

# Long Term Player Development Women's and Girls Football



An Introductory Guide



# Contents

<b>5</b>	Forward
<b>6-7</b>	Introduction
<b>8</b>	Sporting System Issues
<b>9</b>	Stage One - Fundamentals
<b>10</b>	Stage Two - Learning to Train
<b>11</b>	Stage Three - Training to Train
<b>12</b>	Stage Four - Training to Compete 1
<b>14</b>	STAGE FIVE - Training to Compete 2
<b>15</b>	STAGE SIX - Training to Win 1
<b>15</b>	STAGE SEVEN - Training to Win 2
<b>15</b>	STAGE EIGHT - Retirement/Retention
<b>16</b>	Conclusion
<b>17-19</b>	Matrix
<b>20</b>	System Chart
<b>21</b>	Trainability Chart
<b>22</b>	Periodisation Chart
<b>23</b>	Bibliography

## **Contributors to this guide also include**

John Allpress - National Player Development Coach  
Andy Cale - Head of Player Development  
Jim Hicks - PFA Coaching Department and Manager Millwall Lionesses F.C.  
Tony McCallum - Girls and Women's Football Development Officer Somerset  
John McDermott - Academy Manager, Tottenham Hotspur F.C.  
Hope Powell - National Coach  
Dawn Scott - Exercise Scientist  
Craig Simmons - Player Development Advisor  
Kelly Simmons - Head of National Football Development

In association with



# Introduction

Brent Hills  
Assistant Women's National Coach



The Football Association is currently engaged in the re-design of a Long Term Player Development strategy which will inform all stakeholders working with players of all ages and abilities. As part of this strategy FA staff in the Football Division have been working with Sport England and Dr Istvan Balyi to bring some of the benefits of Dr Balyi's Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model to women's football. This has been done in the hope of producing a player development philosophy which is tailored to the women's game in England and will meet the varying needs.

This document is the result of that work and is an introductory guide to Long Term Player Development in Women's Association Football. It is in no way supposed to be a definitive work, indeed player development systems by their very nature are evolutionary and will develop as experience and research influence them. It is envisaged that this guide will support the work being undertaken in Long Term Player Development and will inform any debates that take place as to the nature and philosophy of Long Term Player Development.

Scientific research supports the reasoning that it takes eight to twelve years of training for a talented athlete to reach elite levels. There are no short cuts if these elite levels are to be reached and maintained (Bloom 1985, Ericsson et. Al., 1993, Ericsson and Charness, 1994). For all concerned in the players development this translates to slightly more than three hours of daily practice for ten years (Salmela, 1998). At present many involved in the development of young players continue to approach the playing and training in a way that can be described at "Peaking by Sunday". Research indicates that a long-term commitment based on sound and demonstrable scientific principles is needed for the training and practice to produce elite athletes in all sports.

To ensure optimum development throughout an athlete's career a specific, progressive and well-planned training, practice, competition and recovery programme must be in place. The greater the quality of preparation the more likely it is that the peak will be higher and be maintained over a greater period. Rushing into competition will result in shortcomings in technical, physical,

tactical, psychological and emotional preparation and will actually detract from performance.

The three ways that young footballers will improve their performances are by:

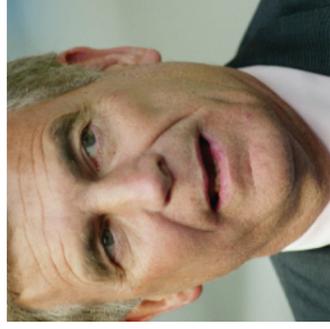
- Training and Practice;
- Application of Growth, Development and Maturation Principles.
- Providing an optimal structure for a games programme for all stages of LTAD

LTAD will assist in promoting optimal performances throughout an athlete's career and particularly during the adolescent growth spurt when performances can become unstable and can lead to actual dropout.

## The Aims of the LTAD System

- To map out a clear development pathway for female footballers
- To identify and fill current gaps in the development pathway
- To adjust and integrate the current programmes available to talented female footballers in England
- To provide a scientifically based planning tool for coaches, educationalists and administrators
- To be used as the guiding light in planning for optimal performance

# Forwards



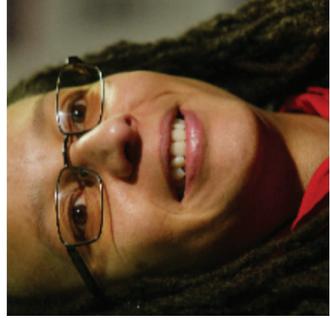
We all want to see a continued improvement in players at all levels and only by improving coaching knowledge, and outlining a clear Long Term Player Development system, can we achieve this aim.

Players must be given the opportunity to become more technically accomplished, at whatever level that is, but especially if we want to be at the forefront of international football. It is extremely important for the governing body to lead in setting guidelines for achieving the required progress and so

this document will help everyone involved in women's and girls football to focus on the key factors in the development of female players.

Our goal is to help all players reach their true potential so that from this we can produce a steady stream of world class female internationals who can compete successfully at the highest levels of the game. We hope that this document provides the catalyst for us all to help our players maximise their potential and move women's football on to the next level.

Sir Trevor Brooking



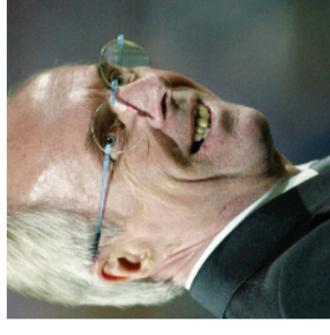
To ensure the continued progress of girls and women's football in England it is vital that we continue to support all the good work that is taking place at all levels of the girls and women's game. An increased emphasis on the use of the latest research and applied knowledge of how to develop female players is crucial to our continued progress.

This introductory booklet is designed to inform and stimulate debate and give guidance for coaches. Also, to give an overview of how the Football Association sees the player pathways developing in the future to ensure the continued enjoyment and progress of all female players. Having a coherent and comprehensive Long Term Player Development strategy will ensure that female players are better prepared and technically more

accomplished. This will lead to greater adherence to the game and to all players achieving greater enjoyment through success and satisfaction.

I hope you find the information contained in this publication food for thought and helpful when working with players. I would like to thank Sport England for the assistance they have given in the preparation of the document particularly Graham Ross and Dr Istvan Balyi. Their input has been invaluable.

Hope Powell



Girls and women's football in England is now the most popular female sport in terms of participation and interest. I have seen a great improvement personally when I attended a recent Under 21 fixture in Sweden and was very impressed with the improved standard of play and commitment of the English players.

Supporting the long term development of players is crucial to future success at international levels and this booklet will outline how female players can be better prepared to compete at all levels of the game. The internationals of tomorrow are the grass roots players of today and as such must be nurtured with care and commitment.

