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# Participant and Performer Development in Youth Football: The Need for Bio-Psycho-Social Support

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# Coach Decision Making Model (Abraham et al., 2010)

Understanding of Culture & Context:  
Policies, Pathways, Resources, NGB, Player/Athlete/Participant/Other Expectations & Constraints





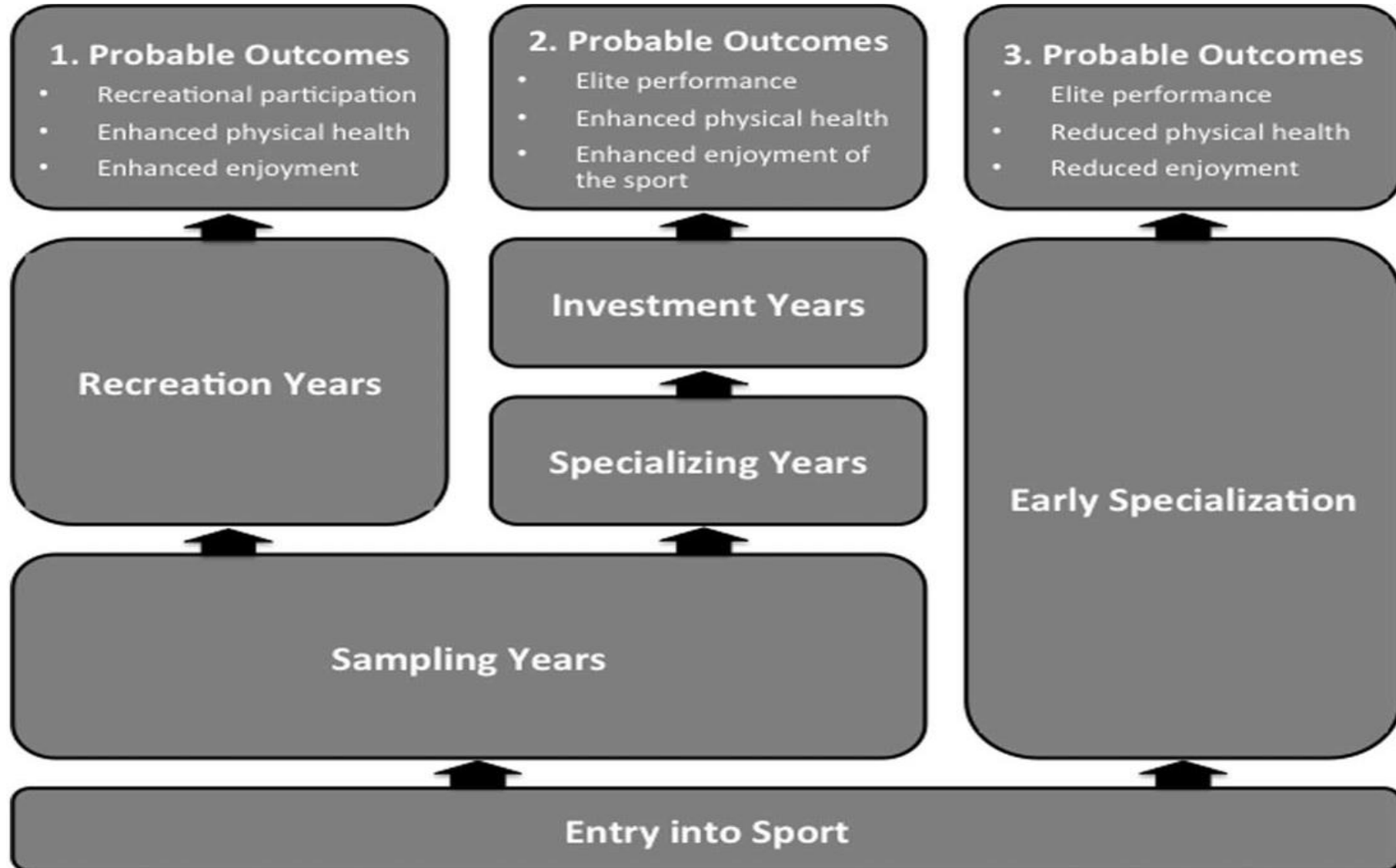
# Athlete Development Models (Tinning et al., 1993)



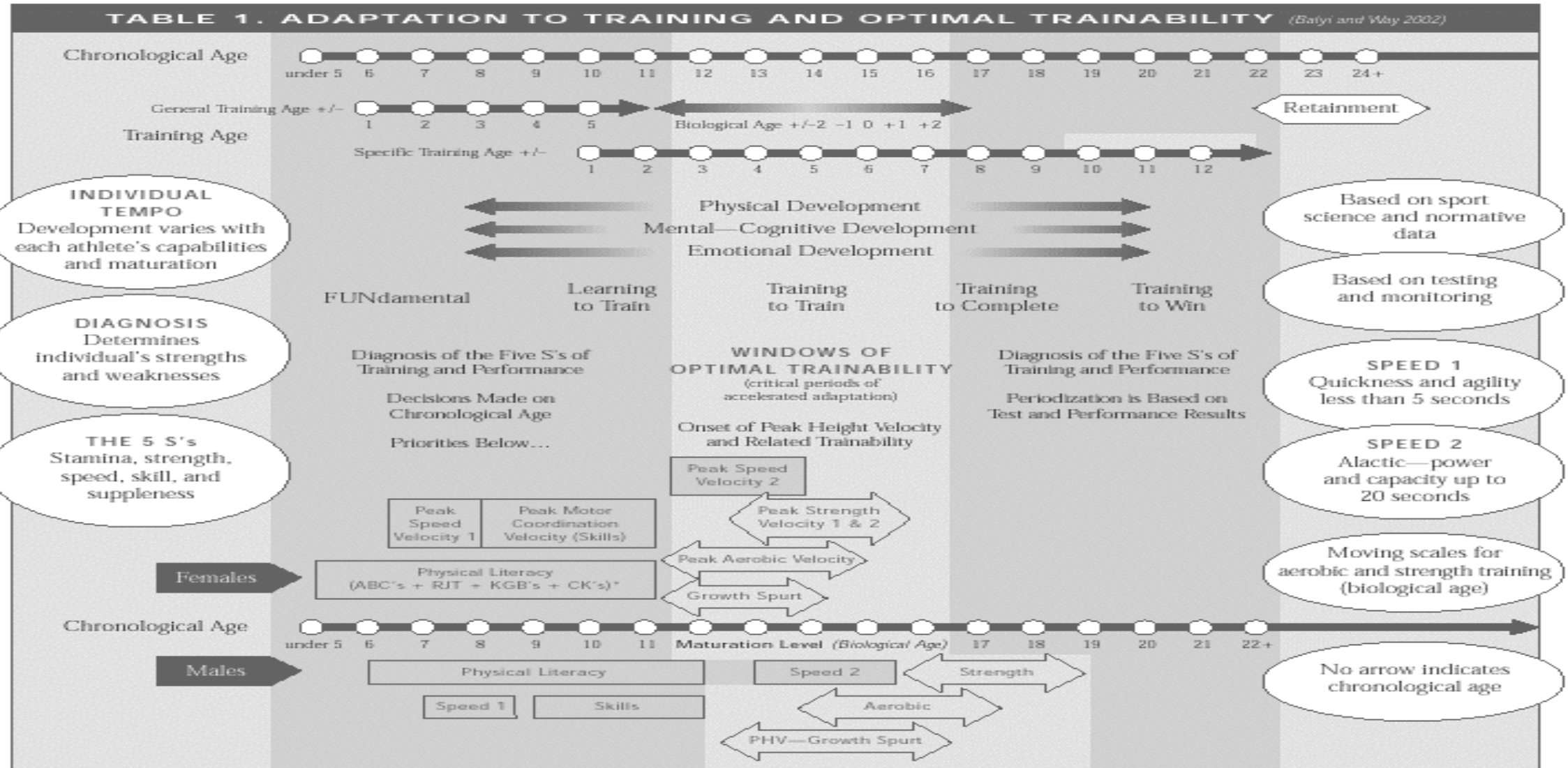
**Figure 3.1: The pyramid model of sports development (adapted from Tinning, Kirk and Evans, 1993)**



# Athlete Development Models (Cote, 1999)

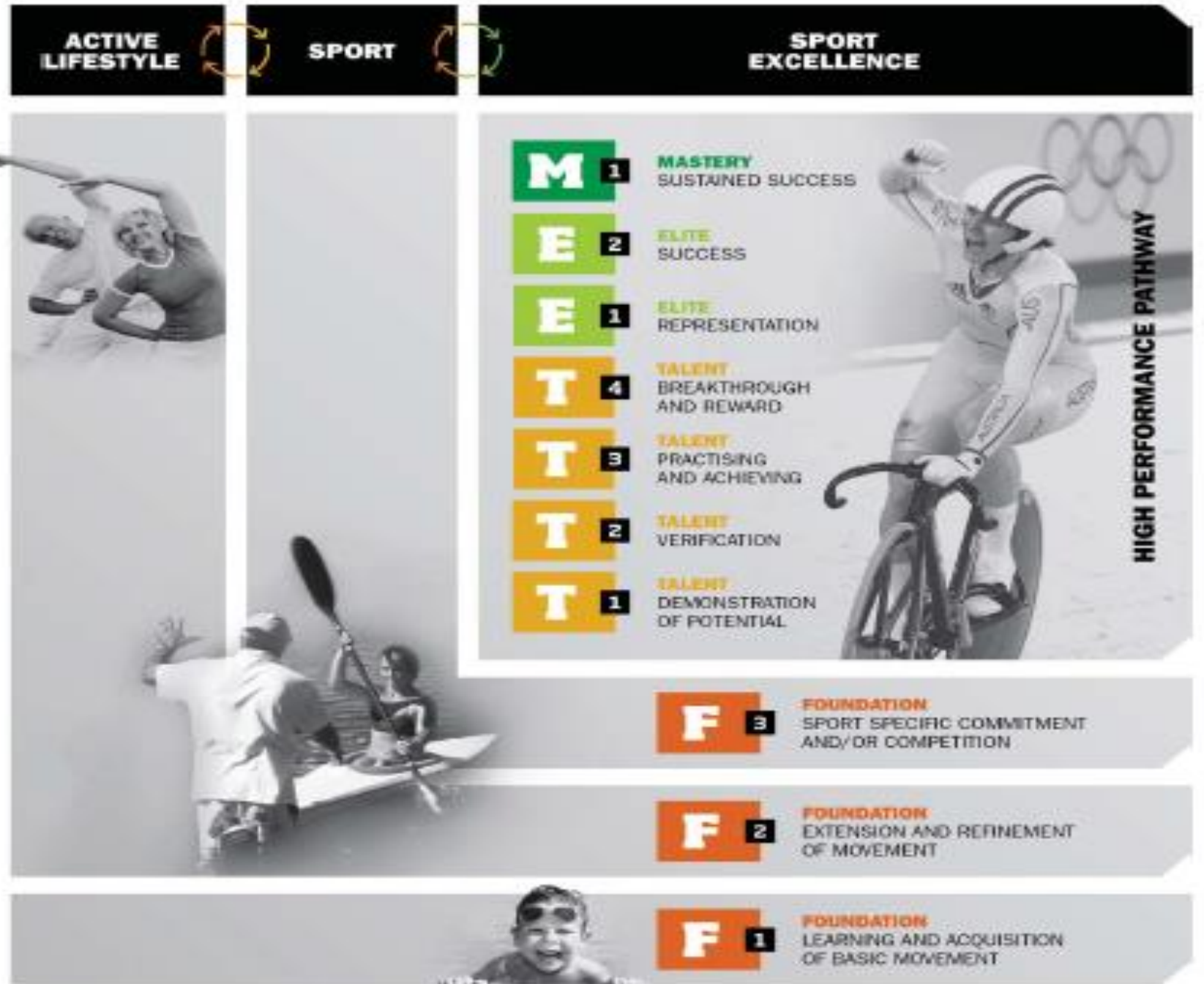


# Athlete Development Models (Bayli & Hamilton, 2004)



\*ABC's - Agility Balance Coordination Speed + RJT - Run Jump Throw + KGB's - Kinesthesia Gliding Bouyance Striking with objec + CK's - Catching Kicking Striking with body

# FTEM Athlete Development Pathway (Gulbin et al., 2013)



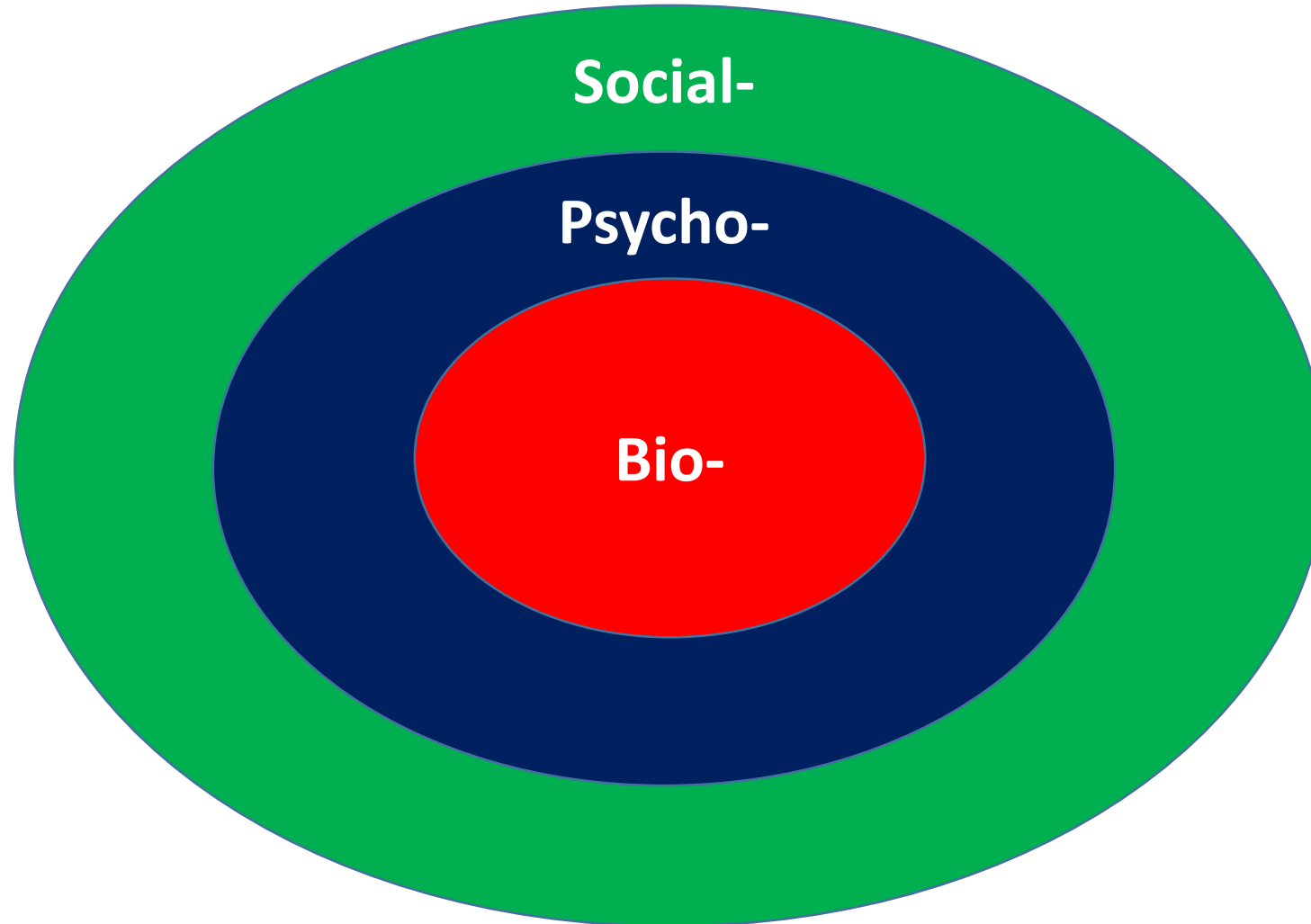


# Dilemmas in Research & Practice

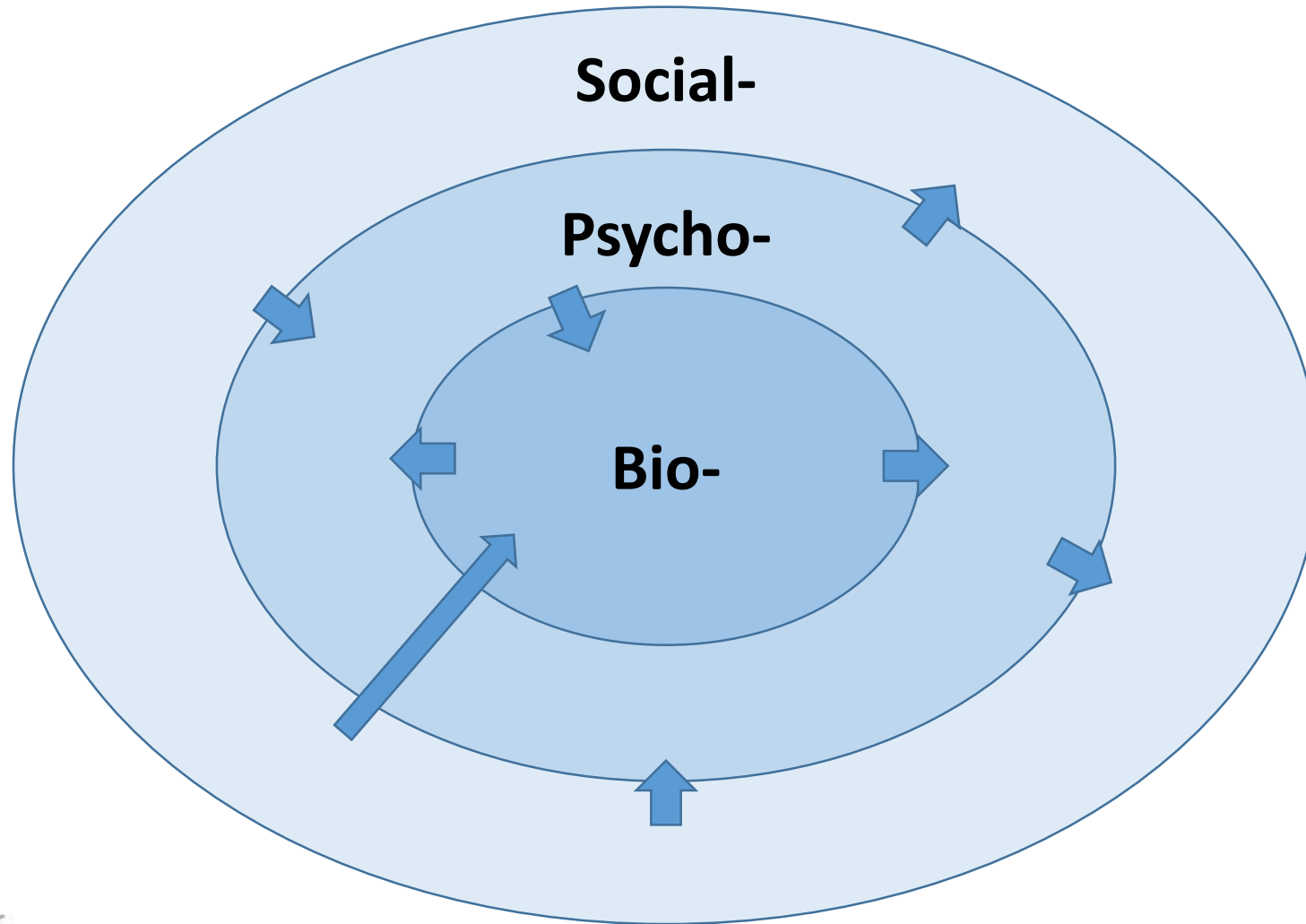
- Models only offer a partial or sub-set perspective of participant and performer development
- Models lack Sport Specificity
- ‘Breadth’ and ‘Depth’ of knowledge for large number of characteristics across all stages of development is limited
- Application of models within practice is questionable
- BUT should we expect anything else?
  
- **Symposium Aim – Showcase research on Participant and Performer Development in Youth Football including...**
  - **Systems development (from a holistic perspective), and...**
  - **Specific Biological, Psychological and Social projects**



# Bio-Psycho-Social Analysis



# Bio-Psycho-Social Ontology





# Coaching As Professional Judgement and Decision Making

Theoretical View	Summarised Description of What Happens		
Common Perception	Plan/Review	Do	
Decision Modes (Yates & Tschirhart, 2006)	Analytic (Formalistic or Substantive)	Rule Based (Formalistic or Substantive)	Automatic/Intuitive

(Abraham, Collins & Collins, in Preparation)

# Order of Play

- **Player development systems as a context for bio-psycho-social development (J. North)**
- **Biological**
  - **Maturation & physical characteristics in male youth football players (Kevin Till)**
  - **Maturation & physical characteristics in female youth players (Stacey Emmonds)**
- **Psychological**
  - **Developmental psychology in the youth footballer (Andrew Abraham)**
- **Social**
  - **Athletic Identity (and the environment) in elite youth football (Tom Mitchell)**
- **Practical implications and future research directions**
- **Q&A**



# Player development systems as a context for bio-psycho-social development

Dr J. North

Carnegie School of Sport  
Leeds Beckett University







**2012**



England	Interviews with 18 coaching and player development experts in the FA, Premier League, Championship
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**2014**

