



# Unleashing Potential

*& creating a life long love of Volleyball*

Overview Guide

Long Term Player Development Model



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## Foreword

The Long Term Player Development model is a globally researched and recognised pathway will deliver an incredible impact to volleyball on our island. One of the major key benefits is everyone associated in the sport can identify their role within the programme.

We have been fortunate in assembling a group of leading coaches around Ireland to work closely in ensuring the system we promote here in Ireland aligns significantly with best practice from around the world, whilst using the strengths of our heritage, culture and society to gain competitive advantages.

The LTPD model has multiple layers and goals in developing participation and performance, however it begins by centring entirely around the child's evolution and enjoyment of our sport for the entirety of their lives. This ideal must be at the core of everything we do, we must create a **Life Long Love for Volleyball**.

This programme isn't just about creating good volleyball players, we want to nurture good, happy and fulfilled people. So alongside the player development programmes and initiatives we will be delivering personal skill development activities for our young people. These will include programmes that will help with not only volleyball specific skills but transferable skills like public speaking, building resilience, positive mindsets, teamwork, leadership skills – things that will help our young people grow off the court as well as on.

Through our programmes, we will educate young people on topics like anti-doping, diversity and inclusion and endeavour to provide opportunities to support young people gain valuable life experiences. This may be in the form of work experience or exchange programmes with other Federations and professional teams.

This approach is unique, but we believe Volleyball is more than just another sport.

I am looking forward to the future and extremely optimistic on how the outcomes of this programme will affect Volleyball forever here in Ireland.

*Grainne Culliton*

Grainne Culliton

**President, Volleyball Ireland**

## Introduction to the LTPD Plan

Volleyball Ireland is launching a Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) model in alignment with the “Raising The Game” Strategic Plan 2019-22. This model will provide a framework for all stakeholders involved with Volleyball Ireland and players of all ages and abilities.

It is a training, competition and recovery framework for individuals at all stages of life. Once adopted the LTPD plan will be the policy framework for how volleyball will be developed across Ireland in partnership with our clubs, schools, players, officials and coaches.

This document provides an overview of the key principles of the LTPD model, based on the needs of our club players, underpinned by international standards and best practices. Resources for coaches, players, parents and officials will be developed with a goal to support the implementation of the model across the sport.

This pathway model alongside coaching and refereeing pathway plans will provide a clear route for all players, referees and coaches to reach their potential with life-long opportunities to be involved in sport. Successful implementation of the model, will lead to a thriving game of more skilful players supported by quality coaches, officials, volunteers at all levels of the game, placing Volleyball as one of the fastest growing and developing sports in Ireland.

LTPD or LTAD models are common in many major sports and Federations with high participation rates. Typically, they focus on an elite pathway that provides a route from grassroots to World Championships or Olympic Games.

Our model is based on this concept but adapted to represent the inclusive values of the Volleyball Ireland community, and our current level of play. This model provides opportunities for the most talented to reach their potential, whilst creating a clear development pathway for all young players to progress, with learning objectives and skill competencies created for all stages in the programme. This will help everyone enjoy volleyball to the best of their personal ability, whilst maximising retention and keeping people active for life.

Supporting the model is a comprehensive coach education programme with age appropriate courses, workshops and learning opportunities for teachers and club coaches alike.

**The LTPD plan is player centred, coach driven and administration supported.**

## Why do we need a Long Term Volleyball Development Plan?

Long Term Player Development plans are implemented across the world with an aim to develop and reshape sport. The development and implementation of a long-term volleyball development model will enable Volleyball Ireland to provide participants with positive experiences across a sustainable pathway.

Lifelong participation in sport and high performance is affected by the shortcomings which are recognised across many sports, these are listed in the table below along with the consequences they have on participation and sport performance.

Shortcomings	Consequences
Players tend to over-compete and under-train during developmental stages.	Children and adults with limited movement abilities and athleticism, deficient skill development due to under-training.
Developing athletes are superimposed by adult training and competition structures.	Children not having fun because programs are designed for adults and focus on outcome rather than process.
Training methods and competition structures are not distinguished between male and female players.	Limited national performance due to poor understanding of the developmental pathway.
Developmental age is not considered when planning training and competition.	Players may not reach their full athletic potential due to inappropriate training and competition programs.
Training and competition in the developmental stages place too much emphasis on short-term outcomes (winning) at the expense of development.	Players fail to achieve their potential and leave the sport
Critical periods of accelerated adaptation to training are largely neglected by coaches.	Players frustrated by the lack of consistent and integrated support that will help them to perform well

**A lack of systematic development for the next generation of players**

## LONG-TERM VOLLEYBALL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

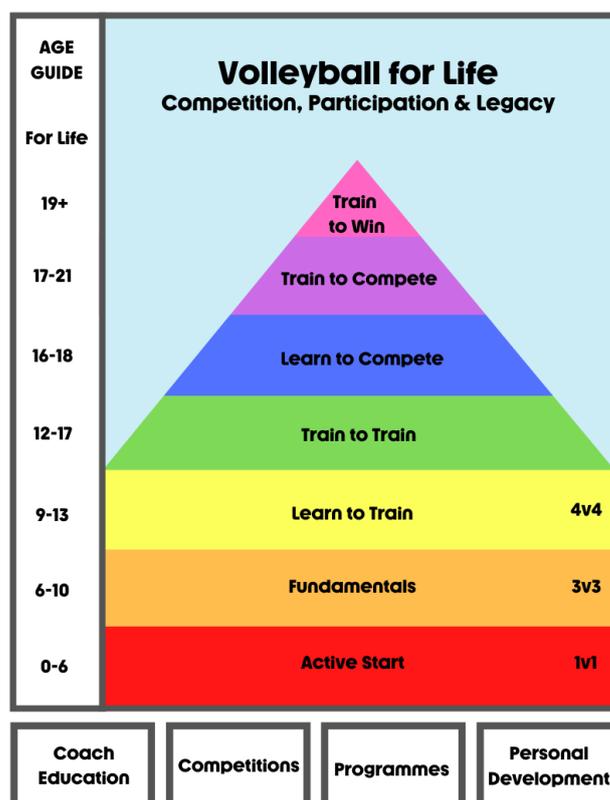
Volleyball Ireland’s LTPD model is consisted of an 8-stage development pathway, beginning with an introduction to physical activity and sport all the way through to elite participation in volleyball. Although the model is structured around chronological age, its principles and specific content are based on the player’s developmental age.