Sven-Göran Eriksson

- The following reflect issues of concern for a number of young female footballers, which are common around the world, not only to England:
- Young players under train and over compete;
  - Competition to practice/training ratio's are too high particularly in the early years;
  - Young players often follow adult competition schedules;
  - Young players often follow adult training/practice schedules;
  - Young female players often follow programmes designed for males
  - Training/practice in the developmental years often focuses on winning and not on performance (process versus outcome)
  - Chronological age influences coaching and selection rather than biological age (readiness)
  - The so-called critical periods of accelerated adaptation are under utilised
  - Poor programmes between the ages of 6-16 result in athletes never reaching their genetic potential

- The "best" coaches are encouraged to work at the elite levels
  - Coach Education tends to "skim" the growth, maturation and development of young females
  - Parents/Guardians/Partners need to be re-educated in LTAD principles and implications
  - Administrators and officials need to be re-educated in LTAD principles and implications
- Women's football has grown enormously in the last 5-10 years and the people at grass roots are more responsible for this growth than anyone. At present women's football is characterised by fantastic support but is still plagued by to little preparation/practice and too much competition at all levels. Most young players do not spend enough time developing fundamental movement skills or fundamental sports skills at an early age and therefore miss out on developing their full genetic potential. They also miss out on developing a love of the game through the development and mastery of skills, as much of their

practice is in the form of competitive games and a win at all costs environment. Many coaches, through no fault of their own, do not understand that the windows of opportunity for developing certain qualities are not being utilised and the deficits created can never be replaced in full. This issue if tackled sympathetically and with foresight can make a significant improvement to women's football at all levels.

Through an innovative and enlightened physical education and sport programme young girls will also be experiencing a number of other beneficial activities whether they are formalised or informal play. These will all have a cumulative effect and support the notion of developing females who are movement and sports literate.

Dr Istvan Balyi's model for LTAD in late specialisation sports is a five stage model e.g.,

- FUNdamental - fundamental movement skills
- Learning to Train - fundamental sports skills
- Training to Train - building the engine and sport specific skills;
- Training to Compete - optimising the engine including skills and performance;
- Training to Win - maximising the engine including skills and performance.

We have adapted this model to take account of the social fabric of female sport and the associated educational requirements and are suggesting an eight-stage model detailed below:

## STAGE ONE FUNDAMENTALS (FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS)

At this stage of LTPD (6-9) children begin the majority of their

- Coaches and teachers strive for multiple outcomes from all parts of sessions i.e., can more than one goal be achieved through the creative planning of practice sessions.
  - Ball manipulation and mastery is a worthwhile achievement within this SLE.
  - Simple decision making practices can also be used.
  - All players should experience all positions including that of goalkeeper.
- Emphasis should be on developing fundamental movement skills.
- ABC's (Agility, Balance, Co-ordination and Speed)
  - RJT (Running, Jumping, throwing)
  - KGB's (Kinesthetics, Gliding, Buoyancy, Striking with the body part)
  - CPK's (Catching, Passing & Kicking, Striking with an implement).
- involvement in Association Football through school, club and Local Authority experiences (daily physical activity should be encouraged i.e. physical education, out of school activities).
- Philosophy
- The philosophical atmosphere to be created is one of "Freedom and Fun". The ethos is one of "striving to win". Winning at all costs is counter productive. Young people want to win when they play so we don't need to promote this nor do we need to discourage it. We just need to keep it in perspective in the overall development system.
  - Creating a Stimulating Learning Environment (SLE) should be paramount in the planning of coaches and teachers.
  - The game should be the teacher whenever appropriate to foster this atmosphere.
  - As players respond repetition is important in fostering a love of technical mastery.

FUNDamental	Learning to Train	Training to Train	Training to Compete Stage 1	Training to Compete Stage 2	Training to Win Stage 1	Training to Win Stage 2	Retirement - Retention
6-9	8-11	10-14	13-16 +/-	16-18 +/-	19-21 +/-	22 +/-	Any age

<p>In order to foster the development of all round physical literacy, participation in as many sports and movement activities should be encouraged.</p> <p>Speed, and endurance can be developed using fun games. Basic rules and the historical ethics of the sport can be introduced. This is also the 1st Speed window (agility and quickness)</p> <p>As integration is a major theme running through the whole of LTAD technical work, involving associated fundamental movement patterns, should take account of the following themes:</p> <p>Level 1</p> <p>Core/individual skills (these are techniques which are fundamental to the individual if they are to master and enjoy the sport. They should be over learnt and will be in constant use throughout the sport e.g. close ball manipulation, juggling, volleys etc)</p> <p>Receiving the ball</p> <p>Passing &lt;25m</p> <p>Individual attacking moves (turning - dribbling - running with the ball)</p> <p>Heading (soft touch ball)</p> <p>Finishing</p>	<p>Counter attack</p> <p>Defending</p> <p>Goalkeeping</p> <p>Small sided games (4v4 to 6v6).</p> <p><b>STAGE TWO</b></p> <p><b>LEARNING TO TRAIN</b></p> <p>(FUNDAMENTAL SPORTS SKILLS INCLUDING FOOTBALL SKILLS)</p> <p>This stage (8-11) players will be moving to playing more formalised football matches. These games will be for the club, school etc but should remain developmental in ethos. Games programmes becoming results driven will not enhance the enjoyment or experience of the sport, can lead to early drop out, and should be avoided.</p> <p>Early developers often stand out during childhood but research does suggest that many late developers have greater potential to reach and maintain elite levels in the long term. These players will greatly benefit from spending longer on the types of activities suggested during this stage.</p> <p>Philosophy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The philosophical atmosphere should be the same as in the Fundamentals stage and</li> </ul>	<p>revolves around "Freedom and Fun".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ethos is one of 'striving to win". Winning at all costs is counter productive. Young people want to win when they play so we don't need to promote this nor do we need to discourage it. We just need to keep it in perspective in the overall development system.</li> <li>This stage coincides with peak motor co-ordination and is often referred to as "the golden age of skill learning". It is vital therefore, that coaches focus on techniques and skills development whenever possible. The terms techniques and skills refers to both the physical and psychological components of learning</li> <li>Players can be introduced to general physical conditioning at awareness level but combining this with technical work is an ideal scenario.</li> </ul> <p>Early developers often stand out during childhood but research does suggest that many late developers have greater potential to reach and maintain elite levels of performance in the long term. These players will greatly benefit from pending longer on the types</p>	<p>of activities suggested during this stage</p> <p>Technical/Tactical themes will include:</p> <p>Level 1/2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core/individual skills</li> <li>Receiving</li> <li>Passing &lt;25 mts</li> <li>Individual attacking moves (turning - dribbling - running with the ball)</li> <li>Heading (soft touch ball)</li> <li>Finishing</li> <li>Combinations plays</li> <li>Counter attack</li> <li>Defending</li> <li>Goalkeeping</li> <li>Small sided games (4v4 to 7v7).</li> </ul> <p><b>STAGE THREE</b></p> <p><b>TRAINING TO TRAIN</b></p> <p>(BUILDING THE ENGINE INCLUDING FOOTBALL SPECIFIC SKILLS AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS)</p> <p>This is a crucial stage (10-14) and players during this stage will need to train for endurance, speed and strength in addition to ABC's and the building up a greater repertoire of football related movements. Some experts refer to this stage as "building the engine". The maximum competition to</p>	<p>training/practice ratio should be 1:3 and greater (1:4+) if possible</p> <p>Philosophy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The philosophical atmosphere created should be one of "Understanding and Skill".</li> <li>Creating a Stimulating Learning Environment (SLE) continues to be of paramount importance.</li> <li>Repetition is important to refine and develop technical excellence.</li> <li>The committed coach will continue to strive for multiple outcomes, where appropriate, from all parts of sessions to maximise the efficient use of time. However, where specific work is needed for example, to address a particular need, then this should be undertaken</li> <li>Ball manipulation and mastery continues to be a theme.</li> <li>As the players become more sophisticated decision making can take on new broader concepts.</li> <li>Players should continue to experience all positions including GK but most will have settled on one or two positions by the end of this phase. It is also recognised that genetics can influence the issue of final playing position/s. Late</li> </ul>	<p>developers can sometimes settle on a different position much later and the coach should be aware of this fact.</p> <p>It is at this stage that the young talented player can be called upon by a number of interested bodies to represent them. However, with effective communication and a recognition that the interests of the player must lay at the heart of any decisions taken, these issues can be resolved to ensure that the system remains "player centred".</p> <p>Occurring in this phase are the windows of accelerated adaptation of aerobic and strength training. This should not be undertaken at any time with young players except under the supervision of qualified staff. In-service training of staff at all levels should be undertaken (The Football Association takes expert advice on this subject). Optimal aerobic training begins with the onset of Peak Height Velocity (PHV), more commonly known as the adolescent growth spurt. Strength training has two windows of accelerated adaptation in this phase. Window 1 is immediately after PHV and window 2 begins with the onset of menarche.</p>
---	--	---	---	--	--