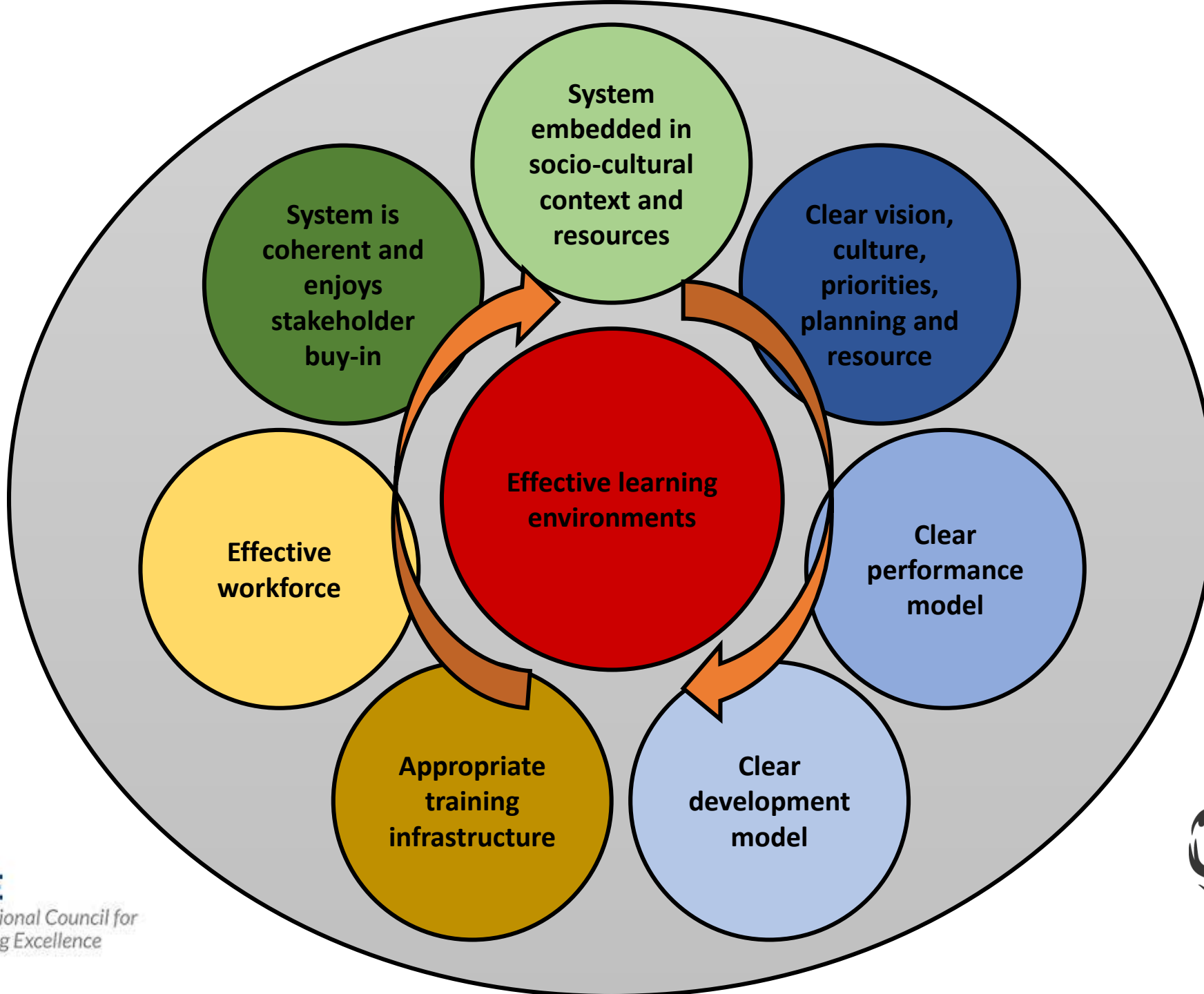


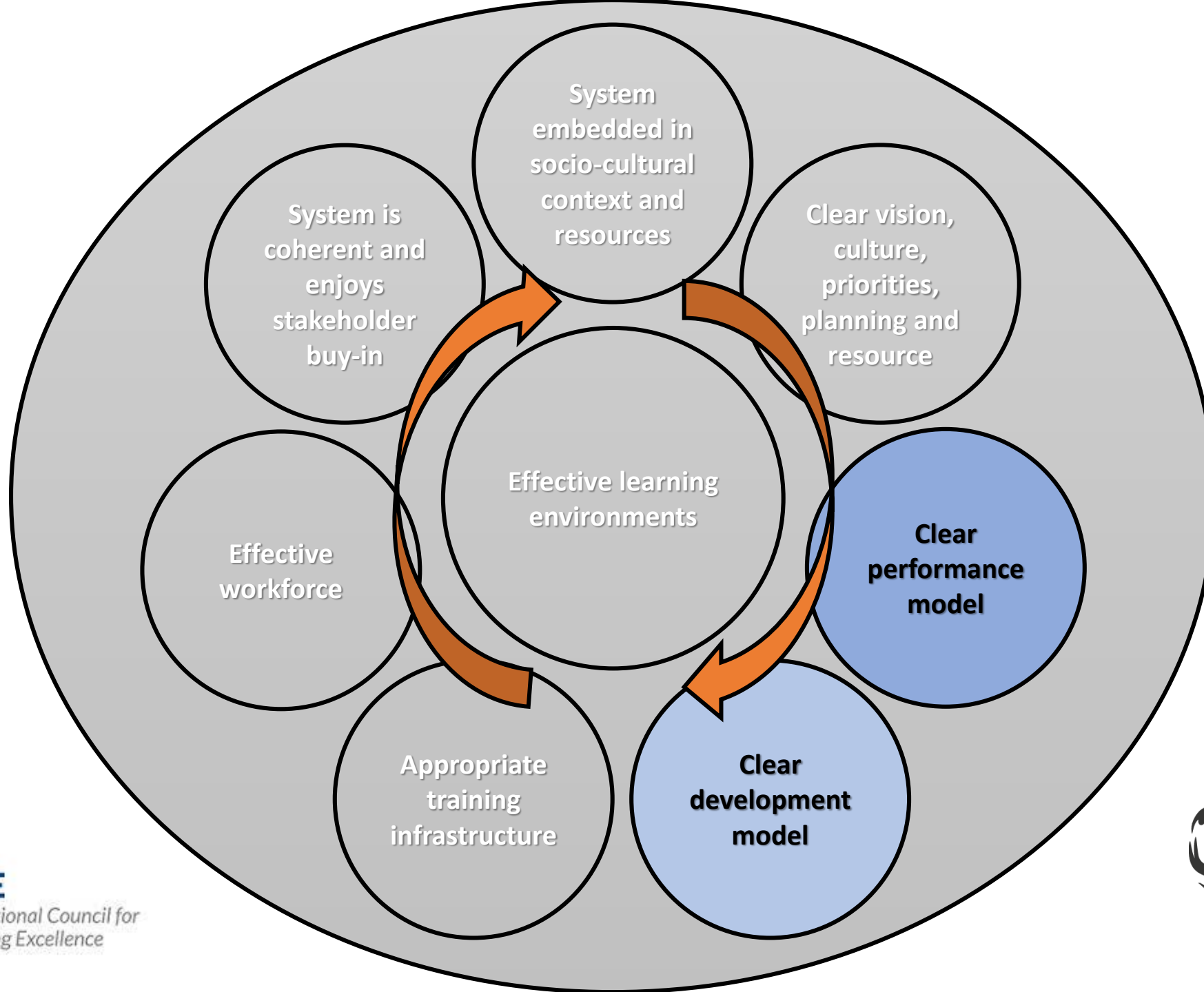
E C th	<b>2 sports</b> <b>12 country systems</b> <b>58 experts</b>	coaching and player s from the football nd tier 1 clubs
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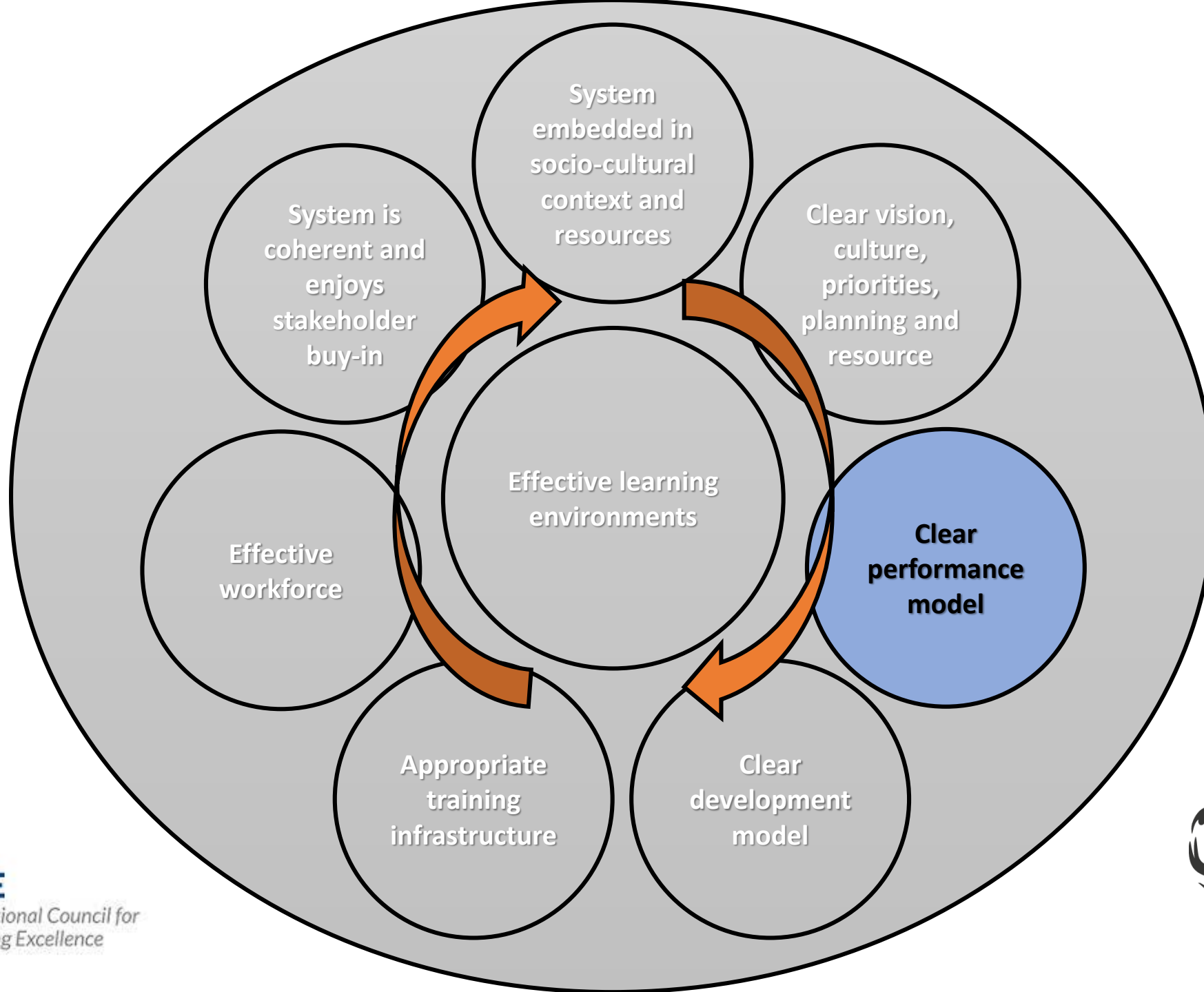
**2016**



Indonesia, South Korea, Denmark and Spain	Interviews with 9 coaching and player development experts from badminton associations notably performance directors, head coaches, sports science
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# Performance model

- Existing research, and our evidence, points to player performance being a composite of five characteristics/competencies
  - Physical/physiological (P)
  - Psychological (P)
  - Social/lifestyle (S)
  - Movement/technique (T)
  - Tactical (T)
  - PPSTT!

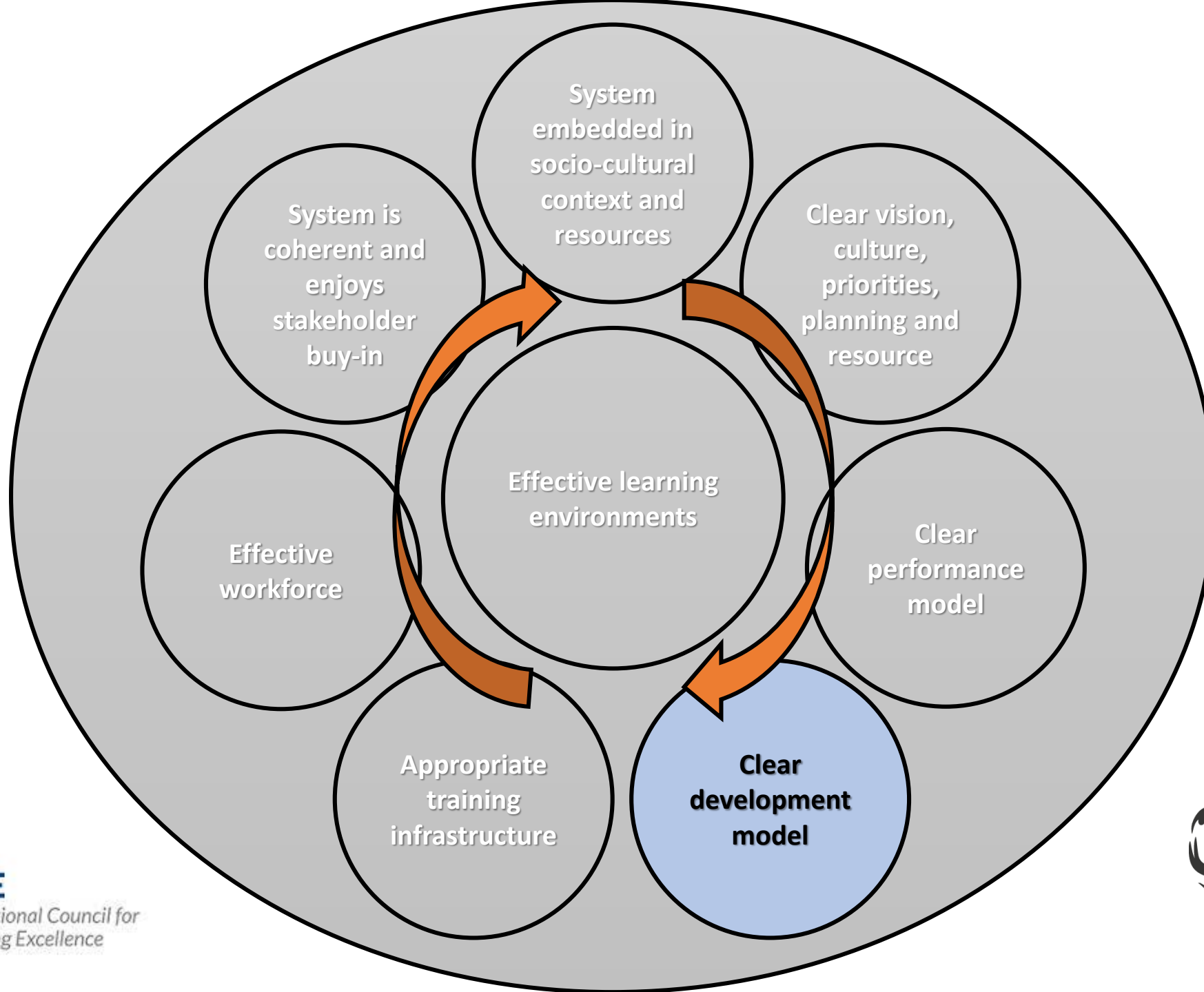


ELITE	Physical/ Physiological	Psychological	Social/lifestyle	Movement/technical	Tactical
<p>What the elite level game is like:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a high level of physical intensity but also intermittent very high levels of physical intensity – sprints, jumps, physical contact, and sudden direction shifts</li> <li>At the same time the game expects high levels of physical fitness and endurance – players typically run in excess of 10 km in a game</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is psychologically intense, highly pressurised and competitive during practice, competition, and outside the game</li> <li>This requires a number of highly developed psychological characteristics both in learning and development and performing at the highest levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involves high levels of personal scrutiny of performance and conduct of players from the media, public, etc.</li> <li>Players are judged as members of a community, a club, a team, dressing room and are expected to contribute to their image and abide by their rules</li> <li>There are high levels of expectation around player conduct and lifestyle management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although players have varying movement/technical profiles at the elite level – depending on their strengths, position, etc. – there is a consensus growing around particular technical characteristics and competencies</li> <li>Without exception, the research revealed the need for highly movement literate/technically skilled players</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no one performance model for elite level football – with teams winning international trophies using a variety of approaches and formations</li> <li>However, the game currently appears to be moving towards a possession or counter-attacking based approach with the ball played through the thirds in phase, and/or moved quickly and accurately in counter-attack</li> <li>This requires players to have excellent game understanding and to be able to make quick and effective decisions</li> </ul>
<p>Elite players will typically have <u>high levels</u> of the following characteristics and competencies:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Speed/explosive speed</u></li> <li><u>Strength</u></li> <li><u>Power</u></li> <li><u>Hypertrophy</u></li> <li><u>Aerobic fitness/endurance</u></li> <li><u>Muscular endurance</u></li> <li><u>Flexibility</u></li> </ul>	<p><b>Psychological characteristics that benefit the individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Ambition</u> - a desire to become a great player</li> <li><u>Motivation</u> - especially intrinsic motivation, love of the game</li> <li><u>Effort and commitment</u> - engagement, investment, work ethic, determination to succeed</li> <li><u>Awareness</u> - high level of awareness of self in all contexts; realistic performance evaluation; strengths and weaknesses and acts accordingly</li> <li><u>Attentiveness and focus</u></li> <li><u>Vision</u> - knowing what it takes to succeed, goal setting; planning, effective and appropriate imagery use</li> <li><u>Discipline</u> - dedication, taking responsibility, sacrifice, self-control, concentration, distraction control, delaying gratification</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social characteristics that benefit the individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Supportive parents</u> (informational, emotional and practical)</li> <li><u>Supportive important others</u> - partner, friends, team-mates, coaches, club officials, broader social connections</li> <li><u>Access/exposure to player development resources</u> - facilities, coaching</li> </ul> <p><b>Social characteristics that benefit the club/team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Team spirit and cohesion</u></li> <li><u>Team work</u></li> <li><u>Collective responsibility</u></li> <li><u>Community understanding and integration</u></li> </ul> <p><b>Lifestyle characteristics and competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Appropriate education</u></li> <li><u>Appropriate social choices</u></li> </ul>	<p><b>Fundamentals of movement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Agility</u></li> <li><u>Balance</u></li> <li><u>Coordination</u></li> </ul> <p><b>Fundamental movement skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Stability</u></li> <li><u>Object control</u></li> <li><u>Locomotion skills</u> - mobility</li> </ul> <p><b>Fundamental sport skills and sport-specific skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Ball control</u> - receiving and controlling the ball as and when it arrives with an assured, varied and secure touch, using all parts of the body; keeping possession of the ball while running, turning, stopping</li> <li><u>Ball mastery and manipulation</u> – tricks, ability to spin, float and drive the ball</li> <li><u>Running with ball/dribbling</u></li> <li><u>Passing/crossing</u> – releasing the ball accurately and instantly over a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Game understanding</u> - for example, understanding the professional game such as the different requirements for playing in the Champions League, Premier League and Championship</li> <li><u>Strategy</u></li> <li><u>Game intelligence/reading the game/game sense</u> e.g. movement off the ball</li> <li><u>Team/unit understanding and organisation</u></li> <li><u>Recognising opportunities to attack</u> - disrupting stable systems</li> <li><u>Recognising defensive threats</u></li> <li><u>Game control and manipulation</u> - players who can influence the tempo and shape of the game</li> <li><u>Positioning</u></li> <li><u>Knowing about ball actions</u></li> <li><u>Knowing about others' actions</u></li> <li><u>Acting in change situations</u></li> </ul>

# Performance model

- Existing research, and our evidence, points to player performance being a composite of five characteristics/competencies
  - Physical/physiological (P)
  - Psychological (P)
  - Social/lifestyle (S)
  - Movement/technique (T)
  - Tactical (T)
  - PPSTT!
- These 'ideal' characteristics/competencies are guides:
  - There will be different emphasis between cultures (countries) and individuals

ELITE	Physical/ Physiological	Psychological	Social/lifestyle	Movement/technical	Tactical
<p>What the elite level game is like:</p>		<p>psychologically intense, highly pressurised and competitive during practice, competition, and outside the game</p> <p>This requires a number of highly developed psychological characteristics both in learning and development and performing at the highest levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve scrutiny of play etc.</li> <li>Players comm room to the rules</li> <li>There are around manag</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no one performance model for elite level football – with teams winning international trophies using a variety of approaches and formations</li> <li>However, the game currently appears to be moving towards a possession or counter-attacking based approach with the ball played through the thirds in phase, and/or moved quickly and accurately in counter-attack</li> <li>This requires players to have excellent game understanding and to be able to make quick and effective decisions</li> </ul>
<p>Elite players will typically have <u>high levels</u> of the following characteristics and competencies:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speed/explosive speed</li> <li>Strength</li> <li>Power</li> <li>Hypertrophy</li> <li>Aerobic fitness/endurance</li> <li>Muscular endurance</li> <li>Flexibility</li> </ul>	 <p>determination to succeed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Awareness</u> - high level of awareness of self in all contexts; realistic performance evaluation; strengths and weaknesses and acts accordingly</li> <li><u>Focus</u> - knowing what it takes to succeed, goal setting; planning, positive and appropriate imagery</li> <li><u>Discipline</u> - dedication, taking responsibility, sacrifice, self-control, concentration, distraction control, long gratification</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social characteristics that benefit the individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Supportive parents</u> (informational, emotional and practical)</li> <li><u>Supportive important others</u> - partner, friends, team-mates, coaches, club officials, broader social connections</li> <li><u>Access/exposure to player development resources</u> - facilities, coaching</li> </ul> <p><b>Social characteristics of club/team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Team spirit and cohesion</u></li> <li><u>Team work</u></li> <li><u>Collective responsibility</u></li> <li><u>Community understanding and integration</u></li> </ul> <p><b>Lifestyle characteristics and competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Appropriate education</u></li> <li><u>Appropriate social skills</u></li> </ul>	<p><b>Fundamentals of movement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Agility</u></li> <li><u>Balance</u></li> <li><u>Coordination</u></li> </ul> <p><b>Fundamental movement skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Stability</u></li> <li><u>Object control</u></li> <li><u>Locomotion skills</u> - movement</li> </ul> <p><b>Fundamental sport skills and specific skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Ball control</u> - receiving and controlling the ball</li> </ul>	 <p>game understanding - for example, understanding the professional environment such as the different divisions for playing in the Football League, Premier League and Championship</p> <p><u>Game sense</u> - the intelligence/reading the game/game sense e.g. movement off the ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Team/unit understanding and organisation</u></li> <li><u>Recognising opportunities to attack</u> - disrupting stable systems</li> <li><u>Recognising defensive threats</u></li> <li><u>Game control and manipulation</u> - players who can influence the tempo and shape of the game</li> <li><u>Positioning</u></li> <li><u>Knowing about ball actions</u></li> <li><u>Knowing about others' actions</u></li> <li><u>Acting in change situations</u></li> </ul>
					



# Development model

- If we know our elite performance exhibit high level PPSTT characteristics/competencies, then we need to develop them!
- The days of physical and technical development only are over (more or less)!
- All effective systems attend to holistic PPSTT characteristics/competencies (whether this is delivered on the ground is a different matter!)
- But in different ways...



FA Learning  
Working in the Four Corners



cal  
L OR CUSHION? DIRECTIONAL...  
IGHT OF PASS, FEET OR SPACE?  
TATE MOVEMENT WITH PASSING  
BODY SHAPE: MAKE PLAY  
PREDICTABLE.  
SHOOTING - BE CONFIDENT, HAVE A GO!

Ps  
DECISION MAKING - SPA  
NO  
SHOOTING - ARE YOU TO  
SHOOT IN TO  
IF YES: SHOOT!  
IF NO: MOVE THE BALL.  
RELAX! TAKE YOUR TIME, PLAY YOUR GAME!

TURNING - SHARP, DYNAMIC, MAKE SPACE.  
DICTATE THE PACE OF THE GAME,  
PLAY AT OUR PACE.  
YES - PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS.

UNITS - PLAY AS A TEAM  
DEFENSE/IND  
COMMUNICATE - LET  
WHERE  
CELEBRATE - IF YOU  
SOMETE  
CELEBRATE +



Physical





# Development model

- If we know our elite performance exhibit high level PPSTT characteristics/competencies, then we need to develop them!
- The days of physical and technical development only are over (more or less)!
- All effective systems attend to holistic PPSTT characteristics/competencies (where this is delivered on the ground is a different matter)
- Also, and finally, for current purposes, aged/staged

	Physical/physiological	Psychological	Social/lifestyle	Technical	Tactical
<b>17-21 years</b>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Physical development with strength and condition specialist</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Activities to build strength, speeds, power, flexibility etc.</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Continue to develop key psychological characteristics - motivation, commitment, discipline, resilience, confidence, desire to learn and improve; work on refinement of high level professional characteristics - awareness and concentration, coping with pressure and stress, competitive behaviours and appetite for winning, never giving up</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Continue to build players key psychological attitudes and skills in and out of sessions</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Help players manage transition to first team football, working on higher level social characteristics - place and humility, respect etc. ; reinforce importance of appropriate lifestyle characteristics and choices - nutrition, hydration, rest and social behaviour</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Helping players to understand professional environment</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Maintaining and refining technical skills; work on position specific skills</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Position specific skills</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Develop detailed understanding and awareness of game, tactics, team organisation; understanding difference between different levels of competition, increasing overall speed of play; providing opportunities for young players to play at senior/first team level</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Advance game understanding and tactics, and playing opportunities</p>
<b>12-16 years</b>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Sensitivity to changes associated with sexual maturity; there are differing opinions about the introduction of physical development work in this age band; some advocate a specialist programme, others suggest physical development should be done through normal game related training activities</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Physical development through games</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Getting to know players and building relationships; emphasising personal responsibility, motivation, discipline and focus; establishing a practice ethic; sessions in the learning/challenge zone, emphasising calculated risks and creativity</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Continue to build players' key psychological attitudes and skills in and out of sessions</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Helping players through difficult life changes; work with and develop players ideas about friendship/peer group encouraging mutual support, respect and humility; develop a culture of hard work; develop good nutritional and life-style habits; manage parent expectations; working with educationalists</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Helping players through a difficult period</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Manage technical inconsistencies associated with sexual change; skill development under pressure; greater emphasis on passing and retention; advanced technical skills; exposure to position specific work though players not 'locked in'; work with skills coaches; continue to encourage engagement in other sports</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Problem solving games, move towards 11-a-side, some unopposed development</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Prioritise game understanding and awareness; awareness of roles in and out of possession; overall decision-making; manage transition to 11-a-side</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Problem solving games such as 3v2; use competitive matches as development opportunities</p>



	Physical/physiological	Psychological	Social/lifestyle	Technical	Tactical
<b>8-11 years</b>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> No specific physical focus other than engaging youngsters in games of a slightly longer duration</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Physical development through games</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Same as 5-7 years but encouraging youngsters' self-regulation e.g. showing up on time, encourage players to take responsibility for their own learning, coaching focused more on individual players, using consultation to shape sessions, use questioning more, encourage risk taking and creativity</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Building players psychological attitudes and skills, experimentation through games</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Same as 5-7 years but focus more on evolving peer/team mate relations, and managing parents with regard to selection and competition.</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Working with team on their relationships, talking to parents</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Same as 5-7 years but refine movement skills, and greater focus on technical ball skills particular ball retention and passing, using both feet, encourage engagement in other sports. Key skill development age.</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Problem solving games, small sided games, some unopposed development (but keep fun)</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Work on decision-making - when to pass, when to dribble, when to share, when to keep, consider off the ball movement, and reading and anticipating play, introduce and manage competition, more detailed rules later in this age group</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Problem solving games, small sided games 3v3, 4v4.</p>
<b>5-7 years</b>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> No specific physical focus other than engaging youngsters in games</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Physical development through games</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Getting to know the youngster, being a 'fun friend', making the youngster feel safe, secure and happy, establish clear behavioural boundaries, prioritising fun and enjoyment in sessions, plan structured sessions but with variety (change every 10-15 minutes), simple language, with low levels of instruction, very positive/encouraging approach</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Fun varied games</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Work with club, other coaches and parents to define a clear philosophy, expectations and manage problems.</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Talking to parents</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Prioritise movement development such as agility, balance and coordination, introduce ball work notably dribbling and shooting with players having many touches, encourage engagement in other sports</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Fun games with movement focus, small sided games 2v2, 3v3, some unopposed development (but keep fun)</p>	<p><u>Developmental focus</u> Develop a basic understanding of the game - team, directions of attack, simple rules</p> <p><u>Key activities</u> Small sided games with some very basic tactical ideas such as passing and space (though these are not a priority compared to movement and ball skills)</p>

# References

North, J., Lara-Bercial, S., & Rongen, F. (forthcoming). Components of effective performer development systems. *Journal of Sports Science* (target).

North, J., Lara-Bercial, S., Rankin-Wright, A. J., Ashford, M., & Whitaker, L. (2016). Player development systems in the performance pathway in four world-leading badminton nations: A literature review and interviews with experts from Indonesia, Korea, Denmark and Spain. Leeds: Carnegie School of Sport, Leeds Beckett University.

North, J., Lara-Bercial, S., Morgan, G., & Rongen, F. (2014). The identification of good practice principles to inform player development and coaching in European youth football. A literature review and expert interviews in Belgium, England, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain in the performance pathway: A research report for UEFA. Leeds: Research Institute for Sport, Physical Activity and Leisure. Leeds Beckett University.

North, J., Morgan, G., & Rongen, F. (2012). Matching player & coach competencies in association football across age categories 5-11, 12-16 & 17-21 years: A research report for the Football Association. Leeds, UK: Leeds Metropolitan University.