The first three stages of the LTPD model encourage physical literacy and sport for all. These are the foundations for a life long love of sport. The next two stages focusing on development with more emphasis on building, optimising and maximising volleyball-specific skills and performance in a competitive, well-structured environment. The next stages focus on high performance and excellence, representing Ireland’s National teams in International competition.

The final stage overlaps the Developmental and Performance stages and is the retention of all athletes and players in the sport. During the final stage ex-players move into sport-related roles that may include coaching, officiating, club administration etc. Players not on the performance pathways can enter this stage at any time after 12 years old and continue in Volleyball competitions in club, social or recreational setting.

**Volleyball is a sport for life, where friendships are forged and a community exists – where everyone has a sense of belonging.**

The LTPD model is underpinned by key supports; quality coach education, appropriate competitions, player development programmes and personal development and learning.



# LONG TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT MODEL OVERVIEW

## VOLLEYBALL FOR LIFE



	<b>EXPLORE</b> ACTIVE START	<b>DISCOVER</b> FUNDAMENTALS	<b>PLAY</b> LEARN TO TRAIN	<b>PROGRESS</b> TRAIN TO TRAIN	<b>APPLY</b> LEARN TO COMPETE	<b>REFINE</b> TRAIN TO COMPETE	<b>EXCEL</b> TRAIN TO WIN	
	PHYSICAL LITERACY			DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY		PERFORMANCE PATHWAY		PARTICIPATION & COMPETITION
AGE GUIDE ONLY	0-6	6-10	9-13	12-17	16-18	17-21	19+	12+
ENTRY CRITERIA	THIS STAGE IS FOR EVERYONE. PLAYERS ENTER AT BIRTH	THIS STAGE IS FOR EVERYONE.	ACQUIRED A WIDE RANGE OF FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS	PHYSICALLY LITERATE AND COMPETENT IN THE LEARN TO TRAIN STAGE	PROFICIENT IN THE VOLLEYBALL SPECIFIC TRAIN TO TRAIN STAGE	JNR NATIONAL TEAM SQUAD	SNR NATIONAL TEAM SQUAD, PREMIER DIVISION PLAYERS	PLAYERS ENTER WHEN NOT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OR PERFORMANCE PATHWAY
OVERALL OBJECTIVE	EXPLORE BODY MOVEMENTS	LEARN FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS	LEARN OVERALL SPORTS SKILLS & INTRODUCE BASIC VOLLEYBALL SKILLS	INTRODUCE S&C, CONSOLIDATE VOLLEYBALL SPECIFIC SKILLS	PREPARE PLAYERS FOR COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENTS	REFINE VOLLEYBALL SKILLS, OPTIMISE THE BODY & PREPARE TO COMPETE	PERFORMANCE ON DEMAND	CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN COMPETITION, COACH, REFEREE & VOLUNTEER
CORE GOALS	FUN PARTICIPATION EXPLORE BODY MOVEMENTS	FUN PARTICIPATION INTRODUCTION TO SIMPLE RULES & SPORT ETHICS	FUN PARTICIPATION, DEVELOP ABCS OF ATHLETICISM, AGILITY, BALANCE & COORDINATION	FUN & PARTICIPATION, FURTHER DEVELOP THE ABCS, IMPROVE PHYSICAL FITNESS	FURTHER ENHANCE THE ABCS & PHYSICAL FITNESS, MENTAL COGNITIVE & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	POSITION SPECIFIC TECHNICAL SKILLS, EVENT PREPARATION. ADVANCED MENTAL PREPARATION	MAINTENANCE OR IMPROVEMENT OF TECHNICAL, TACTICAL & PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES	LEAVE A LEGACY. BE COMPETITIVE, LIFELONG INVOLVEMENT. FRIENDSHIPS FOREVER
GAME FORMAT	1V1 FREE PLAY	2V2 > 3V3 (FUNDA VOLLEY)	3V3 (FUNDA) > 4V4 VOLLEY	4V4 VOLLEY > 6V6 VOLLEY	6V6 VOLLEYBALL	6V6 VOLLEYBALL	6V6 VOLLEYBALL	VARIOUS
BALL	MVG230	MVG230	V200W	V200W	V200W	V200W	V200W	VARIOUS
CLUB COMPETITION	NONE	FUNDA BLITZ TOUR	4V4 VOLLEY TOUR	YOUTH NATIONAL LEAGUE	NATIONAL LEAGUE & INTL.	NATIONAL LEAGUE & INTL.	NATIONAL LEAGUE & INTL.	NATIONAL LEAGUE, SOCIAL VOLLEY, MASTERS, DEV LGE ETC
SCHOOL COMPETITION	NONE	FUNDA DAYS	4V4 VOLLEY	4V4 VOLLEY > 6V6 VOLLEY	6V6 VOLLEYBALL	6V6 VOLLEYBALL	STUDENT LEAGUE	4V4 & 6V6
NET & COURT	NONE	185CM, SGL BADMINTON	200CM, DBL BADMINTON	4V4: 2.15, DBL BAD 6V6: F: 224CM, M: 235CM	STANDARD	STANDARD	STANDARD	STANDARD
TRAINING VOLUME P/W	ACTIVE THROUGHOUT	12 HRS OF ACTIVITY ACROSS MULTIPLE SPORTS	14 HRS OF ACTIVITY ACROSS MULTIPLE SPORTS	14 HRS OF ACTIVITY ACROSS MULTIPLE SPORTS	20HRS IN VOLLEYBALL & FITNESS PLUS ONE OTHER REC SPORT	22HRS IN VOLLEYBALL, FITNESS & TACTICAL PREP	22HRS IN VOLLEYBALL, FITNESS & TACTICAL PREP	DEPENDANT ON AGE & TIME

## Volleyball Development in Schools & Clubs

The relationship between School volleyball and club settings presents a vital consideration when looking at the implementation of the model. This will be achieved by promoting developmentally appropriate programs and competitions, that align in both environments.

