



NEWSLETTER

Specialists in Long Term Athlete Development

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Welcome to our May 2007 newsletter. The aim of our newsletter is to not only keep people informed of recent developments at Movement Dynamics (MD), but to continue to provide information to those individuals responsible for the 'practical' implementation of Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD).

The Diversity of Sports

We are pleased to report on our journey into the world of Golf, as this has been a very interesting facet of recent work. It is always satisfying to meet with coaches and administrators from a sport that is committed to applying the known theories of LTAD. As we have mentioned on previous occasions this is always a cultural change for any organisation as they consider improving their player development strategy.

Much of the contact with Golf has come directly from our association with Michael Dagleish and Rob Neal from "THE GOLF ATHLETE". They have, in recent years, created a first class service to coaches and players that sees the integration of 3D Biomechanical analysis of the Golf swing, Physiotherapy screening and intervention and Strength and Conditioning screening and exercise prescription. Their success in this field is known worldwide and they offer a distinct 'best-practice' model of performance attainment.

Their service has developed to one that offers considerable support to Coach Education and the ongoing professional development of coaches and Allied Health professionals associated with the sport.

Movement Dynamics has joined this service and offers modules on LTAD in "The Golf Athlete's" Level 1 and Level 2 Courses that are conducted worldwide.

This coincides with the ongoing dialogue with The England Golf Partnership on their major commitment to LTAD. This is a forward looking organisation that is making strong headway in the cultural changes required.

With more and more organisations and individuals looking for the answers that turn the theory of LTAD into a functional pathway of well resourced delivery at the sharp end, Movement Dynamics will present the inaugural LTAD Workshop for Teachers, Coaches, Administrators and Allied Health practitioners in the UK in late 2007.

This will take place in South East England and will see the combination of Strength and Conditioning and Physiotherapy issues highlighted in the workshop. The intention is to take the delegates along the journey from screening to the delivery of the exercise continuum through the different Training Stages.

Cultural Change

I have mentioned this phrase on many occasions when expressing my thoughts on Athlete Development so I thought it may be of interest to put it in some form of context.

Our youth are our future, whether they accomplish great deeds in sport or live their lives with general well-being and health. They deserve the very best we can give them to be prepared to negotiate the ever-changing society they will have to survive in. If we view the strategy of LTAD as a tool designed to give them 'the very best' chance to take advantage of the colossus that is sport and physical activity, then we should put all other things aside and commit to this change.

Without any substantial change we will allow them to continue to 'over-compete' and under-prepare'. We will continue to set before them a competition structure that is based upon tradition, history and the adult desire for 'winners at all ages' as opposed to one that is based upon their development age. We will continue the weakness of seeking out and rewarding the early maturer in the teen-age years, establishing them as the backbone to our teams, while ignoring the late developer. We can continue tolerating the 'pushy parent', screaming and cussing on the sideline, as we lose more and more participants after the age of 16 years. We can continue this and blindly state that – "yes- we do have a development program".

For the brave and committed individual there is another path, a path that is strewn with potential failure and rejection, yes, but a path of change that will positively influence the generations yet to come. I am not suggesting revolution or carnage here, far from it. Some of the greatest and most convincing change has come from an idea that grew from existing structures. All it took was cogent argument, a deal of diplomacy and a willingness by the listener to think laterally.

Cultural change will be a hard road to travel for those with vision but, in the case of the LTAD strategy we all hear about, the rewards are enormous across all layers of the community.

I saw this on Vern Gambetta's web-site (<http://www.gambetta.com>) in his recent Blog and see it as an accurate example of the resistance to change that we all experience at some time in our lives.

The Top 10 Things They Never Taught Me in Design School by Michael McDonough

The road to hell is paved with good intentions; or, no good deed goes unpunished.
The world is not set up to facilitate the best any more than it is set up to facilitate the worst. It doesn't depend on brilliance or innovation because if it did, the system would be unpredictable. It requires averages and predictables. So, good deeds and brilliant ideas go against the grain of the social contract almost by definition. They will be challenged and will require enormous effort to succeed. Most fail. Expect to work hard, expect to fail a few times, and expect to be rejected. Our work is like martial arts or military strategy: Never underestimate your opponent. If you believe in excellence, your opponent will pretty much be everything.

For those who have sought out a better plan for the developing athlete, we remain your close supporter. Each translation and adaptation of these ideas will be different and will grow from small 'pilot' studies to fully fledged national strategies. I continue to enjoy the exchange of ideas and the sharing of plans and results from a host of like-minded practitioners around the world and see this as a common bond of professional and personal development. Not without heated debate, this current wave of enthusiasm, albeit small in size, is both helpful and challenging. May we all continue to learn.

Kelvin Giles May 2007

Product Development

We are investing in the development of a fully installed PC version and On-Line version of the product. This Version 2 development will see an increase in the depth and breadth of Exercise Streams as well as the improved delivery mechanism.

We continue to ask for patience from all interested parties as we negotiate these structural and commercial ventures. All staff associated with Movement Dynamics are heavily involved on a minute-to-minute basis in High Performance operations outside these projects and we will continue to do our best to fulfil all obligations.

Vern Gambetta in Australia

We are all excited about Vern's arrival 'down-under'. He will be here for a few weeks and spend time with the New South Wales Institute of Sport, the Brisbane Broncos and will present at the University of Queensland's Conference on Athlete Development in early June. His final days will be spent with the Australian Rugby Union's (ARU) Elite Player Development (EPD) Strength and Conditioning staff to support some major projects that are underway. As part of this ARU system I can state that their EPD program is the most advanced operation in the LTAD environment. They have clearly adapted to the theories of LTAD and continue to push out the edge of the envelope in applying the theories in direct delivery and resource development.

A powerful advocate of 'the Functional Pathway', Vern holds the same opinions of long term athlete development and continues to promote 'best practice' concepts for the growing child as they negotiate the sports development environment in which they find themselves. His observations and input will be of great value.

The Competition Issue – Some thoughts

- The competition programme followed by the majority of schools and clubs reflects traditions, history and the organisations misguided notion that competition IS development - rather than the athlete's development needs.
- Evidence suggests that within these 'competition based development structures' there is a lack of good quality coaches who are able to deal with the development of younger players. This is a reflection of the content of our Coach Education models.
- Many approach training with a view to winning the next game. Sound Talent identification and Recruitment strategies are largely neglected in favour of the recognition and selection of the 'early maturer'. As a result most developing players suffer from under-training and over-competition especially in the younger age groups. There is sufficient evidence that injury frequency is increasing during the Training to Train stage.
- A high ratio of competition to training activities inhibits optimal athletic development, especially in team sports. This is compounded by the presumption that if players do not play competitive games, they lose interest and stop playing. These attitudes are reflected in the use of watered down adult competition and training programmes for younger age groups which have little focus on childhood development.
- Game results are seen as the only performance indicator in assessing how good players are, rather than the achievement of the necessary athletic skills to realise optimum development for long term success and involvement. Talent identification and recruitment measures should go much further than the 'he / she can play' process often supported by a series of 'end-stage' scientific tests e.g. Beep Test, 10-40m Speed Test, Vertical Jump Test. As sound as these tests are, they do not give us any measure of the athlete's training age, all-round physical competence and fundamental movement efficiency.