<p>Speed Window 2 (anaerobic alactic power) will also fall within this phase (please refer to the trainability chart).</p> <p>Double periodisation will be used to include a mid winter break for reconditioning and technical/tactical work and to emphasise the continued ratio's of competition to practice. This should be planned with an individual's needs in mind.</p> <p>Warm-up and cool down will play an added part in preparing and recovering from performance. The links between hydration, nutrition and performance can be emphasised further. Mental preparation, recovery and regeneration, tapering and peaking, pre, during and post games routines should be introduced and established.</p> <p>Biological differences can be as much as four years towards the end of this phase. This will apply in all four corners of development (technical, psychological, physical and social). Coaches should be very aware of this when attempting to assess players. Continued emphasis on athletic development and technical mastery should be</p>	<p>the mainstays of the programme. The whole programme should be holistic in nature and seek to influence all four corners of the players development. For example, the social relationship between a rightback- right midfielder - centre forward could be a determining factor in the progress each individual makes and their ultimate performance levels.</p> <p>Technical/tactical themes will include:</p> <p>Level 2/3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core/individual skills</li> <li>• Receiving</li> <li>• Passing &lt;30&gt; mts</li> <li>• Individual attacking moves (turning - dribbling - running with the ball)</li> <li>• Heading (soft touch ball)</li> <li>• Finishing</li> <li>• Combinations plays</li> <li>• Counter attack</li> <li>• Defending</li> <li>• Goalkeeping</li> <li>• Small sided to full games (6v6 to 11v11).</li> </ul> <p>Other sports continue to play a role, both for variety and cross-training, but the balance now begins to shift firmly in football's favour (the general</p>	<p>recommendation is that the progression of number of sports in various phases is: FUN - 6, LtT - 3, TtT - 2, TtC - 1. In TtT football is the main sport with one other). Careful monitoring of growth, development and maturation is of critical importance during this phase and phases four and five. Ensure appropriate training is introduced at the most beneficial time and remember that growth and development can affect social, technical and psychological states in addition.</p> <p>Careful monitoring of growth and development is of critical importance during this phase to ensure appropriate training is introduced at the most beneficial time.</p> <p><b>STAGE FOUR</b> <b>TRAINING TO COMPETE 1</b> (BUILD &amp; OPTIMISE THE ENGINE, POSITION SPECIFIC (WHERE APPROPRIATE) TECHNICAL/TACTICAL AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS)</p> <p>The Training to Compete Stage (13-16+/-) has been divided into two sections in Women's Association Football. The reasoning</p>	<p>behind this decision is given below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talented players will be training/practicing with elite clubs and centres of excellence. This phase leads up to the GCSE examinations and there is a natural split at sixteen in that this denotes the end of compulsory full-time education.</li> <li>• It is important that we as the governing body give regard to the social fabric within which our players operate and splitting this phase to take account of a momentous life event would allow those people supporting players development to be fully aware of circumstance. They would also be in the best possible position to support the player.</li> <li>• As the women's game becomes more professionalised in the future then it is likely at this stage that elite young players will be able to become full-time trainee players and this would also herald a break in the way their lives are organised.</li> </ul> <p>Philosophy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The philosophical atmosphere to be created at this stage continues to be "Understanding and Skill".</li> </ul>	<p>Repetition continues to be important (deliberate practice is crucial to hone skills and fitness).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strive for multiple outcomes from all parts of sessions where appropriate.</li> <li>• Ball manipulation and mastery continues to be a goal.</li> <li>• Decision making skills are developed with continued sophistication.</li> <li>• Encourage variety in positional experience to develop a greater awareness of other roles and for experimentation.</li> <li>• Encourage variety in systems of play to cope with a variety of situations.</li> <li>• Encourage individualisation of practice where appropriate to cater for the individuals needs.</li> <li>• Playing through thirds of the field (both attacking and defending) will allow repetition of tactical situations and aid understanding.</li> <li>• Introductory experience of tournaments by the end of this phase should be a priority.</li> </ul> <p>The technical/tactical emphases will be on:</p> <p>Level 3/4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core/individual skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving</li> <li>• Passing &lt;30&gt; mts</li> <li>• Individual attacking moves (turning - dribbling - running with the ball)</li> <li>• Heading</li> <li>• Finishing</li> <li>• Combinations plays</li> <li>• Counter attack</li> <li>• Goalkeeping</li> <li>• Defending</li> <li>• Games (6v6 to 11v11)</li> </ul> <p>In this stage the training to competition and competition specific training ratio now change to 50:50. This means that approximately 50% of training is devoted to the development of technical/tactical skills and fitness development, and 50% is devoted to competition specific training to improve tactical and technical proficiency. This does not imply a 1:1 training/game ratio. It means that half training is designed to work on more generalised aspects and half training is related to actual skills and tactics needed for the competitive game. High intensity and individually sport specific training is provided year round. Emphasis is placed on optimum preparation for training and competition and is individually tailored where appropriate.</p>
---	---	--	--	---	---

