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## A HIGHLY UNIQUE PROCESS AND PROCEDURE OF NURTURING TALENT IDENTIFICATION

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### ABSTRACT:

*This article attempts to shed some light on talent identification and although a multi-dimensional process, it is also a highly unique process which should be carefully nurtured in conjunction with the philosophy of the club in mind. Many children strive to attain excellence in sport. However, although talent identification and development programmes have gained popularity in recent decades, there remains a lack of consensus in relation to how talent should be defined or identified and there is no uniformly accepted theoretical framework to guide current practice. The success rates of talent identification and development programmes have rarely been assessed and the validity of the models applied remains highly debated.*



**KEYWORDS:** *Nuturing Talent, talent identification and development programmes.*

### INTRODUCTION

Talent identification can be defined as that process by which children are encouraged to participate in the sports at which they are most likely to succeed, based on results of testing selected parameters. These parameters are designed to predict performance capacity, taking into account the child's current level of fitness and maturity. As talent identification is often confused with talent development, it is necessary to keep the above definition clearly in mind. Talent identification is the first step in the progression from a

beginner in a skill to a developed potential athlete; talent development follows this as the next important phase in the achievement of sporting success. Talent identification in sports has been used with varying degrees of success. Talent identification has generally not been very reliable in predicting the future success of juniors and for sports which rely heavily on other factors such as technique, tactics and psychological factors. Successful programs have been for sports that do not have a large participation base, and have clear physical attributes for success that can be tested for. However, being a successful athlete in any sport is a result of a multitude of factors,

and they may also not be easy to test for. In addition to the physical and physiological attributes which usually make up a talent identification Process, Other factors such as motivation, determination, resilience, positive attitude, resistance to injury, ability to learn and perform skills can all be important. Finding potential athletes is one thing. The success of a Talent Identification program relies on getting the athlete into the best training program, support system and on to a sport career pathway to the elite level. Fitness testing is primarily used to determine an athlete's strengths and weaknesses, so as to design the most appropriate athletic training

program. Another use of testing is for talent identification, to direct the athlete to a better suited sport or to play in a more appropriate position or compete in any more appropriate event in their chosen sport. A general non-sport specific testing battery can provide you with an idea of a person's basic strengths and weaknesses, and from this they can be matched to sport which takes the best use of their strengths. You can also use muscle fibre testing to determine the relative composition of fast and slow twitch muscle fibres, to help match the person to appropriate sports. More specific tests can be performed when athletes for a certain sport are being recruited.

### **THE PHASES OF TALENT IDENTIFICATION**

**To identify and develop World Class Talent requires a structured sport specific pathway unique to the sport that encompasses four key phases of intervention:**

#### **Phase 1: Planning and preparation**

It includes following factors: Talent Strategy, Intelligence Gathering, Talent Conversion, Management and Personnel, Support Services, Innovation and Creativity.

#### **Phase 2: Profiling and Recruitment**

It includes following factors: Talent Profile, Recruitment of Assessment Criteria, Recruitment Cycles, Geographical Search, Assessment Days.

#### **Phase 3: Talent Confirmation**

It includes following factors: Planned Confirmation Programme, Athlete Responsiveness, exit Strategy.

#### **Phase 4: Talent Development**

It includes following factors: Coaching, Development Programme, Induction, Talent Training, Competition Strategy, Progression Profiles, Support.

### **TALENT IDENTIFICATION AGE**

At what age should Talent Identification take place? This is a sports specific question that should be answered from a physiological and psychological perspective. Talent Identification should take place over a number of years in the following three phases:

**Stage 1: Age 3- Age 8 (Recognising Physical Inefficiencies):** Physician's examination aimed at recognising malfunctions and physical deficiencies that may hinder athletic performance.

**Stage 2: Age 9 —Age 16 (Physiological, Psychomotor Changes):** These ages will vary dependent upon the sport and maturation of the athlete. Testing is conducted on athletes already participating in sports and is based on physiology and anthropometry.

**Stage 3: Age 16+ (Sport Specific Test, New Adaptations):** This area of Talent Identification is concerned with high calibre athletes and is very sports specific. Focusing on physiological adaptations to training and potential for further improvement is recommended.

### **CONCLUSION**

Talent identification has become increasingly important across a number of different domains. Within sport, it is becoming more important than ever. Teams are desperate to try and recruit the best to help them succeed and this process begins from a young age. Talent identification processes start at a young age to ensure the individual receives the 10 years of deliberate practice that is widely recognised as a necessity on the pathway to elitism.

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