# Maturation & Physical Characteristics of Male Youth Football Players

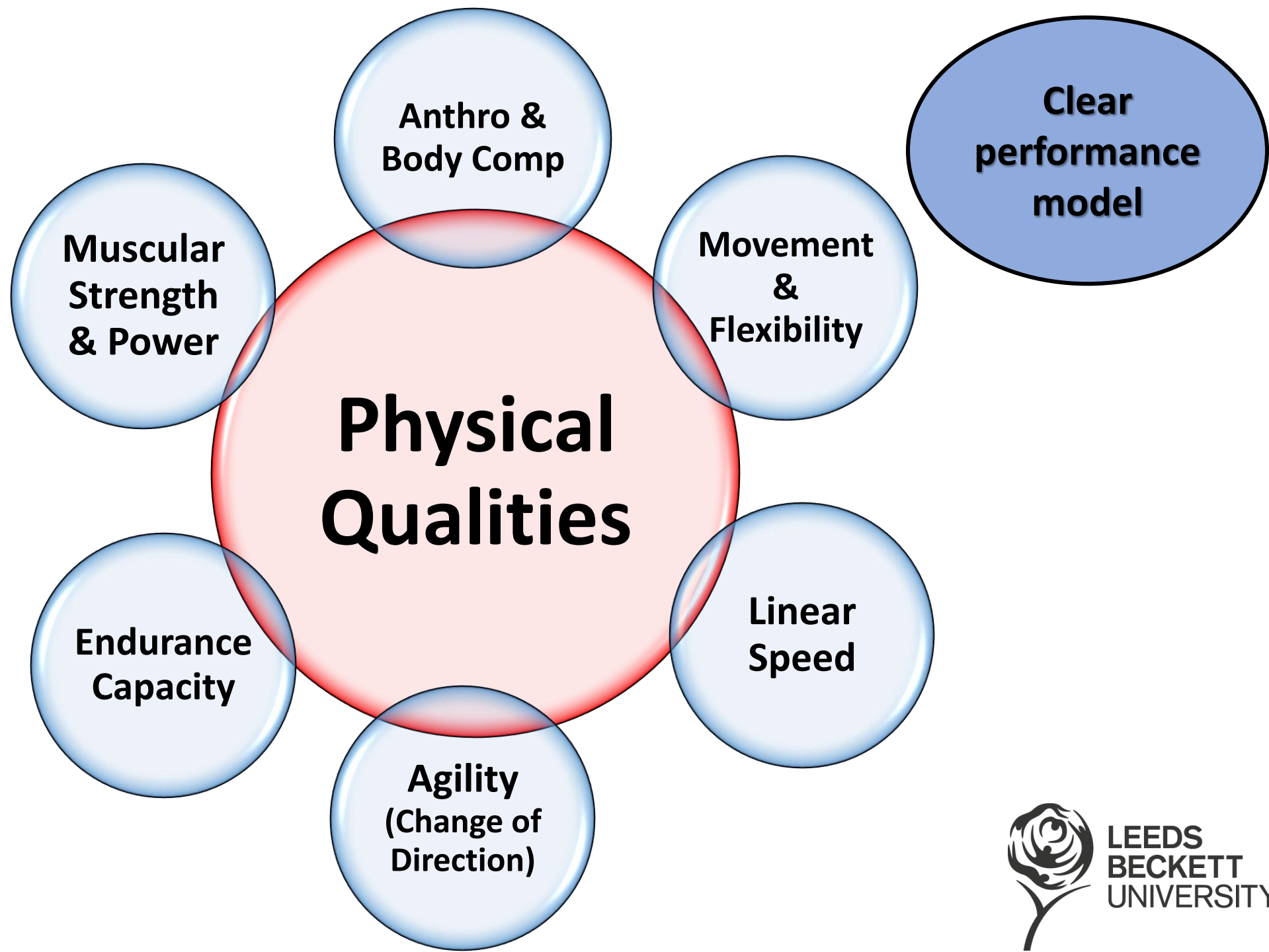
Dr Kevin Till  
@KTConditioning

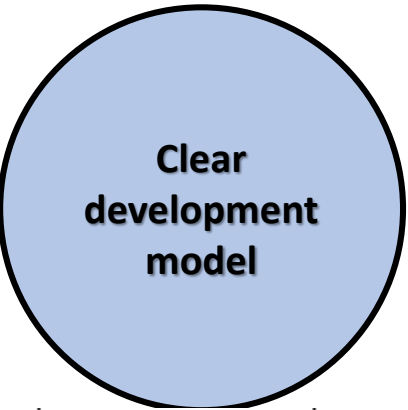


# IOC Consensus on Youth Athletic Development

“Sports participation with appropriate physical development decreases the risk of sports related injuries, and enhances the likelihood of achieving and sustaining an enjoyable, high level of performance

Muscular fitness and effective movement skills serve as the foundation for achieving optimal and sustainable long-term athletic performance; Therefore, an emphasis on developing muscular strength, power, speed and agility of young athletes with appropriate age-related interventions is **ESSENTIAL!!!**”



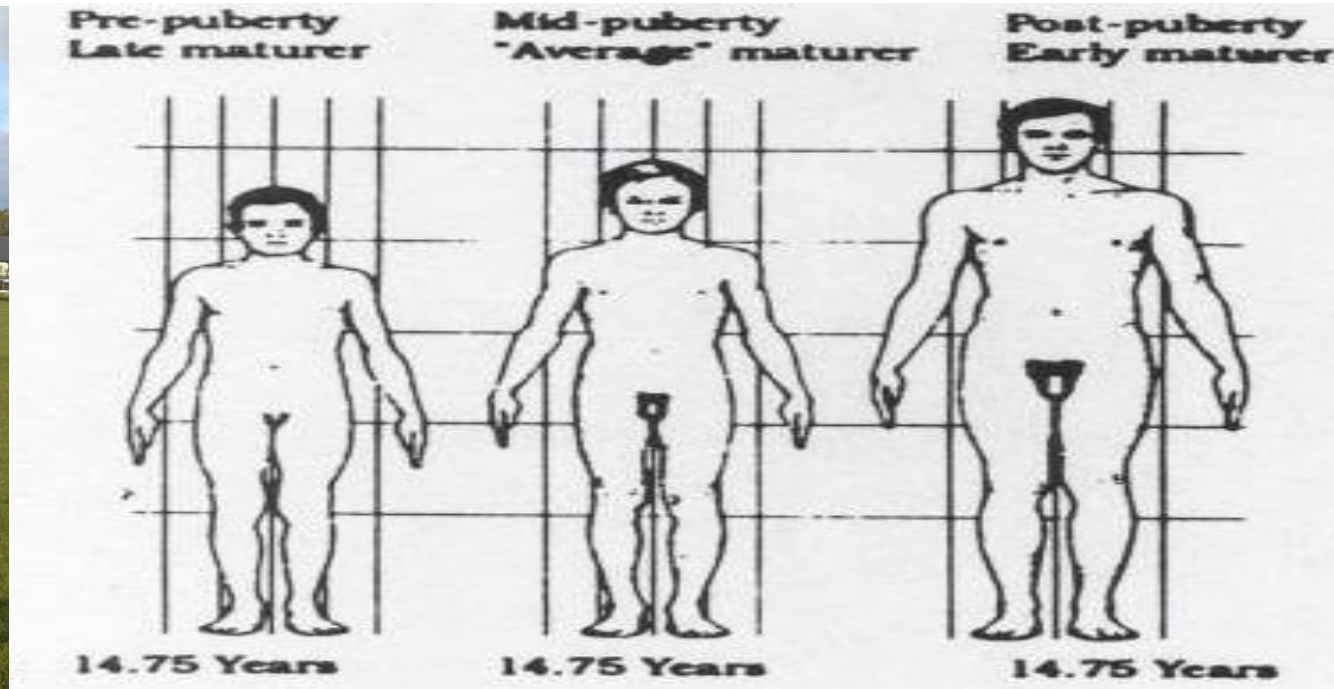


# Physical Development

<b>5-7 years</b>	<u>Developmental focus</u> No specific physical focus other than engaging youngsters in games <u>Key activities</u> Physical development through games			<b>12-16 years</b>	<u>Developmental focus</u> Sensitivity to changes associated with sexual maturity; there are differing opinions about the introduction of physical development work in this age band; some advocate a specialist programme, others suggest physical development should be done through normal game related training activities <u>Key activities</u> Physical development through games
	<b>8-11 years</b>	<b>Physical/physiological</b> <u>Developmental focus</u> No specific physical focus other than engaging youngsters in games of a slightly longer duration <u>Key activities</u> Physical development through games		<b>17-21 years</b>	<b>Physical/physiological</b> <u>Developmental focus</u> Physical development with strength and condition specialist <u>Key activities</u> Activities to build strength, speeds, power, flexibility etc.

# Maturation

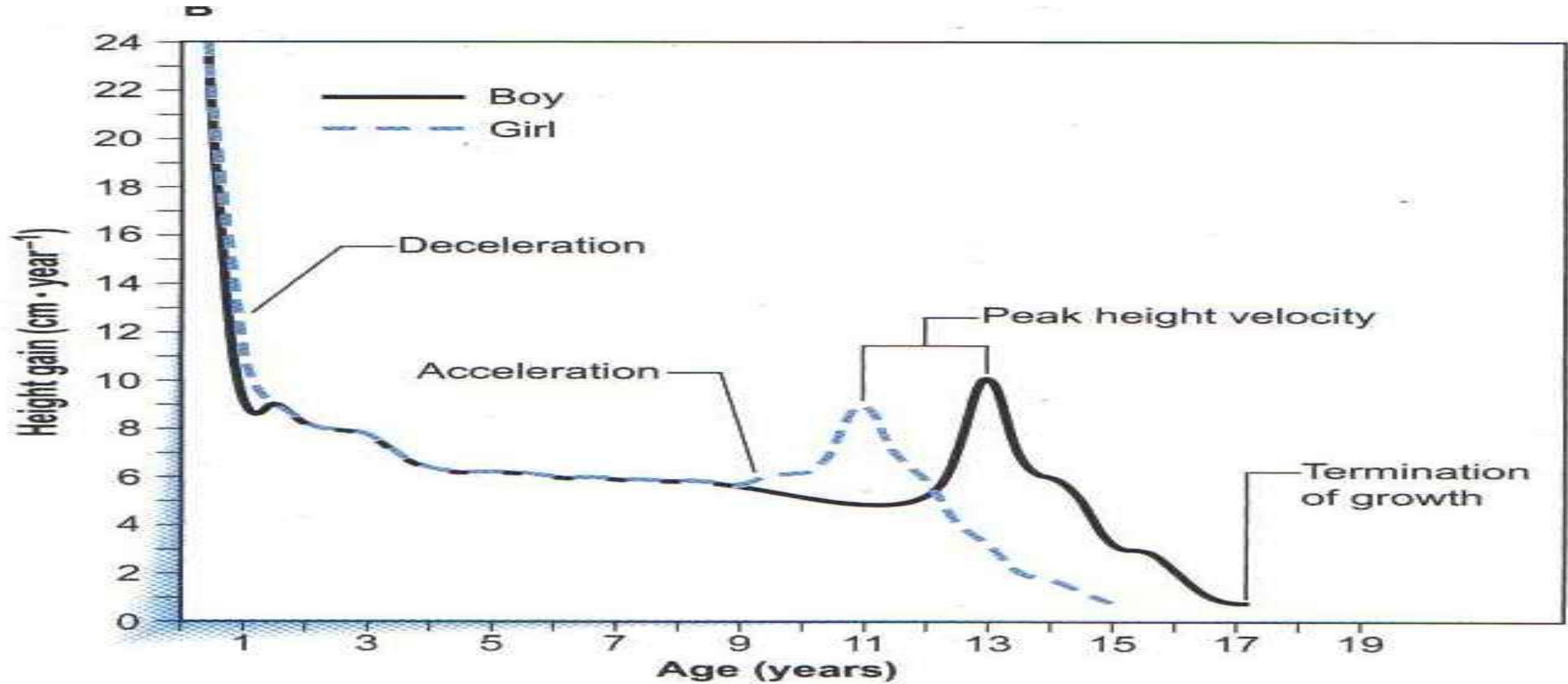
The **TIMING** and **TEMPO** of progress towards the mature adult state



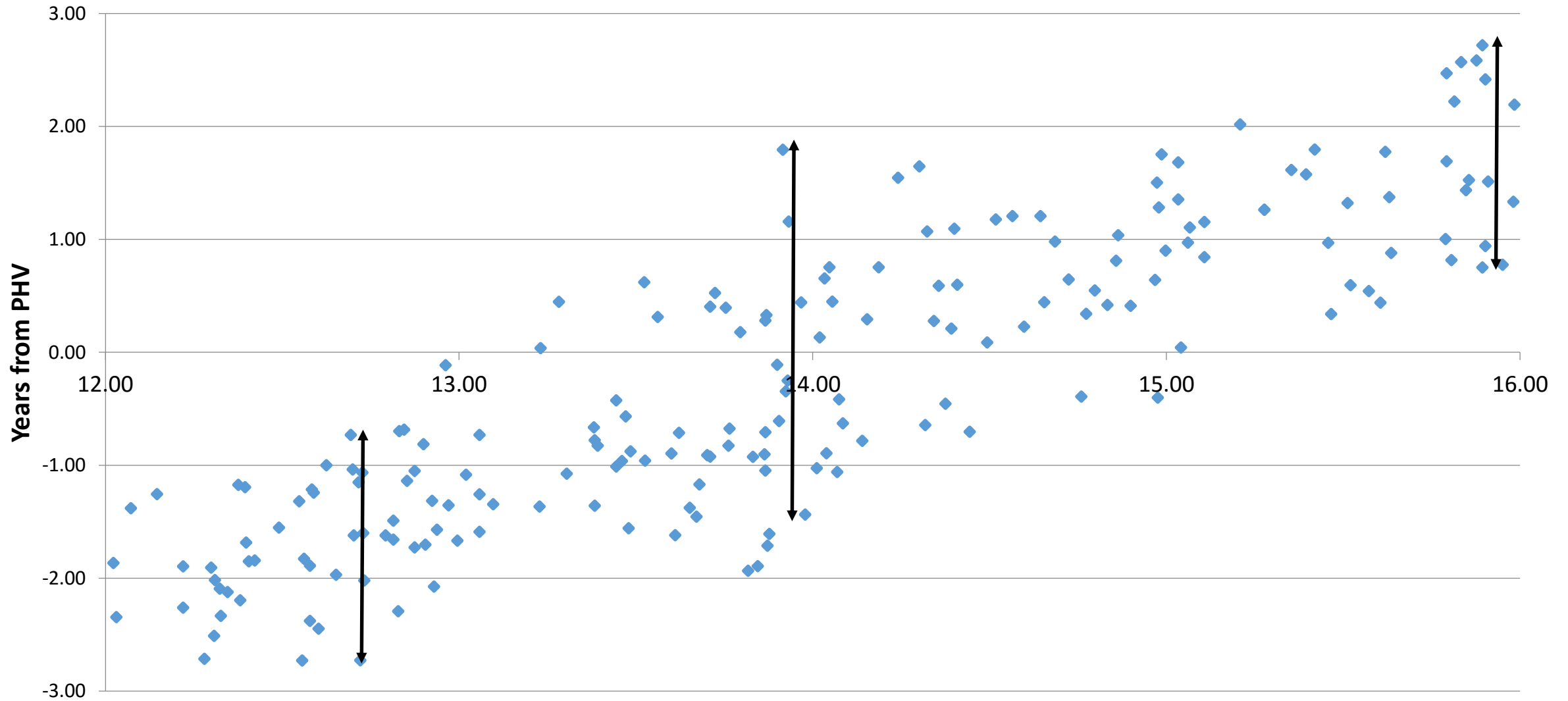
Comparison of Late, Average and Early Maturers of the same Chronological Age



# Maturation – Age at PHV



# Age vs Maturation in Youth Soccer





# What does this mean for Youth Football?

**Chronological Annual Age  
Grouping  
+  
Individual variation in  
biological maturity  
+  
Relationship between  
maturation and performance**

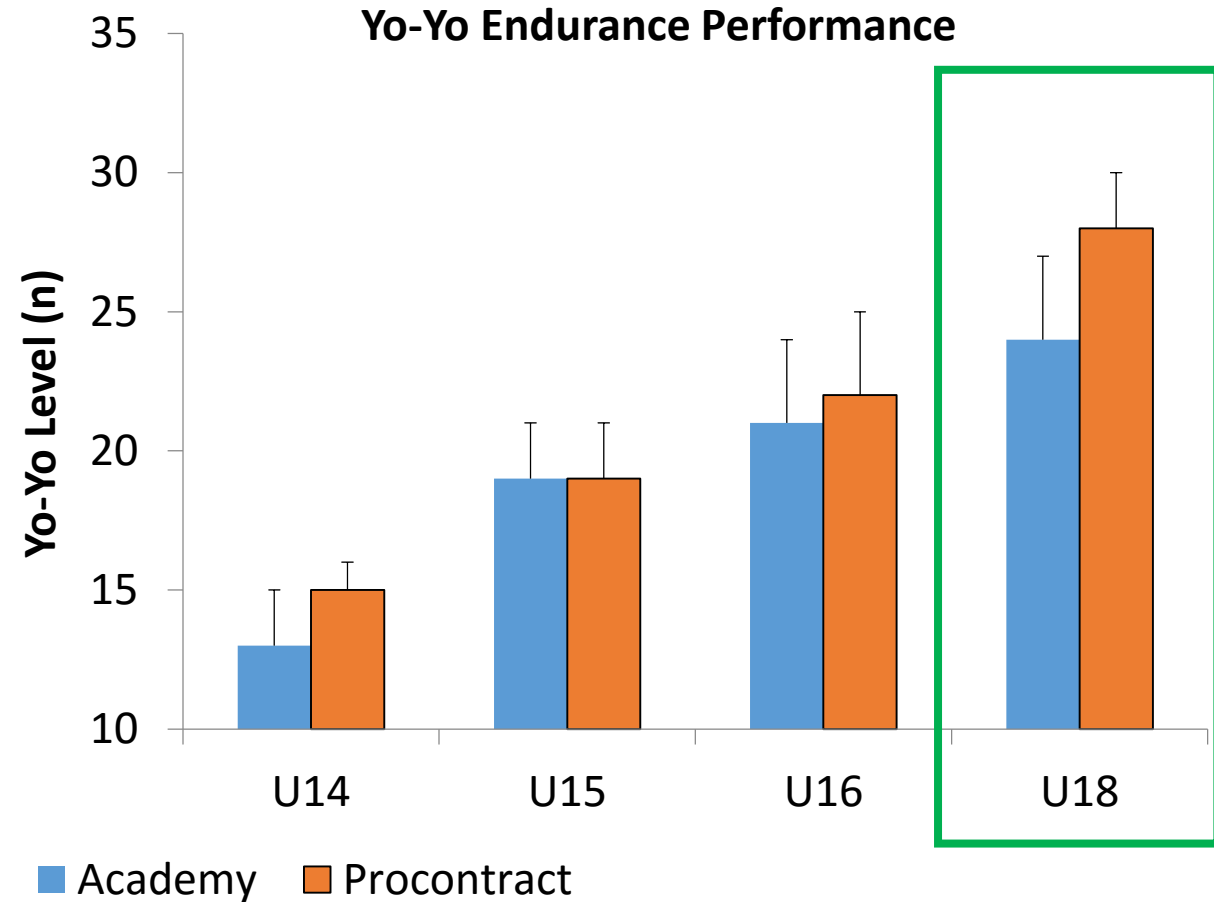
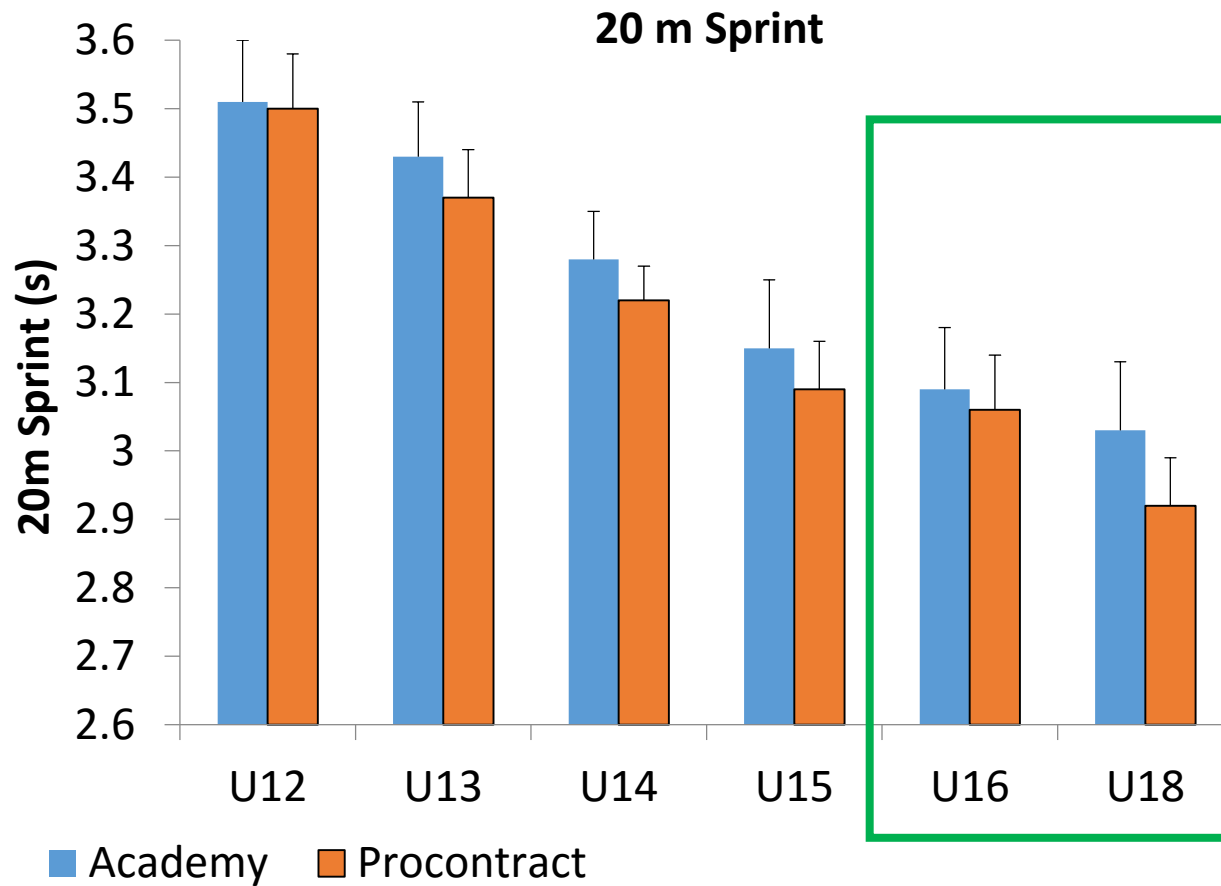
**=**

**Players may be  
(dis)advantaged within  
selection opportunities  
and have different  
developmental needs**

# Anthropometric, Speed & Endurance Characteristics

	U9 (n=67)	U10 (n=94)	U11 (n=168)	U12 (n=172)	U13 (n=211)	U14 (n=195)	U15 (n=151)	U16 (n=123)	U18 (n=321)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Chronological age (y)	8.87 ± 0.34	9.83 ± 0.38	10.88 ± 0.31	11.95 ± 0.35	12.95 ± 0.31	13.84 ± 0.32	14.84 ± 0.30	15.73 ± 0.33	17.61 ± 0.45
Height (cm)	132.0 ± 4.9 (118.0–141.0)	136.9 ± 5.2 (119.5–148.3)	141.4 ± 7.2 (126.0–161.6)	147.3 ± 7.5 (129.2–175.0)	155.5 ± 9.1 (133.5–177.6)	161.0 ± 8.4 (139.0–183.4)	169.6 ± 7.5 (151.9–191.6)	174.1 ± 8.1 (149.0–193.0)	178.1 ± 7.9 (157.1–197.4)
Body Mass (kg)	29.4 ± 3.2 (22.5–38.4)	33.2 ± 3.9 (26.1–46.7)	36.8 ± 5.7 (27.1–56.6)	40.7 ± 6.4 (28.0–68.2)	46.6 ± 8.0 (30.1–69.6)	51.8 ± 7.8 (34.7–74.9)	61.0 ± 7.6 (42.7–85.4)	66.7 ± 8.6 (44.6–86.6)	72.5 ± 8.6 (55.0–88.5)
10m Speed (s)	2.19 ± 0.07 (2.04–2.36)	2.13 ± 0.06 (1.96–2.31)	2.06 ± 0.09 (1.90–2.27)	2.00 ± 0.11 (1.85–2.26)	1.99 ± 0.10 (1.76–2.26)	1.90 ± 0.10 (1.67–2.18)	1.84 ± 0.03 (1.65–1.99)	1.82 ± 0.07 (1.66–1.97)	1.79 ± 0.05 (1.65–1.92)
20m Speed (s)	3.85 ± 0.16 (3.26–4.23)	3.66 ± 0.11 (3.20–4.11)	3.64 ± 0.14 (3.18–4.00)	3.51 ± 0.13 (3.00–3.96)	3.43 ± 0.18 (2.99–3.87)	3.28 ± 0.09 (2.91–3.47)	3.15 ± 0.17 (2.90–3.32)	3.09 ± 0.08 (2.82–3.29)	3.03 ± 0.12 (2.78–3.21)
YYE12 (n)					13 ± 3 (7–21)	13 ± 4 (7–23)	19 ± 4 (8–27)	21 ± 6 (9–30)	24 ± 6 (12–38)

# Anthropometric, Speed & Endurance Characteristics: Influence on Pro Contract?

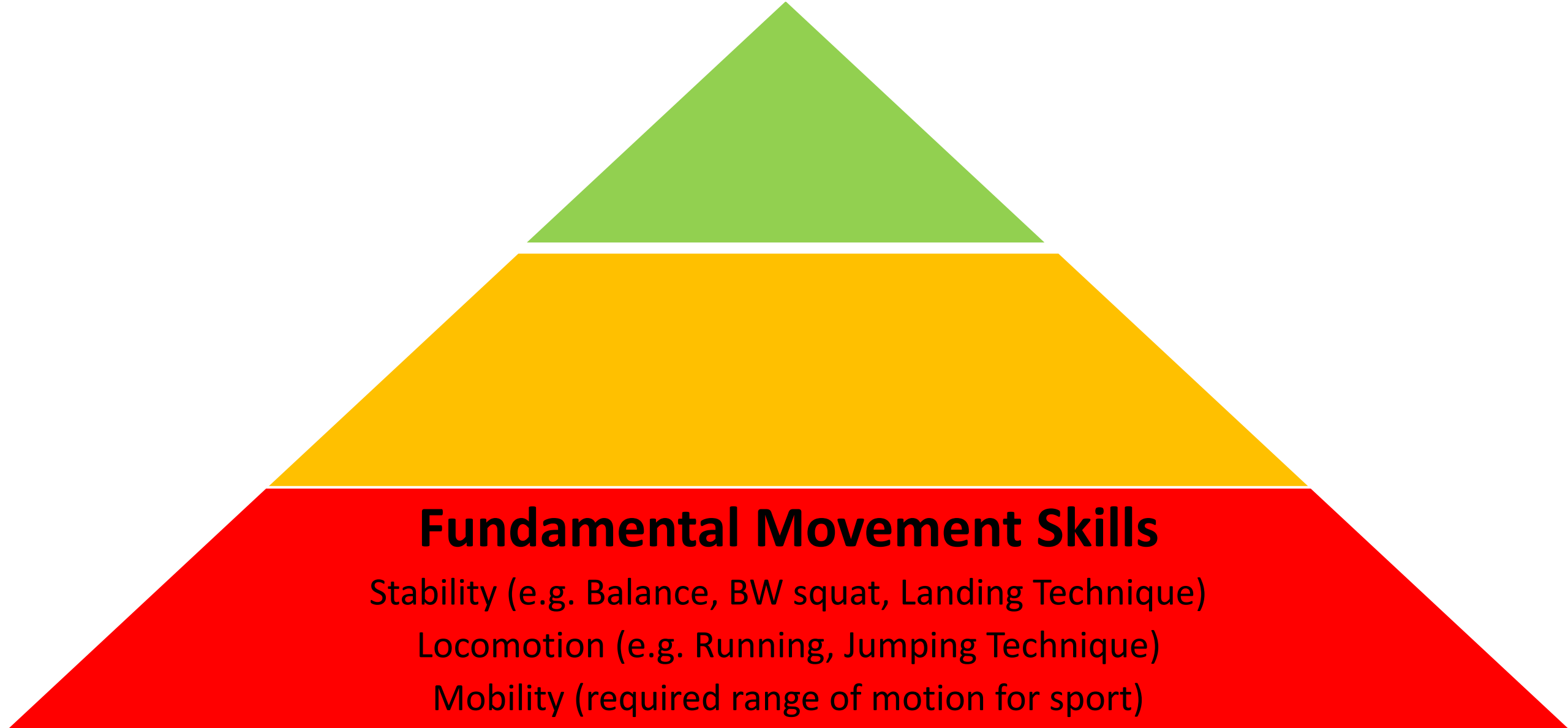


# But What About Strength?

YOUTH PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT (YPD) MODEL FOR MALES																								
CHRONOLOGICAL AGE (YEARS)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21+				
AGE PERIODS	EARLY CHILDHOOD			MIDDLE CHILDHOOD							ADOLESCENCE							ADULTHOOD						
GROWTH RATE	RAPID GROWTH			↔				STEADY GROWTH				↔				ADOLESCENT SPURT			↔			DECLINE IN GROWTH RATE		
MATURATIONAL STATUS	YEARS PRE-PHV							←				PHV			→						YEARS POST-PHV			
TRAINING ADAPTATION	PREDOMINANTLY NEURAL (AGE-RELATED)							↔				COMBINATION OF NEURAL AND HORMONAL (MATURITY-RELATED)												
PHYSICAL QUALITIES	FMS			FMS				FMS			FMS													
	SSS			SSS				SSS			SSS													
	Mobility			Mobility							Mobility													
	Agility			Agility				Agility			Agility							Agility						
	Speed			Speed				Speed			Speed							Speed						
	Power			Power				Power			Power							Power						
	Strength			Strength				Strength			Strength							Strength						
	Hypertrophy			Hypertrophy				Hypertrophy			Hypertrophy							Hypertrophy						
	Endurance & MC			Endurance & MC							Endurance & MC			Endurance & MC										
TRAINING STRUCTURE	UNSTRUCTURED			LOW STRUCTURE				MODERATE STRUCTURE			HIGH STRUCTURE			VERY HIGH STRUCTURE										