<p>During this stage there will be a continued emphasis on physical conditioning. Double periodisation will continue to be used in general, although at the upper end triple periodisation may be needed for players who have graduated into the National U17 team and have a UEFA/FIFA tournament. Coaches will place a greater emphasis on the independence and autonomy of the individual player in order to encourage players to play a greater role in their development. Individually devised physical and mental development programmes will be devised including a strength training programme. Research now suggests that a carefully devised and monitored strength development programme is integral to the optimal improvement in most sports including football.</p> <p><b>STAGE FIVE</b>  <b>TRAINING TO COMPETE 2</b>  (OPTIMISING THE ENGINE, POSITION SPECIFIC TECHNICAL/TACTICAL AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS)</p> <p>The second stage of Training to Compete (16-18 +/-) slots easily into the time when all players have</p>	<p>the opportunity to finish full-time compulsory education. It is our intention to encourage all players to take the educational and training opportunities available and these may vary according to ability. Genetics will have a major influence on assessment at this stage. Coaches must allow for genetic limitations when assessing progress. Moving towards position specific work whilst recognising possible genetic ceilings is crucial in assessment.</p> <p>Philosophy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The philosophical atmosphere to be created at this stage is now one of "Learning To Win". The ethos is one of "striving to win". Winning at all costs is counterproductive. Young people want to win when they play so we don't need to promote this nor do we need to discourage it. We just need to keep it in perspective in the overall development system.</li> <li>Repetition continues to be important.</li> <li>Strive for multiple outcomes from all parts of sessions.</li> <li>Decision making skills are developed with continued</li> </ul>	<p>sophistication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage variety in positional experience to develop a greater awareness of other roles and for experimentation.</li> <li>Encourage variety in systems of play to cope with a variety of situations.</li> <li>Encourage individualisation of practice where appropriate to cater for the individuals needs.</li> <li>Playing through thirds of the field (both attacking and defending) will allow repetition of tactical situations and aid understanding.</li> <li>More demanding in depth experience of tournaments by the end of this phase should be a priority.</li> </ul> <p>The technical/tactical emphases will be on:</p> <p>Level 4/5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core/individual skills</li> <li>Receiving</li> <li>Passing &lt;30&gt; mts</li> <li>Individual attacking moves (turning - dribbling - running with the ball)</li> <li>Heading</li> <li>Finishing</li> <li>Combinations plays</li> <li>Counter attack</li> <li>Goalkeeping</li> </ul>	<p>be possible due to the earlier planned and progressive nature of training and practice. Triple periodisation is mostly employed to cater for the season (including mid-winter re-conditioning break) and the UEFA/FIFA tournaments, which take place in the summer.</p> <p>Philosophy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The philosophical atmosphere is now one of "Training to Win".</li> <li>Repetition continues to be important.</li> <li>Coaches continue to Strive for multiple outcomes from all parts of sessions.</li> <li>Decision making related to tournament pressure is a focus.</li> <li>Position specific experience becomes a major focus.</li> <li>Encourage flexible systems of play at will in order to solve the tournament scenarios</li> <li>Encourage individualisation of practice where appropriate.</li> <li>The modelling of tournament play is the major theme of all preparation.</li> </ul> <p>The technical/tactical emphases will be on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The maximisation of all capacities;</li> <li>Individualised training where</li> </ul>	<p>appropriate;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical and tactical work emphasises high quality;</li> <li>Tactical emphasis is on modelling tournament play in all scenarios.</li> </ul> <p><b>STAGE SEVEN</b>  <b>TRAINING TO WIN 2</b>  (MAXIMISING THE ENGINE &amp; POSITION SPECIFIC TECHNICAL/TACTICAL AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS)</p> <p>This stage (22+/-) will see the senior international focus on the maximisation of all capacities. Practices with multiple outcomes may well prove most useful at the later stages when much of the practice/training is allied to tactical and teamwork outcomes e.g. a corridor practice under pressure will have incidental effects on the social, psychological and psychological corners of development as well as the main outcome of game related technical repetition under pressure.</p> <p><b>STAGE EIGHT</b>  <b>RETIREMENT/RETENTION</b></p> <p>It is hoped that elite players will serve the sport after retiring from full-time training and will get the</p>
<p>Defending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Games (8v8, 11v11, 10v11, 11v10).</li> </ul> <p>The underlying principles of Frequency, Intensity, Duration and Type of training during this stage will build on the Training To Compete Stage 1 and will seek to use the same guiding philosophies.</p> <p><b>STAGE SIX</b>  <b>TRAINING TO WIN 1</b>  (MAXIMISING THE ENGINE &amp; POSITION SPECIFIC TECHNICAL/TACTICAL AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS)</p> <p>This penultimate stage (19-21+/-) sees the emphasis firmly focussed on "Training to Win". The majority, if not all, of the players physical, technical, tactical, psychological and ancillary capacities are now fully established and the focus of training has shifted to optimisation of performance. There may still be a need for the development of tactical experience in major tournaments. Training is characterised by high intensity, high quality and relatively high volume. Frequent "prophylactic" breaks help to prevent physical and mental burnouts. Increasing the number of games continues to</p>	<p>Defending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Games (8v8, 11v11, 10v11, 11v10).</li> </ul> <p>The underlying principles of Frequency, Intensity, Duration and Type of training during this stage will build on the Training To Compete Stage 1 and will seek to use the same guiding philosophies.</p> <p><b>STAGE SIX</b>  <b>TRAINING TO WIN 1</b>  (MAXIMISING THE ENGINE &amp; POSITION SPECIFIC TECHNICAL/TACTICAL AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS)</p> <p>This penultimate stage (19-21+/-) sees the emphasis firmly focussed on "Training to Win". The majority, if not all, of the players physical, technical, tactical, psychological and ancillary capacities are now fully established and the focus of training has shifted to optimisation of performance. There may still be a need for the development of tactical experience in major tournaments. Training is characterised by high intensity, high quality and relatively high volume. Frequent "prophylactic" breaks help to prevent physical and mental burnouts. Increasing the number of games continues to</p>	<p>Defending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Games (8v8, 11v11, 10v11, 11v10).</li> </ul> <p>The underlying principles of Frequency, Intensity, Duration and Type of training during this stage will build on the Training To Compete Stage 1 and will seek to use the same guiding philosophies.</p> <p><b>STAGE SIX</b>  <b>TRAINING TO WIN 1</b>  (MAXIMISING THE ENGINE &amp; POSITION SPECIFIC TECHNICAL/TACTICAL AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS)</p> <p>This penultimate stage (19-21+/-) sees the emphasis firmly focussed on "Training to Win". The majority, if not all, of the players physical, technical, tactical, psychological and ancillary capacities are now fully established and the focus of training has shifted to optimisation of performance. There may still be a need for the development of tactical experience in major tournaments. Training is characterised by high intensity, high quality and relatively high volume. Frequent "prophylactic" breaks help to prevent physical and mental burnouts. Increasing the number of games continues to</p>	<p>be possible due to the earlier planned and progressive nature of training and practice. Triple periodisation is mostly employed to cater for the season (including mid-winter re-conditioning break) and the UEFA/FIFA tournaments, which take place in the summer.</p> <p>Philosophy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The philosophical atmosphere is now one of "Training to Win".</li> <li>Repetition continues to be important.</li> <li>Coaches continue to Strive for multiple outcomes from all parts of sessions.</li> <li>Decision making related to tournament pressure is a focus.</li> <li>Position specific experience becomes a major focus.</li> <li>Encourage flexible systems of play at will in order to solve the tournament scenarios</li> <li>Encourage individualisation of practice where appropriate.</li> <li>The modelling of tournament play is the major theme of all preparation.</li> </ul> <p>The technical/tactical emphases will be on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The maximisation of all capacities;</li> <li>Individualised training where</li> </ul>	<p>appropriate;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical and tactical work emphasises high quality;</li> <li>Tactical emphasis is on modelling tournament play in all scenarios.</li> </ul> <p><b>STAGE SEVEN</b>  <b>TRAINING TO WIN 2</b>  (MAXIMISING THE ENGINE &amp; POSITION SPECIFIC TECHNICAL/TACTICAL AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS)</p> <p>This stage (22+/-) will see the senior international focus on the maximisation of all capacities. Practices with multiple outcomes may well prove most useful at the later stages when much of the practice/training is allied to tactical and teamwork outcomes e.g. a corridor practice under pressure will have incidental effects on the social, psychological and psychological corners of development as well as the main outcome of game related technical repetition under pressure.</p> <p><b>STAGE EIGHT</b>  <b>RETIREMENT/RETENTION</b></p> <p>It is hoped that elite players will serve the sport after retiring from full-time training and will get the</p>

