTAD. For example; if a child's only physical activity is walking at a younger stage what sports may this child move into in later life?

Recommendation(s)

- Education of parents, coaches and administrators is crucial. Informed parents will demand this be delivered to their children.
- Develop templates that assist the above mentioned people to plan and implement appropriate fundamental movement development
- Develop resources that show how these movement skills can be properly taught in a fun way. Many fun playground games naturally teach these skills. It is not always about drills.
- Work to develop relationships across other sports that are delivering sport at these stages of LTAD.
- Fundamental movement need to be a part of warm up and early season training at all stages of LTAD.

Rationale

- Every child is an athlete and needs the proper grounding in movement in order to develop an appreciation for physical activity and therefore derive the health benefits. This will also let them make wiser decisions as to which pathway of sport to choose.
- Educated people will aid in the implementation of LTAD
- Many weaknesses of sport specific skills can be linked to ineffective or poorly developed movement skill. If the movement skill is not corrected first the sport skill will suffer. A basketball example is the layup. If a child has problem with skipping, a fundamental movement, he/she will struggle to develop the proper rhythm in executing a layup.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- What are your current programs or practices that are meeting this principle?

Weaknesses

- Where are the biggest problems with meeting this principle?

Opportunities

- To create situations for the three pathways of basketball (health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation) can be delivered in this country

Threats

- What are the biggest roadblocks to implementation of this principle?

Periodization

Periodization is time management. It provides the frame work for arranging all of the pieces in an athletes training. In order for athletes to develop they need to plan their training in a more scientific way. At a simpler level it helps recreational athletes manage their time more effectively and ensures that they are covering all components required for a healthy life style. Proper periodization provides a plan that can be evaluated in the future. This evaluation helps guide future plans. Currently the majority of coaches' base there plans on past practices and on the competition schedule. More individualize plans must be developed for athletes even in team sports. Coaches need to be shown ways to maximize the training time they have with their athletes.

Recommendation(s)

- Educate all parties as to the benefits of periodization
- Work with the "experts" to develop more team sport friendly periodization. Much of the current research is based on individual sports and is not easily adaptable to the team sport environment.
- Develop templates that show coaches how use periodization at each stage of development. Also coaches need to be made aware of what to avoid. For example; as the "big" games approach late in the season coaches should reduce the volume of practice, not increase the length of practice to prepare for the opponent.
- More work must be done to understand the female athlete. We cannot continually push male models unto our female athletes.
- Monitor plans to with a "scientific eye" to make decisions on future revisions to the templates.
- Periodization will be part of the New NCCP coaching education
- Seasons of play must be developed in conjunction with the various delivers of basketball so that proper periodization can occur.
- We need to establish a positive working relationship with school based basketball in order to implement proper periodization.
- Work with other sports to develop proper periodization with the multi-sport athlete at the beginning stages of LTAD.

Rationale

- In order to maximize an athlete potential proper planning must occur in order to ensure all components are met.
- By constantly monitoring the plan innovations and improvements can be monitored to judge their effectiveness.
- All children need to learn time management and planning as a future life skill.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- What are your current programs or practices that are meeting this principle?

Weaknesses

- Where are the biggest problems with meeting this principle?

Opportunities

- To create situations for the three pathways of basketball (health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation) can be delivered in this country

Threats

- What are the biggest roadblocks to implementation of this principle?

Physical, mental, cognitive and emotional development

More than just the skills of the game need to be addressed. All areas of an athlete's development must be included in sport programs. Training and competitive and recovery programs should consider, mental, cognitive and emotional development of each athlete. Decision making is a major point of emphasis. A major objective of LTAD is a holistic approach to athletic development. This includes emphasis on ethics, fair play and character building throughout the various stages, an objective that reflects Canadian values. Programming should be designed considering athlete's cognitive ability to address these concepts.

Recommendation(s)

- All deliverers of basketball programming need to review how they are currently developing the physical, mental and social/emotional abilities of their athletes. Also, how are ethics and values being taught and modelled within the organization?
- Decision making or "when" to use skills is to be emphasized at all stages of LTAD. This is based on keys that the athlete detects, not on coaches commands.
- Coaches need to progress athletes through the various stages of LTAD with the goal of creating a self-reliant athlete who has the physical, mental and social/emotional skills to make their own decisions on their future.
- Work needs to be done in accounting for the differences between female and male athletes. Also we must recognize that athletes with a disability may require special attention.
- Templates need to be developed to aid all parties in delivering holistic training.
- A key component of the New NCCP is the holistic approach
- Mental and emotional/social training needs to be delivered in conjunction with the physical training. It cannot be seen as an "add on" done outside the practice and competition site.
- Rewarding players solely on the bases of their physical superiority can lead to societal problems in the future. This has occurred mostly on the male's side of the sport, but is becoming a problem on the female's side also. Associations must check to see what "subliminal" messages are being sent though team selections, scholarships, and awards.

Rationale

- Every child is an athlete and needs to develop skills, knowledge and comfort in all areas in order to make the best decision in the future as to their own well being.
- Canadians believe that sport has a more important role; more than just producing winners and losers. It has a key role in developing future leaders and positive members of society.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- What are your current programs or practices that are meeting this principle?