The previous school programme included formats such as Mini Spikers & Spikeball, which in some instances were successfully played at both secondary school ages and at the Community Games, yet the rules and skills required aren't deemed susceptible for progressing from small sided volleyball to 6v6 volleyball at club level.

The new model is for both school and club settings, and creates a seamless pathway for school age children to easily progress in both environments. It is composed of three key programmes:

**Funda Volley:** This is a 2v2 and 3v3 *catch and throw* game, that is fast paced and focusses on the development of fundamental movement skills. There are two levels within this simple game, with level two techniques based on the Dutch game of *Circulation Volleyball* replicating the body movements required for the Volleyball 'pass' and 'set' skills – which are both integral parts of Volleyball.

**4v4 Volley:** Players progress from Funda Volley to 4v4. A 22 – week programme has been created that will help players transition to 4v4 Volleyball, which is based on the FIVB Mini Volley programme. The court is smaller than a standard Volleyball court and therefore ensures more touches of the ball, more rallies and more fun.

**6v6 Volleyball:** Once players are competent with the 4v4 game, they will transition to 6v6 full court volleyball. Again a support programme with drills and games to aid the progression will be provided to teachers and coaches.

The LTPD model will provide a framework on which the above programs will be tailored, and new programs will be developed, each aligned with appropriate stage of the LTPD.

A youth Competition calendar will be developed to align with the above programmes, reflecting on recommended training to competition ratios. The underlying factor for all the decisions will be a long-term approach to development, with a player-centred approach. Children will be provided with the tools to either play volleyball recreationally or competitively, progressing their skills and reinforcing their enjoyment of the game.

The LTPD model takes into consideration the transitions and progressions between levels. A comprehensive suite of courses and workshops will be implemented to support both club coaches and school teachers.

## **Specialisation**

Volleyball is classified as a *late-specialisation* sport, dependant on a range of fundamental movement and sport skills.

Sports can be classified into either early or late specialisation, where late specialisation sports (volleyball and all team sports) are dependent on physical literacy. Physically literate individuals can select a sport such as Volleyball between the age of 12 and 15 and have the potential to excel in the sport and rise to international standard.

Early specialisation sports differ in that overly complex skills are learned before maturation since they cannot be fully mastered if taught after maturation, gymnastics is an example of early specialisation sport.

Early specialisation in late specialisation sports can have detrimental effects on player's development. Specialising earlier than necessary contributes to one sided, sport specific preparation, a lack of ABCs with poor basic movements and fundamental sport skills. Extensive research shows that children with competent fundamental movement skills are more likely to enjoy the sport they play, and will be retained in that sport for a much longer period of time.

This model and the programmes and educational courses that support it, will reinforce the importance of good fundamental movement skills and overall sports skills. These are the building blocks for Volleyball and must be regarded and respected by coaches at all levels of the games.

**Focussing on fundamentals and the ABCs of Volleyball now, can give Ireland a competitive advantage at International level in years to come, whilst reducing the chance of players 'dropping out' of the sport in their teens. Good fundamental movement skills are imperative for performance and participation.**

## Beach Volleyball

Volleyball Ireland has been witnessing a significant growth of events and attraction of players towards beach volleyball, particularly from a junior perspective. The indoor and beach volleyball formats of the game share many common attributes, and both offer excellent participation and performance opportunities. Just as we are unable to accurately determine what position a developing indoor player in the Training to Train stage will be physically and athletically best suited for, we also will be unable to accurately predict which volleyball discipline will best suit a player's athletic qualities until later in their development.

Although research is limited, some anecdotal evidence may suggest that those players who participate in both volleyball disciplines benefit greatly from the experience. Some skills and abilities seem to improve at accelerated rates and when a player is trained correctly, there seems to be positive performance transfer from one discipline to the next.

Beach volleyball appears to have some potential to help address identified shortcomings apparent in the indoor game and enhance indoor training. Listed below are some examples.

- I. Individual blocking.
- II. The high physical demands experienced in the discipline will aid in the raising of some physical capacities.
- III. Encourage the development of all-around skill.

Conversely, indoor volleyball also has the potential to aid in the development of beach volleyball players.

- I. Hitting against multiple blockers improves attackers' offensive capabilities.
- II. The faster indoor game encourages the development of speed-strength capacities
- III. Setting versatility is created for those participants who play the setting position.

Currently within the Irish volleyball structure the focus is on reducing the conflicts between Beach and Indoor ensuring our players can take part in both disciplines. The combination of both complementary formats will improve the chances of players being retained in the sport. Players should choose to specialise in one format if the conflicts are unavoidable and detrimental during the performance stage of LTPD.

## KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING LTPD

Participation and performance in physical activity and sport is underpinned by physical literacy. Physically literate individuals are more likely to be active and engage in sport throughout their lives.

Physical literacy is influenced by individual's age, maturation and capacity. For this reason, development of physical literacy should be prioritised prior to adolescent growth spurt, with further development and mastery over the life span.

Physically literate individuals demonstrate a wide variety of basic human movements, fundamental movement and sport skills. They move in creative ways within various environments (indoor, outdoor, in water etc.) with confidence and competence. Physical literacy promotes engagement in physical activity and recreational sports activities.

