

SECTION 03

ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT
PYRAMID



03



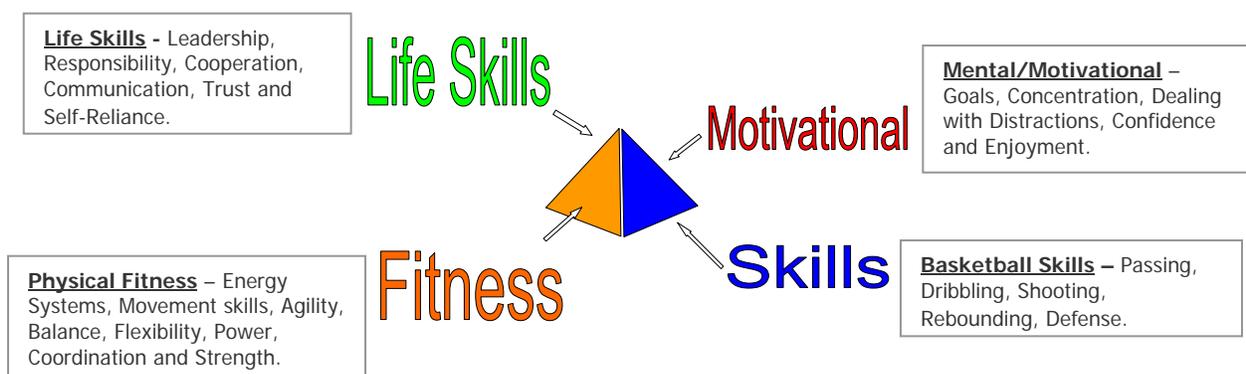
CANADA
BASKETBALL



3.0 ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

This section outlines the premise of the Athlete Development Pyramid and the overall LTAD philosophy as it applies to the Steve Nash Youth Basketball program. The main principle behind these philosophies is the emphasis on the whole person, not just the basketball player. Coaches will be introduced to the concept of an athlete developmental pyramid and will be required to be able to deliver and monitor all components of the pyramid in order to effectively develop young players.

There are four components of the athlete developmental pyramid that we want all athletes to develop. These components allow the athletes to deal with the daily stresses and strains that they will face. A weakness in any one area will cause instability and disintegration when faced with stress and strain over time.



The following sections will provide more details on these four components of athlete development. Each component provides specific details and strategies that can be utilized for each LTAD stage of the athletes you will be coaching in Steve Nash Youth Basketball.

3.1 – BASKETBALL SKILLS

The basketball skills component of the pyramid is broken down into four sections. They too create a pyramid of development. The four sections are as follow:



Fundamentals - The foundational skills or principles; Learning the **how** and **why** of the basic basketball skills.

Technical - More specific in nature involving decision making; Emphasis is on the **when**; Repetition to enhance the learning of the skills. *This is one of the areas that we have lost from the game - players are not being taught to “read” they are taught to be robots.

Strategies - The long term plan; Learning through exposure to real game like conditions; **What** you are going to do.

Tactics - Short term adjustments to the plan; Specific preparation for the game; **Where** and **who**.



Basketball Skills Development through the Stages of LTAD

LTAD Stage: FUNdamentals

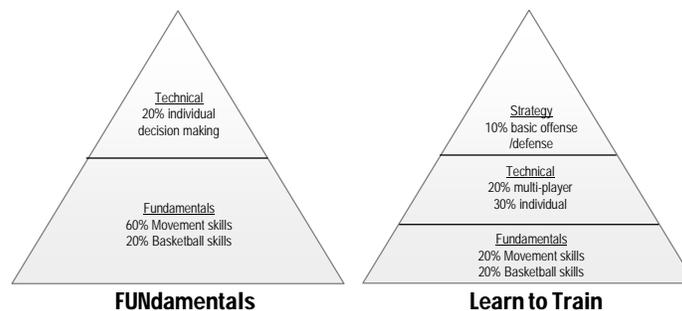
- To learn fundamental movement skills through basketball in a positive, inclusive and fun way.
- To learn the basic basketball skills through modified games while still emphasizing fundamental movement skills in a fun and inclusive environment.
- Fundamental movements: pushing, pulling, squatting, lunging, twisting, walking, jogging and sprinting. When combines, these movements create agility, balance, throwing, catching and jumping.
- Basketball fundamentals: stance, footwork, dribbling, passing and shooting. Athletes should be able to perform these using the different planes of their body. Most importantly, players need to develop a passion and enjoyment of the game.