STAGES	FUNDAMENTAL	STAGE 1	LEARNING TO TRAIN	STAGE 2	TRAINING TO TRAIN (Growth & Development Stage) STAGE 3	TRAINING TO TRAIN	STAGE 4	TRAINING TO COMPETE 1	STAGE 5	TRAINING TO COMPETE 2	STAGE 6	TRAINING TO WIN 1	STAGE 7	TRAINING TO WIN 2	STAGE 8	RETIREMENT
Age	Chronological/ Biological/ Developmental 6-9 years	Biological/ Developmental Age: 8-11 years	Biological/ Developmental Age: 10-14 years	Biological/ Developmental Age: 13-16 +/- years	Biological/ Developmental Age: 16-18 +/-	Chronological/ Developmental Age: 19-21 +/-	Chronological/ Developmental Age: 22 +/-	Age	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental
Development Stages	Fundamental Movement Skills	Fundamental Sports Skills including Football Skills	"Building the Engine" & sport specific skills	"Building & Optimising the Engine" & position specific skills & fitness towards the end of this phase	"Optimising the Engine" & position specific skills & fitness	"Maximising the Engine" & position specific skills & fitness	"Maximising the Engine" & position specific skills & fitness	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental	Developmental
Progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FREEDOM &amp; FUN (participation) General, overall development: ABC's: Agility, Balance, Co-ordination and Speed. RfTs: Running, Jumping and Throwing. KGB's: Kinesthetics, Cliding, Buoyancy and movement. CPK's: Catching, Passing, Kicking and Striking. Speed power and endurance through FUN and games. Introduction to all positions including GK simple rules and ethics of sport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FREEDOM &amp; FUN ABC's/KGB's/CPK's/ RfTs development: ABC's: Agility, Balance, Co-ordination and Speed. RfTs: Running, Jumping and Throwing. KGB's: Kinesthetics, Cliding, Buoyancy and movement. CPK's: Catching, Passing, Kicking and Striking. Speed power and endurance through FUN and games. Introduction to all positions including GK simple rules and ethics of sport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDERSTANDING &amp; SKILL Emphasis on aerobic conditioning. 2nd Speed window and individualisation of fitness and technical based on maturational patterns and technical patterns. Participation in complementary sports (similar energy system and movement patterns). Introduced. More specific practices towards the end of the phase</li> <li>• Development of tactical preparation. Development of mental preparation.</li> <li>• Sports ethics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDERSTANDING &amp; SKILL Sport and individual specific physical conditioning under competitive conditions. Introduction of individual into more advanced tactical units</li> <li>• Individualisation of technical/tactical skills. Development of mental preparation. Sport and individual specific "ancillary capacities" (knowledge and experience).</li> <li>• Sports ethics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEARNING TO WIN Sports specific and playing skills under competitive conditions. Testing tactical prep in competition. Advanced mental preparation of position specific tactical skills &amp; fitness</li> <li>• TO WIN Sports specific and playing skills &amp; fitness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRAINING TO WIN Maintenance or improvement of all physical capacities. Further development of technical and tactical units. Modelling all possible aspects of training and performance. Frequent prophylactic breaks. Advanced tactical preparation "ancillary capacities" (knowledge and mental preparation. All aspects of training individualised. Develop further "ancillary capacities" (knowledge and experience) Social psychology and team dynamics</li> <li>• Sports ethics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRAINING TO WIN Maintenance or improvement of all physical capacities. Further development of technical and tactical units. Modelling all possible aspects of training and performance. Frequent prophylactic breaks. Advanced tactical preparation "ancillary capacities" (knowledge and mental preparation. All aspects of training individualised. Develop further "ancillary capacities" (knowledge and experience) Social psychology and team dynamics</li> <li>• Sports ethics</li> </ul>									