Weaknesses

- Where are the biggest problems with meeting this principle?

Opportunities

- To create situations for the three pathways of basketball (health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation) can be delivered in this country

Threats

- What are the biggest roadblocks to implementation of this principle?

Specialization

Early specialization in a late specialized sport, like basketball, has been shown to lead too:

- One sided sport specific preparation
- Lack of the basic fundamental movement skills
- Overuse injuries
- Early burnout
- Early retirement form training and competition

Specialization is not only the concept of specialization in one sport; it is also specialization within the sport. Basketball has continually forced the tall player to play in the "post". Often this has meant the child was not been allowed to use all of the skills required to play the game at the later stage of LTAD, when other late maturing player catch up and some times pass this player.

Recommendation(s)

- During the first three stages of LTAD we need to develop "global" players. These are players who have worked on all the skills and have trained to play every position.
- Make use of offences and defences that encourage flexible positioning in the developmental stages of LTAD.
- Review our current elite system. Are we selecting provincial/national teams too early?
- Fundamental movement skills need to be part of daily warm ups in training and in competition
- Strategies need to be developed that allow for coaches to account for early, middle and late matures.
- Strategies need to be developed to help with athlete identification vs. athlete selection. Currently we are selecting from the players who "show up" to try out. We need to identify future players and ensure that they receive the proper multi-skilled training at the early stages of LTAD. Many are exiting our sport in the later stages of LTAD or arrive there without the necessary skills need to compete.
- Means must be found to include athletes with a disability in all stages of programming. Resources need to be developed to show coaches how this can be accomplished.

Rationale

- Every child is an athlete and needs the proper grounding in movement in order to develop an appreciation for physical activity and therefore derive the health benefits. This will also let them make wiser decisions as to which pathway of sport to choose.
- The inability to detect the "great athlete" until after maturity.
- Reduce boredom, frustration, burn outs and drop outs
- Ensure that all children develop the skills necessary to play at the next stage of LTAD if they wish too.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- What are your current programs or practices that are meeting this principle?

Weaknesses

- Where are the biggest problems with meeting this principle?

Opportunities

- To create situations for the three pathways of basketball (health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation) can be delivered in this country

Threats

- What are the biggest roadblocks to implementation of this principle?

System alignment and integration

Groups cannot work in isolation. The government of Canada is challenging sports to arrange all delivery agencies of their sport to become aligned. Children do not remain in same delivery system throughout their entire sporting experience. Children, coaches, officials and administrators should be able to move seamlessly from one delivery system to the next. One rule set is the best example of aligning our system. Participants need to see clear pathways for players, coaches, officials and administrators. There needs to be various entry points. These pathways must be available for all three streams of sport: health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation.

System alignment also involves integrating all of the ancillary groups into the sport system. His includes such groups as the sport scientist, trainers, managers, sponsors etc.

Recommendation(s)

- Continue or movement towards one rule set
- Continue to grow Be One as a way to bring the basketball community together
- Work to develop positive working relationships with all deliverers of basketball
- Continue to educate the grassroots as to the importance of LTAD
- Distribution of the basketball specific LTAD brochure
- Develop resources to enhance sharing
- Engage all partners in the process
- Engage all levels of government to assist in aligning the system

Rationale

- Without an aligned system we can not impact the “game”
- Sport Canada is moving to accountability. LTAD alignment is one of the key factors. Provincial sport organizations are also moving to the implementation of LTAD. This will move across ministries i.e. health and education at the provincial level, sport and wellness at the federal level.
- An aligned system allows basketball to be a leader and have a positive influence in all areas of the Canadian Sport System and society.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- What are your current programs or practices that are meeting this principle?

Weaknesses

- Where are the biggest problems with meeting this principle?

Opportunities

- To create situations for the three pathways of basketball (health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation) can be delivered in this country

Threats

- What are the biggest roadblocks to implementation of this principle?

The 10 year rule

Scientific research has shown that it takes a minimum of 10 years of training for a talented athlete to reach elite levels. The trap is that many people believe that early specialization is what is needed to make this happen. “If I start young then I will be better sooner”. The opposite is actually true. Most athletes only have ten years at an elite level. If you specialize too early the likely hood of staying in the sport is diminished.

Recommendation(s)

- Delay specialization
- Focus on multi-sport skills in the pre-PHV (peak height velocity – fastest growth during puberty) stages
- Move to specialization at some point after PHV
- Education of the parents, coaches and players is crucial in assist them in making appropriate decisions
- To be an elite athlete you will eventually need to specialize in your chosen sport
- Develop pro leagues where athletes in this country can specialize at the appropriate stage of LTAD.
- Develop relationships with other sports to stop the vicious cycle of competing for younger and younger athletes.

Rationale

- Every child is an athlete and needs the proper grounding in movement in order to develop an appreciation for physical activity and therefore derive the health benefits. This will also let them make wiser decisions as to which pathway of sport to choose.
- To avoid burn out at an early ages.
- When athletes reach the point where they need to specialize they will have the foundation required to excel at their highest level and the mental freshness to put in the required time.
- To avoid overuse injuries
- Poor decisions are being made at too early in a child’s development. This leads to not enough athletes staying in the sport at the latter years when they can specialize.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- What are your current programs or practices that are meeting this principle?