# Performance Pyramid (Abraham et al., 2015)



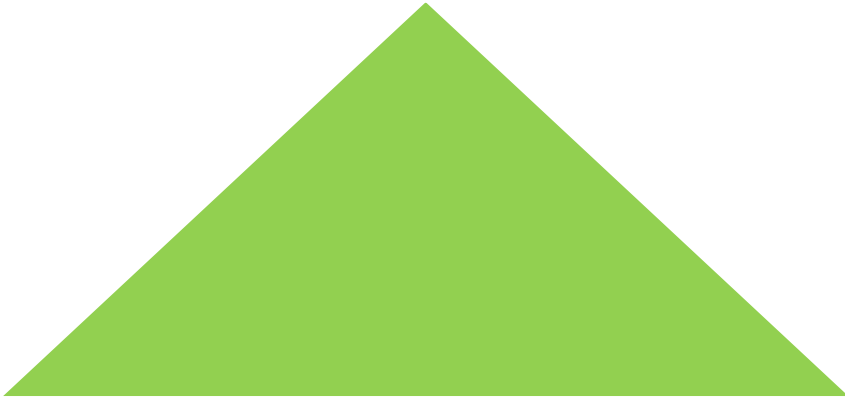
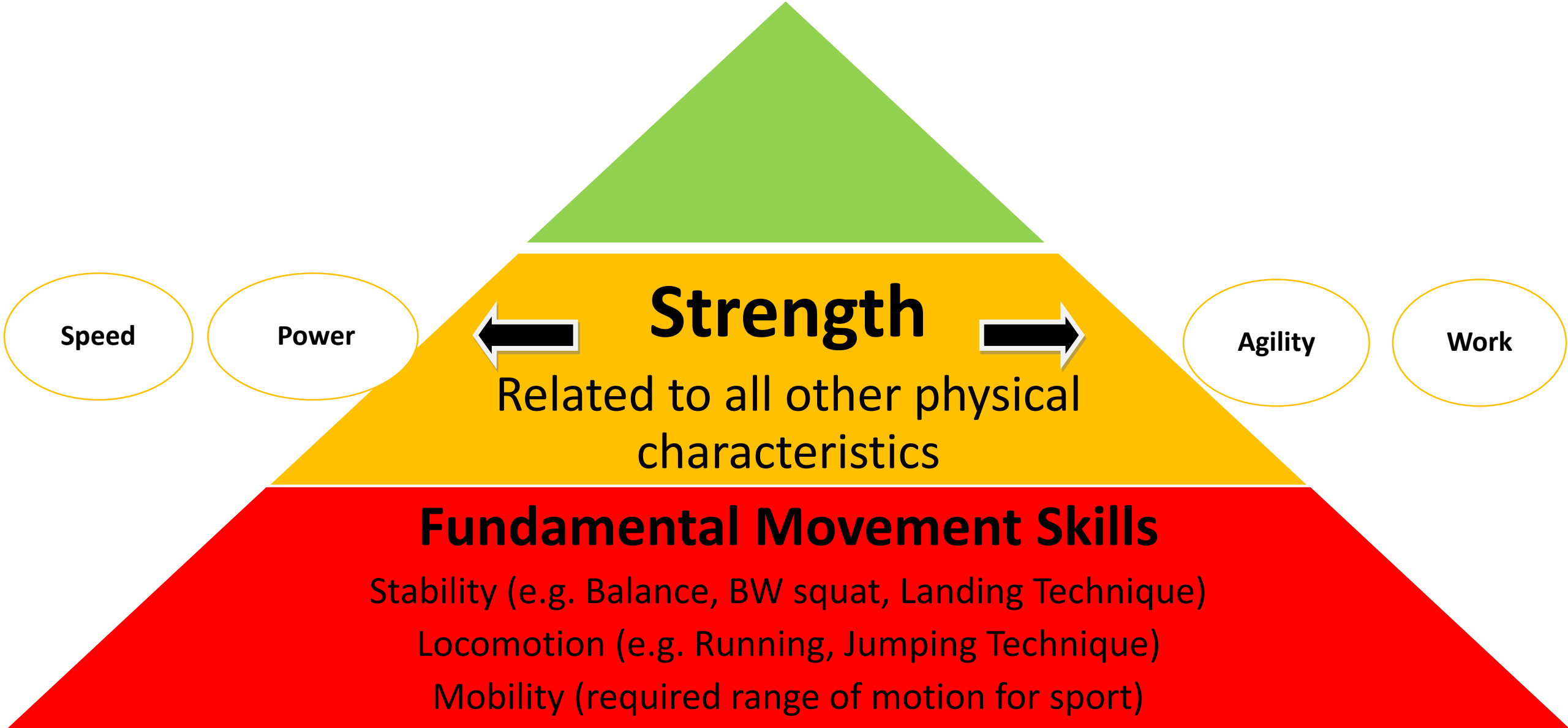
## **Fundamental Movement Skills**

Stability (e.g. Balance, BW squat, Landing Technique)

Locomotion (e.g. Running, Jumping Technique)

Mobility (required range of motion for sport)

# Performance Pyramid (Abraham et al., 2015)



**Strength**



Related to all other physical characteristics

Speed

Power

Agility

Work

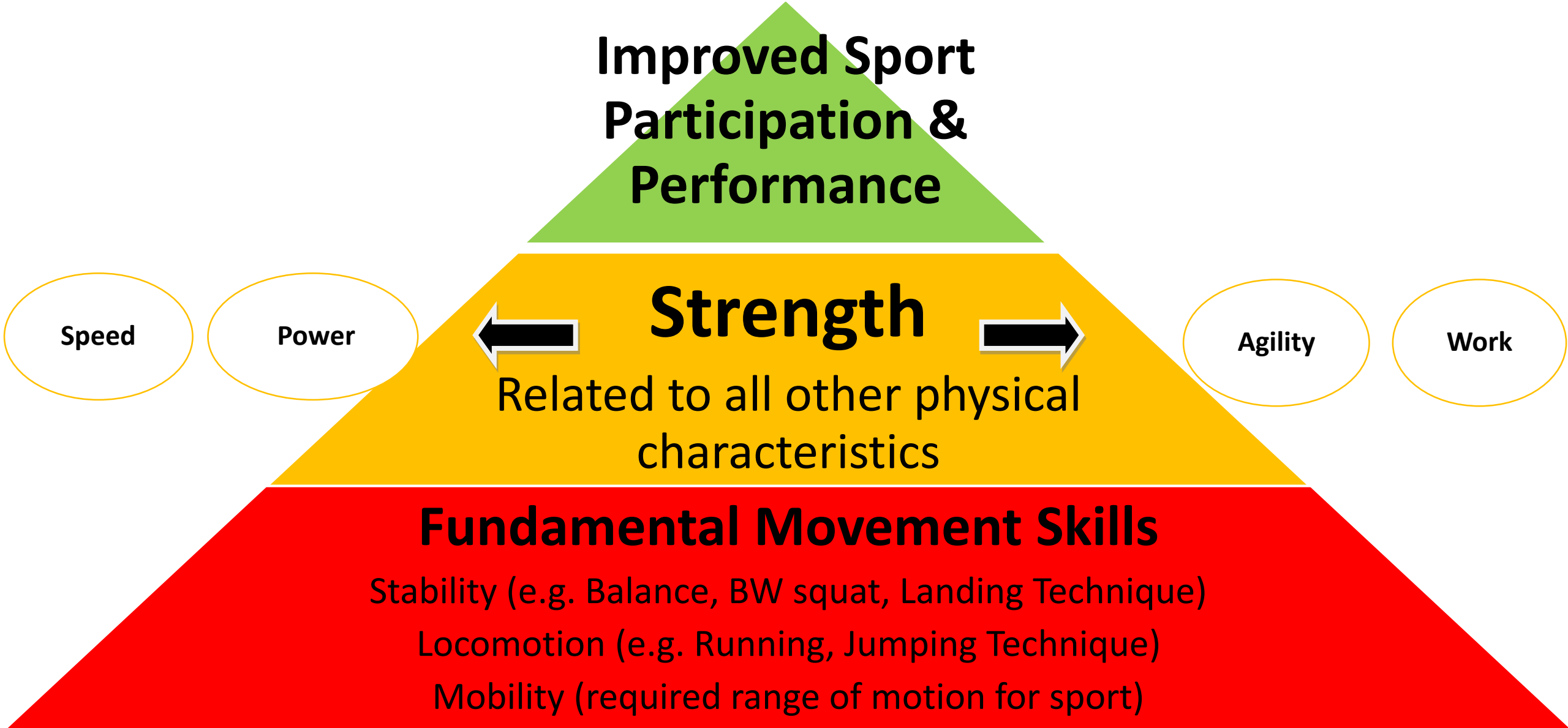
**Fundamental Movement Skills**

Stability (e.g. Balance, BW squat, Landing Technique)

Locomotion (e.g. Running, Jumping Technique)

Mobility (required range of motion for sport)

# Performance Pyramid (Abraham et al., 2015)



# Strength in Youth Football



Influence of Age and Maturation on **Strength**, Speed and Power in Youth Soccer

Assessed 293 Youth Soccer Players aged 12-18 years from 4 academies

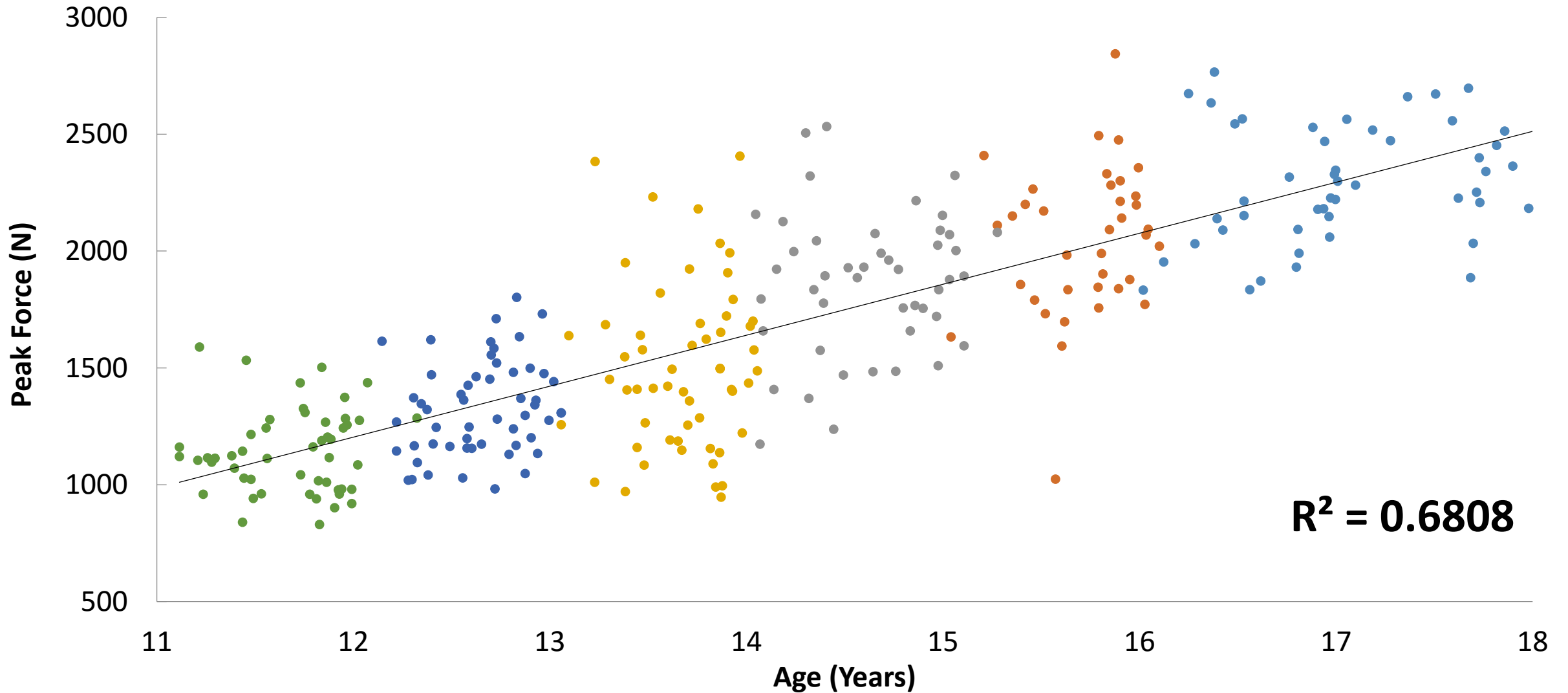
Strength Assessment =  
Isometric Mid Thigh Pull

- Peak Force
- Relative Peak Force (considering body mass)



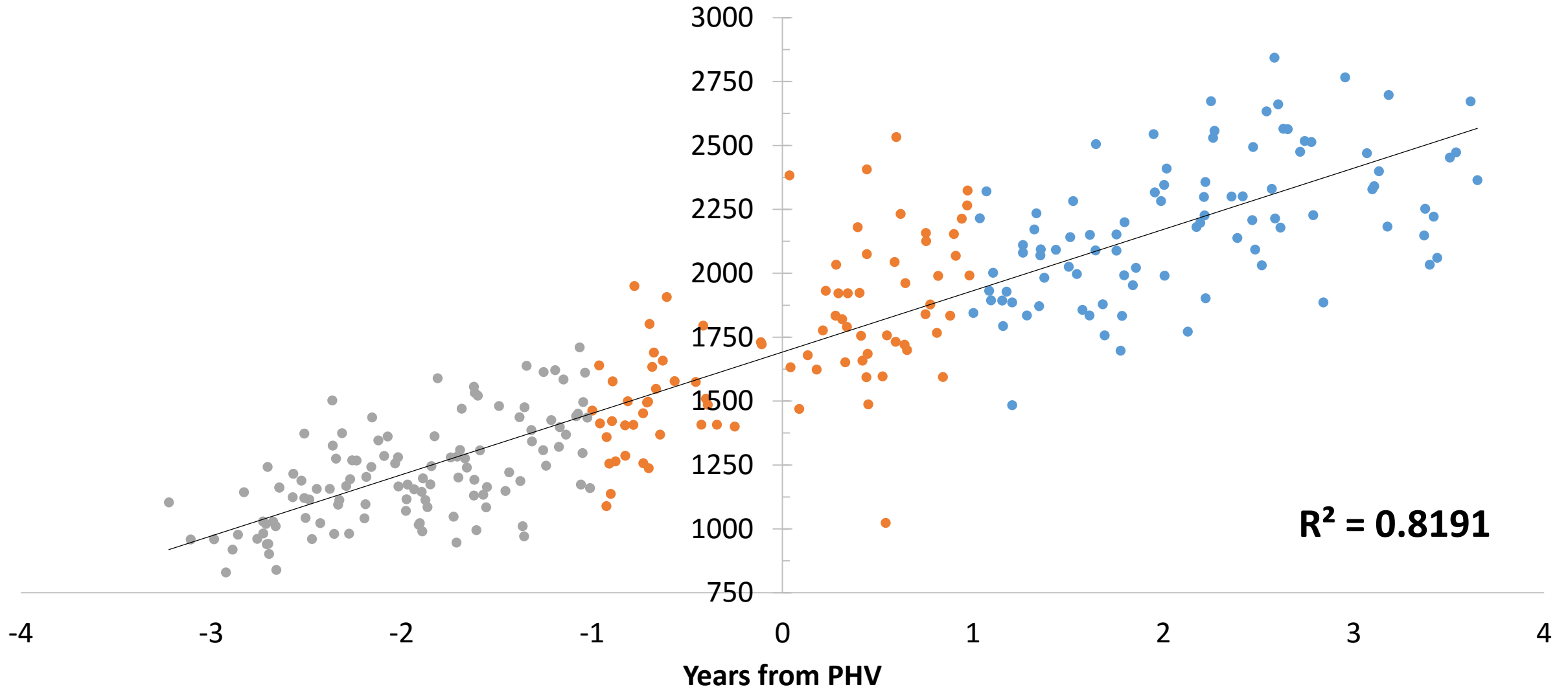


# Strength (Peak Force) vs. Age



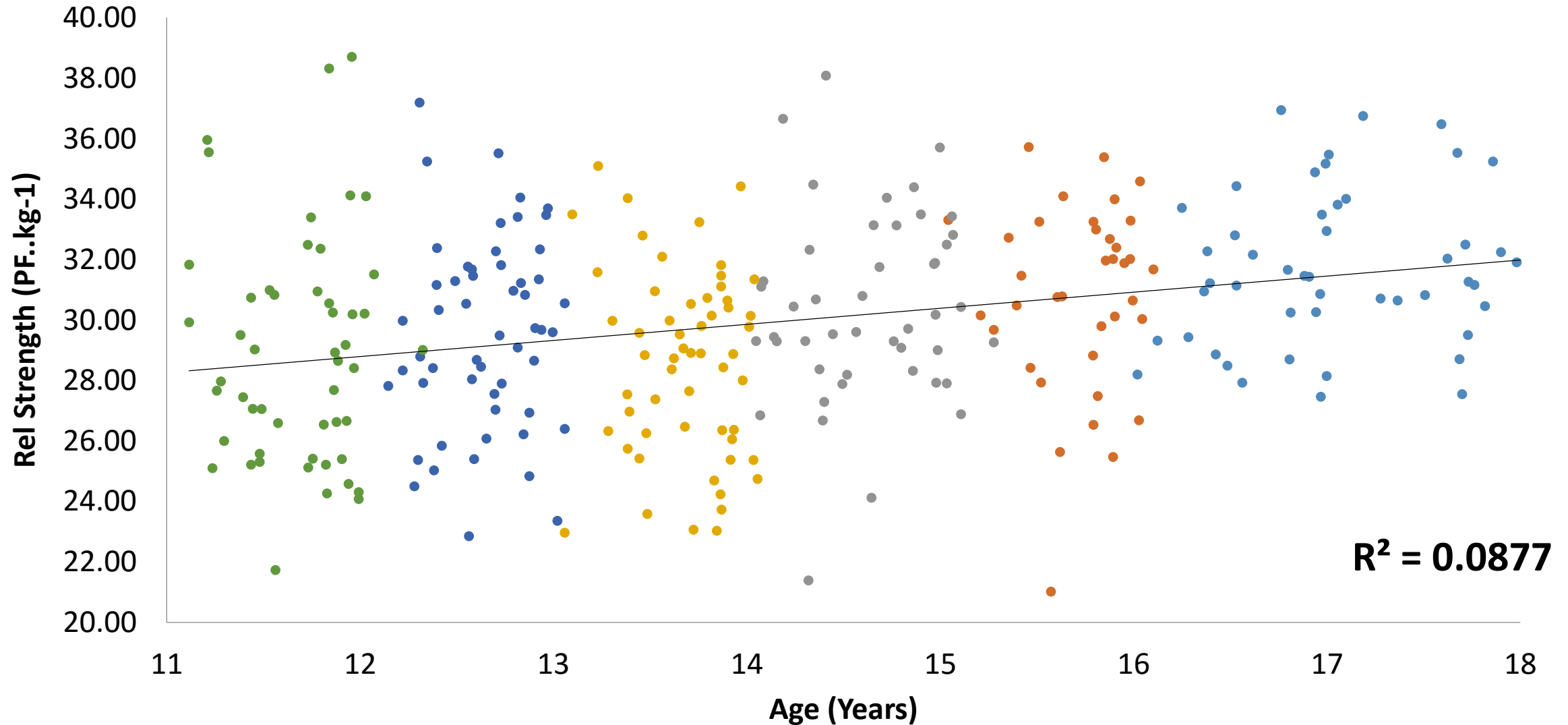
$R^2 = 0.6808$

# Strength (Peak Force) vs. Maturation



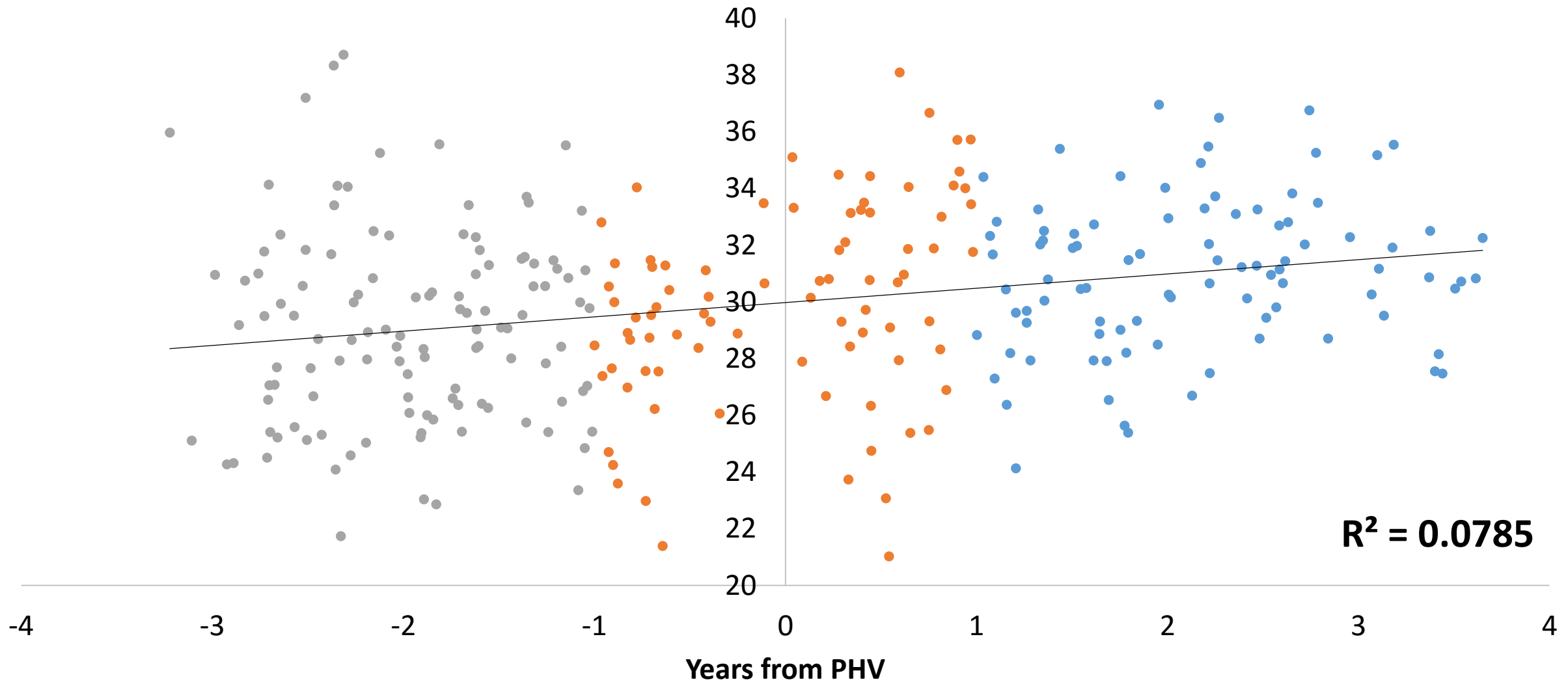
$R^2 = 0.8191$

# Relative Strength vs. Age



$R^2 = 0.0877$

# Relative Strength vs. Maturation



$R^2 = 0.0785$



# Predictors of Speed, Agility & Power

Variables	Predictors
20m Sprint	1. Age
	2. Height
	3. Relative Strength
Agility 505 L	1. Years from PHV
	2. Relative Strength
Agility 505 R	1. Age
	2. Relative Strength
	3. Height
Vertical Jump	1. Age
	2. Relative Strength

- Speed, agility and power performance in by factors related to age, maturation and relative strength qualities
- Practitioners should understand the impact of growth and maturation upon physical performance
- Young soccer players should undertake strength training interventions, especially when large body mass increases are likely, to develop relative strength

# Conclusions

- Physical characteristics are important aspects for football performance  
= Clear Performance Model
- Large variations in maturation status of youth players, which impacts upon physical performance
- Physical performance in young ages should not be used for Talent ID but should be implemented for long-term development
- Strength is important – especially Relative Strength! Implement resistance training interventions with youth players

# THE INFLUENCE OF AGE AND MATURATION ON THE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH FEMALE SOCCER PLAYERS



**Dr Stacey Emmonds**

 @ S\_Emmonds



"One of the big challenges in the women's game is just developing athleticism," Campbell told BBC Sport.

"It is not technical and tactical - [in those aspects] they are probably as good as anybody in the world.

"But that athleticism that you see in the American players or the Germans is a very different type of athleticism, power and agility. We have got a long way to go.







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# England Talent Pathway



## Applied Physiology

Naomi Datson · Andrew Tracy Lewis · Matthew Warren Gregson

Published online: 7 May 2014  
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**Abstract** The popularity of soccer has increased markedly in recent years, and professional players now employed on a professional basis. The physical demands of female soccer have increased significantly since the sport was first researched coupled with the increasing demands warrants an update on physical performance demands of match-play activities such as the standard of performance and fatigue have been explored. Female players is approached completed at high-speed sprinting than moderate-speed running distance within halves, which may high-intensity activity. A

N. Datson (✉) · T. Lewis  
The English Football Association, St. George's Park,

# IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL QUALITIES FOR SPEED AND CHANGE OF DIRECTION ABILITY IN ELITE FEMALE SOCCER PLAYERS.