**Physical literacy benefits psychological well-being in addition to physical health and enables individuals to pursue sport excellence with their ability and motivation.**

The fundamental movement skills that underpin physical literacy:

Locomotor Skills	Object Control Skills	Balance Movements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Running</li><li>•Jumping</li><li>•Leaping</li><li>•Skipping</li><li>•Sliding</li><li>•Hopping</li><li>•Gliding</li><li>•Galloping</li><li>•Skating</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Kicking</li><li>•Rolling</li><li>•Striking (with hand &amp; implement)</li><li>•Throwing</li><li>•Catching</li><li>•Stopping</li><li>•Trapping</li><li>•Dribbling</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Body Rolling</li><li>•Dodging</li><li>•Landing</li><li>•Ready Position</li><li>•Spinning</li><li>•Stopping</li><li>•Stretching/Curling</li><li>•Swinging</li><li>•Twisting/Turning</li></ul>



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**EXPLORE**  
Active Start  
Ages 0 - 6 Years Old

Part of the Long Term Player  
Development Model

## **Stage 1: Active Start, aged 0-6 years old**

### **Key Objective: Learn fundamental movements and link them together in play**

Physical activity should provide fun and be part of child's everyday life as it is the way for young children to be physically active and explore their world.

Active Start is a stage of critical brain development. Through active play, important connections in the brain and between the brain and muscles are created. Brain-muscles connections are strengthened by repetitions of rhythmic activities. Children can experience pleasure from being involved in activities that offer rhythms of various stimuli.

Children at this stage begin using their imagination, as well as develop understanding, memorisation and movement presentation. Children easily pick up and imitate adult's attitudes. Chances that a child will enjoy physical activity is much greater when they see such behaviour in adults.

Children gain a great sense of achievement in performing activities that adults are unable to do, thus, those activities should be encouraged.

#### **Active Start Checklist:**

- Provide unstructured physical activity every day regardless of the weather, for at least 30 minutes for toddlers and at least 60 minutes a day for pre-schoolers. Toddlers and pre-schoolers should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except while sleeping.
- Starting in infancy, provide infants/toddlers/pre-schoolers with opportunities to participate in daily physical activity that promotes fun, physical, mental and emotional development.
- Provide parents and care givers with age-appropriate information.
- Ensure that children acquire movement skills that build towards more complex movements. These skills support development of foundation for lifelong physical activity.
- Encourage basic movement skills- they do not just happen as a child grows older but develop depending on each child's heredity, activity experience, and environment. For children with a disability, access to age and disability appropriate adapted equipment is an important contributor to success.



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**DISCOVER**  
Fundamentals  
Ages 6-10 Years Old

Part of the Long Term Player  
Development Model

## Stage 2: FUNdamentals, ages 6-10 years old

### Key Objective: Learn all fundamental movement skills

The emphasis is on the overall development of the child's physical capacities and fundamental movement skills, in a well-structured and fun way. Participation in as many sports as possible is encouraged, where the ABC's of athleticism are developed. These are Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed. FUNdamental movement skills should be practiced and mastered before sport-specific skills are introduced. Our fundamentals program will help in the development of these skills, using a positive and fun approach, significantly contributing to future athletic achievements. Participation in a wide range of sports is encouraged.

Sports such as gymnastics, ballet and athletics should be high on the list when choosing additional sports for children. Skills of agility, balance, coordination, jumping and throwing are developed in those sports. Many of these skills are highly transferable to volleyball, which will enhance future volleyball development.

Using modified games and age appropriate equipment to develop fundamental volleyball skills such as volley, forearm pass, spiking, blocking and serving can be introduced. However, this should be done in the simplest of ways, used primarily as tools to enhance the development of all fundamental movements, which encourages exposure to a multitude of different sports.

If children later decide to leave the competitive stream, the skills they have acquired during the FUNdamental phase will still benefit them when they engage in recreational activities, which will enhance their quality of life and health.

### FUNdamentals Checklist:

- Practice to become proficient in fundamental movement skills before more sport-specific skills are introduced towards the end of the stage.
- Emphasize the overall development of the child's physical capacities, fundamental movement skills and the ABCs of athleticism: agility, balance, coordination and speed.
- Players should be engaged in a minimum of 12 hours activity across multi sports per week
- Emphasize the development of fundamental movement skills to produce individuals who have a better skill base for potential long-term sport-specific development.
- Introduce basic flexibility exercises.



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**PLAY**  
Learn to Train  
Ages 9-13 Years Old

Part of the Long Term Player  
Development Model

## Stage 3: Learn to Train

### **Key Objective: Learn overall sports skills and introduce basic volleyball sport skills**

One of the most important periods of motor development for children is between the age of 9 and 13. During this time children are developmentally ready to acquire general, overall sports skills that are the cornerstones of all athletic development.

VI's 4v4 volleyball program, on top of developing all fundamental movement skills, develops volleyball fundamentals (volley, forearm pass, spiking, and serving) with greater emphasis now put on the execution of proper technique.

Strength is continually developed using medicine and swiss balls, exercises using the child's own bodyweight. To aid in strength and power development, hopping and bounding exercises and routines should be incorporated. Endurance and speed are further developed using appropriate warm up activities, games and relays. Basic flexibility exercises should also be introduced during this phase.

Competition should be well structured, with recommended training to competition ratio of 70:30.

#### **Learn to Train Checklist:**

- Further develop all fundamental movement skills and teach general, fundamental sports skills. Otherwise a significant window of opportunity is lost, compromising the ability of the young player/athlete to reach their full potential.
- Develop strength using exercises that incorporate the child's own body weight as well as Medicine balls and Swiss balls.
- Introduce hopping and bounding exercises or routines to aid in strength and power development.
- Further develop endurance through continuous activity, games, and relays.
- Further develop flexibility through stretching.
- Further develop speed by introducing sprinting activities that also focus on agility, quickness and change of direction during the warm-up.
- Players should be engaged in a minimum of 14 hours activity across multi sports per week.
- Provide developmentally appropriate competitions.