Weaknesses

- Where are the biggest problems with meeting this principle?

Opportunities

- To create situations for the three pathways of basketball (health of the nation, develop the game and compete for the nation) can be delivered in this country

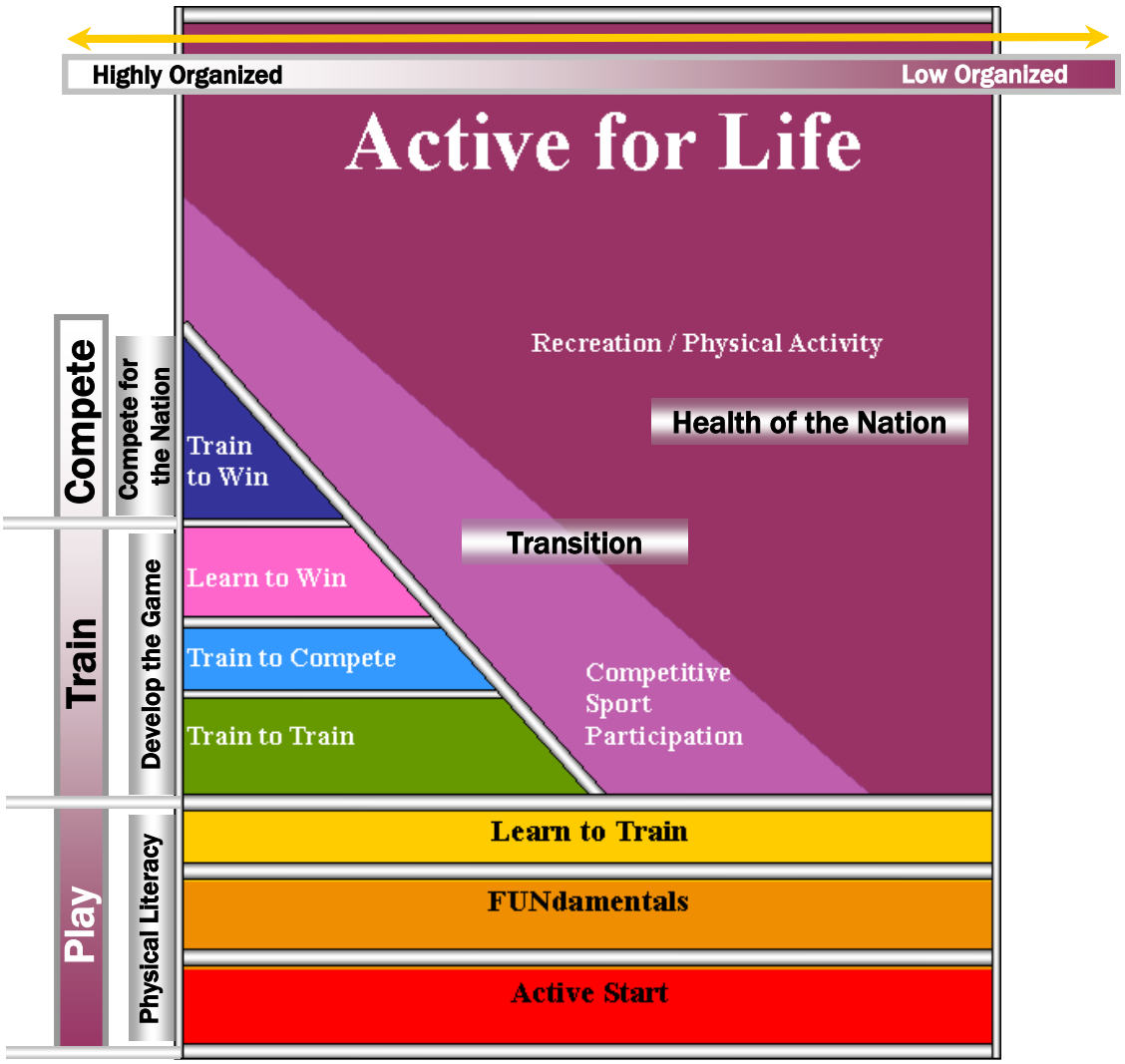
Threats

- What are the biggest roadblocks to implementation of this principle?

