

Supporting Gifted & Talented Sports People

Junior Athlete Education

50% of those talented in sport are also good at other subjects i.e. multi-talented, however there is an extensive number who leave the performance pathway due to burn out. This burn out may be due “too much too soon” and therefore possible boredom or it may be because of their high performance in a number of other areas forces choices to be made. They do not necessarily need more coaching at school, they need support, flexibility and often individual timetabling, a multi- agency approach between the school, the club and their home.

One difficulty is the *identification* of a talented sports person especially in the aesthetic areas. In fact it is probably harder to determine than in any other academic subject.

There are 3 main groups of talented sports people:

- 1) Those already within National Governing Bodies (NGB) World Class programme. Often the youngsters do not share their achievements with school so its important to find out who, what, with who, for how long and nature of their sport.
- 2) Those picked out by school but not known by NGBs. Usually a big bulk of numbers with high potential.
- 3) Those not picked up by school or NGBs. Usually around Key stage 2 / 3 stage.

Obviously an achievement baseline needs to be known for each specific sport, but it is well known that physical education can take a student so far and then an elite club with high-level specialist coaches need to take over. Students benefit from the communication and socialisation etc within their lessons but their time can be wasted if the lesson is pitched at performance far below their level.

Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD)

Some sports require early specialisation for example gymnastics. However for most sports children need to learn core, fundamental skills, the best age being between 8-12 years. If they haven't learnt basic skills by then, it becomes almost impossible to relearn i.e. over arm throw. Istvan Bahli has pioneered the LTAD programme enabling children to learn basic skills which then can be transferred between sports and thus enable children to swap between sports and thus avoid burn out and or boredom.

South Gloucestershire have already began developing LTAD with training being offered to school teachers, coaches etc. This will hopefully begin to develop a generation of all round literate young sports people.

Junior Athlete Education (JAE)

This programme is designed to assist schools in the support they provide for talented young sports people. It encourages schools to work with identified

pupils, their parents and coaches to reduce conflict between education and sport enabling the young athlete to maximise their sporting and academic potential.

JAE is implemented through the Youth Sport Trust and will be cascaded through South Gloucestershire's Sports Colleges and School Sport Co-ordinators programme.

Key features include:

- Workshops for talented young athletes – covering areas such as lifestyle management, performance profiling, and identifying “hotspots” when there are clashes of demands.
- A workshop for their parents – covering knowledge of the needs & demands made on the students in the sport and in school, how they play a crucial part in the team.
- Mentoring Support – “neutral” mentors (not associated with PE and therefore impartial) to support the student in becoming independent thinkers.

All these aspects come with national recognised training and should be embedded in whole school policy on Gifted & Talented provision.

There will be some students who are low need students – very organised, supportive parents and motivated but there will also be high need students who are not necessarily high achievers, often forgetful, disorganised with little parental support. They may need 1 to 1 mentoring on a weekly basis.

This is a very exciting time to maximise students' potential in all areas of excellence. Kath Wilson from The Grange Sports College who is an AST in PE is on the Gifted & Talented working group, so we can be reassured that sport will be well up on future developments in South Gloucestershire.

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