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**PROGRESS**  
Train to Train  
Ages 12-17 Years Old

Part of the Long Term Player  
Development Model

## **Stage 4: Train to Train, ages 12-17 years old**

### **Key Objective: Develop and consolidate sport-specific skills.**

The objectives of this stage include building of an aerobic base, developing speed and strength towards the end of the stage, in addition to further development and consolidation of sport-specific skills and tactics.

Early and late maturers need to consider both aerobic and anaerobic training. Which are dependent on maturation levels.

Aerobic training should be prioritised, while simultaneously, skill, speed and strength should be maintained and further developed.

Special emphasis should be put on flexibility during this stage, due to the sudden growth of bones, tendons, ligaments and muscles.

During competitions players play to win and do their best, but the major focus of training and competition is on applying the skills, strategies and tactics learned during training. Training to competition ratio is 60:40, which is optimised to better prepare players for competition in both the short and the long term. During this phase, players train in competitive situations in the form of practice matches or competitive games and drills.

Players plateau during the later stages of their careers because of an over-emphasis on competition instead of training during this important period in their athletic development. Those players will not reach their full potential if the critical periods of development during the Train to Train stage are missed

#### **Train to Train Checklist:**

- Depending on sport-specific needs, make aerobic training a priority while maintaining or further developing levels of skill, speed, strength and flexibility.
- Encourage flexibility training, as the rapid growth of bones during this stage leads to stress on tendons, ligaments and muscles.
- Train athletes in regular competitive situations in the form of practice matches, scrimmages or competitive games and drills. Players should be engaged in a minimum of 14 hours activity across multi sports per week.



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**APPLY**  
Learn to Compete  
Ages 16-18 Years Old

Part of the Long Term Player  
Development Model

## **Stage 5: Learn to Compete, ages 16-18 years old**

### **Key Objective: Prepare players for competitive environments.**

The objective of this stage is to prepare players for competitive environments.

Players must continue to develop and refine technical skills, ancillary skills, and also physical attributes.

All objectives from the train to train stage must be completed before players can move onto the Learn to Compete

Optimal aerobic trainability continues during maturation, and so aerobic training should play an integral part during trainings. This is the time to optimize fitness preparation and skills as well as beginning to specialise in volleyball.

Players will require to develop a different mental state as they shift focus to winning matches as opposed to the focus of applying skills in the previous stage.

Training to Competition is still 60:40 ratio and maintain the focus of competitive drills and skills in training sessions.

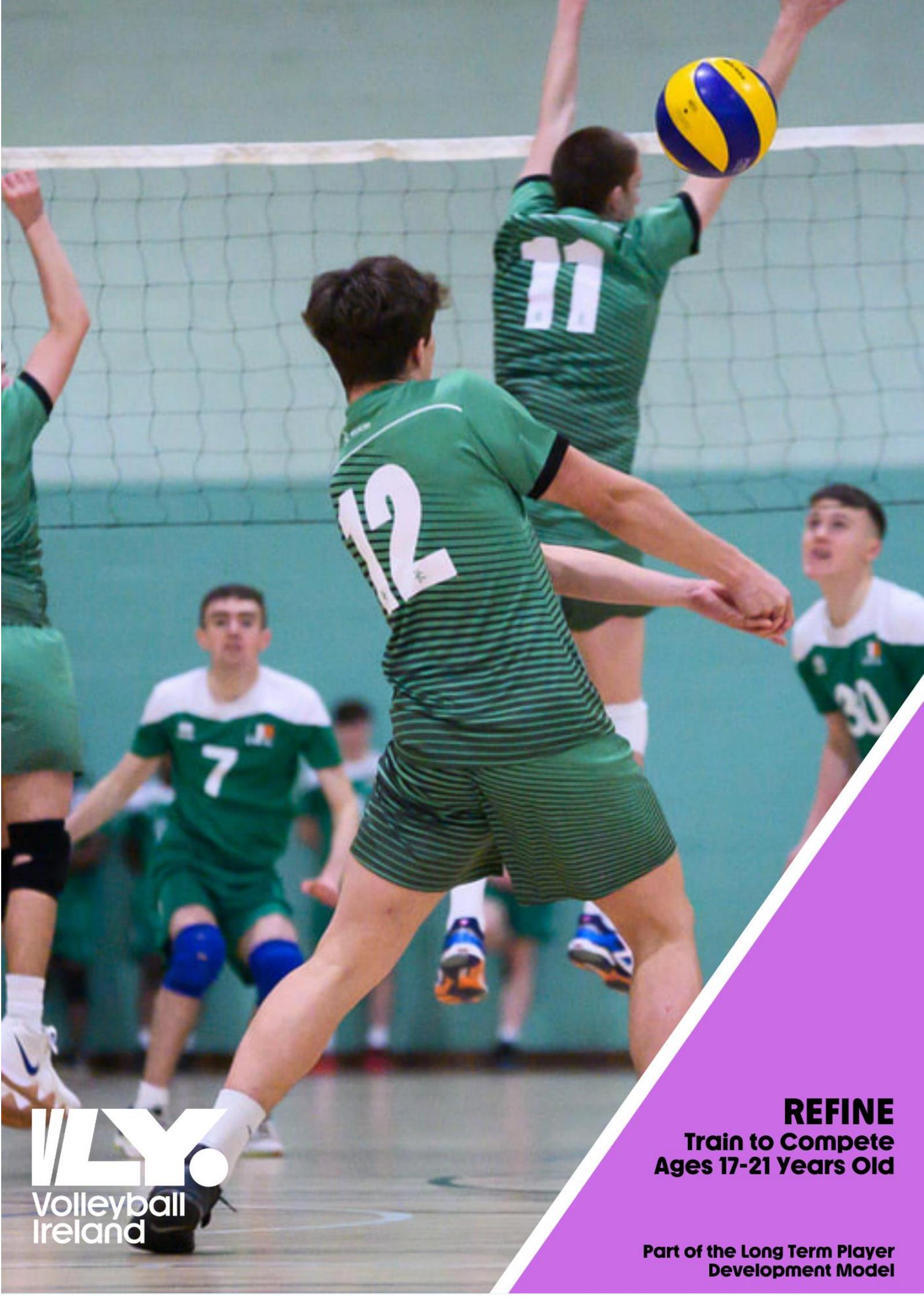
This a critical stage of retaining players as they choose to specialise in their individual sports.

