Meeting the Goals of the American Developmental Model: Theory and Application for US Youth Soccer Coaches

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Purpose of the Presentation

- Introduce youth soccer coaches to the American Developmental Model (ADM, 2014)
- Identify ADM key principles and stages to help coaches develop and deliver best practices for long-term player development

Introduction

- USA Hockey (2009) introduced the American Developmental Model (ADM) as a nationwide youth skill development and long-term athlete development program (USA Hockey, 2015)
- In 2014 the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) partnered with USA Hockey to reach out to 48 USOC sports, including US Soccer, with the purpose of disseminating long-term athlete development concepts (United States Olympic Committee, 2015)
- A goal of the American Developmental Model (ADM) is to “help Americans realize their full athletic potential and utilize sport as a path toward an active and healthy lifestyle.” (United States Olympic Committee, 2015)
- The ADM is influenced by the Long-Term Athlete Development Model (Balyi, 2001)
- “The ultimate goal is to create positive experiences for American athletes at every level.” (United States Olympic Committee, 2015)

State of the Nation

- Specialization before age ten is not recommended, contributes to early burnout, dropout and retirement from training and competition (Harsanyi, 1985)
- Early specialization is not an essential component of elite development (Baker, 2003; Baker et al., 2009; Cote et al., 2007)
- Coaches, the most powerful influence to specialize in a single sport (Hill & Simmons, 1989)
- Taking fun and enjoyment out of sports
- Rising costs to play or participate (Sports and Fitness Industry Association, 2015)

10 of 12 Youth Sports Are Declining in Participation

“Core” Participants 6-17 Years Old – 5 Year Change (Millions)

Stage of the ADM (USOC, 2014)

Stages of the ADM (USOC, 2014)

Stage III: Train and Compete (ages 13-19)
- Athletes begin to train and compete in particular sports of interest
- Multiple sport play for cross sport development
- Increase sport specific training
- Emphasize competition skills
- Improve skills at the local, regional and/or national levels

Stage IV: Excel for High Performance or Participate and Succeed (ages 15+)
- Full development and commitment to sport
- Dedicated to maximizing athletic potential
- Single sport focus while in season, multi sport out of season
- Competitions commensurate with athlete skill level

Stage V: Mentor and Thrive (Active for Life)
- Giving back to sport having finished competing
- Transition from participant to sport leader
- Coaching, mentoring, and officiating are natural next steps
- Pursue opportunities to remain in sport
- Maintain a physically active lifestyle

ADM 5 Key Principals (USOC, 2014)

1. Universal access that allows everyone an opportunity to participate in sport and increases physical activity levels
2. Understanding individual developmental levels with an emphasis on motor and foundational skill development
3. Encourage multi-sport participation to develop skills that can transfer between sports
4. Create an environment that is fun, engaging and challenging where spontaneous play is encouraged
5. Quality coaching at all levels is vital for athlete success. Coaches value education and view themselves as lifelong learners

ADM 5 Key Principals

Stage 1: Discover, Learn and Play (ages 0-12)
- Play multiple sports
- Encourage deliberate play (DP) unstructured, street soccer, influences intrinsic motivation (Cote & Hay, 2002)
- Fundamental motor skills that transfer between sports, skilled soccer players and hockey players recognized attacking game play across respective sport (Smeeton et al., 2004)
- Have fun

Stage II: Develop and Challenge (ages 10-16)
- Participate in fun and structured training program
- Continue to participate in multi-sports for continued development
- Emphasize practice and skill development over competition
- Understand maturation rates and the impact on performance
- Develop physical, psychological, social, technical, and tactical skills

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Application

- ADM is a visual guide for National Governing Bodies and consumers, identifies expectations and stages of development
- How the US Youth Soccer Player Development Model (2012) and the ADM aligns:
  - Eliminate research-based best practices to build and deliver quality programs and experiences
  - Targets youth coaches, administrators, and parents
  - Influenced by Balyi and the Long-Term Athlete Development Model
  - Early stages of development focuses on play, fun, and enjoyment
  - Emphasis on developing physically literate athletes, physical, psychological, social, technical, and tactical skills
  - Advocates for a multi-sport experience for long-term development

References