Long Term Active Development

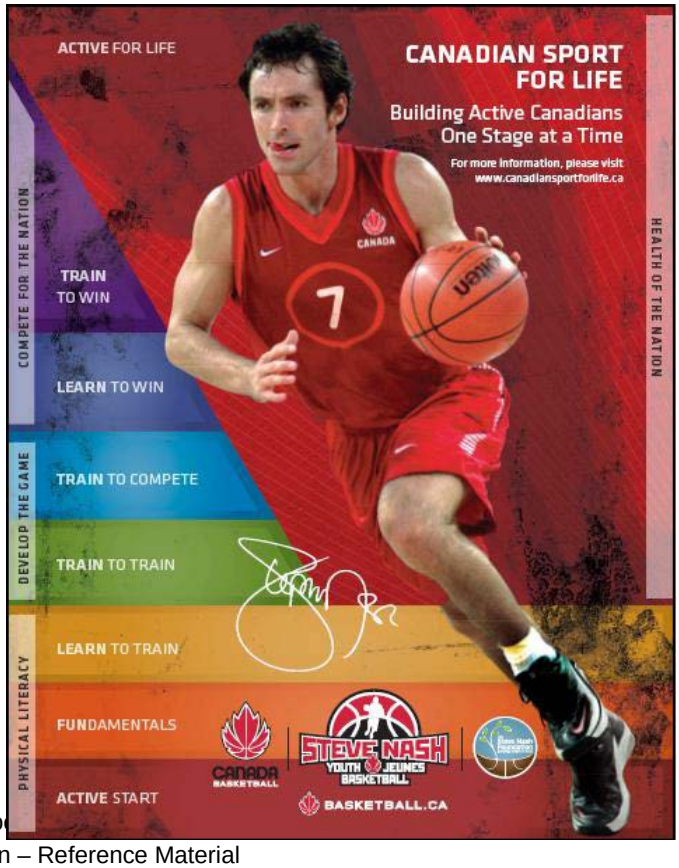
When Long Term Athlete Development first was first unveiled it was to the National Sport Organizations (NSO's). For this reason it was often seen through the lens of elite sport. Many saw it as a plan to solely produce the next Olympians. Some groups, not involved in the delivery of elite sport, disregarded the model since they felt it did not apply to their organization. Therefore, the true beauty of the model was often lost on many.

The universal truth of the model is that it is a long-term plan for the health and wellness of all Canadians. This is accomplished by keeping Canadians active. The preferred description is provided by the diagram below. It is not a pyramid, which means you are not losing participants along the way. In this model we include all Canadians throughout their entire lifespan.



Key points:

1. 100 % of the population enters the model.
2. The younger you are the more the emphasis is on playing, the less on competition. (It is suggested that after you leave the elite stream you may return to the love of play).
3. The more elite the delivery agency, the more structured and restrictive in nature will the opportunities be for participation (Only 12 players in the entire country can make the national team in a given year). The more recreational the less requirement for a highly structured delivery agency (you and a ball at a basket in your backyard).
4. **Physical Literacy**
   - All children go through the first three stages (AS, FUN, L2T). The goal is to develop competency in physical literacy and a love for being active.
   - The majority of children move into Active for Life from this stage.
5. **Develop the Game**
   - Those that move to the elite stream focus on development (T2T, T2C, L2W).
   - Athletes need to have appropriate training during this time.
6. **Competitive Sport Participation**
   - This acts as transition between the elite stream and Active for Life:
     - L2T athlete who moves into A4L (late maturer) can stay involved in the game and return to the elite stream at a later date.
     - Elite athletes who leave the sport can stay active and return at a later time.
     - Athletes who move from sport to sport have a place for entry and exit.
     - Highly competitive athletes can still achieve some of the benefits of the sport upon retirement.
     - Note: It is important to note that this stream does not develop elite athletes. One of the major problems in our current sport system is that too many delivery agencies believe they are delivering elite sport when in reality it is Competitive Sport Participation.
7. **Compete for the Nation**
   - Very few reach the top of the elite stream and get to compete in the pro's or for their country (T2W).
8. **Active for Life**
   - Everyone eventually ends up in Active for Life. This is the key component to creating a healthy nation.



Athlete Development Model Overview

Physical Literacy LTAD Stages

Active Start *(0-5) Is a vital part of a child's long term development. Canada Basketball does not recommend any organized basketball activities for this age. Development should take place through play.

	FUNdamentals		Learn to Train
Basketball Phases	Movement	Modified Games	Skills
NCCP	Community Sport Initiation	Community Sport Initiation Advanced	Introduction to Competition
Age	5 - 7 years old	8 - 9 years old	10-11 years old
Aim	To learn *fundamental movement skills** through basketball in a positive, inclusive and fun way.	To learn the basic basketball skills through modified games while still emphasizing fundamental movement skills in a fun and inclusive environment.	To learn the basic basketball skills while still emphasizing fundamental movement skills in a fun all inclusive environment.
Fundamental Movements	Pushing, pulling, bending, twisting, lunging, squatting and the gaits (walking, running, sprinting) 60% of teaching time is on movement Skills	Basketball skills are used as a way to teach fundamental movement skills. 30% of teaching time is on movement skills.	Since this is still an entry stage for many children it is imperative that the instructor ensure that each child still has these fundamental movement skills. 20% of time is used on movement skills.
Fundamental Basketball (how and the why)	The main emphasis is on movement skills. Basketball skills are introduced by using simple "playground games". 20% of teaching time is on Basketball Skills	Ball handling, passing, receiving, and shooting. 40% of teaching time is on basketball skills.	Introduced the basic skills. Bilateral development global approach, everyone learns all skills and positions. 20% of teaching time is basketball fundamentals.

