

YOUR ATHLETE NEEDS A PLAN

The Need For A Model For Long-term Athlete Development (LTAD)

"It takes 10 years of extensive training to excel in anything"

Herbert Simon – Nobel Laureate

Scientific research has concluded that it takes eight to twelve years of training for a talented athlete to reach elite levels. This is called the ten-year or 10,000 hour rule, which translates to slightly more than three

hours of practice daily for ten years. Unfortunately, parents and coaches in many sports still approach training with a short-term focus and an over-emphasis on immediate results. We know that a long-term commitment to practice and training is required to produce elite athletes in all sports.

A specific and well-planned practice, training, competition, and recovery regime ensures optimum development through an athlete's career. Ultimately, sustained success comes from training and performing well over the long-term rather than winning in the short-term. There are no short-cuts to success in athletic preparations. Rushing completion will always result in shortcomings in physical, technical, mental, personal, and lifestyle capabilities.

Building a plan!

The Long-term Athlete Development (LTAD) model is based on the needs of athletes. The formation of a long-term plan in hockey stems from the fact that a very high percentage of athletes in the High Performance Program respond to questionnaires that their goals are to play on provincial and

national teams or to receive post-secondary scholarships. At the same time, they have no idea how to get to that level, thus the need for a long-term plan.

The proposed model for long-term athlete development includes these main phases:

Reliance On Physical Education And Physical Literacy

Physical education should provide the base of general movement skills and technical and tactical skills for an active lifestyle. If this is not the case in your child's education situation, it is certain that participation in competitive and recreational sports will be inhibited and limited. Even within a hockey setting, the FUNdamental and Learning the Skills stages must stress the acquisition of fundamental movement principles (Physical Literacy). If children acquire these, they can choose competitive and/or recreational involvement in sports. By providing the knowledge base and the positive experiences (FUN), the sport system can positively contribute to lifelong physical activity and health.

Physical literacy is the ability to perform fundamental and specialized movements and the "knowledge, understanding and ability to analyze sport and physical activity." It also includes a positive disposition to participation. Physical literacy is the base for life-long physical activity and performance.

- 1 **FUNdamental**
- 2 **Learning To Train Your Hockey Skills**
- 3 **Train To Train**
- 4 **Train To Compete**
- 5 **Train To Win**

Enhanced physical literacy can create a "win-win" situation for a very low cost by improving the health system and well-being of the population through improved delivery of pre-school and school physical activities and participation in life-long physical and competitive sport activities.

Plan for a healthy life

Recent technological and social changes have contributed to the development of a lifestyle that is characterized by a sedentary way of life. The population has become increasingly overweight and obese and the health care system is beginning to shoulder the burden of inactivity and unhealthy lifestyles.

Shepard (1986) stated:

Reports from our laboratory and elsewhere have suggested that a number of important social and economic benefits are associated with an increase of physical activity. Gains are seen in the workplace (greater productivity can reduce absenteeism, turnover, and industrial injuries), in the health care system (fewer physician visits and less need for hospital utilization and geriatric care) and in lifestyle (reduction of appraised age and lesser incidence of cigarette and alcohol abuse.) Each of the "western" nations might save billions if regular exercise were to be adopted by their entire population.

High Performance

High performance sport is not only good for the high performance athlete! High performance (which includes medals at major games) through "role modeling", motivates involvement in recreational and competitive sport activity. Athletes retiring from competition continue to compete at masters' competitions and are involved in recreational and preventative sport activities.