The player is introduced to the concept of the Performance Enhancement Team towards the end of this stage.

It is during this phase that the player's personal style continues to evolve. Movement control, synchronization, and rhythm are stable when performing the skill under more complex conditions. However, when the player is under pressure, conditions change, or demands increase, performance still remains inconsistent.

#### **Learn to Compete Checklist:**

- Position-specific technical and tactical preparation
- The development of playing skills under competitive conditions
- Players should be engaged in a minimum of 20 hours primarily in their specialised sport but also possibly one other recreational sport per week
- Optimization of ancillary capacities



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**REFINE**  
Train to Compete  
Ages 17-21 Years Old

Part of the Long Term Player  
Development Model

## **Stage 6: Train to Compete, ages 17-21 years old**

### **Objectives: Refine volleyball skills, optimise the body and begin to compete.**

All skills and tactics are the same as Learn to Compete in Train to compete, however players move into the later stages of consolidation or refinement.

This phase of development is introduced after the goals and objectives of the Learn to Compete stage have been achieved. The objectives of train to compete stage are to optimise fitness preparation, sport-, individual- and position -specific skills as well as performance.

The Train to Compete stage is characterised by 50:50 training to competition ratio. 50% of the time is devoted to the development of technical and tactical skills and fitness improvements, with the remaining 50% devoted to competition and competition specific training.

During the Train to Compete stage, high intensity individual- and position-specific training is provided to players. Players who are now proficient at performing both basic and sport-specific skills learn to perform these skills under a variety of competitive conditions during training.

Development of strength and aerobic power should be emphasised due to the peak strength and peak weight velocity during the early phase of the Train to Compete stage. These two athletic qualities play a vital role in volleyball success.

#### **Train to Compete Checklist:**

- Provide year-round, high intensity, individual-, event- and position-specific training.
- Teach athletes, who are now proficient at performing basic and sport-specific skills, to perform those skills under a variety of competitive conditions during training.
- Place special emphasis on optimum preparation by modelling competitions in training.
- Individually tailor fitness programs, recovery programs, psychological preparation and technical development.
- Emphasize individual preparation that addresses each athlete's individual strengths and weaknesses.
- Players should be engaged in a minimum of 22+ hours training relating to their specialised sport per week.
- Change the training-to-competition and competition-specific training ratio to 50:50.



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**Volleyball  
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**EXCEL**  
Compete to Win  
Ages 19+

Part of the Long Term Player  
Development Model

## **Stage 7: Train to Win, ages 19+**

### **Objectives: Performance on Demand**

The principle focus is to have our athletes compete at major international competitions and achieve podium performances. The Train to Win stage focuses on maximising fitness preparation and sport, individual and position specific skills as well as preparing to peak for major competitions; Performance on demand.

This is the final phase of athletic preparation. Player's physical, technical, tactical, mental, personal and lifestyle capacities are now fully established, and the focus of training is shifted to the maximisation of performance. Players are trained to peak for major competitions.

Training is characterised by high intensity and relatively high volume. Frequent preventative breaks help to reduce physical and mental burnouts. Training-to-competition ratio in this phase is 30:70, with the competition percentage including competition-specific training activities

#### **Train to Win Checklist:**

- Train athletes to peak for major competitions – performance on demand.
- Ensure that training is characterized by high intensity and relatively high volume all year round.
- Allow frequent preventative breaks to prevent physical and mental burnouts.
- Utilize single, double, triple or multiple periodization as the optimal framework of preparation.
- Change the training-to-competition ratio 25:75, with the competition percentage including competition-specific training and actual competitions.
- Players should be engaged in a minimum of 22+ hours training relating to their specialised sport per week.



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**ACTIVE FOR LIFE**  
Lifelong Participation in  
Volleyball

Part of the Long Term Player  
Development Model

## **Stage 8: Volleyball for Life, Enter at any Age**

### **Objectives: to facilitate players to stay involved in sport or physical activity**

Volleyball for life begins at an early age. It can be focused around bringing those children that are not interested in perhaps playing the sport of volleyball into other aspects of the game such as coaching or refereeing.

We recognise that not all players will carry on into the Performance zone of the pathway, but it's important they remain participating in Volleyball and a part of the Volleyball family.

Players in this stage may be those that play recreationally for fun, attend social volley sessions or want to give back, by coaching in a Development League team to help mentor younger players for example.

This stage can also be a smooth transition from a competitive career to lifelong physical activity and involvement in the sport. The goal here is to ensure that everyone regardless of their ability has an opportunity to keep active and participate in volleyball for life.

## Coach Education Support

Having a LTPD model is good practice, but effective player development is ultimately driven by motivated and progressive coaches.

With this in mind Volleyball Ireland has produced a menu of Coach Education workshops that focus on the specific areas of the LTPD plan, and a programme and competition pathway that creates a map of opportunities for players to develop skills and to continue participation in the sport.

The Coach Education programme will be delivered through a mix of resources and methods including face-to-face workshops, practical sessions and online webinars.