Technical (when)	Players learn when to shoot, pass or dribble. They also learn when to play offence and defence. 20% of teaching time is on individual decision making skills.	20% of teaching time is on individual player skills. When should I dribble or shoot? 10% of teaching time on multi-player skills. When should I pass?	30% of time is spent on individual skills. When should I dribble with my left hand/right hand? 20% of time is spent on multi-player skills. When should I cut to get the ball?
Strategy	The players use a simple game that progressively teaches them a modified game of basketball.	Players play equal time in modified games* with modified rules. The major emphasis is to learn the basic principles of the game.	Players participate equally in controlled games designed to enhance skill development. Players learn a basic awareness of offence and defence. 10% of the time is spent on basic offence / defence.
Tactical	Does not apply		Many short term adjustments are made to enhance the learning of the skills of the game and to allow the players to cooperate in a competitive environment. Tactics are not for a coach to win the game by taking advantages of the child's level of play.
Decision Making	Making decisions involving the ball (when a player has the ball or does not have the ball).		Making decisions using the basic skills of play.
Periodization	Not applicable. A single season. Recommended of one, one hour sport specific session per week.		Single periodization. Maximum of two sport specific session per week.
Length of Program	6 - 12 weeks		12- 20 weeks
Training to Competition	Fundamental movement skills are taught through basketball activities and modified games that occur in the same session. Competition and results are not a priority. Base games such as 1 on 1, 2 on 2, 3 on 3 and 4 on 4 are to be used at this stage. Players receive more touches on the ball and therefore more opportunities to apply their skills and decisions.		For every minute of game time three minutes will be spent on skill development. This will enhance the experience of playing the game. 75% of the time devoted to training 25% spent in games (not competition).

Physical ,	Fundamental movement skills - moving in all planes of the body Agility, balance, coordination, throwing, catching, linear and lateral speed Running, jumping, stopping, starting Introduction to simple recovery techniques	Continue with fundamental movement skills Own body weight exercises for strength Basic flexibility Expanded recovery
	Avoid activities that emphasize: Aerobic stamina (prolonged effort), Speed endurance (interval training) Strength endurance (anaerobic training) Maximal strength (non-weight bearing lifting) and power exercises (bounding)	
Mental / Emotional	The object is to produce self-confident athletes who have the mental and emotional skills needed to meet the demands of their sport context and daily life.	
	Confidence - Focus on building *self -confidence** and *self-esteem** through having fun through basketball. Concentration - Focus on giving your eyes and ears when people speak Goal setting - Use of imagination, introduction to debrief Social support system - helping parents understand their role Enjoyment - keep it fun Competition management - encouraging cooperation	Continue to build on the elements introduced in the FUNdamental stage. Focus on building confidence through the skills of the game. Self-confidence, Focus and concentration, Debrief, Imagery, Introduction to goal setting
Social / Life lessons	Focus on multi-activity participation. Leadership - Learn to cooperate Responsibility - Learn to follow directions Self - Reliance - Play at home Communication - developing relationships Trust	Continue to build on the elements introduced in the FUNdamental stage. Introduction to relaxation Multi sport involvement

Elite Pathways

Develop of the Game

LTAD Stage	Train to train	Training to Compete
Basketball Phase	Train	Compete
NCCP	Introduction to Competition	Competition Development
Age	11-15 girls	15-19 girls
	12 - 16 boys	16- 20 boys
Aim	To introduce the basic technical and strategic parts of "global" basketball with a more structured approach to training.	To introduced athletes to all aspects of the game, and begin to refine all technical aspect and most strategic components.
Fundamental Movements	25% of the time in instruction should be used to warm up using the fundamental movement and basketball skills. Players should be taking the basic skills into a stage of refinement. They will also be introduced to more complex variations of the skill. Note that some players may still be introduced to the sport at this stage. Players may be at different stages of their own personal skill development.	20 % of instructional time is spent here. Work is done on refining the skills and in warming up. The players should be able to perform the basic skills in a competitive environment. Begin to develop a more individualized skill package.
Fundamental Basketball		
Technical	30% of instructional time is on introduction, acquisition of new skills and refinement of old. Some should become creative. A major emphasis is on learning to "read" on defence and offence.	40 % of the time is spent on the acquisition and consolidation of specialized skills, refinement and creative of the basic technical skills.
Strategy	To use the basic skills for all positions in a competitive environment. Players learn basic team maneuvers that involve multi-player and multi-positional play. 30% of instructional time is spent here. Basic offences and defences should be consolidated and refined before introducing more complex strategies such as zones and presses.	40 % Of the time is spent here. Acquisition and consolidation of specialized strategies, refinement and creative of the basic strategies. Players are exposed to an expanding array of team maneuvers and an increased knowledge of positional movement.

Tactical	Simple reminders about the strengths and weaknesses of an opponent. Only 15% of the time should be spent here. Use drills assist players in understanding an opponent's main strengths / weaknesses.	20% of the time is spent on competition specific tactics.
Decision Making	Making decisions involving other players.	Making decisions involving game situations
Periodization	In phase one of this level single periodization with a general prep, and specific preparatory stage. Double periodization can occur in the later stages of this phase.	This phase can be a single, double and in elite situations triple periodization.
	Note: In double and triple periodization the total volume of the program should not exceed the number of weeks recommended in the length of the program. Also the athletes must be allowed a proper transition. Frequent rest will be required.	
Length of Program	20 - 35 weeks	35 - 45 weeks
Training to Competition	For every game there needs to be one hour minimum of training. Games for learning vs. games for competition. The ratio of 75% training and 25 % competition is still applicable.	Competition becomes more important and training takes on a more competitive nature. 40% of training is devoted to technical and tactical skills and fitness. 60% is devoted to competition and competition specific training.
	Note: The onset of PHV* is a key marker in the physical maturity of an athlete. Coaches must be aware that this is not age specific and that training must be individualized to meet the athletes needs not the convenience of the group.	
Physical ,	Fine tune the fundamental movement skills. Flexibility training Strength training continued medicine ball, Swiss ball and body weight for strength. Core strength is key. Note: During PHV coaches must be aware of limitations. Recovery techniques	Develop the aerobic and anaerobic systems in sport specific context. Individualized conditioning Strength and power training. Develop proper technique first. Recovery techniques

