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Connecting Coaches Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 7 July 2012

ASDC Services Research Coaching Tips Events

Welcome to Connecting Coaches Newsletter,

Services: Service Providers

Research: So What Is Developmentally Appropriate Sport?

Coaching Tips: Who do you want to bring to competition?, Heat Illness Videos, Olympic-sized sport myths

Coaches of Canada: Call for Nominations – 2012 Jack Donohue 'Coach of the Year' Award

Events/Educational Opportunities: Red Deer Synchronized Summer Camp

Alberta Sport Development Centres

www.asdc.ca

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ASDC Network



Partners



ASDC Services

The Alberta Sport Development Centres' main purpose is to coordinate and enhance services available to Alberta's emerging athletes and coaches. Each Centre supports the idea of a holistic training approach in order for athletes to reach their optimal athletic potential. By combining sport science applications with support from experts in areas such as nutrition, sport psychology and injury prevention and strength and conditioning we help build an ideal environment for enhanced athletic development and performance. For example, our sports nutritionists are registered with the Provincial Regulatory Bodies and offer nutrition counseling for individuals or teams, menu development and provide education in proper nutrition and fluid intake to optimize performance.



Our mental trainers have a minimum of a Masters Degree and provide mental training and preparation skills to help prepare athletes for training and competition. All service providers contracted by ASDC have the experience and qualifications to provide the best athletic experience to young athletes and coaches. Contact your local ASDC for more information on the services they offer at

www.asdc.ca



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Research

So What Is Developmentally Appropriate Sport?

by Richard Bailey

The collective wisdom from decades of research into children and sport can be summarised in just three points:

1. Children are not mini-adults;
2. Children are not mini-adults;
3. Children are not mini-adults.



Point ‘1’ relates to the unarguable fact that children’s minds and bodies work differently from adults. They process information, pay attention, move and exercise in distinctive ways. Many of the sports scientific principles that underpin conceptions of good practice simply do not apply to children. For example, we have been taught that benefits of exercise come from sustained activity above a certain threshold. But the most cursory observation of young children’s physical activity reveals that it is stop-start, and of wildly varying levels of intensity.

Point ‘2’ refers to movement development. With a few exceptions, adults engage in a small number of physical activities that require quite specialised motor skills. These skills predominantly relate to games with names (golf, judo, netball, and so on). Children are still laying down the foundations of their movement competence. Much of the pre-adolescent phase is taken up with the development of fundamental movement skills – running, jumping, twisting turning, stopping, starting ... These skills are necessary for subsequent physical activity, are best developed in an atmosphere that could be characterised as ‘play’, and are intrinsically motivating (kids do them for love the movements themselves). Also, importantly, these basic movements are best developed through engagement in a wide range of activities that are adapted to reflect the distinctive needs of children. In terms of early movement development, variety really is the spice of life.

Finally, Point ‘3’ reminds us that, whilst us adults play sport for lots of different reasons – weight loss, elite competition, socialising, reproduction – the vast majority of children play sport for only one reason – **fun**.

Developmentally appropriate coaching is an attempt to put into practice what we have learned about human development. It recognises that, if we want children to enjoy sport and to continue to do it throughout their lives, we’d better acknowledge some of the basic facts of their development.

You might think that this is all rather obvious. But if it is, I’m led to wonder why there is still so much inappropriate practice going on. Maybe we would expect the odd rogue coach to stand in opposition to recognised good practice. But this does not explain more structural things like:

- Children playing full (or nearly full) sided) games, or following adult-designed rules;
 - Children being selected for teams based on their relative age or physique;
 - Later sporting performance being predicted from early childhood;
 - The concept of ‘early specialisation sport’.
- Cont’d

KEY POINTS

Children are not mini-adults;

Developmentally appropriate coaching is an attempt to put into practice what we have learned about human development. It recognises that, if we want children to enjoy sport and to continue to do it throughout their lives, we’d better acknowledge some of the basic facts of their development.

[Source: and complete article can be found at [Sports Coach UK](#)]

You may also be interested in the Canadian Sport For Life article: “Your child is not a miniature elite athlete”.

