Strategies and Tools for Getting Club and Parent Buy-In for LTAD

USSA Club Excellence Conference
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Develop great racers first, then develop great skiers
Results ≠ Future Success

Best world rank age 15: **2658 (SL)**

Best world rank age 15: **60 (SL)**

Peak Performance Happens Later Than It Used To

**Average Age of Olympic Gold Medalists**

**AVERAGE AGE OF WORLD CUP WINNERS**

- BOTH GENDERS
- WOMEN
- MEN
Long-Term Athlete Development

An individually based, age-appropriate approach to training and competition, based on science, that will lead the athlete to their full potential in the long run.

Long-Term Athlete Development

Optimal training, competition and recovery programming with relation to biological development and maturation.
It’s about the base!

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

COORDINATION ACTIVITIES:
• Speed  (reactivity & limb velocity)
• Technique  (efficiency)
• Strength  (force output)

EFFICIENT, CONCISE AND RELAXED

GENERAL SKILLS NEED TO BE CONNECTED SOMEHOW TO THE SPORT

THINK QUALITY NOT QUANTITY – HOW WELL VS. HOW MUCH
Simpler is better…

Fundamental Skills/Technique
Passion, effort, fun

Transition to competition
Attitude, effort, fun

Competition skills
Dedication, effort, fun

You’re only 10 once…
Long-term, repetitive success is a matter of building a principled system and sticking to it; principles are anchors.

-Dr. Wade Gilbert

Principles

- Long-term focused
- Every skier/rider is unique
- Every skier/rider has potential
- Process vs. outcome
- Training is magical
- Build a strong foundation before you build up
Strategies

• Communication linkage in program
  – Coaches, parents, athletes
• Weekly theme for development
• “Big picture” calendar - training blocks highlighted like competitions
• Allow for athlete movement in phases 3-5
• Give early maturers exposure to developmental phase peers
  – Communicate, establish timeframe, expectations
  – Case-by-case basis
• Address fundamental skill deficiencies with early maturers

More strategies

• Crossover with other sports
• Weekend program – have a coach home on weekend competitions
• Awards – reward development
• Club markers – retention, skills scores, success in later years
• Club role in physical literacy
Athlete’s view of development

What part is most fun...
Athletes do this because...

I would quit the sport if...
Educating the parents

- Proactive approach – partnerships
- USSA webinars
- Training systems matrix with printed materials
- Link to USSA Training System on club website
- SkillsQuest
- Talk about LTAD in orientation meetings
- Tell a story

Parents want to know...
Sample letter

Dear Parents,

The intent of this communication is to provide a better understanding of the principles which guide athletic development with the J3 age ski group. This will be the first of three such communications. In this I will summarize the underlying principles of our skiing progression and plan for the year.

- Research indicates that expertise in academics, athletics, and music is more correlated to the amount and quality of practice over time than genetics.
- Stages in physical maturation (biological stages of development) need to be of greater consideration than age class (chronological) distinctions in athletic development.
- Critical in all sports is the ratio of training to competition.

Sample letter cont.

…while many focus on the number of competitions what is most important is the ratio of training to competition. Our J3 athletes are still in the developmental phase so the training is more important than the competition. Compared to the older athletes the J3’s have more days of training during the winter because they race less. The Williams sisters in tennis are two notable examples of athletes at a younger age who emphasized development of technical skills over a heavy emphasis on junior competitions...

BMA – Kirk Dwyer
What do I avoid?

• Labels
• Numbers
• Car ride home
• Conflicting messages

What do I do?

• CARE – unconditional love and support
• Talk process
• Praise for effort
• Team up with coaches
• Look for intrinsic motivation
Coach responsibility

- Coach must help parents re-affirm message by providing regular feedback on their child’s progress
- Simple training time tracking reports describing content areas
- Share a season plan at the start of the year
- Evaluation forms are LTAD based

Be careful not to send these messages

- Competition is bad
- Competition results don’t matter
- Training is not very serious
- Play other sports, don’t choose a primary sport
Communicate this message

• We emphasize a balance between training and competition to maximize long-term performance
• Look at other factors in addition to competition results to gauge progress and reward juniors
• We put serious thought into making your child’s training fun and game-like to learn important sport skills
• It’s OK for a child to like skiing/snowboarding the most, but they should do other complementary sports in the off-season

Long-term success
Resources

• USSA Training Systems www.ussa.org/training-systems
• Mindset, Carol Dweck
• The Talent Code, Daniel Coyle
• Canadian Sport For Life, Istvan Balyi, www.ltad.ca
• US Tennis Association www.10andundertennis.com
• USA Hockey – American Development Model www.admkids.com
• Children and Youth In Sport: A Biopsychosocial Perspective, Frank L. Smoll & Ronald E. Smith
• Children & Sports Training, Jozef Drabik
• Developing Sport Expertise, Farrow, Baker & MacMahon