Athletes are going to go through the same physical, cognitive and emotional development, but each will develop at different rates. To help children acquire the basic ABC's of athletics, encourage them to participate in as many different sports as possible. Most importantly, make everything into a game that stresses FUN – games provide an opportunity for rules, cooperation and fitness levels to be developed, but also for children to work on skills and have fun doing so. Participants should be taught that it is not to win, but rather to have fun while playing sports that is most important.

LTAD Stage: Learn to Train

- To learn basic basketball skills while still emphasizing fundamental movement in a fun inclusive environment.
- The introduction of basic offensive and defensive principles and philosophies.
- Fundamental movements should be developed and refined.
- Basketball fundamentals: ready position (without ball), and ready stance (with ball).
- Emphasize applying basic skills to game-like situations.
- Players must learn how to make decisions on when to use the skills and how to properly apply it.

The focus should be on the process rather than the outcome. Ensure that the ratio between practice and competition is not skewed: too many competitions wastes valuable training time, while not enough competition inhibits the practice of technical skills learned in practice. During this stage, a practice to competition ratio of 4:1 will better prepare athletes in both the short and long term.



3.2 – PHYSICAL CAPACITIES

Basic physical movements at all stages should include:

- Running – forward and backwards
- Starting and stopping
- Change of direction
- Athletic stance
- Hopping, skipping and jumping
- Eye-feet / Hand-eye coordination
- Balance
- Lunging
- Squatting
- Twisting
- Pushing
- Pulling



Physical Capacities Development through the Stages of LTAD

LTAD Stage: FUNdamentals

Children in the FUNdamental stage of development generally possess the following characteristics that are associated with the Physical component of development:

- Aggressive, noisy and active when participating in activities.
- Tire quickly, but also recover quickly.
- Weak, low strength level.
- Flexible, requiring only big muscle stretching.
- Low aerobic capacity.
- Large muscle development is far behind fine muscle development.
- Poor tracking skills.
- Hand/eye coordination and general coordination just beginning to develop.
- Limited spatial awareness.
- Poor balance and reaction time.
- Stops and starts are weak.
- Learn to use muscles through guided discovery and exploration.

With the above characteristics in mind, the following suggestions are recommended for this group.

- Use vigorous activities and games.
- Keep activities brief with short rest periods.
- Be sure you have control over activities.
- Allow children to experience a variety of basic movements.
- Provide an opportunity to handle objects in different ways.
- Practice movements in different directions.
- Use activities that give children enough space to execute basic movements.

LTAD Stage: Learn to Train

Children in the Learn to Train stage of development generally possess the following characteristics that are associated with the Physical component of development:

- Aggressive when participating in activities.
- Beginning to develop strength and enjoy physical contact.
- Greater aerobic capacity and increased stamina, but still prone to fatigue.
- Improvements in spatial awareness, eye-hand coordination and reaction time.
- Better receivers and catchers due to increased eye-hand coordination.
- Fine muscle skills are beginning to improve, but large muscles still dominate.
- Enjoy using fine muscles in games and activities.
- Improvements in whole body movements and body awareness.
- Work well to rhythm.
- Most are willing to experiment with new movements.

With the above characteristics in mind, the following suggestions should be considered for this group.

- Use active contests that allow children to release energy.
- Lengthen activities to allow for more activity.
- Work on perception skills.
- Continue to adapt music and rhythmic activities into the program.
- Build on the foundation of basic movements.
- Begin to use more activities involving fine muscle skills.



3.3 – MENTAL / LIFE SKILLS

Developing the Mental and Life Skills of young athletes are crucial components of developing the whole player, and must not be neglected.