[Read](#)



Research

KEY POINTS

Developmental Markers and Characteristics

- **3-6 Years**
- Relatively rapid physical growth
- Rapid brain development
- **6-12 years**
- Relatively slow physical growth
- Steady brain development
- Improving memory, decision-making, and attention-span
- Reasoning abilities are limited
- **12-17 years**
- Relatively rapid physical growth
- Initially rapid, followed by steady brain development
- Physical and psychological maturation rarely occur at the same pace
- Young people start to identify and commit to one or a small number of sports
- Abstract thought becomes well-developed
- **17+**
- Relatively slow physical growth
- Steady brain development

The list could go on and on, but I hope these few make my point. It seems to me that none of these practices can be described as developmentally appropriate. They either assume that children's and adults' needs and interests are more or less the same. Or that adults' sporting ambitions ought to dictate children's recreational actions. The first assumption is factually wrong. The second is heading towards being morally wrong. This is a serious matter, especially for those who try to persuade politicians, policymakers, practitioners and parents that sport is a really good thing for children, and that every child needs to experience regularly.

I've hinted at some of the principles that might inform developmentally appropriate sport. Now, let me be more explicit about some of the building blocks.

1. *Biology does not celebrate birthdays*

There is a strong tendency in youth sport to rely on chronological age as the main criteria for grouping children, but this is an extremely poor measure. At any given age, there will be children of the same chronological age who are up to 2 years older or younger in terms of development. The easiest way to see what this means look at a group of half a dozen ten or eleven year old boys and girls together. What will be obvious straight away is a stark variation in height.

2. *Childhood can usefully be thought of in terms of stages of development*

The child's developing body and brain alternative between periods of rapid growth and stability. This pattern has enormous significance for coaches, since learning complex skills can be tricky if the body is rapidly changing.

"End of the Beginning" - physical and emotional development continues, although at slower rates than before; preparing for adulthood

It is not difficult to imagine some of the implications of this pattern for effective sports practice. I hope.

3. *Performance is a poor indicator of ability*

Many sports groups continue to believe that the identification of talent in children is a relatively simple matter. They use essentially the same procedures used with adults, namely observing in practice and in competition, direct comparison with peers and occasionally some sort of sciency testing. Those who perform best are the most talented, right? Wrong!

It is almost impossible to make valid and reliable assessments of children's sporting performance that can be translated in terms of talent. The extent that this might seem a shocking statement is an indication of how over-zealous coaches have simply ignored a host of factors that undermine the whole childhood talent enterprise. For example:

Relative Age Effect – every age-based group of children will include those who are relatively young and those who are relatively old. The older children will have spent up to a year longer than their younger peers developing their bodies and practising their sport. And since maturation is the simple greatest determinant of physical performance, it is hardly surprising that children born early in the selection year dominate.

Social and economic factors are massively significant – generally speaking, children are unlikely to develop high-level sports skills if they've never learned that sport and had the opportunity to experience high quality coaching. The curse of the UK sports system is that opportunity is heavily mediated by factors that have absolutely nothing to do with the child's interest or ability.

To read entire article, visit Sports Coach UK.

Coaching Tips

Who do you want to bring to the competition?

by Adrienne Leslie-Toogood

I worked with an athlete who traveled a great deal Internationally at a very young age. Given that she was on the World Cup circuit and quite young, a more experienced athlete sat her down and began to ask her a few questions. The questions at first were pretty generic and not at all challenging. Then he looked at her quite seriously and asked her this rather bold question "do you know who you are?" The young athlete looked back and said something like, "I don't know, I'm not sure." And he said back "well you better take some time to figure that out. And once you know who you are, that is whom you want to bring to competition. If you are emotional or upset or anxious, you need to let that go before you step to the line. "

[Read complete article](#)

Heat Illness Videos

Summer is here and so is the heat. Well at least it was last week. Heat illnesses are common among athletes. With this in mind the SMCA have produced several Podcasts with information about types of heat illness prevention, signs, symptoms, and treatment. These timely you-tube videos offer tips to help keep your athlete hydrated, cool and safe. Visit the [SMCA](#) website to view these videos.



Monitoring Athlete growth Video

As a coach do you adapt your athlete's exercise & training regimen as they enter into their growth spurt? Alberta Sport development centre has created a training adaptation instruction video to give some practical examples.

[Learn more](#)

Olympic-sized sport myths

July 23, 2012

By: Timothy Caulfield, The Star

Not long ago I heard an Olympian being interviewed on the radio. She was talking about her preparation regimen for the London games. She was articulate, engaging and clearly committed to her sport. She was the kind of athlete who makes it easy to cheer for the home team. But she also said a few things that caused the science-nerd in me to cringe.

