



NEWSLETTER

**Specialists in Long Term
Athlete Development**

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Welcome to our April 2008 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).

New Location

Movement Dynamics operations have relocated to the UK due to the favourable response to the content and dialogue over the last few years. The intention is to work more closely with those organisations and individuals that have made a commitment to improving their athlete development structures.

As you can understand there is the 'tyranny of distance' issue with conducting operations in Australia and the move to Europe allows for a greater frequency and density of personal contact.

Projects

Schools - Work has started in earnest with Mark Fox (Director of Specialism, Marriotts Sports College) and Phil Elcock (Director of Stevenage Education Support Centre) to integrate the principles of Physical Competence development into the UK's National PE Curriculum. For the last three years Mark has been working on the resources required to support teachers in delivering these principles into the daily lesson plans. Selected North Hertfordshire schools will be the first to investigate the new process and we look forward to our first conference in June.

National Federations – Chris Chapman from the Rugby Football League is busy assembling the components for a fresh look at player development structures in the sport of Rugby League. The new agreement for all Super League clubs includes the provision of 'home grown' talent within the main playing squad and this has stimulated a fresh look at player identification, recruitment and development. Driven by outgoing Performance Director Graeme Thompson, this is a major step forward for the governing body. It is heartening to see change taking place as the challenge is always to question history and tradition in the quest for the very best processes.

Overseas

Abu Dhabi Sports Council, under the creative leadership of Mohammad Al Mahmood, have also 'questioned their assumptions' on athlete development and some exciting projects are underway. This may well be the best opportunity to start things with a clean slate and not be hampered by history and tradition. The cornerstone of the current dialogue is the simple fact that you can't strive for High Performance if the general health and well-being of the younger generations is poor. Mohammad is clearing the decks to assemble a strategy that clearly links the continuum from participation and recreation through to elite performance. This is a mammoth task and he is cognisant of the need for a thorough review of teacher and coach professional development.

This is the main area of concern for all those organisations that have questioned their athlete development programs. As stated here many times before, it is of no use simply writing loads of warm and fuzzy plans and strategies without DELIVERING practical resources for the teachers and coaches in the field. Without 'delivery' the theory remains inert.

The Abu Dhabi initiative starts with a group of projects in early April that are geared to introducing all practitioners (teachers, coaches, sports scientists, sports medical and allied health professionals) to the proposed plan. Vern Gambetta and Mike Dalglish will join me in a conference that covers:

- The Required Infrastructure and its Implications.
- Athletic Development processes.
- The role of Sports Medicine.
- The role of Sports Science
- Athlete Screening and Exercise Prescription.

We will be conducting the Movement Dynamics Physical Competence Screening in a secondary school and with some development level Soccer players from the Al Ain Soccer Club. These results will give us a thumbnail sketch of the current Physical Competence levels of these young people. We will also be observing some Physical Activity sessions in schools and sports clubs.

All this practical information will allow us to offer some solutions in Teacher and Coach Education, Physiotherapy Screening and Support mechanisms and general infrastructure issues.



Version 2

Details of the new Movement Dynamics Progressive Exercise Syllabus are on the website. I am indebted to Mark Andrews for his incredible support in the development of this new version. It is designed for PC installation and is available under license in four versions: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced. The inaugural Golf specific version is also available.

Golf, in particular the England Golf partnership under the guidance of Stuart Armstrong, has been the first sport to embrace the total scheme. This has led to the development of this first sports-specific version. Mike Dalgleish (Director of The Golf Athlete), has worked on integrating this exercise syllabus with his excellent Golf specific screening process to form the first set of resources that combine Sports Medicine Screening and Athletic Development into a coordinated player development system.

For all of these resources and systems there is an underlying set of principles and we encourage everyone to take the following steps:

Review Your Operation – consider conducting a workshop based look at the principles behind these resources. Without knowledge and infrastructure no resource works. The Systematic Sports Development Team (SSD) can support you in this. SSD is a flexible service provider led by Vern Gambetta and I that can conduct these operational reviews and subsequent workshop series.

Consider Changes – this is always the hardest part as change often encourages inertia from those who don't know the difference between what they have always done and what they can do better. Using Steve Myrland's great comment – "We need athletes that are adaptable and not just adapted" – we can consider decision makers in the same light. They need to be adaptable!

Focus on your Human Resources – those charged with delivering change at the 'coal face' (Teachers, Coaches, Allied Health professionals, etc) need access to the information and tools to carry out their tasks. Teacher and Coach Education immediately comes under scrutiny in this issue and it is vital that content is progressively updated to keep abreast of the ever changing landscape that each of us face in athlete development.

Prioritise the Competing Demands – you can't change everything overnight so list the things that need overhauling and set them out as a series of 'must do's'. Improve the things that will have the greatest long term influence first e.g. Teacher / Coach Education content. In this way you will assemble a generation of like-minded souls who can actually get something done.