Emmonds, S\*<sup>1</sup>, G.Nicholson<sup>1</sup>, C.Beggs<sup>1</sup>, B.Jones<sup>1</sup> and A. Bissas<sup>1</sup>

Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the importance of physical qualities for speed and change of direction (CoD) ability in female soccer players. Data were collected on 10 female soccer players who were part of a professional English Women's Super League team. Player assessments included anthropometric (stature and body mass), body composition (dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry), speed (10m, 30m sprint), CoD ability (505 agility), aerobic (Yo-Yo Intermittent Recovery Test), lower-body strength (bilateral knee extensions) and power (countermovement jump [CMJ], squat jump [SJ], 30cm drop jump [DJ]) measures. The relationships between the variables were evaluated using eigenvector analysis and Pearson correlation analysis. Multiple linear regression revealed that the performance variables (10 and 20m speed, mean 505, and CoD deficit mean) can be predicted with almost 100%

in 1991. The popularity of women

players for competition.

f elite female soccer players during international

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26 Jul 2016]

provide a detailed analysis of the physical demands of competitive football of 148 individual match observations were undertaken on 107 international matches during the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 seasons, zone Sports Ltd., Leeds, England). Total distance (TD) and total high-speed running (TVHSR) distances were completed when a player is in possession of the ball. The majority of sprints were less than 5 m and 10 m, respectively. Between half sprints were completed for all variables, independent of playing position. The current study provides important insights for physical coaches preparing elite female



# England Talent Pathway

England Women Senior Team

England U15/U16/U17/U18/U19/U20

FA Girls' National Performance Camp

FA Girls' Regional Excellence Camps

FA Girls' Regional Talent Clubs Tiers 1, 2 & 3

Community Football / Grassroots Clubs /  
Schools Football



Girls' Advanced  
Training Centres

# English female footballers 'need more athleticism' says FA's Baroness Campbell

By Tom Garry  
BBC Sport

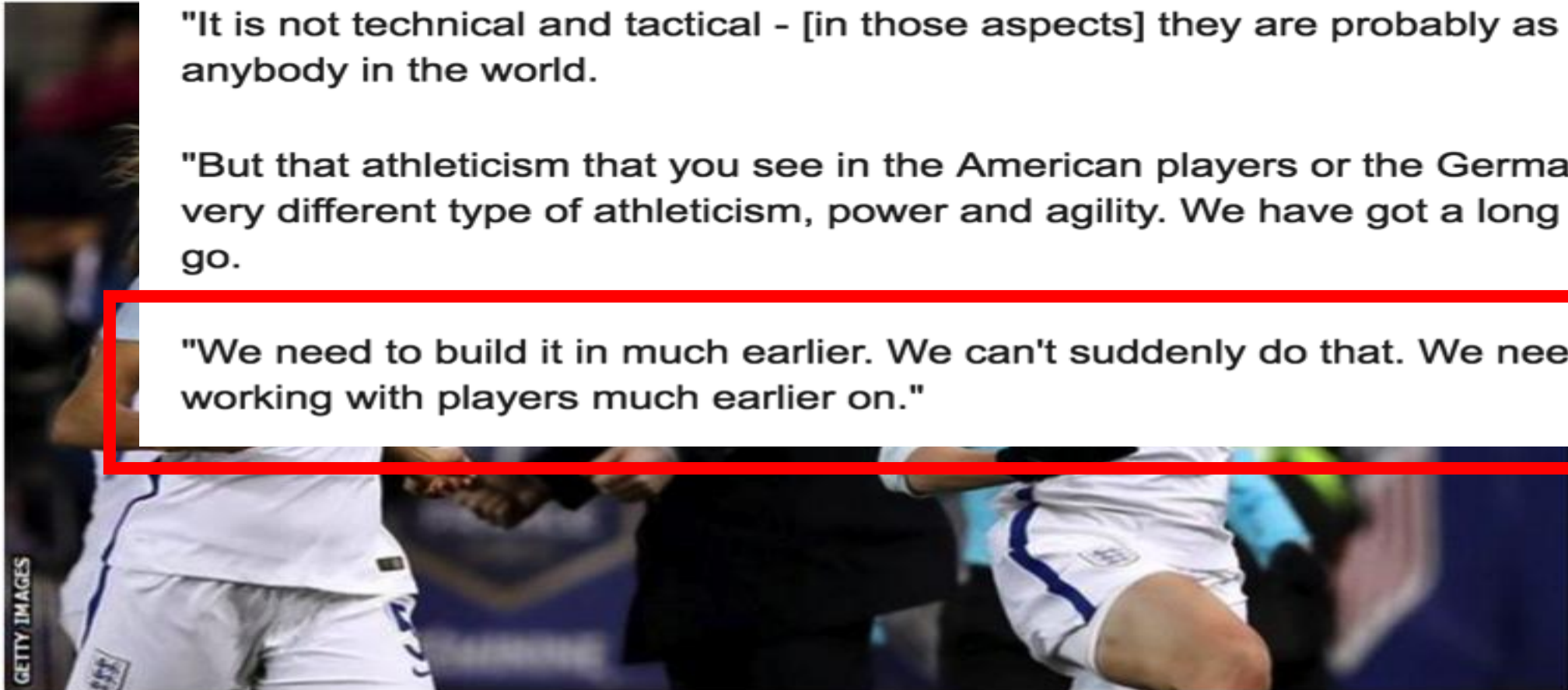
🕒 15 Mar

"One of the big challenges in the women's game is just developing athleticism," Campbell told BBC Sport.

"It is not technical and tactical - [in those aspects] they are probably as good as anybody in the world.

"But that athleticism that you see in the American players or the Germans is a very different type of athleticism, power and agility. We have got a long way to go.

"We need to build it in much earlier. We can't suddenly do that. We need to be working with players much earlier on."





# England Talent Pathway

England Women Senior Team

England U15/U16/U17/U18/U19/U20

FA Girls' National Performance Camp

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FA Girls' Regional Talent Clubs Tiers 1, 2 & 3

Community Football / Grassroots Clubs /  
Schools Football



Girls' Advanced  
Training Centres





# Physical Characteristics of Elite Female Soccer Players

- 3 Tier 1 Regional Talent Centre's (RTC's)
- **157 Players**
- (U16; n =46, U14; n =43, U12; n=28, U10; n=30)
- **Testing Battery:**
  - -Anthropometry (height, body mass)
  - -Strength (Isometric mid-thigh pull)
  - -Lower body power (CMJ)
  - -Change of direction (505 left and right)
  - -YoYo Intermittent recovery level 1 (YYIRL1)
  
  - -Speed (10 and 30m)
  - - Aerobic capacity (YYIRL1)

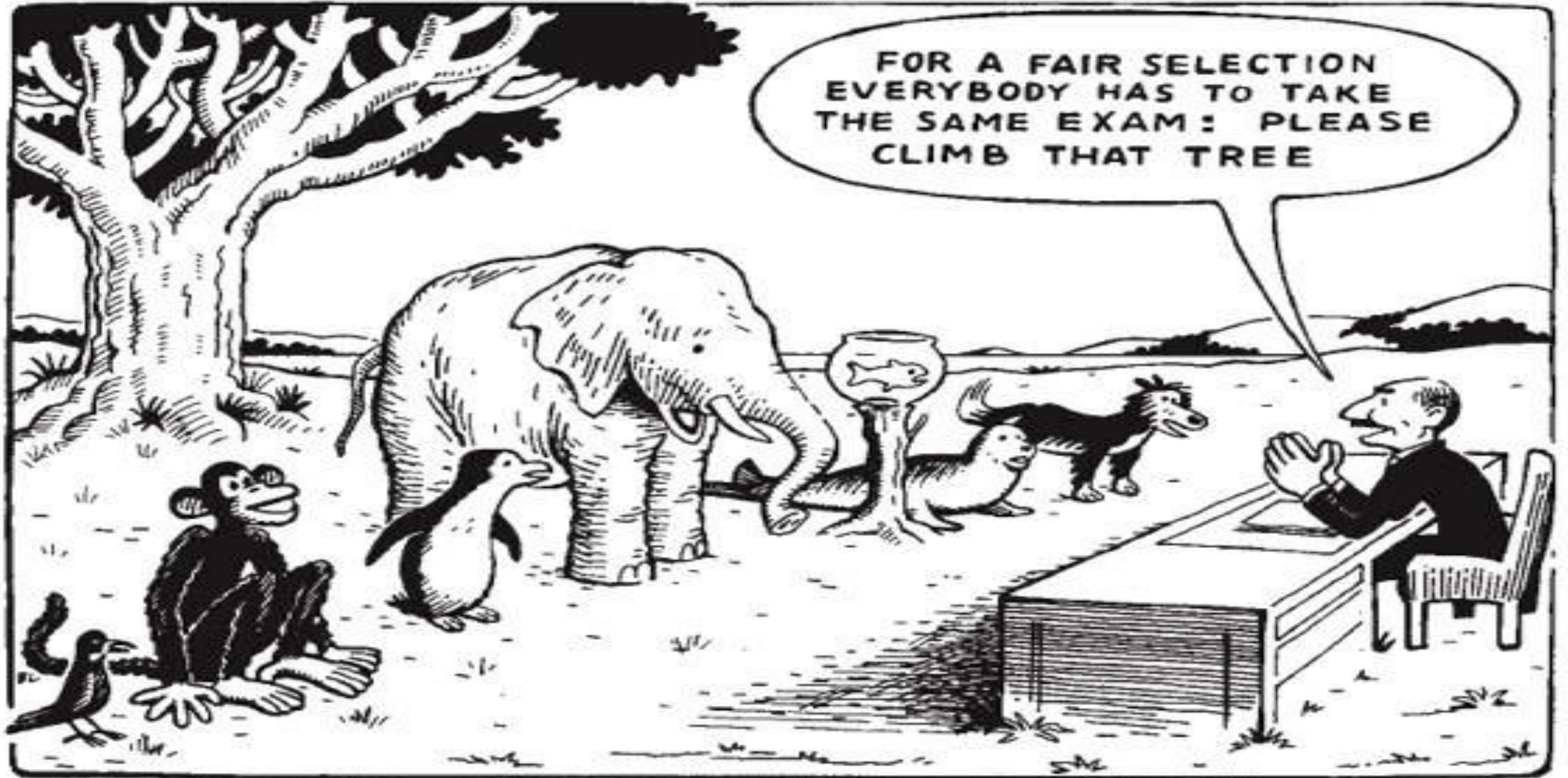


# Physical characteristics of youth female soccer players

	Standardised Differences ( <i>d</i> )						
	U10 (n=30)	U12 (n=38)	U14 (n=43)	U16 (n=46)	U10-U12	U12-U14	U14-U16
<b>Age (y)</b>	9.25 ± 0.58	11.41 ± 0.98	13.22 ± 0.65	15.05 ± 0.64	<i>Most Likely</i> ↑	<i>Most Likely</i> ↑	<i>Very Likely</i> ↑
<b>Height (cm)</b>	134.7 ± 8.1	147.2 ± 8.5	159.2 ± 7.4	163.9 ± 6.2	<i>Most Likely</i> ↑	<i>Most Likely</i> ↑	<i>Very Likely</i> ↑
<b>Body Mass (kg)</b>	29.7 ± 5.1	37.6 ± 8.0	50.1 ± 7.6	56.8 ± 7.2	<i>Most Likely</i> ↑	<i>Most Likely</i> ↑	<i>Very Likely</i> ↑
<b>Peak Force (N)</b>	819 ± 135	1019 ± 193	1337 ± 234	1511 ± 196	<i>Most Likely</i> ↑	<i>Most Likely</i> ↑	<i>Most Likely</i> ↑
<b>Relative Peak Force (N·s<sup>-1</sup>·kg<sup>-1</sup>)</b>	26.9 ± 4.2	26.1 ± 2.5	26.5 ± 4.2	26.7 ± 2.5	<i>Possibly Trivial</i>	<i>Possibly Trivial</i>	<i>Most Likely Trivial</i>
<b>CMJ (cm)</b>	23.5 ± 2.5	27.3 ± 4.3	29.1 ± 4.4	31.4 ± 6.4	<i>Very Likely</i> ↑	<i>Likely</i> ↑	<i>Very Likely</i> ↑
<b>YYIRL1 (m)</b>		635 ± 241	886 ± 334	959 ± 399		<i>Most Likely</i> ↑	<i>Possibly</i> ↑
<b>505 CoD Dominant (s)</b>	2.78 ± 0.15	2.71 ± 0.16	2.60 ± 0.10	2.54 ± 0.12	<i>Very Likely</i> ↓	<i>Likely</i> ↓	<i>Most Likely</i> ↓
<b>505 CoD Non-Dominant (s)</b>	2.82 ± 0.11	2.73 ± 0.15	2.66 ± 0.13	2.53 ± 0.09	<i>Very Likely</i> ↓	<i>Likely</i> ↓	<i>Very Likely</i> ↓
<b>10m Speed (s)</b>	2.24 ± 0.13	2.10 ± 0.16	2.06 ± 0.13	1.96 ± 0.14	<i>Most Likely</i> ↓	<i>Possibly</i> ↓	<i>Very Likely</i> ↓
<b>30m Speed (s)</b>	5.75 ± 0.31	5.19 ± 0.33	5.01 ± 0.28	4.81 ± 0.24	<i>Most Likely</i> ↓	<i>Possibly</i> ↓	<i>Very Likely</i> ↓



# The influence of growth and maturation



# Influence of maturation on the physical characteristics of players

	-2.5 ( <i>n</i> = 24)	-1.5 ( <i>n</i> = 30)	-0.5 ( <i>n</i> = 19)	0.5 ( <i>n</i> = 22)	1.5 ( <i>n</i> = 36)	2.5 ( <i>n</i> = 27)
<b>Age (y)</b>	9.16 ± 0.61	10.70 ± 0.62	11.87 ± 0.31	12.83 ± 0.67	14.01 ± 0.65	15.19 ± 0.67
<b>Height (cm)</b>	131.9 ± 6.3	142.4 ± 4.4	151.1 ± 4.5	157.4 ± 4.8	162.2 ± 4.4	165.8 ± 6.9
<b>Sitting Height (cm)</b>	67.3 ± 3.2	70.9 ± 2.9	74.8 ± 2.8	78.7 ± 2.9	82.2 ± 2.6	84.4 ± 3.9
<b>Leg Length (cm)</b>	64.6 ± 4.4	71.5 ± 3.6	76.4 ± 3.5	78.8 ± 2.8	80.0 ± 3.8	81.4 ± 4.1
<b>Body Mass (kg)</b>	28.3 ± 4.5	33.4 ± 3.8	40.5 ± 4.9	49.0 ± 5.0	54.9 ± 5.1	57.5 ± 7.5
<b>Peak Force (N)</b>	729 ± 105	880 ± 112	1093 ± 171	1206 ± 223	1391 ± 196	1523 ± 207
<b>Relative Peak Force (N·Kg<sup>-1</sup>)</b>	26.16 ± 4.22	26.44 ± 2.89	27.13 ± 4.24	24.62 ± 3.70	25.36 ± 2.73	26.68 ± 3.66
<b>CMJ (cm)</b>	23.46 ± 4.86	25.96 ± 4.44	28.64 ± 3.84	29.61 ± 3.52	28.63 ± 3.87	33.42 ± 4.33
<b>10 m Sprint (s)</b>	2.22 ± 0.13	2.21 ± 0.17	2.00 ± 0.12	2.08 ± 0.16	1.99 ± 0.14	1.98 ± 0.15
<b>30 m Sprint (s)</b>	5.75 ± 0.34	5.40 ± 0.64	5.09 ± 0.21	4.98 ± 0.47	4.90 ± 0.26	4.81 ± 0.27
<b>505 CoD Dominant (s)</b>	2.99 ± 0.39	2.73 ± 0.19	2.69 ± 0.15	2.69 ± 0.20	2.61 ± 0.15	2.54 ± 0.11
<b>505 CoD N-Dominant (s)</b>	3.03 ± 0.41	3.76 ± 0.19	2.71 ± 0.12	2.71 ± 0.17	2.64 ± 0.16	2.53 ± 0.08
<b>YYIRL (m)</b>		668 ± 284	716 ± 234	897 ± 404	888 ± 288	952 ± 320

Emmonds et al. (2017). The influence age and maturation of the maximum and explosive strength qualities of elite youth female soccer players. Medicine and science in football

# Influence of maturation on the physical characteristics of players

	Maturity Offset Groups (YPHV) comparisons				
	-2.5 vs. -1.5	-1.5 vs. -0.5	-0.5 vs. 0.5	0.5 vs. 1.5	1.5 vs. 2.5
<b>Age (y)</b>	<i>Most Likely</i> (-2.50 ± 0.62)	<i>Very Likely</i> (-2.39 ± 0.65)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.84 ± 0.64)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.79 ± 0.54)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.79 ± 0.50)
<b>Height (cm)</b>	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.92 ± 0.56)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.96 ± 0.60)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.36 ± 0.59)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.04 ± 0.49)	<i>Very Likely</i> (-0.62 ± 0.44)
<b>Sitting Height (cm)</b>	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.17 ± 0.50)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.35 ± 0.55)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.36 ± 0.59)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.29 ± 0.50)	<i>Very Likely</i> (-0.68 ± 0.44)
<b>Leg Length (cm)</b>	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.71 ± 0.54)	<i>Very Likely</i> (-1.37 ± 0.55)	<i>Likely</i> (-0.77 ± 0.55)	<i>Possibly</i> (-0.37 ± 0.46)	<i>Possibly</i> (-0.34 ± 0.43)
<b>Body Mass (kg)</b>	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.23 ± 0.50)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.61 ± 0.57)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.71 ± 0.62)	<i>Very Likely</i> (-1.17 ± 0.50)	<i>Likely</i> (-0.41 ± 0.43)
<b>Peak Force (N)</b>	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.39 ± 0.51)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.47 ± 0.56)	<i>Likely</i> (-0.57 ± 0.55)	<i>Very Likely</i> (-0.88 ± 0.48)	<i>Very Likely</i> (-0.66 ± 0.44)
<b>Relative Peak Force (N·Kg<sup>-1</sup>)</b>	<i>Unclear</i> (-0.08 ± 0.46)	<i>Unclear</i> (-0.19 ± 0.50)	<i>Likely</i> (0.63 ± 0.55)	<i>Unclear</i> (-0.23 ± 0.46)	<i>Possibly</i> (-0.41 ± 0.43)
<b>CMJ (cm)</b>	<i>Likely</i> (-0.54 ± 0.47)	<i>Likely</i> (-0.65 ± 0.51)	<i>Unclear</i> (-0.26 ± 0.54)	<i>Possibly</i> (0.26 ± 0.46)	<i>Most Likely</i> (-1.17 ± 0.46)
<b>10 m Sprint (s)</b>	<i>Unclear</i> (0.07 ± 0.46)	<i>Most Likely</i> (1.43 ± 0.56)	<i>Likely</i> (-0.57 ± 0.54)	<i>Likely</i> (0.60 ± 0.47)	<i>Unclear</i> (0.07 ± 0.43)
<b>30 m Sprint (s)</b>	<i>Very Likely</i> (0.68 ± 0.47)	<i>Likely</i> (0.65 ± 0.51)	<i>Possibly</i> (0.30 ± 0.54)	<i>Unclear</i> (0.21 ± 0.46)	<i>Possibly</i> (0.34 ± 0.43)
<b>505 CoD Dominant (s)</b>	<i>Likely</i> (0.85 ± 0.48)	<i>Unclear</i> (0.23 ± 0.50)	<i>Unclear</i> (0.00 ± 0.53)	<i>Possibly</i> (0.45 ± 0.47)	<i>Likely</i> (0.53 ± 0.43)
<b>505 CoD N-Dominant (s)</b>	<i>Very Likely</i> (0.84 ± 0.48)	<i>Possibly</i> (0.31 ± 0.50)	<i>Unclear</i> (0.00 ± 0.53)	<i>Possibly Trivial</i> (0.42 ± 0.47)	<i>Very Likely</i> (0.87 ± 0.45)
<b>YYIRL (m)</b>		<i>Unclear</i> (-0.18 ± 0.50)	<i>Likely</i> (-0.55 ± 0.54)	<i>Unclear</i> (0.03 ± 0.46)	<i>Unclear</i> (-0.21 ± 0.43)

Emmonds et al. (2017). The influence age and maturation of the maximum and explosive strength qualities of elite youth female soccer players. *Medicine and science in football*



# Physical characteristics of youth female soccer players

	Percentile	-2.5	-1.5	-0.5	0.5	1.5	2.5
COD (s)	Excellent	2.68	2.57	2.52	2.51	2.45	2.43
	Above Average	2.74	2.65	2.60	2.56	2.54	2.50
	Average	2.87	2.76	2.69	2.65	2.60	2.56
	Below Average	2.96	2.81	2.78	2.73	2.73	2.68
	Poor	3.64	3.01	2.86	2.96	2.83	2.71
Relative Strength (N.Kg-1)	Excellent	30.10	29.42	32.84	29.11	28.77	31.32
	Above Average	28.19	28.21	28.28	26.02	26.46	27.53
	Average	26.23	27.10	26.22	23.21	25.30	25.70
	Below Average	24.74	25.39	25.68	22.17	24.10	24.55
	Poor	20.30	22.19	23.08	20.98	22.04	23.66
YYIRL1 (m)	Excellent		1016	956	1456	1228	1464
	Above Average		937	840	1120	992	1032
	Average		784	740	720	840	840
	Below Average		468	564	590	728	800
	Poor		352	440	480	572	600
10m Speed (s)	Excellent	<2.02	1.99	1.87	1.91	1.83	1.83
	Above Average	2.20	2.11	1.91	2.00	1.90	1.90
	Average	2.26	2.19	1.97	2.04	2.00	1.97
	Below Average	2.30	2.29	2.07	2.11	2.06	2.06
	Poor	2.34	2.44	2.17	2.29	2.29	2.29
30m Speed (s)	Excellent	5.33	5.22	4.88	4.82	4.60	4.60
	Above Average	5.50	5.30	5.03	4.97	4.73	4.73
	Average	5.74	5.47	5.11	5.11	4.86	4.86
	Below Average	5.98	5.67	5.23	5.29	5.04	4.97
	Poor	6.14	5.84	5.36	5.42	5.26	5.05
CMJ (cm)	Excellent	28.3	30.20	33.1	33.5	33.8	33.0
	Above Average	25.5	28.08	30.94	32.3	31.2	31.4
	Average	21.5	25.60	28.4	30.1	28.8	28.5
	Below Average	20.1	23.20	26.73	26.1	26.7	26.5
	Poor	18.9	21.02	24.44	25.2	23.9	22.8

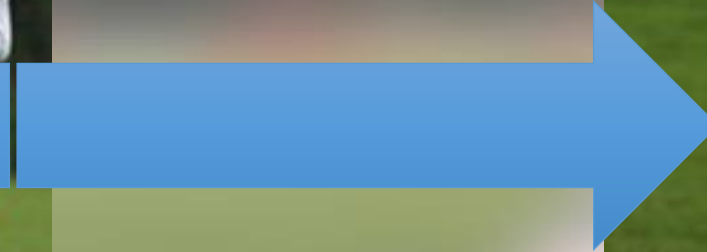
# Youth vs. Senior Characteristics

Fitness Characteristics	Senior (WSL 1) Emmonds et al. (2017)	U16	2.5 YPHV	Difference between senior and youth
10m Speed (s)	1.87 ± 0.06	1.96 ± 0.14	1.98 ± 0.15	0.09-0.11s
30m Speed (s)	4.52 ± 0.10	4.81 ± 0.24	4.81 ± 0.27	0.29s
CMJ (cm)	34.9 ± 4.4	31.4 ± 6.4	33.4 ± 4.2	1.5 - 3.5cm
505-Dom (s)	2.53 ± 0.09	2.54 ± 0.12	2.54 ± 0.11	0.01s
505-N.Dom (s)	2.52 ± 0.09	2.53 ± 0.10	2.53 ± 0.08	0.01s
YYIRL1 (m)	1680 ± 260	959 ± 399	952 ± 320	721 – 728m

Emmonds et al. (2017) Importance of physical qualities for speed and change of direction in elite senior female soccer players. Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research