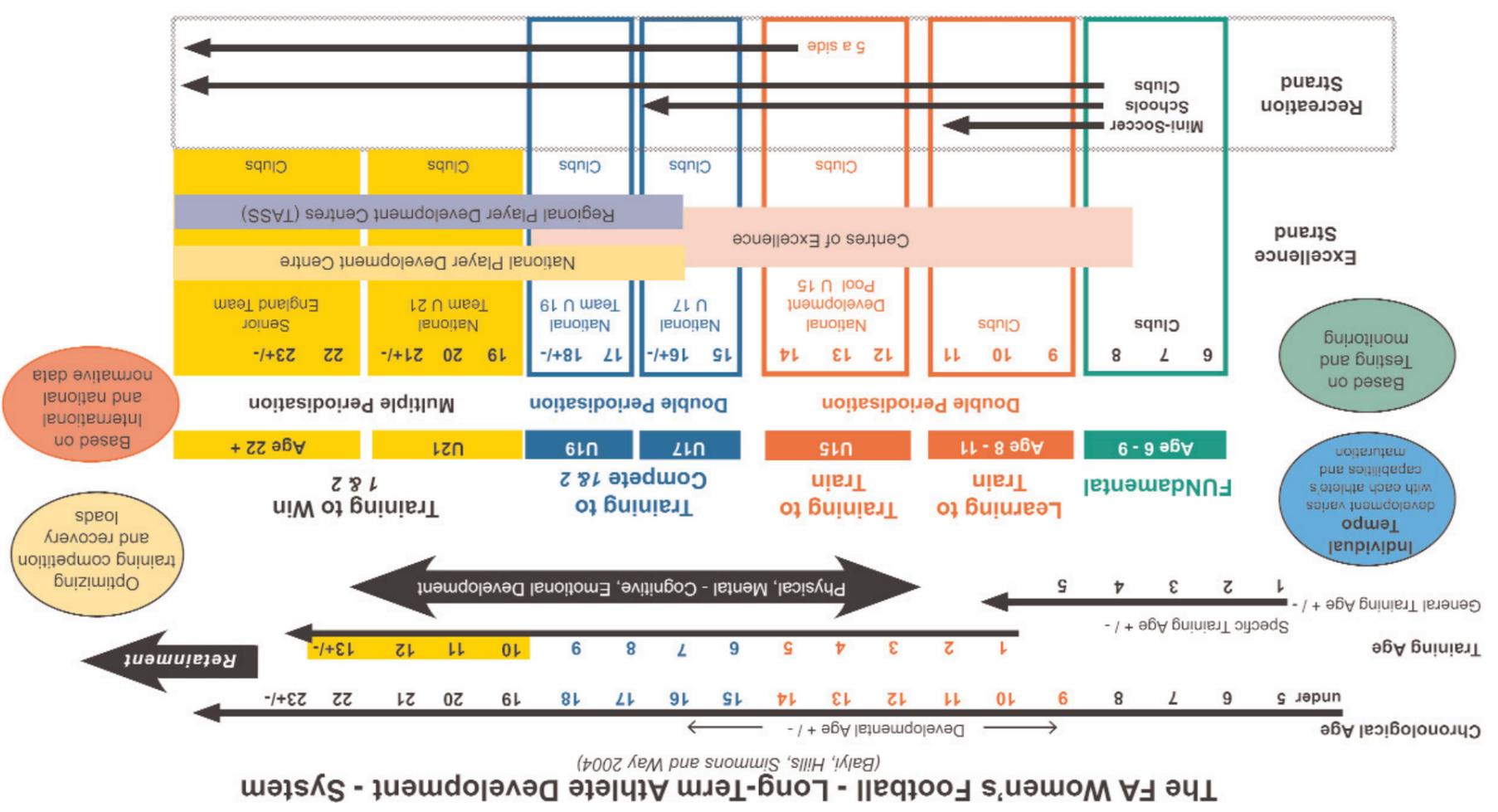
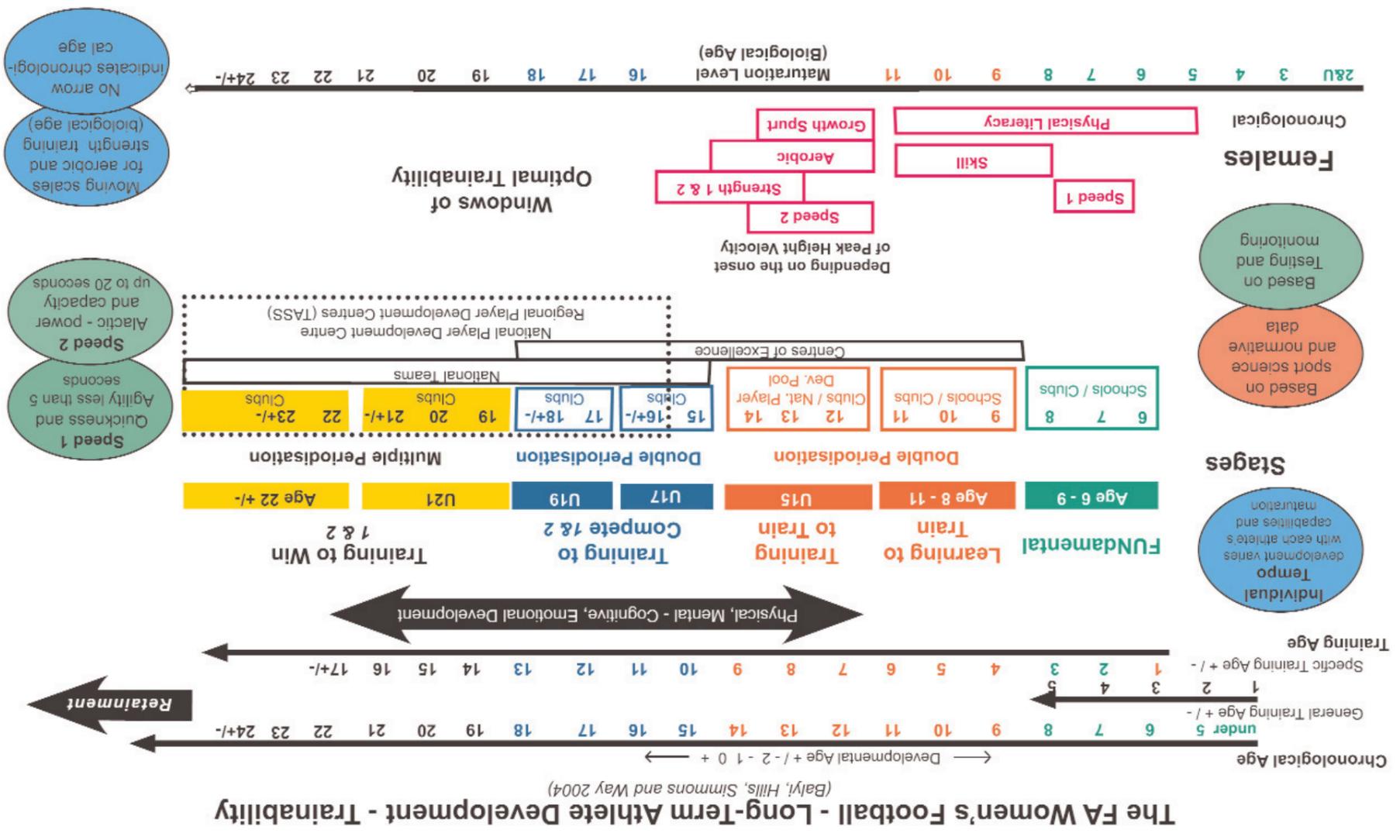
support where appropriate to pursue careers within the sport through coaching, sport science support, mentoring, refereeing or administrating. Others may choose to re-train for a career outside women's football. It would be beneficial to the game in general and the governing body if identification of suitable individuals could formally take place before they leave the elite arena. Support can then be provided in order to retain these people within the fabric of the game

