



Coach Handbook

Long Term Player Development Model

VLI Volleyball
Ireland

Contents

Long Term Player Development	3
Key factors of long-term player development	3
• Physical Literacy	
• Specialisation	
• Age	
• Trainability	
• Intellectual, Emotional and Moral Development	
• Excellence Takes Time	
• Periodisation	
• Competition	
• System Alignment and Integration	
• Continuous Improvement	
Overtraining	6
Factors Reducing Performance	8
Limitations of LTPD	9
Resources & Supports	9
References	10

1.0 Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) for Coaches

Volleyball Ireland's strategic plan to raise performance and increase participation is underpinned by our LTPD programme.

In line with the LTPD model there are a series of education and training courses to help equip and develop coaches as their players progress through the 8-stage pathway.

Included in this list but not limited to it, are formal coaching courses, workshops, webinars, tutorials and masterclasses. They are all designed to assist coaches to implement these stages successfully.

2.0 Ten Key factors for coaches to consider

2.1 Physical Literacy

A much talked about topic in physical education and sport, physical literacy is key to the LTPD model. It focuses on mastering basic human movements, fundamental movement skills and foundational sport skills. It supports long-term participation and performance to the best of an individual's ability.

2.2 Sport Specialisation

Specialisation in sport occurs when players limit their participation to a single sport. They train and compete in this sport year-round.

Sports can be divided into early and late specialisation.

In early specialisation sports (mostly acrobatic and artistic sports such as gymnastics, diving and figure skating) early training (by ages 5 to 7) is necessary for future excellence. However, most sports are late specialisation and some even very late specialisation, although it's important to remember that the time to specialise for each sport is unique.

Late specialisation sports include volleyball and elite levels can still be mastered as long as specialisation begins between ages 12 and 15. It's also essential that these players have already acquired physical literacy, which is best nurtured through playing a number of sports.

2.3 Age

Children develop at different rates. When considering training, competition and recovery programmes for players, regardless of the LTPD stage coaches need to consider the age of the player.

However, this cannot just be done by checking the date of birth. A number of age categories must be considered. These include:

- Chronological age – the number of years and days since birth
- Relative age – the differences in age among children born in the same calendar year
- Developmental age – physical, mental, cognitive and emotional maturity
- Skeletal age – the maturity of the skeleton based on bone development
- General training age – the number of years in training and sampling of sports
- Sport-specific training age – the number of years since the player specialised

4.2 Trainability

To create optimal training and competition programmes, coaches and teachers need to be aware of the sensitive periods in which training for different body systems have optimal effects. These different body systems include stamina, strength, speed, skill and flexibility

5.2 Intellectual, emotional and moral development

Children develop intellectually, emotionally and morally at different rates. For every child, one or more of these factors could be advanced or still developing. This variation in the rate of development affects a child's capacity to make decisions and deal with the strong emotions. It's common for children to be at different stages of their development. Therefore coaches and teachers need to be aware of how this can affect training and competition.

6.2 Excellence takes time!

Research has suggested a minimum of ten years of practice is needed for experts in any field to reach elite levels of performance (Ericsson et al., 1993; Ericsson et al., 2007). However, others believe that talent is based on genetics and can be nurtured at an accelerated rate. Regardless of whether a young player is talented,

many years of training and practice are required to help them become the best in a sport.

7.2 Periodisation

Periodisation is time management in sport. It ensures that the right kind of training is done at the right time. It sequences the training components into weeks, days and sessions. It's also situation specific and this depends on the time available to bring about the required training and competition improvements.

8.2 Competition

Competition drives actions in sport. Coaches instruct based on competitions and generally, we determine the success of things based on the outcome of competitions. Therefore, designing developmentally appropriate competition is key to LTPD.

2.9 System alignment

Being involved in sport exposes participants to a variety of settings and situations that can collectively be defined as a system. System alignment from an individual's perspective provides a guide for parents and players to consider as they progress through the LTPD pathway. The alignment of systems from an organisational perspective is how the four key sectors of health, education, recreation and sport interact with.

10.2 Continuous improvement

The concept of continuous improvement is something that is key to long-term player development. Change can be difficult, however taking no action to improve sport can result in declining participation, increased obesity and other issues.

3.0 Overtraining

Players must put their bodies under a certain amount of stress to increase physical capabilities. Where the stress loads are appropriate, then the player's performance will improve, but if the stress loads are inappropriate, then a state of overtraining/burnout could come about for the player.

Training principles identify the need for rest to allow the body to recover and adapt to the training loads, failure to allow the body to recover can lead to a state of overtraining.