Delivering the programme will be a range of expert tutors including Volleyball Ireland development staff, coaches from the Irish volleyball community, guests from our International partners (CEV & FIVB) and coaching children specialists such as iCoach Kids and Coaching Ireland.

Our formal coaching courses (Foundation, Level 1 & 2) are suitable for coaches at all stages as they provide an overview of the coaching process and skills. CPD workshops will be delivered specifically for coaches working at certain stages in the model. This approach will best arm our coaches with the tools they need and will ensure our courses are player centred.

The Volleyball Ireland coaching menu is a live programme and will be amended based on feedback and the needs of players, teachers and coaches.

## COACHING COURSES

		PHYSICAL LITERACY			DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY		PERFORMANCE PATHWAY		PARTICIPATION & COMPETITION
		EXPLORE ACTIVE START	DISCOVER FUNDAMENTALS	DEVELOP LEARN TO TRAIN	PROGRESS TRAIN TO TRAIN	APPLY LEARN TO COMPETE	REFINE TRAIN TO COMPETE	EXCEL TRAIN TO WIN	VOLLEYBALL FOR LIFE
CHILD AGE GUIDE ONLY		0-6	6-10	9-13	12-17	16-18	17-21	19+	CLUB PLAYERS
	1V1 FREE PLAY		FUNDA VOLLEYBALL	4V4 VOLLEYBALL	STRENGTH & CONDITIONING		MOTIVATING ATHLETES		
			COACHING IRELAND COACHING CHILDREN		FITNESS TESTING		ADVANCED TACTICS		
			VOLLEYBALL FOR PARENTS: AN INTRODUCTION		COACHING & ENGAGING TEENAGERS		VIDEO ANALYSIS & SCOUTING		
			CHILD CENTRED COACHING & PHYSICAL LITERACY (ICK)		COACHING SETTING				
					COACHING PASSING				
					COACHING ATTACK				
					COACHING SERVICE				
			COACHING CHILDREN: PLANNING, DOING & REVIEWING (ICK)				SOCIAL VOLLEY ACTIVATOR		
			MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID						
			FOUNDATION COACHING AWARD						
			LEVEL ONE COACHING AWARD						
			LEVEL TWO COACHING AWARD						
			FIVB COACHING COURSE						

## Programme and Competition Pathway

The Volleyball Ireland Programme & Competition pathway highlights opportunities for players throughout their volleyball journey. Starting with free and active play at 0–6years old, players can progress through 2v2, 3v3 Fundamental Volley into 4v4 volleyball and finally into full 6v6 volleyball.

They can do this at club level and in school, moving into new competitions and programmes when they are ready, and with the necessary skills to achieve success and enjoy the sport.

This approach creates a system, structure and pathway.

There are lots of opportunities for participation on the court but also off it with coaching and referee pathways. It is vital that once a player finishes their career they continue to participate in some way, whether that's through a Masters programme or assisting younger players in the Development League competition. We believe in life long participation in Volleyball, so have created Chair Volley, which is specifically designed for elder adults allowing them to enjoy fun, social and competitive volleyball into their 90s.

The pathway model demonstrates that some programmes are stage specific, such as 2v2 Funda Volley but some straddle various age groups such as the National League Competition.

New programmes will be rolled out to support the LTPD model including Skill Stars which is a programme aimed at developing youth sections and players in the Learn to Train stage.

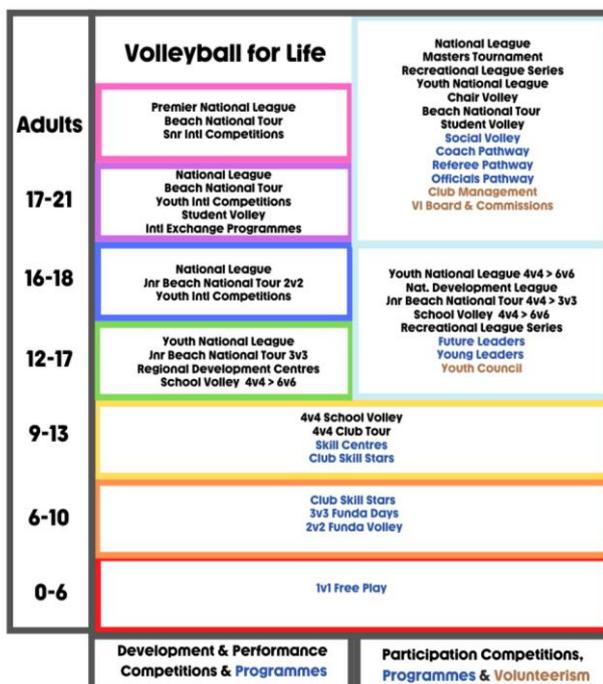
### Key LTPD Programmes & Competitions:

**Skill Development Centres:** This programme starts in the Train to Train stage and is for children aged 11–14 in the first instance. Lively, colourful and energetic participation events will be held nationwide where players come together for a day of fun volleyball sessions and games. Over the Summer this model will merge into a participation camp programme. The skill centres will provide an opportunity for national team coaches to talent identify players with necessary movement skills in a relaxed and informal environment, rather than a traditional 'trial' scenario.

**Skill Stars:** This programme aids the transition from Funda Volley to 4v4 Volley for Club players in the Fundamentals and Learn to Train stage. An 8 week programme has been created to build on Fundamental Movement skills and introduce basic volleyball skills. Clubs deliver the Skill Stars programme and will form robust links feeder schools who receive equipment and teacher training to encourage participation. The club sessions will be supported by VI development officers.

Youth Club National League: After Skill stars players can compete in the Youth National League. It will operate at u17 & u14 level for players in the train to train stage. A 4v4 blitz style competition format will be introduced to help players transition from Learn to Train to the Youth National League.

Jnr Beach Tour: To help provide a smooth transition from the hard court to the sand a Beach Volleyball pathway has also been created which includes mixed gender 4v4 Beach Volley progressing to 3v3 and 2v2 single gender Beach Volleyball at the learn to compete stage.