Mental / Emotional	Focus on building confidence through the skills of the game and developing good training routines. Self-confidence focus and concentration, Debrief, Imagery, Goal setting, Relaxation, Developing routines.	Build confidence and introduce the athlete to the mental skills required for competition. Self-confidence, Focus and concentration, Debrief, Imagery, Goal setting, Anxiety management, Routines, Distraction plans.
Social / Life lessons	Multi-sport involvement, General and specific training, Self-directed practice, Introduction to planning and periodization, Training and performance diary/log (time management), Nutrition /hydration, Basic leadership skills, Fitting sport into life, Relationships, Lifestyle choices (high risk behaviours).	Sport specific training, Integrated sport into lifestyle, Dealing with being an athlete, Self-directed practice, Injury prevention and recovery, Nutrition / hydration, Life balance, coping with pressures, Career/sport planning sustained, Leadership, Planning and periodization of training, Relationships, Lifestyle choices (high risk behaviours).

Elite Pathways

Compete for the Nation

LTAD Stage	Learn to Win	Training to Win
Basketball Phase	Learn	Win
NCCP	High Performance	High Performance
Age	19- 22 female	23+ female
	20 -23 + male	24 + male
Aim	To establish all of the technical, strategic, physical, mental and ancillary skills and capacities needed to compete at the highest level.	To optimize performance for domestic and international competition.
Fundamental Movements/ Basketball	15% - warm up and refinement. Specialized skills for individual performance in a competitive environment.	10% - Warm up and refinement. Complete refinement of sport-specific skills
Technical	20% - refinement and creative	10% - refinement and creative

Strategy	40% - introduced to all strategies and consolidation. Players develop a complete set of offensive and defensive strategies and specific play situations.	40% - refinement - creative Players utilize strategies to maximize the performance and strengths of the team.
Tactical	25% - competition specific	40% - opponent specific
Decision Making	Making complex decisions in game situations	Mastering decision making in high pressure competitive situations.
Periodization	Triple or multiple periodization: frequent recovery breaks.	Triple or multiple periodization: frequent recovery breaks.
	Note: In double and triple periodization the total volume of the program should not exceed the number of weeks recommended in the length of the program. Also the athletes must be allowed a proper transition. Frequent rest will be required.	
Length of Program	45- 50 weeks	45- 50 weeks
Training to Competition	75% of the time is spent on sport specific preparation and participation in competitions.	75% of the time is spent on sport specific preparation and participation in competitions.
Physical	Specific training to achieve optimum performance. High volume and high intensity of training. Recovery techniques	
Mental / Emotional	Develop confidence and individualized mental / emotional training plans.	Well-developed refined and individualized mental skills and routines that are proven to work in competition.
Social / Life lessons	School - work - sport balance Career/sport planning sustained Self - directed practice Relationship decisions (family) Lifestyle choices (high risk behaviours)	Sport - work-life priorities Dealing with transition college /work Professional priorities Relationships Lifestyle choices (high risk behaviours)

Recreational Pathways

Active for life

LTAD Stage	Retirement / Retainment	Health of the nation
Age	individually determined	individually determined
NCCP	Community Sport On Going	Community Sport On Going
Aim	To enjoy a healthy active lifestyle and reinvest time and energy in basketball, through coaching , management or administration, officiating and active participation.	To find fun, fitness, social interaction and self-fulfillment through a level of basketball suitable to the participant in an all-inclusive environment.
Fundamental Movements/ Basketball	Movement skills are used to maintain healthy lifestyle. Retainment of basic basketball skills to be used at an appropriate level and a transfer of knowledge into new roles.	Movement skills are used to maintain healthy lifestyle. Retainment and refinement of skills needed to play at the appropriate level.
Technical	Maintain and improve skills through appropriate competitive experiences. This knowledge is used in other areas of his/ her life.	Maintain and improve skills through appropriate competitive experiences.
Strategy	Retainment of strategic knowledge to be used at an appropriate level and a transfer of knowledge into new roles.	Players retain the strategies necessary for recreational involvement.
Tactical	Tactical knowledge gained from playing experience is used in other roles.	Used when appropriate for recreational play.
Decision Making	Retainment of basic decision making skills that will now be used or transferred into new roles.	Adapting your decision making skills to the appropriate level of play.
Periodization	Information gained as an athlete is now transferred to into new roles.	To meet the individual needs of the participant.
Length of Program	Information gained as an athlete is now transferred to into new roles.	To meet the individual needs of the participant.
Training to Competition	Information gained as an athlete is now transferred to into new roles.	Games are used for fitness, social interaction and developing and refining skills. Training is an individual decision or in preparation for

		competition.
Physical	Detraining principles followed	Keep active.
Mental / Emotional	Readjustment to non-competitive environment. Transfer knowledge to other roles.	Using the mental / emotional skills acquired through sport in recreational and lifetime activities. Positive self-expression
Social / Life lessons	Redefine and pursue personal goals. Pursue further education/career development. Moving into other roles in the game. Role model. Redefine Relationships	Role of physical activity in life. Activity as a means to social and emotional balance.