### CONCLUSION

The LTAD pathway for players should be an integrated system which will take account of the individual player's needs first and foremost and will also encompass calendar planning, the games programme coach education and parental education as without addressing all of these issues the gaps outlined earlier in the document will continue to arise and negate any other proactive developments achieved.

	FUNDAMENTAL	LEARNING TO TRAIN	TRAINING TO TRAIN (Growth & Development Stage)	TRAINING TO COMPETE STAGE 1	TRAINING TO COMPETE STAGE 2	TRAINING TO WIN STAGE 1	TRAINING TO WIN STAGE 2
<b>Practice Session Details</b>	General sport participation 4 times per week. Football specific sessions 2 times (50% ABC's etc.)	General sport participation 4-5 hours. Football specific 2 hours. Conditioning 1-2 hours PW	General sport participation 2-4 hours. Football specific sessions 3-4 hours. Conditioning 2-5 hours PW	Football specific sessions 5-7 hours. Conditioning 5-6 hours PW	Football specific sessions 9-11 hours. Conditioning 4-5 hours PW	Football specific sessions 10, 5-13 hours. Conditioning 3-7 hours PW	Football specific sessions 11, 5-13 hours. Conditioning 3-7 hours PW
<b>Session Length (max)</b>	45-60 minutes	60-75 minutes	90 minutes	90 mins	120 mins	120 mins	120 mins
<b>Training Hours</b>	Sessional	340-440	480-540	580-680	730-790	840-890	890
<b>Number of Games</b>	20 formal but unlimited for fun	20 formal but unlimited for fun	25 formal. Fun games to be monitored	27 formal. Individuals' loading monitored	28 formal but subject to playing level and development	2/3 seasons (double/triple periodisation)	2/3 seasons (double/triple periodisation)
<b>Competitive Events</b>	Mini-soccer School Club Centres of Excellence	Mini-soccer School Club Centres of Excellence	Mini-soccer School Club Centres of Excellence U 15 National Development Pool	U 17 National Team School Centres of Excellence Club	U 17/19 National Team National Player Development Centre School Academy Club	U 21 National Team Senior National Club Development Centre	Senior National Team Club Development Centre
<b>Types</b>	Round Robin Fixture programme Festivals	Round Robin Fixture programme Festivals	Round Robin Fixture programme Festivals/Tournaments	UEFA Fixture programme Festivals/Tournaments Leagues + Cups	UEFA/FIFA Leagues + Cups Tournaments	UEFA/FIFA Leagues + Cups Tournaments	UEFA/FIFA Leagues + Cups Tournaments