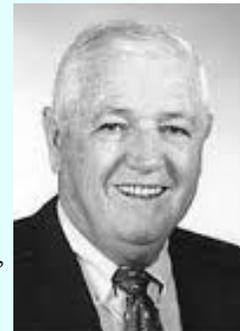


[Read complete article](#)



Call for Nominations – 2012 Jack Donohue 'Coach of the Year' Award

Coaches of Canada recognizes a coach who exemplifies all the great qualities that made Jack Donohue the legendary coach he was. These qualities include honesty, integrity, a positive attitude, competitiveness, a love of the sport, and that it is about more than just wins and losses. Jack taught his athletes about life, about experiences, about a passion to play for your country. As a founder of the Canadian Association of National Coaches, he was dedicated to the profession of coaching and demonstrated care and concern for his colleagues.



Coach Jack Donohue

The nomination should demonstrate how the coach meets the following criteria:

- Possess all the characteristics that made Jack Donohue a legendary coach
- Proved capacity to improve athlete/team performance
- Level of international competition
- Applies relevant training theory and coaching practices
- Demonstrates concern for Long-Term Athlete Development
- Demonstrates care and concern for fellow colleagues
- Presents a strong and morale public image
- Demonstrates a philosophy of fair play
- Member in Good Standing with Coaches of Canada
- Third Party Testimonials

Nominations can be submitted [online](#) through or by emailing a letter outlining how the nominee meets the above criteria to [Rebecca Norton](#).

Nominations are reviewed and the recipient is selected by the Coaches of Canada Recognition Committee. Members of this committee are: Sheila Robertson, Chair, Denise Vourtzoumis, Marc Bowles, ChPC and Heather Fraser, ChPC. This award is presented annually at the Petro-Canada Sport Leadership sportif Awards Dinner.

Nomination Deadline: Friday September 14th, 2012



Upcoming Events

Educational Opportunity



July 25—29

Alberta Summer Games

Lethbridge, AB

For those ASG athletes who were unable to attend the Mental Skills Session, ASDC NW created a video.

[Click here to view video.](#)

Counting Down to London 2012



Just three more sleeps until the London 2012 Olympic Games' Opening Ceremony -- a \$42-million (Cdn.) spectacle that's expected to wow the world. The opening ceremonies will be held on Friday at 4 p.m. ET (9 p.m. in London, England).
Jaime Pulfer, CTV

[More info](#)

Red Deer Synchronized Swim Club Summer Camp

Try an Olympic Sport! Great transition for new or Recreation Swimmers looking to move into the Competitive Program. If you like the water, here's a great way to enjoy it while making new friends! There are opportunities to participate



together as well as in separate groups, depending on previous experience. The camp includes three hours per day in the pool plus gymnastics, dryland training, nutrition, games, stretching and dance. Half Day camp is pool time only. Must be able to swim 25m unassisted for full and half day camps.

Aquasquirts is an aquatic development program intended for younger swimmers to learn basic swimming and synchro skills through purposeful play. Goggles, nose clips & swim caps required and are available for purchase. This is a great chance to try out this sport and have some fun! For more information call Lynn @ [403-340-1146](tel:403-340-1146).

Full Day

Recreation Centre 8+yrs \$250.00 #54416
Mon - Fri Aug 20 - 24 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Half Day

Recreation Centre 8+yrs \$150.00 #54417
Mon - Fri Aug 20 - 24 9:00 am - noon

Aquasquirts Camp

Recreation Centre 5+yrs \$50.00 #54418
Mon - Fri Aug 20 - 24 9:00 am - 10:00 am

To Register call [403-309-8411](tel:403-309-8411) or visit www.reddeer.ca/looknbook

Adapted Sports Training

Discover some new tricks and tips on adapting the Physical Education setting for a variety of learners. You will leave with a package of new ideas and resources to refresh your gymnasium! Learn how to play and teach adapted sports like sitting volleyball, wheelchair soccer, in-line sledge hockey and wheelchair basketball; and find out how to get these resources into your schools!

Course #1316

August 20 & 21, 2012

Tues & Wed, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

\$80.00 + GST

(Bring your kids to class for use of instruction)

Course #2573

Nov 18

Sun, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

\$100.00 + GST (includes lunch and healthy snack breaks)



Canadian Sport Policy 2012 – Now Available!

Following two years of preparation the renewed Canadian Sport Policy (CSP) 2012 was endorsed by Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation on June 27, 2012 in Inuvik, Northwest Territories.

The CSP 2012 sets the direction for all governments, institutions and organizations that are committed to realizing the positive impacts of sport on individuals, communities and society. The policy has been designed to be implemented by complementary action plans developed by governments individually and collectively, and by non-government organizations (NGOs) in the sport and related sectors.

The complete policy as well as a two page user friendly summary can now be found at

www.sirc.ca/csprenewal.