

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

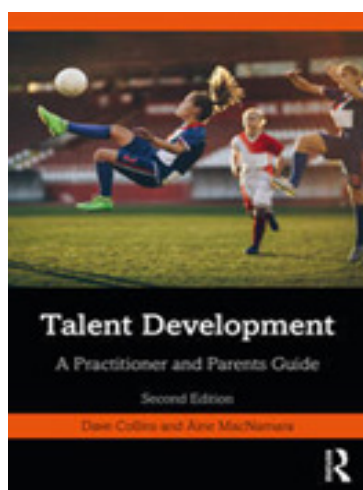
### Book reviews

#### **Talent Development. A Practitioner and Parents Guide. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**

*Editors: Dave Collins and Aine MacNamara*

Publisher: Routledge, June 10, 2022

272 pages; Price: £ 29.99 (Paperback), \$37.95 (kindle), or RON 200.60 (Paperback)



It is more than obvious - a truism in fact - that the process of talent development is essential to success in any sport, as also in many other fields of activity, and that the interest for this topic has recently skyrocketed all over the world. In this situation and taking into consideration that every year there has been an exponential growth in this area - an expansion that has even spawned a new type of sport scientist, the so called "talent scientist" - the book we will present this time can be considered a much waited and really welcomed one, even if it comes after only four years from its first edition.

The provocative text of the new edition represents the result of a laudable collaborative effort, and it draws on the latest evidence and a considerable experience base of both the authors and the two editors. Dispelling myths about talent development and outlining the real and proved truths, it offers both theoretical foundations and practical advice on the talent development pathway, from the pre-school age and novice condition of the future athlete to the elite level. Having the above mentioned qualities and pluses explains why the book will be of real usefulness to all those the authors intended to address - coaches, scientists, administrators, educators, students, parents, policymakers and senior development athletes - , facilitating them the access to a modern, evidence-based

and efficient vision and practice on talent identification and development in sport.

The 16 chapters are distributed into eight parts. Of them the first, the penultimate and the last are made up of only one chapter each, while the rest of the parts contain two or three chapters plus an explanatory introduction. To facilitate the reading and for making it easier to be understood the book is also equipped with 19 figures and 13 tables.

The first chapter is a purely theoretical one and is set out in the key sequence of the entire work. Within about 16 pages this chapter brings out the weaknesses of the past talent identification programs, which didn't prove very effective at detecting and identifying young people with a potential to develop into successful senior performers. These weaknesses originate in focusing on the snapshot characteristics or once-off performances at "trials", instead of giving the necessary attention to the factors that underpin the capacity of a young athlete to finally realize his/her potential. The underlying explanation of these weaknesses consists in fact in viewing talent as an individual's innate collection of abilities, in conjunction with little consideration for the process of development; a process without which the respective abilities cannot be converted into expertise. That is why the talent has to be viewed as a developmental construct, whose rate of progress is influenced by three significant catalysts: chance factors, intrapersonal factors and environmental factors.

The second part consists of three chapters, and teaches us how to put the bases in sport. In other words it refers to the pre-school preparation of those children who later can continue or not to go on the long and difficult path of developing their aptitudes and interest for the field. Other three chapters constitute the third part, which logically is dedicated to "the next level" of involvement and preparation in sport. It is the so-called pre-academy level, i.e. the period before the moment when the child will select his/her preferred sport. And as in the evolution/development of the child these period raises more complex and specific problems to both the parents and coaches, the authors provide these categories of stakeholders with some special considerations.

*Entering the Pathway* is the title of next part. It consists of two chapters and addresses to the actual start of the children professionalization into the secrets of their selected sport. Of course, the young athlete's journey starts with passing through the recruitment process (Ch. 8), a process which has to be structured and put into the practice in such a way as to result into the most

<https://doi.org/10.26659/pm3.2022.23.3.151>

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objective and pragmatic decisions for both the candidates and academies. Then, once s/he went into the academy the specific sport preparation must comply with certain principles and meet certain standards (see chapter 9), because only under such conditions could one talk about a good and efficient athletic preparation. *Making the most of the academy apprenticeship* (Part V) will be possible only if the relationship between coach and athlete makes the latter fly (Ch. 10), and the parents and performers fully support the academy (Ch. 10).

The penultimate part is dedicated to some essential management considerations which the athletes, their parents and coaches must know and exploit very well for designing and operating a pathway of success. While the last part entitled *Conclusions* comes with other information and tips which are intended and proved to really help the athletes in their desire to permanently stay ahead.

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