Appendix:

Fundamental movement skills - agility, balance, coordination, speed, running, jumping, stopping, starting

Modified games - 1 on 1, 2 on 2, 3 on 3 etc. Rules reflect the abilities of the participants; e.g. lower basket, smaller ball, shorter time frame

Self-confidence - feel good about what I am doing

Self esteem - feel good about who I am, how I think others see me

Technical – decision on when to use the skills.

Strategy - long term organizational plan of the players into a method of play.

Tactical - short term adjustments to the plan, usually competition specific)

Recovery

Assist the athlete in dealing with fatigue:

- Metabolic fatigue (energy stores)
- Neurological fatigue (nervous system)
- Peripheral nervous system fatigue (muscles)
- Central Nervous system fatigue (brain)
- Psychological fatigue (social, emotional, cultural)
- Environmental and travel fatigue

See chart below for more detail.

Type of Fatigue	Main Causes for Fatigue	Expression of this Fatigue	Recovery Strategies
Metabolic Fatigue (energy stores)	• Training lasting one hour or more, or • From several (even shorter) sessions a day, & • It can be cumulative when training or performing over a number of days	• Athlete fatigues sooner than is normal for that athlete • Athlete struggles to complete a session or event	• Rehydrate & refuel before, during & after training • Use contrast temperature showers or pool or spa and cold plunge, or active recovery activities • Meal within 1-2 hours of training & monitor hydration
Neurological Fatigue (nervous system) Peripheral Nervous System Fatigue (muscles)	• After short high intensity sessions, e.g. weights, plyometrics, complex skill execution, etc. • After long but low intensity sessions especially involving repetitive movements, e.g. steady state swimming, running, cycling, paddling, rowing, etc.	• Reduced localized force production e.g. slow feet. reduced acceleration, poor technique, etc.	• Rehydrate & refuel (including small amounts of protein as well as carbohydrates) before, during & after training • Within 5 - 15 minutes after training use a spa or shower with jets focused on the large & fatigued muscles • After training or later in the day - massage large muscle groups using jostling / light shaking technique
Neurological Fatigue (nervous system) Central Nervous System Fatigue (brain)	• Low blood pressure levels • High pressured training session - especially involving rapid decision making & reactions • Poor motivation e.g. monotony of training, emotional factors, injury etc.	• Lack of drive • Lack of motivation	• Steady & regular intake of carbohydrates during training & after training to maintain normal blood glucose levels • After training - unwind, listen to music, visualization • Sauna - contrast hot and cold • Rest
Psychological Fatigue (emotional, social, cultural)	• Lack of team or squad cohesion, personality conflicts etc. • Competition pressures, event venue, residential conditions, parents, coach, media, etc. • Other lifestyle stresses - home, school exams, personal relationships	• Athlete looses self-confidence or self esteem • Poor interaction & deteriorating communication with other athletes & staff • Athlete's body language, increased signs of anxiety, negative attitudes, etc. • Quality of sleep is poor	• Focus on process rather than outcome performance measures • Debrief by identifying 1-3 things that worked well and 1-3 that need more work • Take mind off training with escapist or funny movie, TV, book, or socialize with family & friends • 10-15 minutes before bed switch off from the day by using relaxation techniques
Environmental & Travel Fatigue	• Disruption of normal routines, especially biological clock • Disruption to sleep, waking and meal times • Sedentary & limited body positions on long journeys, i.e. 30 minutes or more • Adapting to different climates and time zones	• Athlete takes longer to warm-up, are slower to start • Unforced errors in the first 15 minutes are well above normal • Athletes fatigue sooner than normal	• Preparation planning will minimise fatigue • Stay hydrated and refuelled • Stay cool in the heat - use a pool, shade, iced towels, etc. • Keep moving as much as possible on long journeys • Minimise visual fatigue by wearing sunglasses outside & limiting time on computers & play stations

http://www.ltad.ca Recovery and Regeneration for Long-Term Athlete Development

It is not good enough to inform players about recovery. It is like any skill it must be practiced. Some athletes will be skeptical because it is different. You cannot wait to the big competition to put recovery into practice. It starts the first time the team gets together. For further information download Recovery and Regeneration for Long-Term Athlete Development form www.ltad.ca.

National Coaching Certification Program

coach.ca
REACH HIGHER

PARTNERS IN COACH EDUCATION

The National Coaching Certification Program is a collaborative program of the Government of Canada, provincial/territorial governments, national/provincial/territorial sport organizations, and the Coaching Association of Canada.