Mental / Life Skills Development through the Stages of LTAD

LTAD Stage: FUNdamentals

Children in the FUNdamental stage of development generally possess the following characteristics that are associated with the Mental / Life Skills components of development:

- Creativity leads to learning through exploration.
- Attention is more focused after periods of activity.
- Short attention span, therefore instructions need to be simple.
- Require and enjoy simple tasks.
- Uniqueness of each child necessitates different learning styles (music, stories).
- Learn through imitating others (mirroring).
- Have intense ownership over objects.
- Unique personalities, and want to be recognized as an individual.
- Enjoy individual and small group oriented activities.
- Like to be involved and included.
- Pleasing and cooperative and will want to do what is expected.
- Form strong bonds with coaches.
- Self-centered and like to receive attention (conscious of "their turn").
- Sportsmanlike mentality, fairness, rules and taking turns.
- Boys and girls generally work well together.
- Can be sensitive/timid/cautious/shy in new activities and with new people.
- Don't accept losing well.

With the above characteristics in mind, the following suggestions are recommended for this group:

- Use music and rhythm when practicing skills.
- Change activities often and keep explanations/directions short and simple.
- Use activities that allow exploration of ideas and choice.
- Use activities that consistently repeat skills.
- Play games that give children individual roles.
- Use activities that promote taking turns and sharing.
- Teach children to win and lose with grace.
- Give lots of praise and recognition.
- Break into small groups for activities.
- Stress creativity and allow choice.
- Ensure that all children are included.
- Create a comfortable atmosphere through fun and laughter.



Mental & Social Skills at FUNdamental Stage
<p>1. Self Confidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of self-concept, therefore children need positive reinforcement. • If situation is threatening, children will lose confidence. • Influence of peers is very strong, child will seek acceptance. • Emphasis on self worth and personal pride.
<p>2. Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children need to be led, and desire structure. • Encourage interaction with teammates to build personal skills. • Learn to play fair and respect all aspects of competition.
<p>3. Effort and Commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage involvement. • Provide positive feedback. • Emphasize hard work. • Reinforce putting forth 'best effort'.
<p>4. Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage players to take responsibility.
<p>5. Attitude</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize enjoyment. • Develop good habits. • Encourage experimentation and creativity.
<p>6. Team Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage kids to work together within different scenarios. • Promote respect for each other. • Emphasize development of positive relationships with others.
<p>7. Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention span is short, players should not sit for long periods of time. Use simple, clear instructions.

LTAD Stage: Learn to Train

Children in the Learn to Train stage of development generally possess the following characteristics that are associated with the Mental / Life Skills components of development:

- Less focused on outcomes and more focused on performing well.
- Better ability to follow directions and stay on task within a structured format.
- Welcome challenges and are able to complete self-evaluation.
- Can understand and conceptualize simple things, but not abstract thoughts or concepts.
- Learn through repetition by using increased ability to concentrate.
- Capable of making decisions and choices.
- Able to listen longer with improved listening skills, but need variety to maintain interest.
- Greater attention span and ability to retain information.
- Increased inhibition and fear of failure.
- Tendency to be self critical of failure.
- Divide into leaders and followers while peer influence becomes important.
- Cooperate in group activities.
- Prefer smaller groups, while able to cope in larger groups.
- Anxious to excel and reach goals set by others.
- Handle criticism from peers better than from adults.
- Want to be independent; dislike treatment like a child.
- Desire recognition for achievements.



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COACHES MANUAL



Based on the above characteristics in mind, some suggestions for this group are:

- Lengthen activities, adding more instruction.
- Increase the complexity of directions and number of rules.
- Design activities for small groups.
- Incorporate self-evaluation after an activity.
- Stress quality of skills.
- Use activities that encourage skill repetition.
- Allow for choices and decision-making within activities.
- Use team concepts in activities.
- Promote fair play in activities.
- Emphasize being a gracious winner or loser.
- Provide positive feedback, recognizing achievements.
- Accept what children say and trust them.
- Provide opportunities for achievement.
- Ensure all children are included.
- Create an enjoyable atmosphere with fun and laughter.