# How do we bridge the gap from youth to senior soccer?



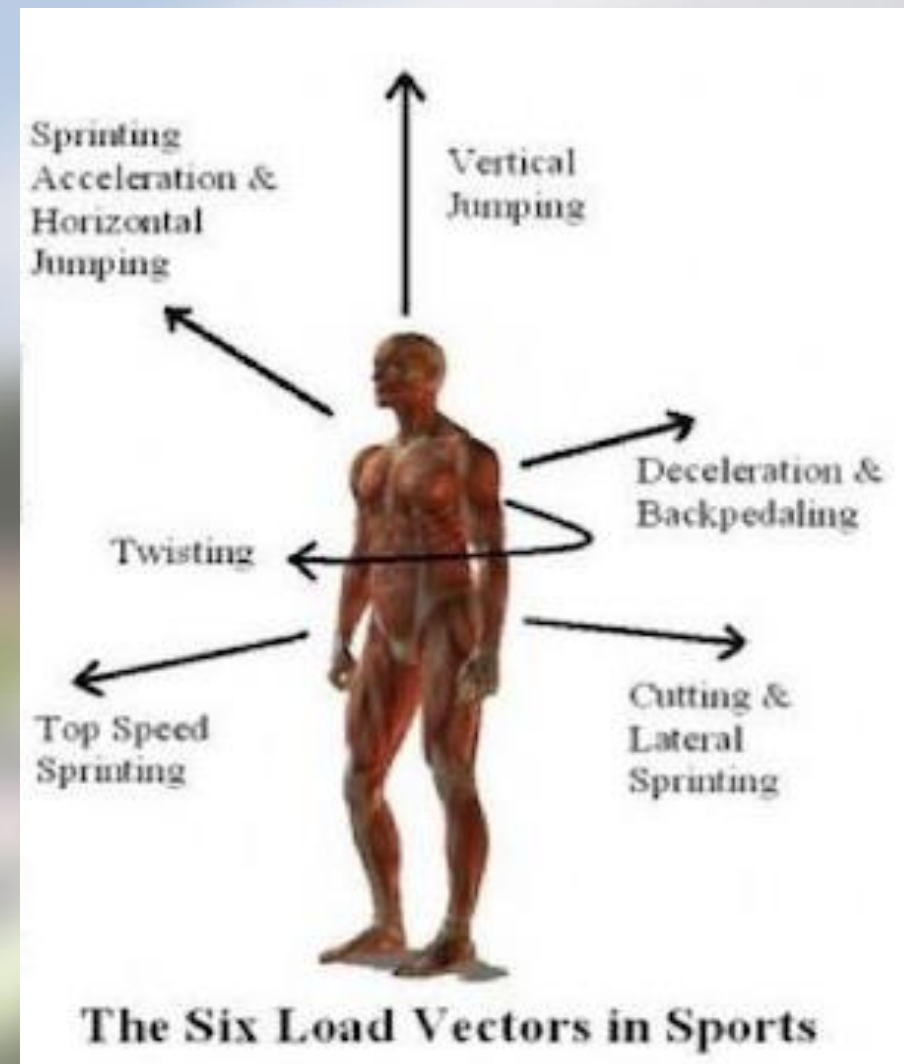
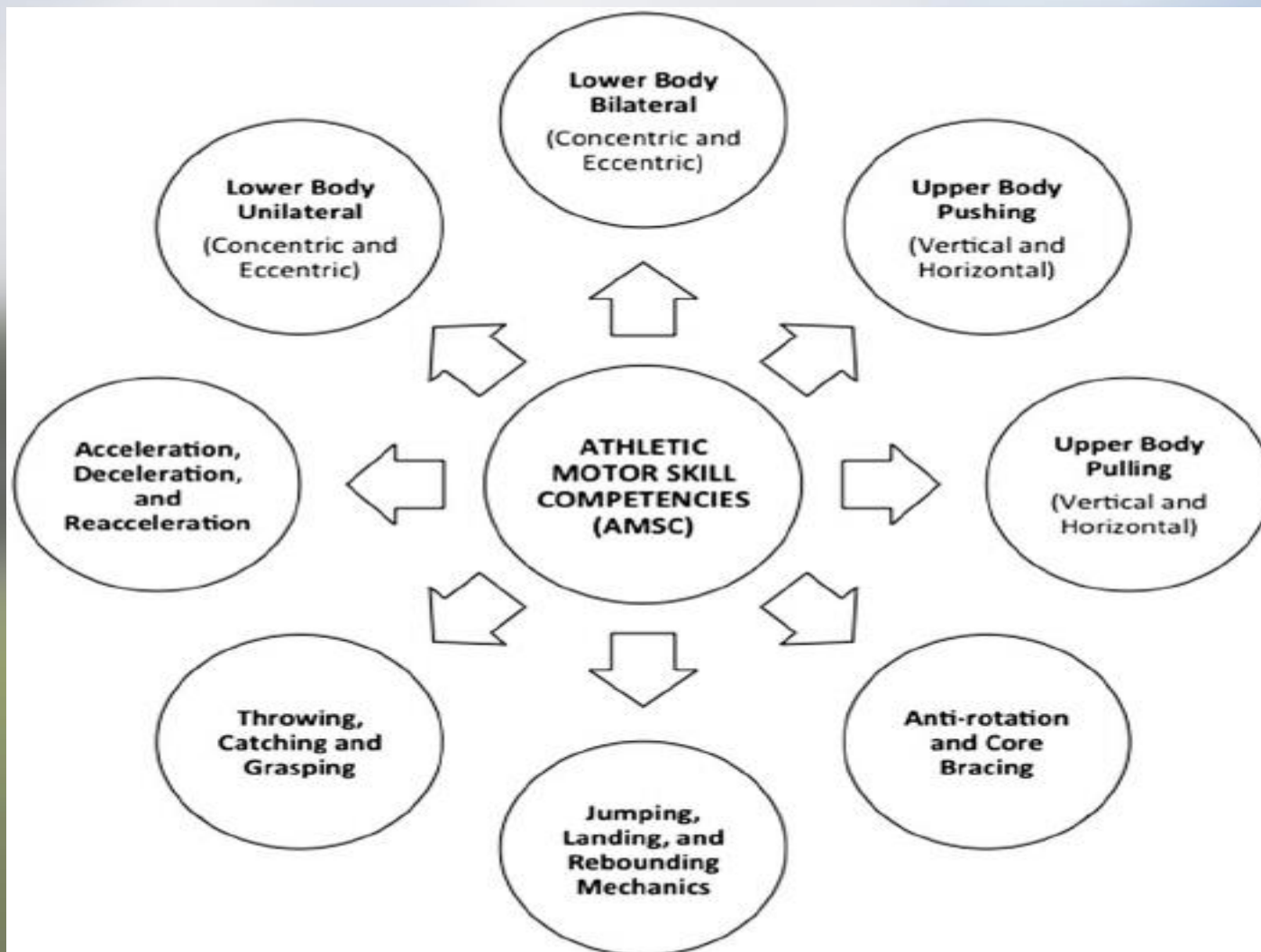
# Relationship between speed, change of direction ability and lower body power in youth female soccer players: Allometric scaling

Variables	Predictors	$\beta$	$R^2$	P
10m Speed (s)	30m.kg	1.226	0.870	<0.001
	505 Dom.kg	-0.210		
	CMJ.kg	-0.211		
	YPHV	0.139		
30m Sprint (s)	10m.kg	0.635	0.996	<0.001
	CMJ.kg	-0.234		
	YPHV	0.194		
	505 Dom.kg	-0.129		
CoD Dominant (s)	YPHV	0.559	0.449	<0.001
	PF.kg	-0.424		
CoD N-Dominant (s)	YPHV	-0.293	0.216	<0.001
	PF.kg	-0.226		
CMJ (cm)	YPHV	0.582	0.401	<0.001
	PF.kg	0.268		





# Developing Appropriate Physical Development Models



Lloyd et al. (2015) Long-term athletic development, part 2: barriers to success and potential solutions. *The Journal of Strength & Conditioning Research*, 29(5), 1451-1464.

# Developing Appropriate Physical Development Models

**Table 2**  
**An example of a possible model for monitoring and progressing key elements of neuromuscular training for girls**

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Squat BL	Assisted squat	BW squat	Overhead squat	Overhead squat 10% BW	Overhead squat 25% BW	Snatch 25% BW
Squat UL	—	—	Assisted single leg squat	Single leg squat	Advanced single leg squat	Single arm single leg KB snatch
Lunge (forward)	From floor to stand	Forward lunge	A-stand forward lunge	Lunge walk + rotations (forward/backward)	Lunge matrix + perturbations	Lunge in context/CHAOS
Lunge (lateral)	Side lunge half depth	Side lunge to A-stand	Side lunge A-stand full	With ball throw	Lateral speed to lunge deceleration	Lunge in context/CHAOS
Bear crawl	Quadruped arm leg	Static bear crawl	Forward 5 m	Backward 5 m	Grid (forward/backward/side)	In CHAOS
Upper-body push pull	Trunk stability push-up (knees) and lying pulls—bridge	Lying pull and trunk stability push-up	Wide grip chin ×1 (band assisted)	Wide grip chin ×1	Chins full ×5	Chins ×5 + 10% BW
Jump land (BL)	BL drop and stick 15 cm	BL drop and stick 30 cm	Drop jump 30-cm box	Tuck jump ×3	Tuck jump ×10	Quality control and error correction in CHAOS
Jump land (UL)	—	—	UL stride and stick 100% height	UL stride and stick 100% height + 90° rotation	Drop/cross step—double stride then stick	Error correction under a variety of perturbations

These can be assessed using the scale in Figure 1 but also include elements of other assessment tools such as the drop (23) and tuck jump assessments (40).

BL = bilateral; BW = body weight; UL = unilateral; CHAOS = chaotic environments; KB = kettlebell.

Wright, M. D., & Laas, M. M. (2016). Strength training and metabolic conditioning for female youth and adolescent soccer players. *Strength & Conditioning Journal*, 38(2), 96-104.

# Summary

- Growth and maturation influences the physical characteristics of youth female players
- Relative strength does not increase with maturation: need to develop this, particularly post-PHV where female experience large increase in body mass and likely fat mass
- Unclear changes were observed in aerobic capacity after PHV: need to actively develop the aerobic system in players post-PHV
- Relative strength is a predictor of speed and change of direction
- ability in youth female soccer players



# Future Research Direction

- Longitudinal tracking of physical characteristics
- Match characteristics
- Training Loads
- Training Interventions



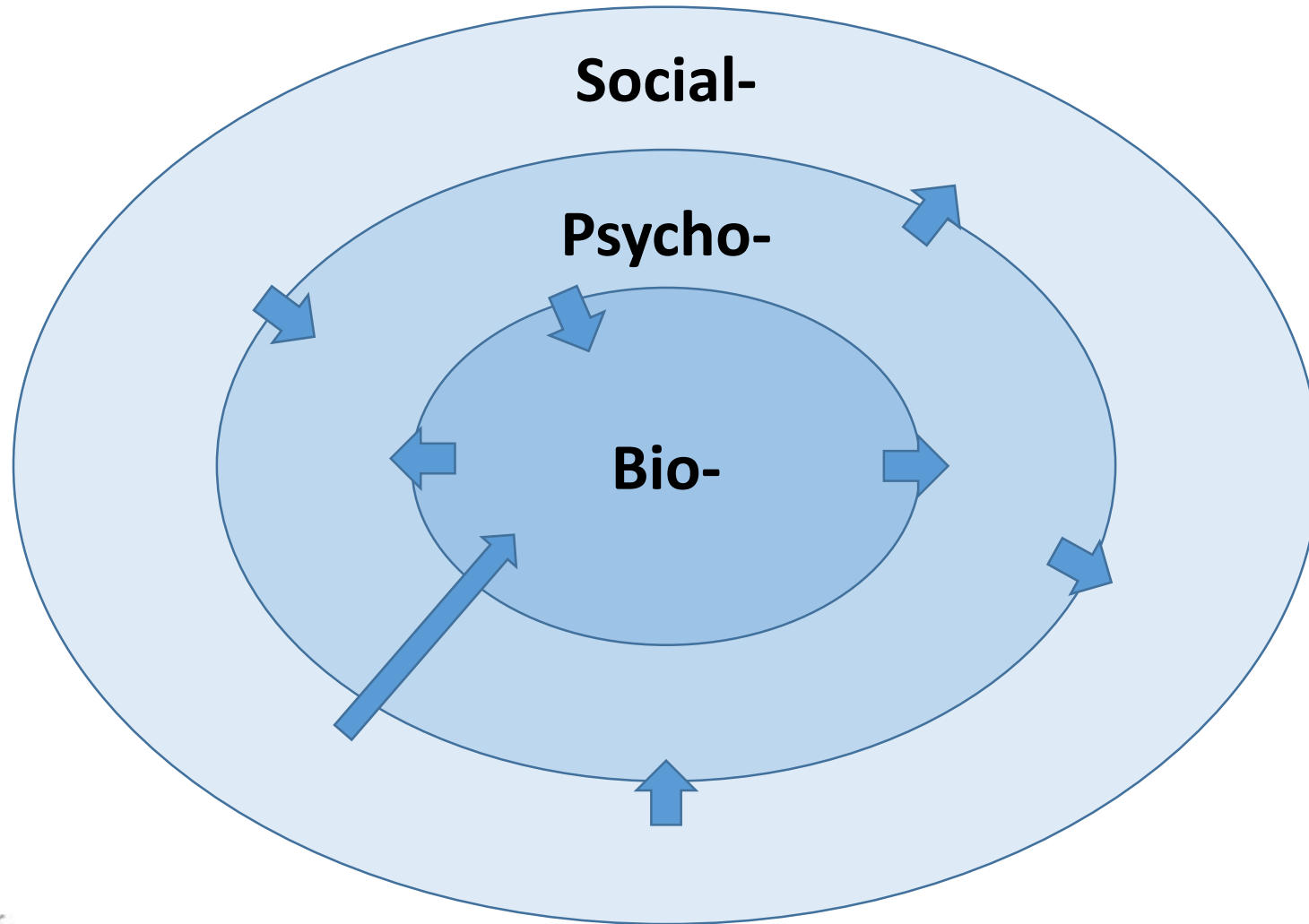
# Considering the Role of Psychology Within a TD Social Setting

Dr Andrew Abraham (@AndrewAbraham11)

Dr Tom Mitchell (@tom\_mitch3)

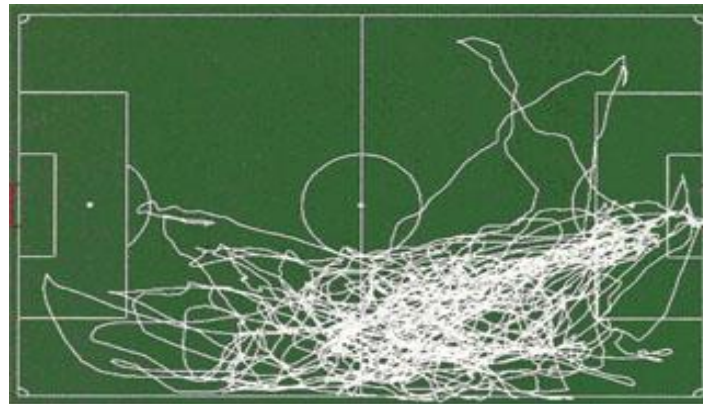
Sport Coaching Group, Leeds Beckett University

# Bio-Psycho-Social Ontology





# Real world understanding





# Transitions

(Adapted from Wylleman, Alfermann & Lavallee, 2004)

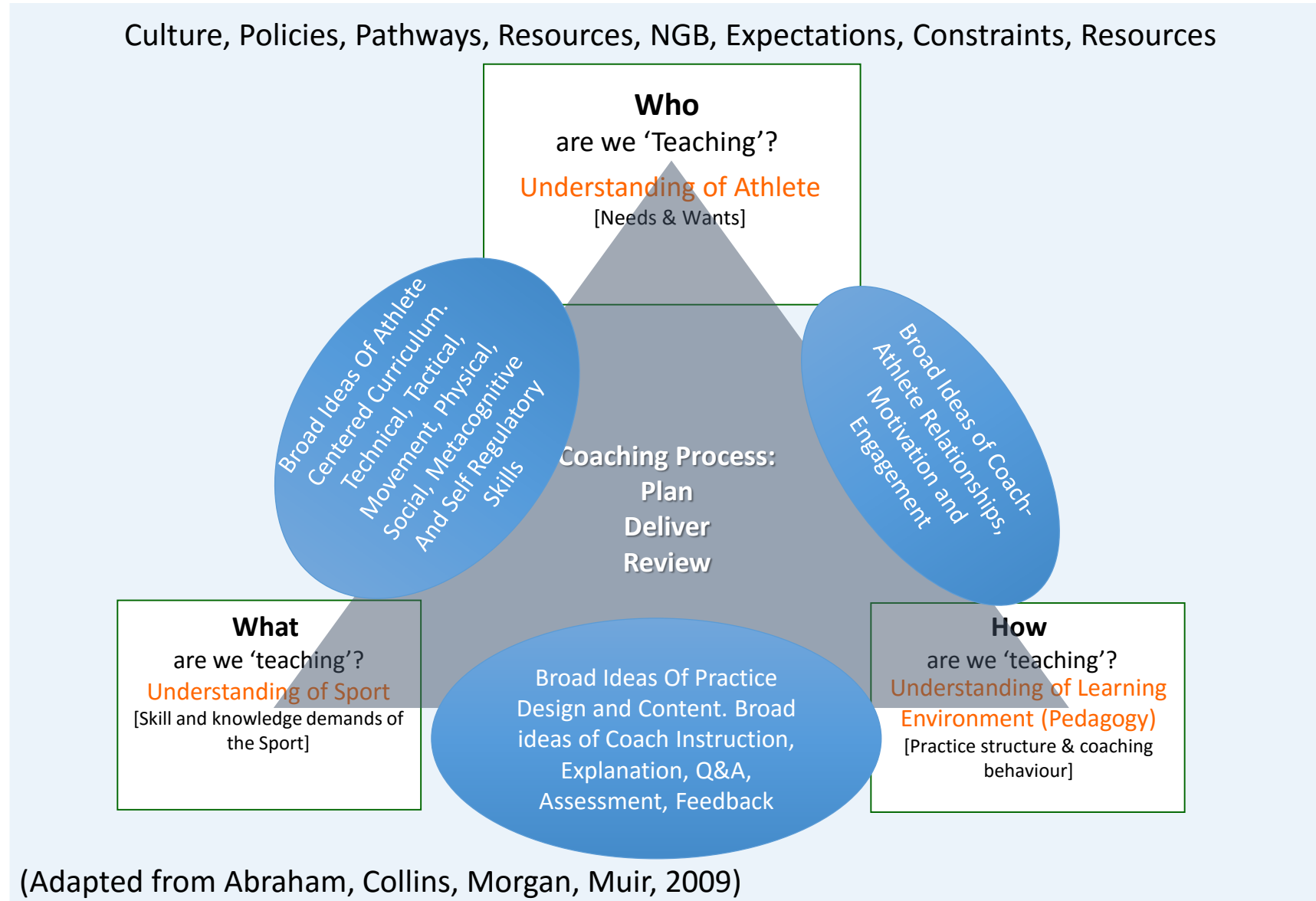
	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 -
Athletic Level		Initiation		Development		Mastery	Discontinuation
Psychological Level	Early Childhood	Middle Childhood	Early Adolescence	Mid and Late Adolescence	Adulthood		
Biological Level		Pre-puberty Steady Growth	Puberty Adolescent Growth Spurt	Post Puberty Decline in Growth Rate			
Psycho-Social Level	Parents - Siblings -Peers		Peers - Coach - Parents		Partner - Coach	Family - Coach	
Academic Level		Primary	Secondary/Further		Further/Higher Education	Vocational Training and/or Professional Education	
Academy Stage and Registration Period		Foundation Phase. U5 - U11 1 Year Registration Potential for release	Youth Development Phase. U12 - U16 2 Year Registration Potential for release		Professional Development Phase. U17 - U21 Professional Contract Potential for release	Senior Professional	
Game Size		4 v 4 - 9 v 9	(9 v 9 at u12 if both clubs agree) 11 v 11		11 v 11		

# Coaching As Professional Judgement and Decision Making

Theoretical View	Summarised Description of What Happens		
Common Perception	Plan/Review	Do	
Decision Modes (Yates & Tschirhart, 2006)	Analytic (Formalistic or Substantive)	Rule Based (Formalistic or Substantive)	Automatic/Intuitive

(Abraham, Collins & Collins, in preparation)

# The Who What How in Context Principle





# What thinking tools exist for coaches?

Stage	Basic Conflict	Important Events	Outcome
Infancy (birth to 18 months)	Trust vs. Mistrust	Feeding	Children develop a sense of trust when caregivers provide reliability, care, and affection. A lack of this will lead to mistrust.
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Preschool (3 to 5 years)	Initiative vs. Guilt	Exploration	Children need to begin asserting control and power over the environment. Success in this stage leads to a sense of purpose. Children who try to exert too much power experience disapproval, resulting in a sense of guilt.
School Age (6 to 11 years)	Industry vs. Inferiority	School	Children need to cope with new social and academic demands. Success leads to a sense of competence, while failure results in feelings of inferiority.
Adolescence (12 to 18 years)	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Social Relationships	Teens need to develop a sense of self and personal identity. Success leads to an ability to stay true to yourself, while failure leads to role confusion and a weak sense of self.
Young Adulthood (19 to 40 years)	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Relationships	Young adults need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people. Success leads to strong relationships, while failure results in loneliness and isolation.

**Table 1**  
*Health Education TFSR levels*

Level	Description
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## The 9 Key Skills

Developing Excellence in Young Athletes

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Effective and Controllable Imagery

Focus & Distraction Control

Realistic Performance Evaluation & Attribution

Role Clarity & Commitment

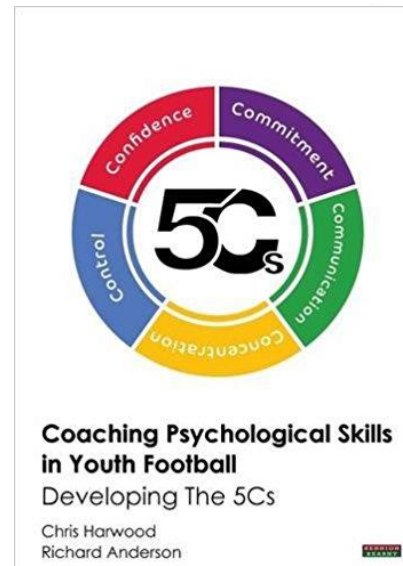
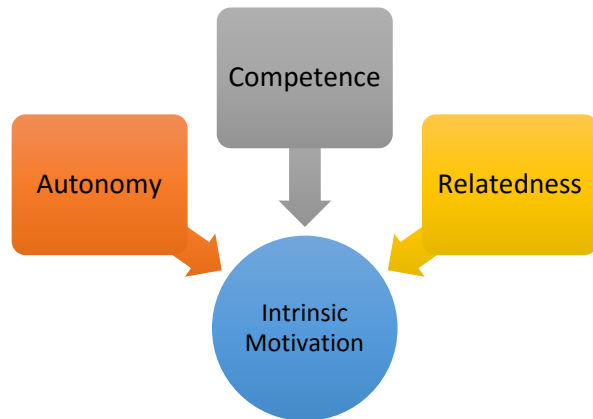
Planning & Organisation

Goal Setting & Self-reinforcement

Quality Practice

Resilience and self-regulation

Creating and using Support Networks

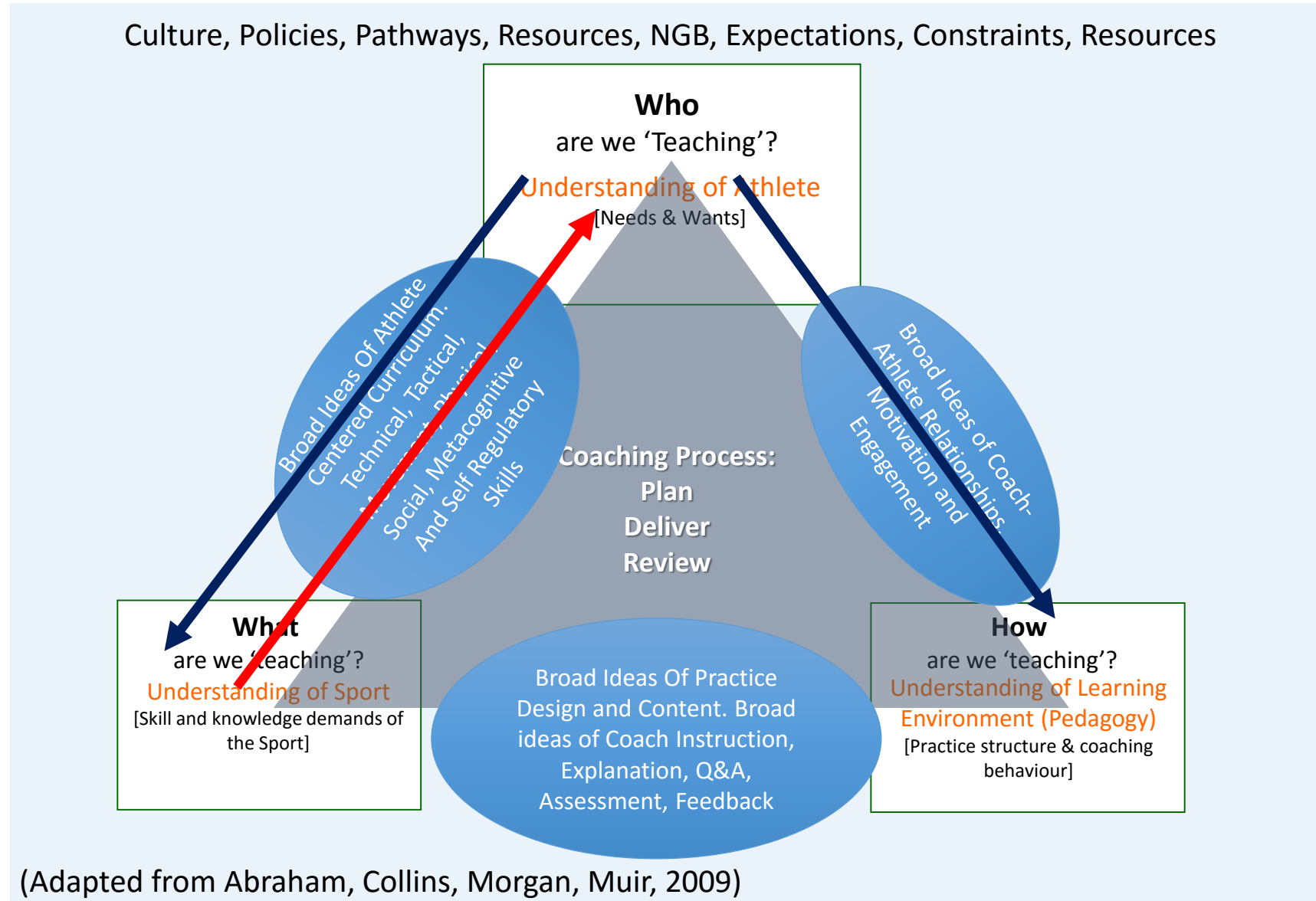


PYD:

- Confidence,
  - Competence,
  - Character,
  - Connection,
  - Caring
- (Lerner, 2005)



# The Who What How in Context Principle



# Is Psychology Content...

- Descriptive and diagnostic?
  - I need to know my players?
    - So what questions should he or she ask?
- Prescriptive and circularised?
  - My players should be able to..
    - Therefore they need...
- Are we being thoughtful enough about what coaches need?

# What Could Be Known and Why?

Psychology ( $\Psi$ ) is fundamentally interested in behaviour through:

- Development and growth
- Learning
- Health
- Performance

All are important to people operating in football but to differing levels at different times dependent on context

Educators educating educators places great emphasis on the need to practice what they preach

# Who: $\Psi$ To Understand The Player In TD Setting

## What Could Be Known...

### Player As Healthy Growing Individual

- Identity
- Personality
- Motivation
- Developmental  $\Psi$
- Morality/Character
- Coping/Thriving

### Player As Learner & Trainer

- Self Regulation
- Metacognition
- Excellence Behaviours
- Growth Mindset
- Motivation
- Personality
- Development Psych

### Player As Team Member, Performer & Competitor

- Self Regulation
- Excellence Behaviours
- Dealing With Pressure
- Personality
- Motivation
- Group Dynamics
- Perception & DM



# Area of Curiosity

- How well prepared are the FA in supporting coaches in the U11 – U13s age groups?
- Period of change and transitions
- Was this period of change sufficiently well accounted for in support and delivery?

# Broad Aim

- To assess whether more could be done to support coaches for the U11-U13 age groups through individualised support and CPD, particularly as provided by the FAYCD group.

# Theoretical background

- Coaching as PJDM
  - How well prepared are coaches to make judgements of creating better players
    - Knowledge and Understanding of the Player (Who)
    - Knowledge and Understanding of the Sport and Curriculum (What)
    - Knowledge and Understanding of Pedagogy (How)
    - Knowledge and Understanding of The Context (Where)
    - Knowledge and Understanding of Self
    - Knowledge and Understanding of The Process and Practice of Coaching
- Expertise
  - Context specific vs Adaptive
  - Focus was on context specific (U11-U13)

# Methods

- 8 Clubs
  - 3 x Category 1
  - 3 x Category 2
  - 2 x Category 3
- Interviews with
  - Senior staff
  - Age group coaches



# Transitions

- Largest single point of data
- Recognition of the fact that numerous transitions are occurring; school, team size, expectation, bio-psycho-social, different coach, time in academy (including shift to day release).
- The greatest focus in this recognition was around the move from U11 – U12 (aligned with primary to secondary school) and the significant extra physical (bio) demands of moving from 9v9 to 11v11 team size
- “Then, obviously going into the Youth Phase, it’s that transition from small-sided games to slightly bigger sided games. I do think at times that can be difficult. For a player to go from Under 11 to Under 12 I think is a very important year, because they go from Primary School to Secondary School; they go from 7-a-side, to 8-a-side, to 9-a-side, to 11-a-side in 12 months, which in some aspects can be good, but in other aspects, it can be difficult for certain players.”
- Managing the transition. How clubs try to prepare players for transitions such as spending time with the new coach before the end of the year, playing some players up an age group, playing some larger sized games (i.e. 11v11).