Government of Alberta
Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation
Alberta — Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.
British Columbia — The Best Place on Earth
Sport Manitoba
Newfoundland Labrador
New Nouveau Brunswick Canada
Sport North Federation
Nova Scotia
Nunavut
Ontario
Prince Edward Island Canada — Health and Wellness
SPORTSQUÉBEC
CAS Coaches Association of Saskatchewan
Yukon — Community Services — Sport and Recreation Branch

The programs of this organization are funded in part by Sport Canada.
Canadian Heritage Sport Canada / Patrimoine canadien

How to be a better coach

Learn to listen, especially to the athletes – they are excellent teachers.

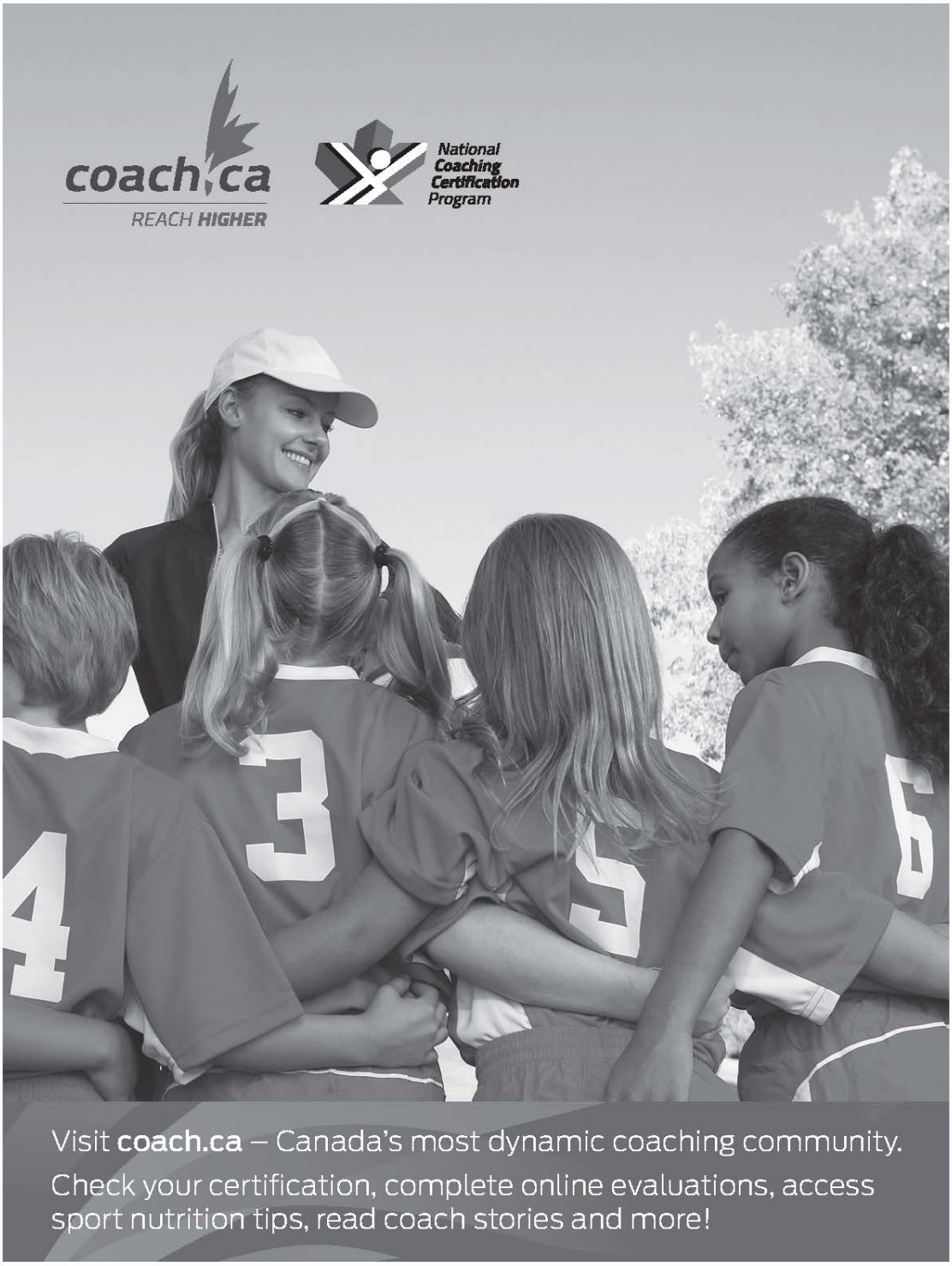
Help each athlete develop all of their capacities: physical, mental/emotional, and social.

Take a stand against doping and cheating in sport.

Thirst for knowledge
attend coaching courses, get certified, stay up to date.

Brought to you by
the Coaching Association of Canada www.coach.ca

Coaching Association of Canada


coach.ca
REACH HIGHER
National Coaching Certification Program
Visit coach.ca – Canada's most dynamic coaching community.
Check your certification, complete online evaluations, access sport nutrition tips, read coach stories and more!

The Collection, Use, and Disclosure of Personal Information

The Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) in cooperation with its National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) partners collect, use and disclose only such information from individuals as is required for the purpose of providing services or information to them, managing NCCP coach education records, conducting research and such other purposes as described in CAC's Privacy Policy.

CAC does not sell, trade, barter, or exchange for consideration any Personal Information obtained. CAC's collection, use and disclosure of personal information shall be done in accordance with its Privacy Policy, a copy of which is available at www.coach.ca.