Exchange Programmes: As we move into the Performance stage National team players will have the opportunity to participate in exchange programmes with other Federations and professional clubs, to advance their development.

National Team Programmes: National team programmes will operate at underage level in alignment with CEV competitions in both formats of the game. Players in the 'performance' zone will be catered for through this programme. To support advanced players in the 'development zone', a national team training squad programme will be created with players identified to join a national team training squad programme when they are 13/14 (for girls) or 14/15 (for boys) years old. These training squad programmes will align fully with the principles of the LTPD model and will resist early position specialisation.

As well as senior teams in both genders, National teams will typically operate at u17 and u19 age groups for girls, u18 & u20 for boys and u18, u20 & u22 in Beach Volleyball. Our squads will actively compete in CEV zonal championships on a regular basis given high level competition opportunities for advanced players.

The Volleyball Ireland HP framework provides a more detailed overview of National team programmes.

## Acknowledgments

One of the key strengths we have in Ireland is the Volleyball community, and the sense that everyone is 'in it together'. This has been particularly evident during the development of this project.

Volleyball Ireland would like to thank a range of people that have contributed to the development of the Long Term Player Development model. In no particular order;

### LTPD Model Working Group:

Conor Flood, Volleyball Ireland staff and project lead

Des Currivan, Volleyball Ireland Education & Training Commission

Andrei Molnar – Mens National Team Head coach

Mark Delahunty – Womens National Team Head coach

Edyta Mc Mullan- Assistant Coach for Womens National Team

Tom Landers- Head Club Coach, Newbridge VC

Des Currivan – Education & Training Coaching Commission

Mary Barrett – School's Commission President

John Burke – Primary School Teacher, Cork

Melissa Barrett – Secondary School Teacher

Vicki Guy – Sport Ireland Coaching Education Officer

### Organisational Support:

Sport Ireland Coaching & Vicki Guy

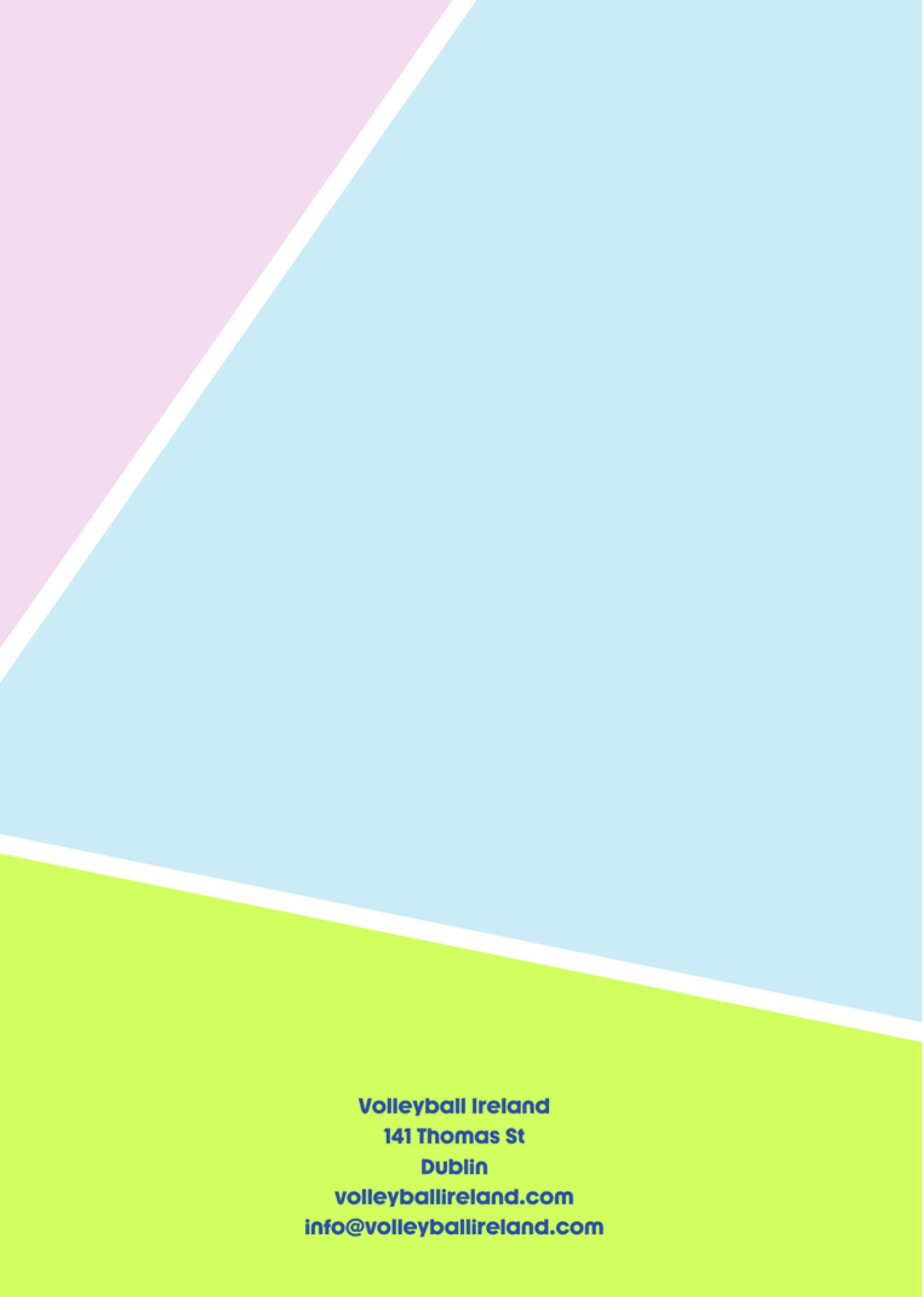
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