# Transitions

- Transition as a challenge. The transition point marked a challenge for individual players that may be important in their development
- Uncertainty about transitions. How to best manage the transition from 9v9 to 11v11 game size. This is explicitly stated by some coaches but is also implicit in the nature of differing opinions between teams.
- “The biggest challenge the kids have at that age is being able to meet the athletic requirements, you know, if they can’t get around the field, and we often see boys that are decent in the small sided games because there isn’t far to run and they can make an impact, but as soon as you stretch the pitch out, then they can’t cover the distances; they fall away very quickly, even though technically they may be very good”
- Some data is available to suggest that players have been able to employ and maybe develop some level of psycho behavioural skills through differing challenges.
- “A bit more homework, because you have lots of different lessons. Instead of, in Primary, you’d do like, for one hour or a couple of hours you do maths then English then pretty much the same thing every day. But then when you go to Secondary School, you do a lot of different subjects... When you get set homework, you’ve got to do it straight away... I have certain days where I do my homework, because sometimes I have football, and sometimes I have free days”

# Who

- There is strong recognition of the players being engaged in a social process both within and out with club. Recognising the role of coaches and parents in the academy process.
- “That’s the biggest thing that I’ve taken from, sort of, the Youth Awards is, who is the child? You know, how do they tick? Knowing a little bit about their social background I think tells you an awful lot I think that’s a massive - I think our role is getting even bigger with that as well, I think it’s getting even bigger. And if we can support them, obviously I think that’s a positive for the boy. Maybe hard work for us, because it’s not easy, you know”
- Least supported theme psychologically developing player.
- “A little bit of child psychology would be good, the people who I’ve spoken to about that, not on courses, has provided huge value to me to develop and understand. Understanding is huge. Like, we’ve all been kids, but we’ve all been kids while we’ve been kids. We haven’t been kids while we’ve been adults, so we don’t understand what it’s like being a kid”
- Despite not being supported as much as other areas, recognition that efforts have been made by the FA
- “I think the courses at the moment, I went on the Advanced Youth, it starts to go far deeper into the social, psychological side of it really, which I think is the massive side of things. Before a coaching course, it’s always been technical, tactical, primarily tactical with the A Licenses and the B Licenses. But the Advanced Youth now is actually starting to go right into, because we’re both doing the 12-16 one, a teenage mind. I think you’ve got to do the research on what makes up a teenage mind to be a good coach for them ages. I think the technical, tactical, is probably at the back behind the social and the psychological side”

# Aha!

We need a psychology intervention!!

# But....

Typically, If We Add Something In Something Needs To  
Be Taken Out

There Is A Need To Be Clear About What Coaches Need  
and Want

Cognitive Task Analysis – Knowledge To Match To The  
Role



		Middle Childhood	Early Adolescence
Psycho - Social	Cognitive Development, Knowledge of Self/Identity	Early development of capacity to plan and use this as a method to reflect, evaluate progress and re plan.	Capacity to reflect on self improves and to deal with more complicated problems.
		Development of an understanding of how learning works. Improve capacity to retrieve information. <b>There can be a connection between hard work/practice and improvement</b>	Children become more aware of what and who they like and don't like based on compatibility with own views and values. A better understanding of their self. <b>Key time in identity formation. Requires broad range of opportunities to engage in identity formation. Avoid identity foreclosure being 'forced' upon them.</b>
		Initial (often unrealistic) optimism regarding capacity to deal with challenges and problems begins to become more realistic. This can be aligned with reductions in self-confidence especially as progress is made into adolescence.	Despite increased capacity to self regulate, <b>self regulation development often lags behind willingness to risk take and monitor consequences of risks</b>
	Emotional and Motivational Development	Increase opportunity for autonomy over behaviour. But also increased chance for tension as to how that autonomy is applied	Increasing need to experiment away from parents. Potential for gaining a greater sense of confidence
		<b>As children mature and become aware of their skills they also become more aware of failures</b> without the skill to deal with this leading to frustration	<b>Confidence can be fragile as failure can be interpreted as predicting future failure. Easy to enter downward spiral. Frustration continues to be a response to failure.</b>
	Opportunity for competition and social comparison increases increasing opportunity to experience pros and cons of these processes.	<b>Despite not always displaying desired behaviour</b> children at this age still have a <b>strong need for relatedness and belonging</b> in formal educational settings. Children who never get a sense of relating to teachers are more likely to display inappropriate behaviour.	
	Social Role and Influence	Increased time spent with peers. <b>Opportunity to engage in group dynamics and create relationships, understanding of 'we'.</b>	More time spent unsupervised on their own or with peers.
		Despite capacity become <b>fixed about ability.</b> Social support from <b>adults</b> (teachers, parent etc.) <b>can create belief in capacity to grow</b> , reduce frustration, and maintain high expectations	Adolescent <b>"Individuals are not likely to do very well, or to be very motivated, if they are in social environments that do not fit their psychological needs."</b> (p.37)
		High potential for being a <b>period of strong relationships with adults</b> as both find each other interesting.	<b>Distancing away from parents</b> increases willingness to engage with other non familial adults who are perceived as being worthy of engaging with, i.e. offer share or engage in something meaningful to the child.
	<b>Eccles (1999) and Steinberg (2005)</b>		




# [Athletic] Identity in Elite Youth football

Dr. Tom Mitchell



# Social Perspectives

## social

/ˈsəʊʃ(ə)l/ 

*adjective*

1. relating to society or its organization.  
"alcoholism is recognized as a major social problem"  
*synonyms:* communal, community, community-based, collective, group, general, popular, civil, civic, public, societal; [More](#)
2. needing companionship and therefore best suited to living in communities.  
"we are social beings as well as individuals"

## context

/ˈkɒntɛkst/ 

*noun*

the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood.


"the proposals need to be considered in the context of new European directives"

*synonyms:* circumstances, conditions, surroundings, factors, state of affairs; [More](#)

- the parts of something written or spoken that immediately precede and follow a word or passage and clarify its meaning.

"skilled readers use context to construct meaning from words as they are read"

## sociology

/səʊʃiˈɒlədʒi, səʊsɪˈɒlədʒi/ 

*noun*

*noun:* sociology

the study of the development, structure, and functioning of human

- the study of social problems.

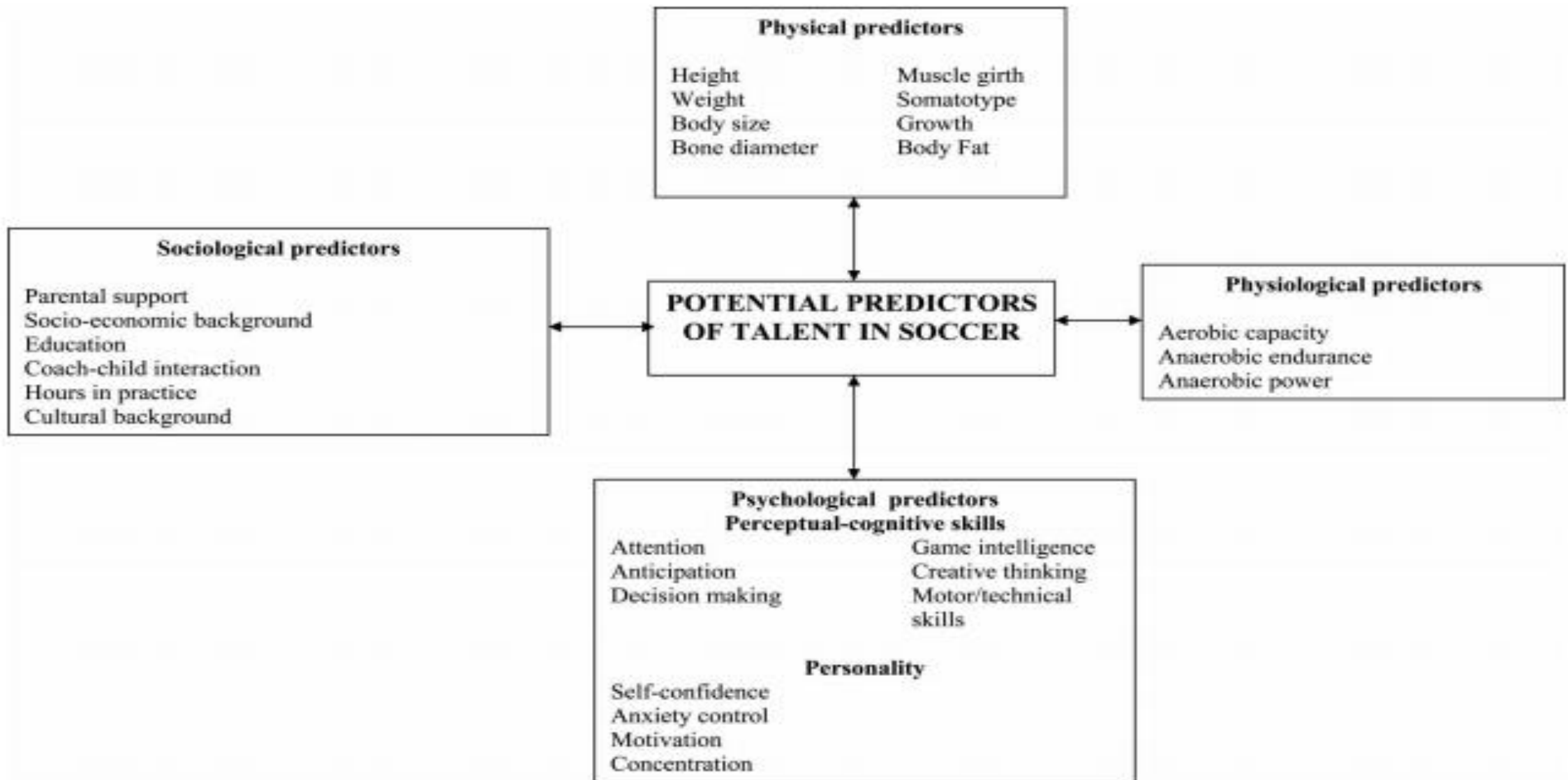


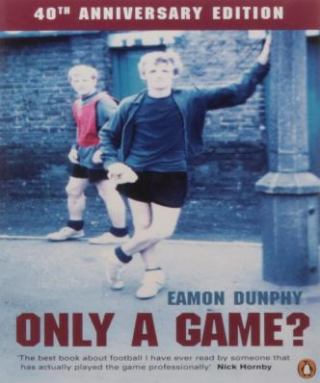
Figure 1. Potential predictors of talent in soccer (source: Williams & Reilly, 2000).

Holt and Mitchell, 2006

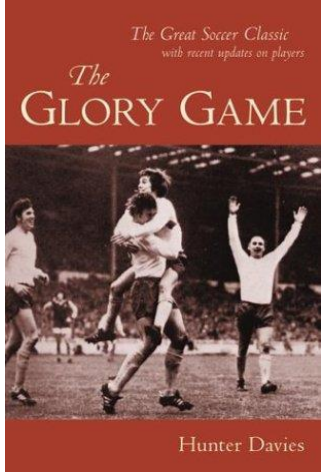


<i>Athletic Level</i>	<i>Academy (16-19s) Development</i>	<i>Post Academy Developing Mastery</i>	<i>First Team Mastery</i>
<b>Psychological Level</b>	Adolescence	Social insecurity and comparison	(young) Adulthood. Limelight stardom
<b>Psycho-social level</b>	Peers, parents, coach, Ed & Welfare	Partner New coach(es) Family	Manager New coach(es)
<b>Environmental and cultural level</b>	Process orientated Nurturing Caring Empathetic	Uncompetitive Lonely Isolated Uncertain Stagnant	Outcome orientated Ruthless Masculine macho Heightened competition Team
<b>Nature of support</b>	Highly supportive	Bereft of social support	(Typically) crisis management, sophist





# What do we know about socio-cultural aspects [context] within football?



...peculiar and unique institutions which stamp a certain character on young men as they pass from adolescence to early adulthood.  
(Gearing, 1999).

Football environments have been characterised as; domineering, authoritarian, hyper-masculine, ruthless and insecure.

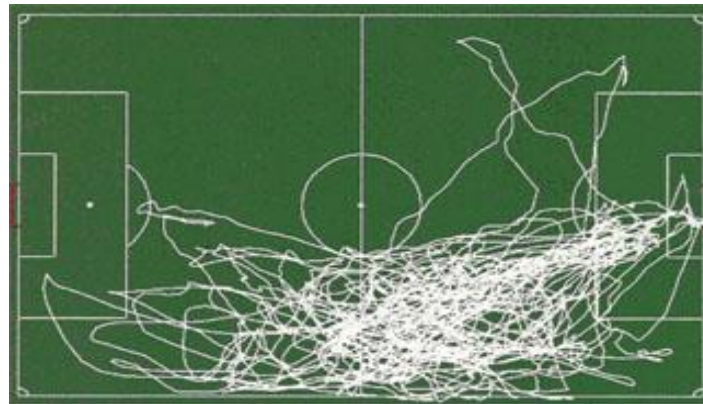
(Parker, 2001).

Uncertain and often volatile.

(Roderick, 2006; Nesti & Littlewood, 2011; Nesti, et al 2012).

Ambiguous context (Gibson & Groom, 2017)

# Real world understanding



# What do [sport] psychologists say about developing psychosocially 'healthy' individuals?

- Self identity is a key driver for human motivation (Maslow, 1950)
- Self awareness is a central facet for successful transition in elite youth soccer (Mills, et al., 2012)
- A strong, flexible, clear sense of self may be most suitable for young players to meet their potential (Balague, 1999; Nesti & Littlewood, 2011).

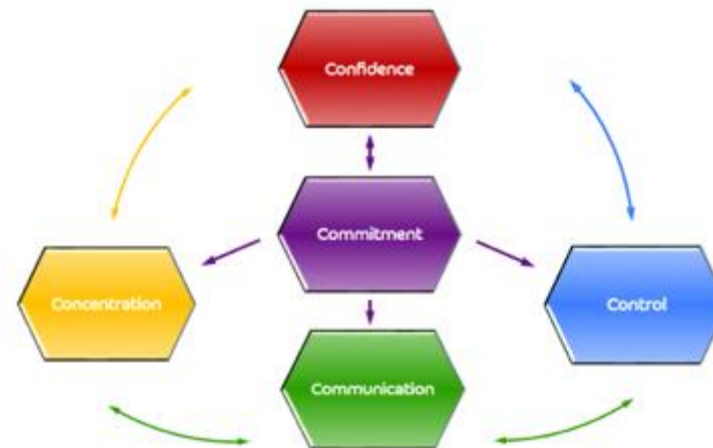
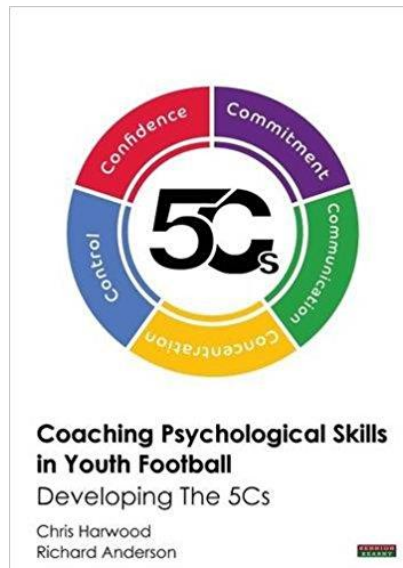


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Role Clarity & Commitment

Planning & Organisation

Goal Setting & Self-reinforcement

Quality Practice

Resilience and self-regulation

Creating and using Support Networks

Research: MacNamara, Button and Collins (2010)  
The Role of Psychological Characteristics in Facilitating the Pathway to Elite Performance. The Sport Psychologist.

# Practitioners perspectives on psychosocial characteristics and their development

Identity, person, self identity, personal characteristics

Clear performance model

What psychosocial characteristics do you think give players the best chance of progressing?

What do you perceive contributes to the development of such characteristics?

Clear development model

*Mitchell, Nesti, Ronkainian, Richardson and Littlewood (under review)*



# Methods – Semi Structured Interviews

Eighteen (N = 18) youth development practitioners from ten (N = 10) English professional football clubs. (n = 1 PL, n=4 CH, n=3 L1, n=2 L2).

Of the 18 practitioners there were 8 Heads of youth (n = 8), 6 Youth team coaches (n = 6), two Heads of Education and Welfare (n = 2), one Education and Welfare officer (n = 1) and 1 Centre of Excellence Physiotherapist (n = 1).

All full time, mean experience of 16 years in the setting.

Data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and a hierarchical thematic analysis was employed to develop common themes from the data moving from description to analysing meaning. (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

*Mitchell, Nesti, Ronkainian, Richardson and Littlewood (under review)*

# What do coaches want from players from a psychosocial perspective?

Raw-data themes (frequency)	Lower-order themes	Higher-order themes
Presence (6)		
Self-awareness (14)	Character	
Dedication (12)		
Mental Toughness (14)		
Stable and Humble (13)		The Person
Take personal responsibility (5)		
Be the best at everything (4)	Attitude	
Have own agenda (10)		
Willingly meet organisational rules (4)		

### ***Self-Awareness (14)***

The one thing that really does define a player at 19 or 20 is really their character... if they haven't got that, then they'll fail, it's just my opinion you know, you've got to have that resilience to be able to react to criticism in a positive manner to react to disappointment to take on board that there might be people that you are ahead who are gonna go past and come through you because they are developing. How do you handle being dropped? How do you handle not playing as well as you should do?

The ones that are more calculated and work things out are the ones who have got a better chance you know that put it into perspective and that's a big thing as well for kids cos sometimes [in a football club] the littlest things are like the end of world.

### ***Presence (6)***

..[FORMER SCHOLAR] had fire in his belly, everyone knew when he was training with us and even when he went to train with the first team the session went up a level. Just by one person

### ***Stable and Humble (13)***

...we've just had one of the lads who's just scored the winner for the under 19s ... you know, he's got a bit of cockiness [arrogance] about him but then when he came into the classroom yesterday and we had a bit of banter about it he was trying to change the subject. The best players have that.

### ***Own Agenda (10)***

...a kid who wants to go and do some extra training, but all the rest of the lads are going to go, oh, goody two shoes, and all this sort of stuff. Well you've got to say, 'Sod that' .

*Mitchell, Nesti, Ronkainian, Richardson and Littlewood (under review)*

# Synthesis

- Self awareness – (e.g. Erikson, 1968).
- Responsibility – (e.g. Hellison, 2011)
- [conforming] Dedication – (e.g. Holt & Mitchell, 2006)

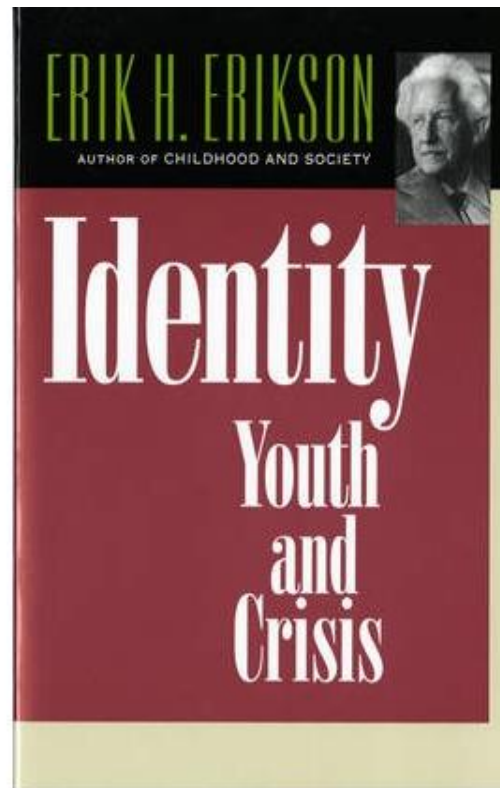



Table 1  
Health Education TFSR levels


Level	Description
Level 1: Self-control	Respecting the rights and feelings of others, maintaining appropriate behavior and language in class
Level 2: Self-responsibility	Participating in class discussions, making an effort in classroom assignments, coming to class prepared
Level 3: Self-direction	Developing personal health plans and goals, thinking and acting independent of peers
Level 4: Leadership	Having positive attitudes and behaviors, helping others learn healthy behaviors and being a positive influence
Level 5: Out of the classroom	Using health applications in life, caring about and helping family members and friends

See all > 27 Citations  
See all > 10 References

Talent development in English professional soccer

Article · April 2006 with 120 Reads

1st  **Nicholas Holt**  
35.82 · University of Alberta

2nd  **Tom Mitchell**

## Abstract

The first purpose of this study was to examine psychological aspects of the talent development experiences of adolescent youth players who were on the verge of being released by a third division professional soccer club in England. The second purpose was to compare these findings with Holt and Dunn's (2004) grounded theory of soccer success and other pertinent literature in order to present predictions about the psychological factors that may increase the chances of talented adolescent athletes making it into professional adult soccer. Nine players (M age =18.5 yrs) and three coaches from an English professional third division club were interviewed and data were subjected to an inductive-deductive analysis procedure as part of the process of qualitative theory generation. The findings suggested that players lacked volitional behavior, delaying gratification, determination to succeed, strategic career planning, coping strategies, and tangible support. We interpreted these findings against previous research and concluded that hope theory (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002) may be a useful framework for understanding psychological issues that enable some talented adolescent soccer players to make it to professional adult soccer. Accordingly a revised grounded theory of soccer success during adolescence is presented.

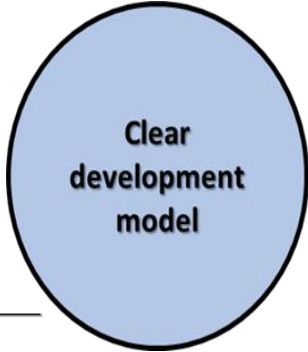


## Coaching Psychological Skills in Youth Football

Developing The 5Cs

Chris Harwood  
Richard Anderson





# What contributes to the development of such characteristics?

Raw-data themes (frequency)	Lower-order themes	Higher-order themes
Authority (19)	Promoting Professionalism	
Additional Responsibilities (Jobs) (8)		Internal Environment
Developing People (17)	Promoting Psychosocial development	
Employ a Sport Psychologist (2)		
Parental Influence (11)	→	External Environment
Characteristics are pre-determined (11)	→	
Society (2)	→	



## ***Authority (19)***

He does promote rules that encourage behaviour. With the discipline you've got the shaving. He has a three strike system..... basically if you don't shave, one of the lads didn't shave yesterday so he's got a strike and if you get three strikes you don't play the game on Saturday.

I've worked with as coaches have worked with and always seen excellence in their working lives, you know 'cross that ball in from the left hand side' bang yep brilliant again again again. Sometimes you cross that ball in from the left hand side and it might not be what your working on you might be working on something in the middle. So they'll say 'he's not good enough you do it'. You can't generalise but quite often they've not got patience or understanding that these kids aren't of that level yet.

## ***Additional Responsibilities (8)***

We've got lads whose job it is to blow footballs up and that to make sure they're at the right pressure cos the first team go crackers if they're not you know, are the bibs washed are they clean if the first team wanna put em on. It's a massive responsibility within our football club.

Have they got the discipline to clean their boots, to clean the footballs. If they've got that they've got the discipline to track runners or mark somebody from a set play.

## ***Developing People (17)***

Teach em good values and there's an education programme there which allows em to go get a load of qualifications and to make em better human beings.

I'll go through their reflections with them and just say to them look defensive heading you've put excellent, I think that you're poor and that's an area we need to work on in your game so what you're gonna do is do that every morning, 10-15 minutes get a partner, get out there and work on that.

## ***Parental Influence (11)***

We see players who've got really good standards, really good values. You know, really focused, really professional, really disciplined; you meet the parents and it's no surprise that they've got those values.

# Synthesis

*All the effort that I've put in that way it can't have hurt to say he's got a good attitude. (Y2 Scholar reflecting on release)*



Some developmental activities contradict the traditional definitions of training which include words such as 'systematic' and 'purposeful' (Buckley & Caple, 2000).

Notion of 'craft idiocy' that is described as becoming a slave to and of ones skills at the expense of wider social experiences such as husband, father or son. (Marx, 1955)

Football coaches within women's soccer acknowledge they don't have the skills or training for facilitate such development. (Gledhill & Harwood, 2015).

Parental involvement in tennis related to both parent and child having shared and communicated goals. (Holt & Knight, 2015)

# Implications

- Potential for Identity foreclosure (Petitpas, 1978) – too early a commitment to a role without sufficient exploration – ‘I am footballer ~~but I also am 13 years old~~’
- Docile bodies (Foucault, 1977) - obedient bodies who do what they are told (seen in runners, Denison, 2007).
- Silencing (Manely, Roderick & Parker, 2016).
- Hidden Curriculum (Cushion & Jones, 2014).
- Conformity (Parker, 2001).
- Potential for an overly strong *Athletic* Identity.

# Implications

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Sport in Society  
Vol. 9, No. 3, July 2006, pp. 371–387



## 'Football is My Life': Theorizing Social Practice in the Scottish Professional Football Field

David McGillivray & Aaron McIntosh

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There exists an apparent paradox between the continuing significance and growing glamorization of the professional game on a global scale and the increasingly unstable labour market conditions affecting professional football players at the national level – in this case, the Scottish professional football field. In this paper, we utilize Pierre Bourdieu's formula of habitus, capital and field to frame professional footballers' social practices – with specific emphasis on their engagement (or lack of engagement) with educational discourses. We also employ Bourdieu's concept of strategy to consider the ways in which footballers' identities might be reformulated within rather than outside the boundaries of the professional football field. Empirically, data generated from an in-depth qualitative study of two Scottish professional football clubs are presented. The paper concludes that, despite the increased awareness and availability of educational opportunities, players' engagement with educational discourses is, at best, an instrumental, means-end and outcome-based one.

'Horton

Soccer & Society  
Vol. 10, No. 2, March 2009, 143–159



## 'You've not made the grade, son': de-selection and identity disruption in elite level youth football

Gavin Brown<sup>a</sup> and Paul Potrac<sup>\*b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Freelance writer, UK; <sup>b</sup>Department of Sport, Health and Exercise Science, University of Hull, Hull, UK

The purpose of this investigation was to utilize in-depth interviews to explore the experiences of young former elite footballers whose respective professional careers were prematurely ended as a consequence of deselection. To this end, the analysis focuses upon (a) the respondents' development of a strong athletic identity, (b) the impact of deselection on the respondents' sense of self, and (c) the respondents' adaptations to life outside of professional football. The results indicated that the development of a strong athletic identity contributed to considerable emotional and psychological disturbances upon deselection, which included feelings of anxiety, fear, depression, anger and humiliation. While the majority of the participants are attempting to build new unified self-concepts and alternative identities, they were critical of the limited social support that they had received from their respective professional clubs when making the transition out of professional football.