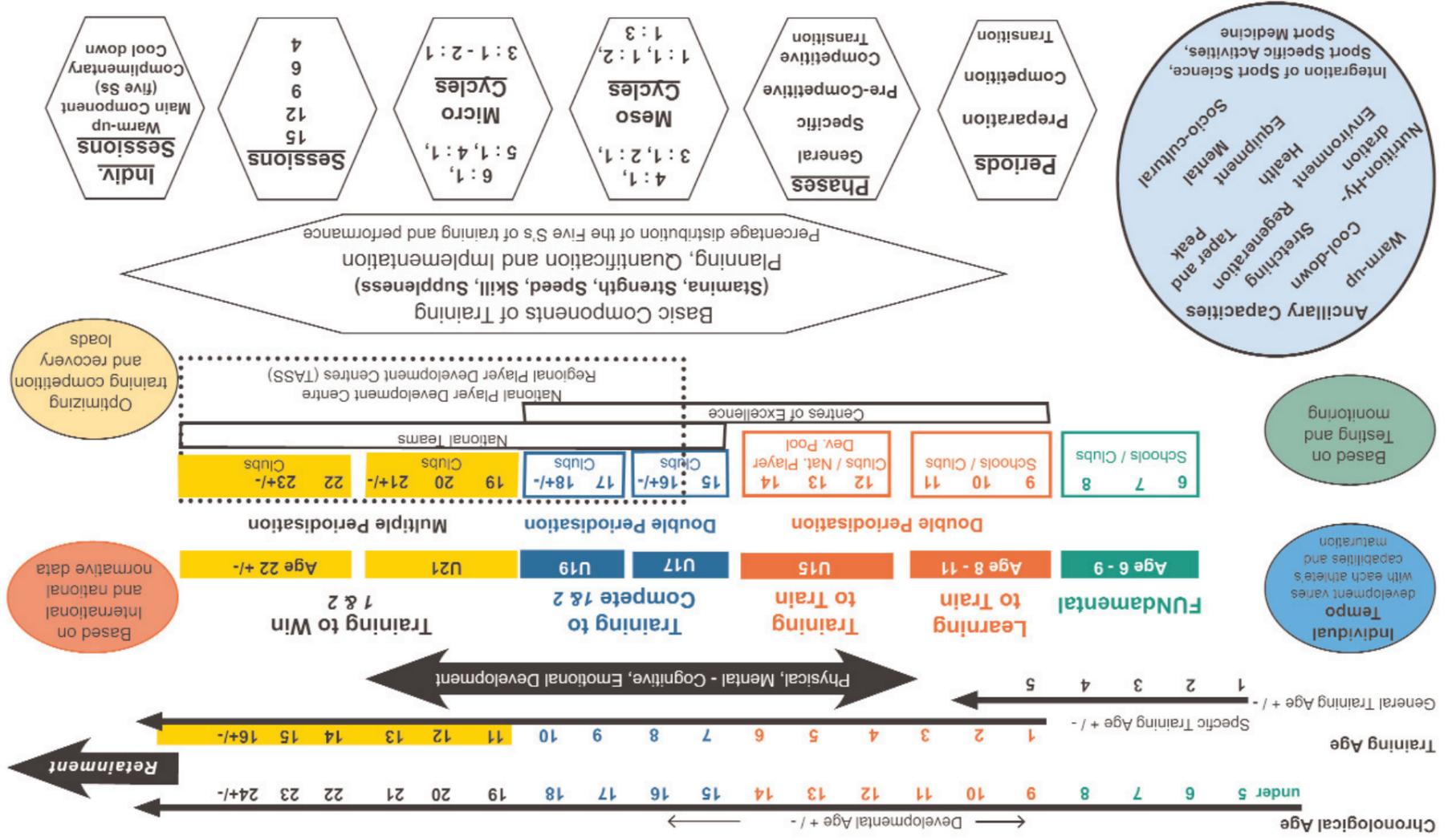
	FUNDAMENTAL	LEARNING TO TRAIN	TRAINING TO TRAIN (Growth & Development Stage)	TRAINING TO COMPETE STAGE 1	TRAINING TO COMPETE STAGE 2	TRAINING TO WIN STAGE 1	TRAINING TO WIN STAGE 2
<b>Growth and Development</b>	Emphasis on development of movement skills. 1st Speed Window (agility/quickness PSpV1); 6-8 yr Introduction to flexibility training	Peak motor co-ordination (PmCV), emphasis on athletic and skill development Develop sport specific range of motion	Growth spurt (PHV), emphasis on aerobic development 11-12 years (WITH THE ONSET OF PHV) 2nd Speed (alactic) Window (PSPV2 11-13 yrs at end of PHV due to growth spurt	Peak Strength development (PSV), emphasis on strength development; 2nd strength window at onset of menarche	Refine tournament experience. Core/individual training where appropriate	Maximisation of stamina, strength, speed, skill and suppleness. All programmes based on diagnostically tested needs	Maximisation of all capacities based on diagnostically tested needs
<b>Skills</b>	Core/individual skills. Receiving, passing, individual attacking moves1v1, heading, finishing, counter attack, defending, GK, SSC's (4v4-6v6)	FUNDamentals of tactical preparation. Core/individual skills. Receiving, passing, individual attacking moves1v1, heading, finishing, combination plays, counter attack, defending, GK, SSC's (4v4-7v7)	Development of tactical preparation. Core/individual skills. Receiving, passing, individual attacking moves1v1, heading, finishing, combination plays, counter attack, defending, GK, SSC's (6v6-11v11). Rotate positions (position to be determined by end of phase)	Introduction to tournaments by end of phase. Core/individual skills. Receiving, passing, individual attacking skills. Receiving, passing, individual attacking moves1v1, heading, finishing, combination plays, counter attack, defending, GK, SSC's (6v6-11v11)	Refine tournament experience. Core/individual training where appropriate	Maximisation of all capacities in all scenarios	Maximisation of all capacities
<b>Periodisation</b>	No periodisation but flexible, progressive and structured sessions	Double Periodisation July-Nov/Feb-April (May-June alternative sports). Dec-Jan reconditioning mid-winter break, further overall technical and athletic development	Double Periodisation July-Nov/Feb-April (May-June alternative sports including transition). Dec-games, Dec-Jan reconditioning mid-winter break, Feb-April games, May-June alternative sports +transition.	Double Periodisation, Triple if UEFA comp. July-Aug preparation, Sept-Nov games, Dec-Jan reconditioning mid-winter break, Feb-April games, May-June alternative sports +transition.	Double Periodisation, Triple if UEFA comp. July-Aug preparation, Sept-Nov games, Dec-Jan reconditioning mid-winter break, Feb-April games, May-June alternative sports +transition.	Double Periodisation, Triple if UEFA comp. July-Aug preparation, Sept-Nov games, Dec-Jan reconditioning mid-winter break, Feb-April games, May-June alternative sports +transition.	Double Periodisation, Triple if UEFA comp. July-Aug preparation, Sept-Nov games, Dec-Jan reconditioning mid-winter break, Feb-April games, May-June alternative sports +transition.



# Selected Bibliography

## The FA Women's Football - Long-Term Athlete Development - Periodisation

(Balyi, Hills, Simons and Way 2004)



Alpine Integration Model. Alpine Canada Alpine, High Performance Advisory Committee, 1999

Balyi, J. Sport system building and long-term athlete development in Canada. The situation and solutions, in Coaches Report. The Official Publication of the Canadian Professional Coaches Association. Summer 2001. Vol.8, No.1, pp.25-28.

Bar-Or, O. (ed). The Child and the Adolescent Athlete. Backwell Science Ltd. Oxford, UK, 1996.

Bloom, B. Developing Talent in Young People. New York: Ballantines, 1985.

Canadian Sport for Life. Long-term Athlete Development Resource Paper. Canadian Sport Centres, 2005.

Ericsson, K.A. and Charness, N. Expert Performance. Its Structure and Acquisition. American Psychologist, August 1994., pp. 725-747.

Malina, R.M. and Bouchard, C. Growth, Maturation, and Physical Activity. Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics, 1991.

Robinson, s. and Way, R. Long-term Athlete Development: A Made-in-Canada Model. Coaches Report, Vol.11.No.3, pp. 6-12.

Rushall, B. The Growth of Physical Characteristics in Male and Female Children. In Sports Coach, Vol.20, Summer, 1998. pp. 25-27.

Sanderson, L. "Growth and Development Considerations for the Design of Training Plans for Young Athletes". Ottawa: CAC, SPORTS, Vol.10.No.2, 1989.

Scammon, R.E. "The Measurement of the Body Childhood" In Harris et.al., eds. The Measurement of Man. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1930.

SportMap: A Blueprint for Sport Excellence. PacificSport, 2001.

Stafford, I. Coaching for Long-Term Athlete Development. The National Coaching Foundation, Coachwise, Leeds, 2005.

Tenner, J.M. "Growing Up." Scientific American, 1973, 9.

Viru, A. Adaptation in Sports Training. CRC Press, Boca Raton, 1995. 310.p.

Viru, A, Loko, J., Volver, A., Laaneots, L., Karlesom, K and Viru, M. Age periods of accelerated improvements of muscle strength, power, speed and endurance in age interval 6-18 years. In "Biology of Sport", Warsaw, V., 15 (4) 1998, 211-227 pp.

The Football Association  
25 Soho Square  
London  
W1D 4FA

Telephone:  
+44 (0)20 7745 4545  
Facsimile:  
+44 (0)20 7745 4546  
Email:  
[info@TheFA.com](mailto:info@TheFA.com)  
Visit:  
[www.TheFA.com](http://www.TheFA.com)