3.1 Signs of Overtraining

Symptoms indicating overexertion can be classified in the following way:

3.1.1 Movement coordination symptoms:

- Increased incidence of disturbances in movement (the re-appearance of faults that seemed to have been overcome, cramp, inhibitions, insecurity)
- Disturbances in rhythm and flow of movement
- Lack of ability to concentrate
- Reduced power of differentiation and correction

3.1.2 Condition symptoms:

- Diminished powers of endurance, strength, speed. Increase in recovery time, loss of 'sparkle' (competitive qualities)
- Reduced readiness for action, fear of competition, giving-up in the face of difficult situations, especially at the finish
- Confusion in competition, a departure from usual tactics
- Susceptibility to demoralising influences before and during competition
- Increasing tendency to abandon the struggle

3.1.3 Psychological symptoms:

- Increased irritability, stubbornness, a tendency to hysteria, grumbling, defiance, increased quarrelsomeness, avoidance of contact with coach and colleagues
- Oversensitivity to criticism, or increasing indolence, reduced incentive, dullness, hallucination, anxiety, depression, melancholy, insecurity
- Close observation can help eliminate the possibility of severe effects of over-stressing. As soon as symptoms are noticed, loading should be reduced, and recovery pursued. All performance checks and competition pressures must be removed, and active recovery put in their place.

3.2 Causes of Overtraining

Certain factors if permitted to accumulate over time can bring about a state of overtraining. They are as follows:

- Recovery is neglected (mistakes in the build-up of training cycles, inadequate use of general exercise sessions for recovery)
- Inappropriate increase in the frequency of training or extent of loading or density of loading
- Demands are increased too quickly, so that adaptation cannot be consolidated
- A too rapid increase of loading after forced breaks (injuries, illness)
- Too high an extent of loadings of maximum and sub-maximum intensity
- Too high an intensity of duration loadings in endurance training
- Excessive and forced technical schooling in complicated courses of movement without adequate recovery
- Excess of competitions with maximum demands, combined with frequent disturbance of the daily routine and insufficient training
- The excessive bias of training methods and units

4.0 Factors Reducing Performance

Performance can also be affected by the following factors:

4.1 Lifestyle

- Inadequate sleep, irregular routine by day
- Use of alcohol and nicotine
- Excess of caffeine
- Bad living conditions (noise, overcrowding, inadequate light, etc.)
- Overstimulating company
- Lack of free time or inability to make good use of free time (no relaxation)
- Nutritional deficiencies (lack of vitamins)
- Rush and hurry
- Frequent necessity to adjust body-weight
- Taking on more stresses when already at capacity

4.2 Environment

- Overburdening with family duties
- Tensions within the family (parents, husband, wife)
- Difficulties in personal relationships
- Dissatisfaction with career, studies, school
- Bad assessment and marks in school, in studies, etc.
- Conflict of attitudes to a sport (family, superiors)
- Excess of stimuli (TV, cinema)
- An increased burden in one area of the environment (e.g. final exams, A levels)

4.3 Health Upsets

- Feverish colds, stomach or intestinal upsets
- Chronic illnesses
- After the effect of infectious illness

5.0 Limitations of LTPD

The ten factors listed in section 2.0 are key, but they're not the only ones that influence the long-term development of players. Additional factors include genetic predisposition, social support for involvement and access to financial resources.

All of these can have an impact on both development and performance. Therefore it's likely that with increasing knowledge, details of these factors will change over time.

A more fundamental limitation of long-term player development is that very little is known about the ways various factors interact. Or even how changes in one factor can affect another.

Additionally, there is still a lot to be learned about individual variations in response to training. For example, we do not know whether people with different genetic makeups respond differently to different types of training at different points in maturation. As this knowledge becomes available, it could change our view of the optimisation of training.

6.0 Support Tools & Resources

Volleyball Ireland acknowledge there is not just one correct method of coaching skills.

However, as a support tool Volleyball Ireland have compiled a series of supports to help coaches deliver the LTPD model pathway. These include:

6.1 Game Parameters

To help players transition through the various stages efficiently and effectively, a range of recommended parameters have been introduced. These include ideal game formats, ball weights & court sizes etc. The can be found in the LTPD overview document.

6.2 Skill Cards

Skill Cards can be used by Coaches during their sessions and focus on:

Attacking: line, cross court, sharp cross, tip, opposite, middle

Defence: basic, overhand, retrieval, dive, roll, pancake

Passing: basic, overhand

Serving: standing float, jump float, jump float step, jump spin

Setting: high ball, middle, opposite, back row, X's

Blocking: step, swing

6.3 Learning Objectives

The learning objectives are ideally the skills that players become competent at during each stage of the LTPD model. This guidance provides a clear skill development pathway for players. As players advance through the pathway the more advanced the skills become and tactical strategies are introduced.

6.4 Coaching Guides & Handbooks

Coaching manuals and guides have been created to help coaches develop volleyball skills and teams, as well as specific support to help players transition through the various game formats and stages.

6.5 Coach Education and Training

A menu of stage specific coach education workshops has been developed to ensure coaches are adequately supported to help develop players.

6.6 Programmes & Competitions

Programmes and Competitions are provided age appropriately to further support player development, from Funda Volley in primary school through to the Masters Programme.

Resources and supports are updated regularly and can be found at:

<https://www.volleyballireland.com/get-involved/itpd/>

7.0 References

Humankinetics.ie

Volleyball Canada

Brianmac.co.uk

Volleyball Ireland has produced a Recommended Reading for Coaches document which is available at: <https://www.volleyballireland.com/get-involved/itpd/>

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