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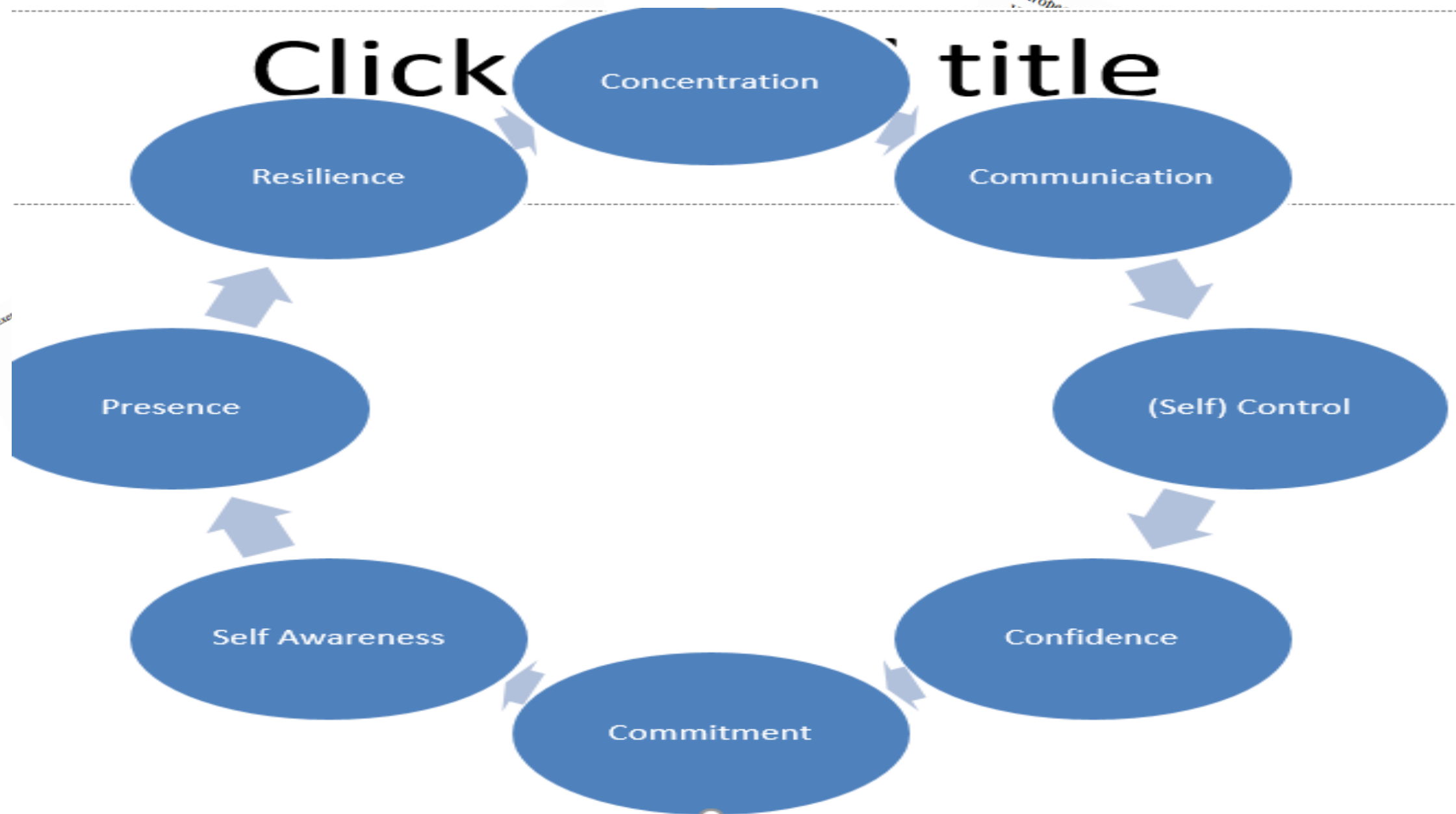


**Table 1 Developmentally Appropriate Coaching Considerations**

<b>Development</b>	<b>Mid-Childhood (6–11 years)</b>	<b>Early Adolescence (10–14 years)</b>	<b>Mid-Adolescence (15–17 years)</b>
<b>Physical</b>	Help athletes gain confidence and experience with basic sport/motor skills	Help athletes gain perspective on pubertal/body changes (e.g., how they are necessary for physical development)	Encourage athletes to develop an increased understanding of their bodies (e.g., nutrition, physiology, mind/body connection)
<b>Cognitive</b>	Use concrete examples; help athletes learn the differences between luck, skill, and effort; promote a sport environment that encourages and reinforces effort and fun; encourage athletes to try new challenges; help athletes problem-solve within sport	Help athletes evaluate their progress based on their own past performances rather than comparisons to others; encourage athletes to express their thoughts about competition and struggles with performing; help athletes focus on the task at hand rather than comparisons to others; help athletes regulate their thoughts during practice and competition	Use abstract or open-ended examples and questions (e.g., “what went well?”) to promote more advanced problem solving; help athletes learn ways to evaluate and respond to feedback (e.g., past performances, coach feedback); encourage athletes to develop personalized strategies (e.g., cue words, breathing patterns, routines) to manage thoughts before, during, and after competition
<b>Emotional</b>	Help athletes learn to cope with winning and losing; encourage athletes to focus on competing in the present moment rather than worrying about success or failure; teach athletes that mistakes are learning opportunities	Help athletes understand how sport situations, positive and negative, can produce strong emotions; encourage athletes to verbalize and learn how to manage their emotions using specific strategies in practice and competition	Encourage athletes to express their complex feelings and concerns related to competition (e.g., fear of facing a specific opponent or losing); Help athletes manage emotions by focusing on what’s within their control; be available for one-on-one conversations or group discussions to discuss specific strategies for coping with these emotions
<b>Social</b>	Help athletes learn to cooperate and positively interact with their teammates and opponents	Help athletes positively interact with and respect coaches and other adults (e.g., officials)	Help athletes learn how to approach and make fair decisions in sport situations (e.g., being honest to officials, opponents, and teammates)

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communication towards youth  
led to staff dissatisfaction  
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# Key Messages for effective B-P-S

Integrating Positive Development / Personal Development is challenging in elite youth football contexts

There are some tools out there to support coaches / clubs

Monitor the effectiveness of strategies

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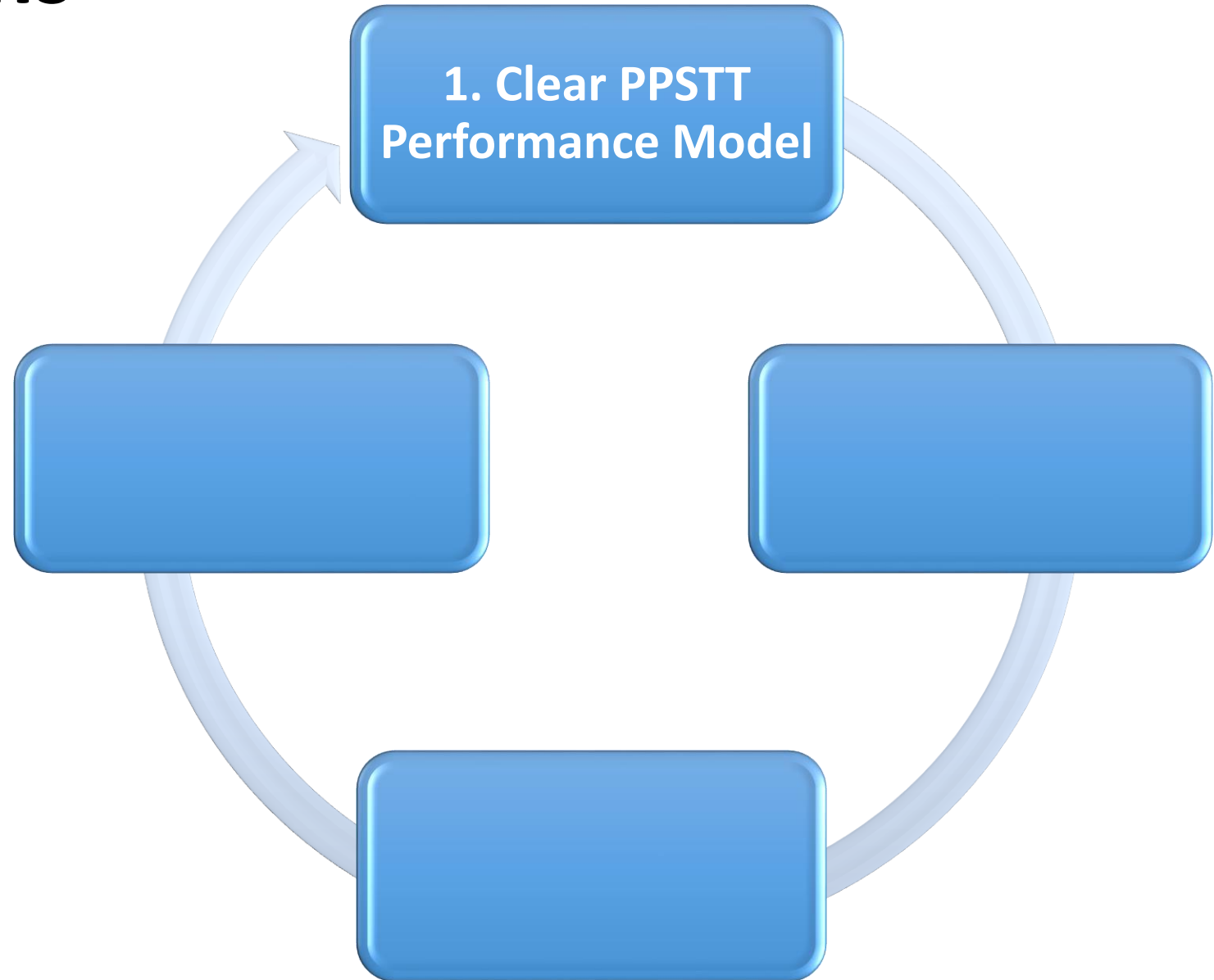
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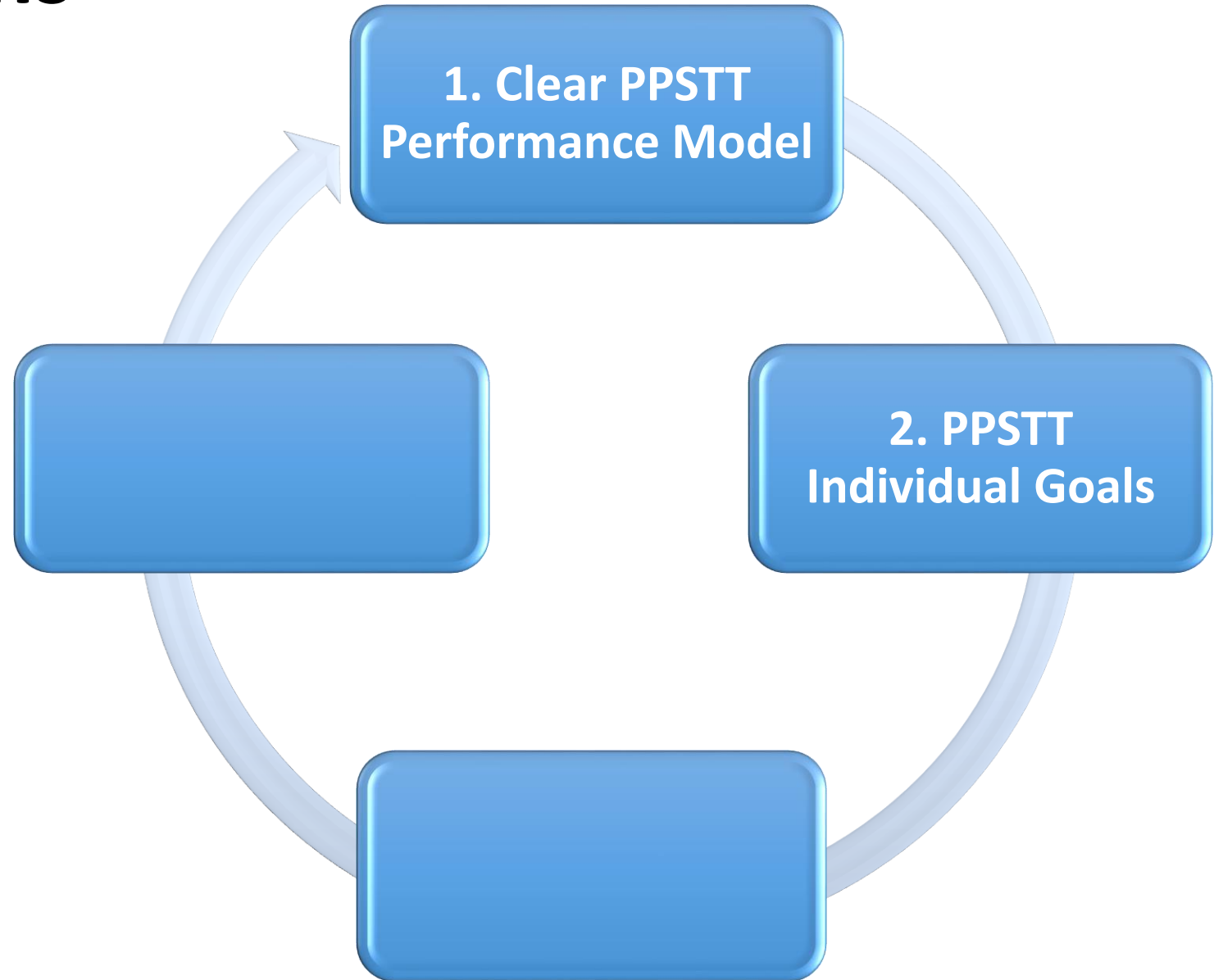
# Practical Implications

- Complexity depends on Context (Participant to Performer)
- Player Performance affected by Stage of development (i.e., Physical / Cognitive Maturity)
- Performance  $\neq$  Potential



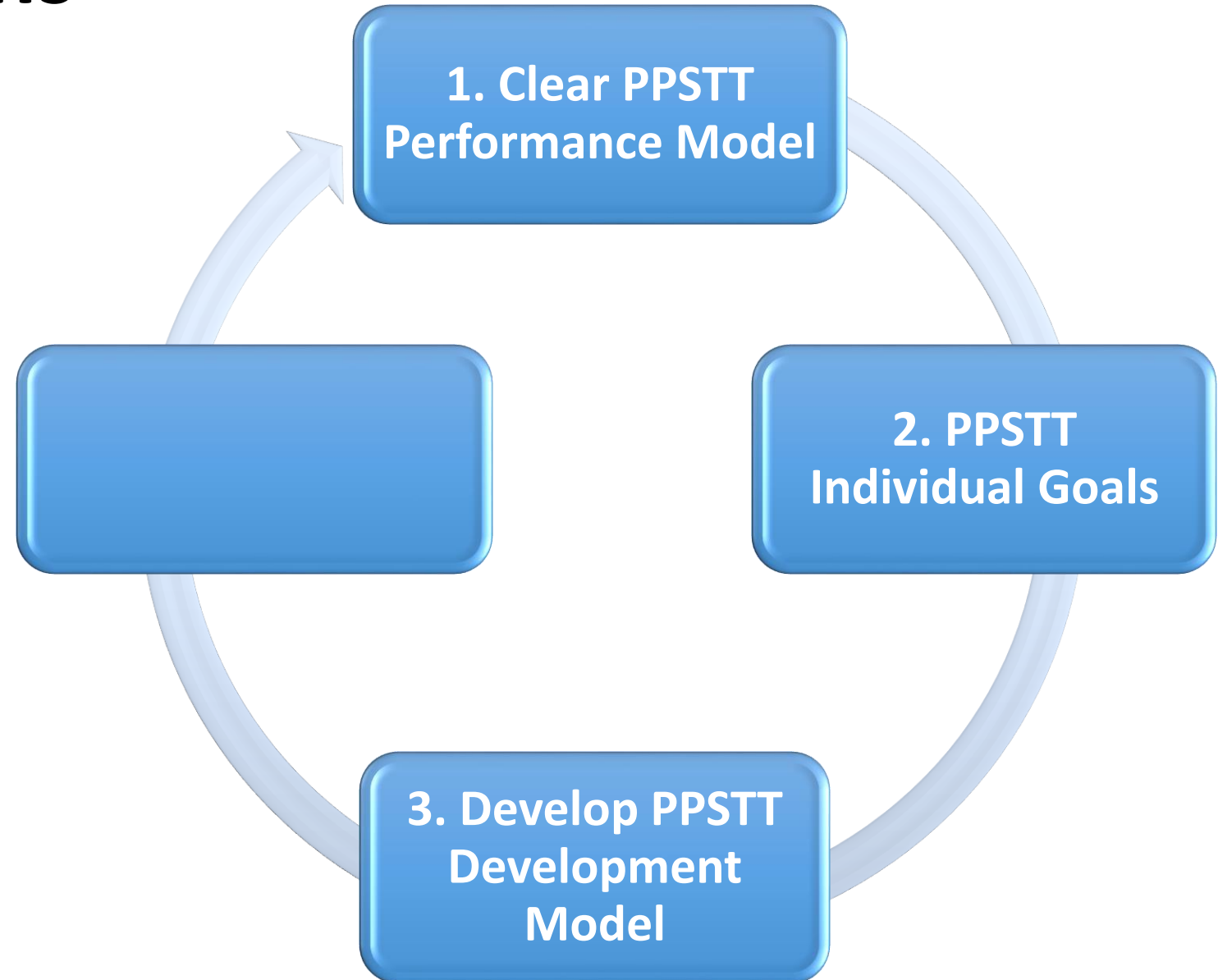
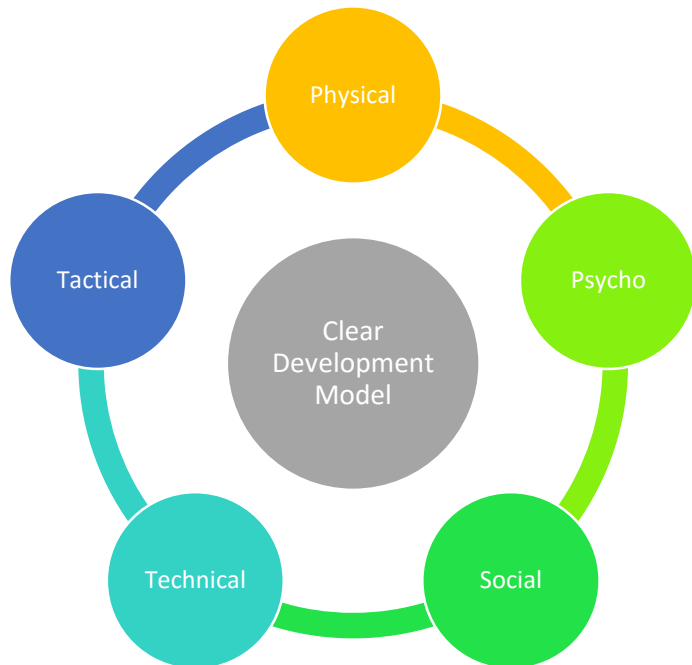
# Practical Implications

- Have flexibility within performance goals
  - understand the individual
- Variability exists within groups (i.e., adolescent development)
- Develop effective monitoring and evaluation tool to inform individual goals



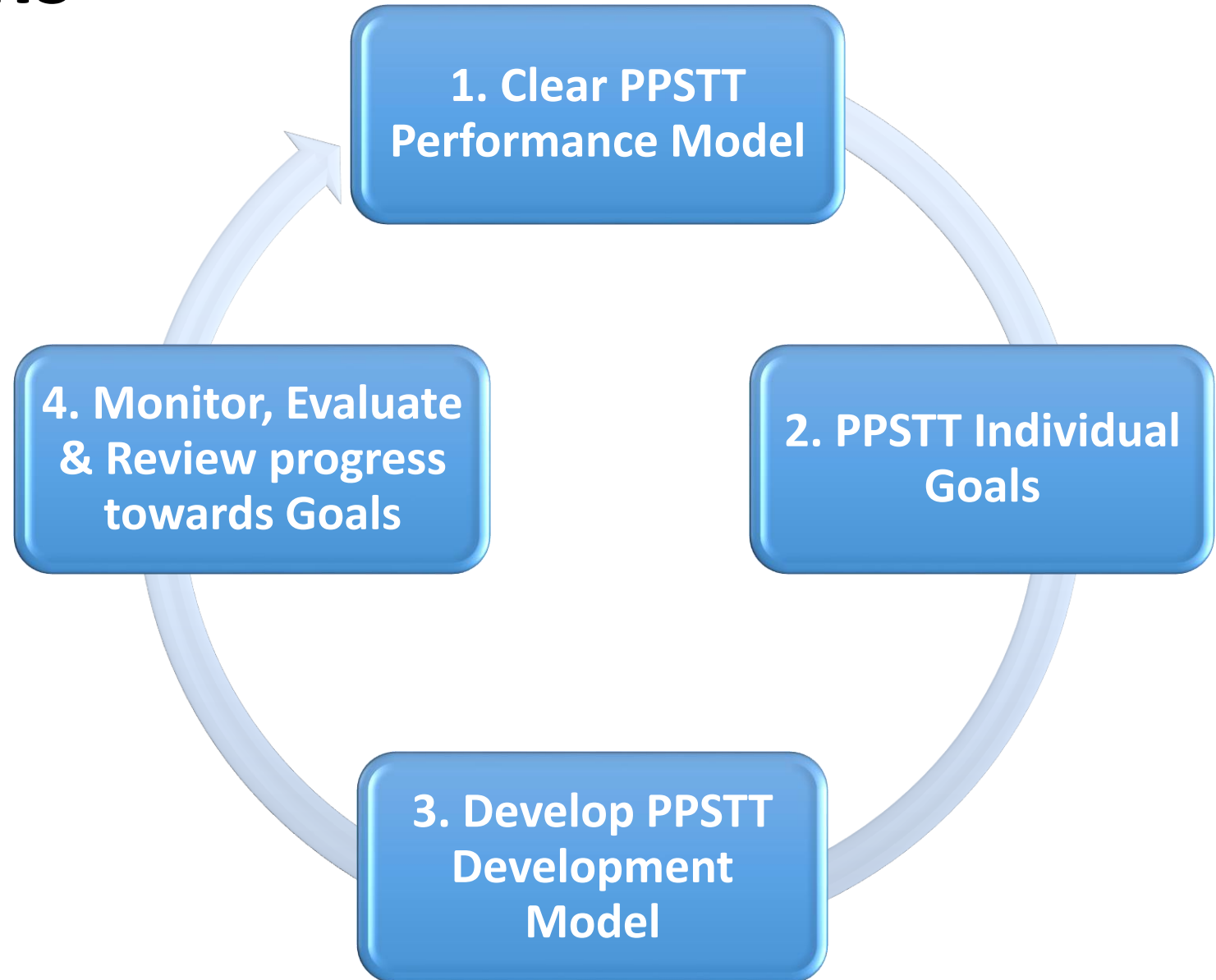
# Practical Implications

- Driven by Performance & Individual Goals
- Supported by appropriate workforce and resources
- Balance Planning & increase connections between PPSTT



# Practical Implications

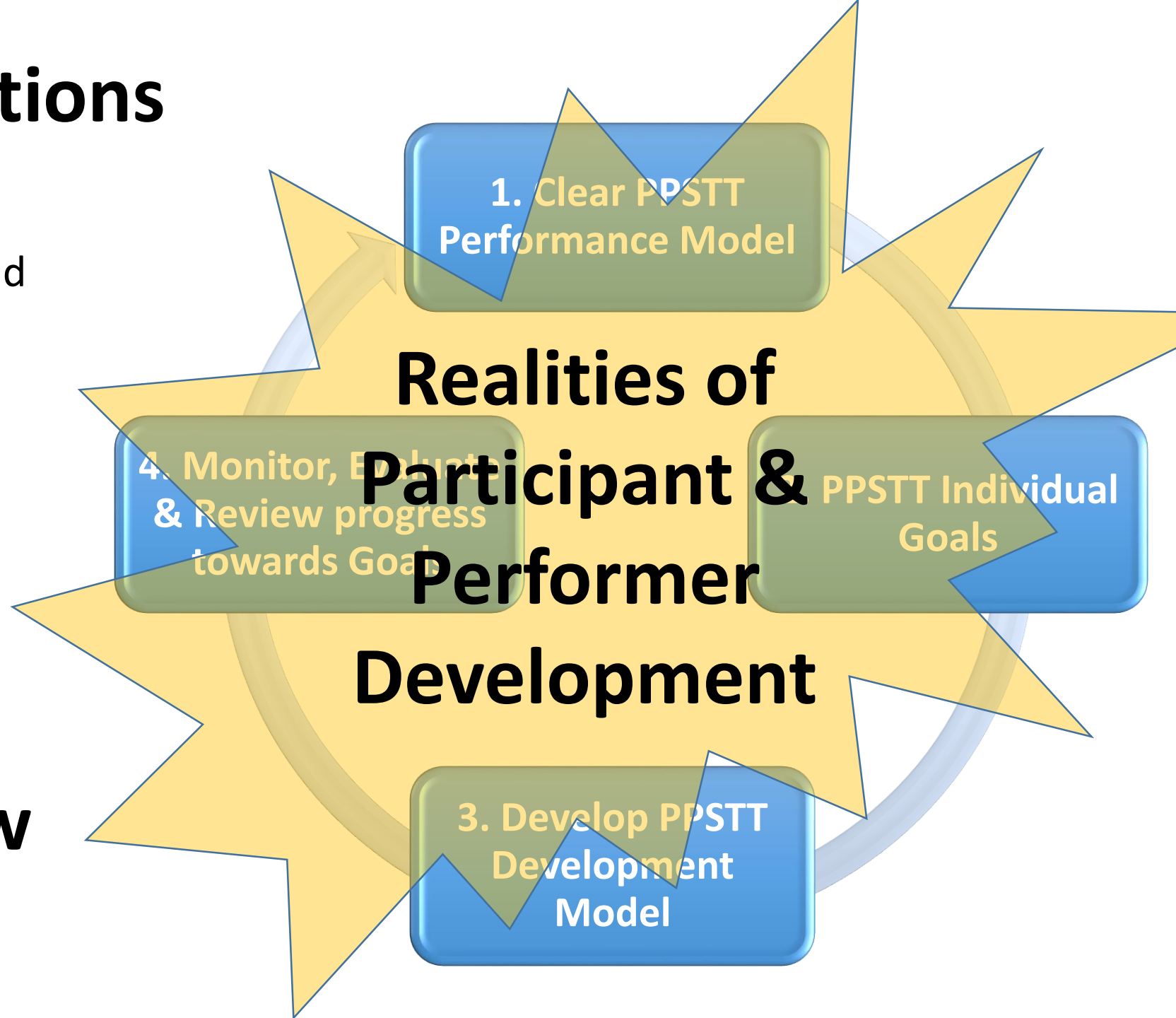
- Holistic player evaluations and reviews (evidenced by monitoring tool)
- Re-consider performance model, individual goals and development model



# Practical Implications

- Holistic player evaluations and reviews (evidenced by monitoring tool)
- Re-consider performance model, individual goals and development model

**How do we know we're right?**





# Thank You

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