

# The Developing Athlete: Avoiding the Talent Trap



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UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALBERTA**

**CANADIAN  
SPORT FOR LIFE**



**Helping club leaders, coaches  
and parents understand the  
'process and balance' of  
developing young athletes**





# Canadian Sport for Life's Three Key Outcomes





Active  
for Life

Train

Train to Compete

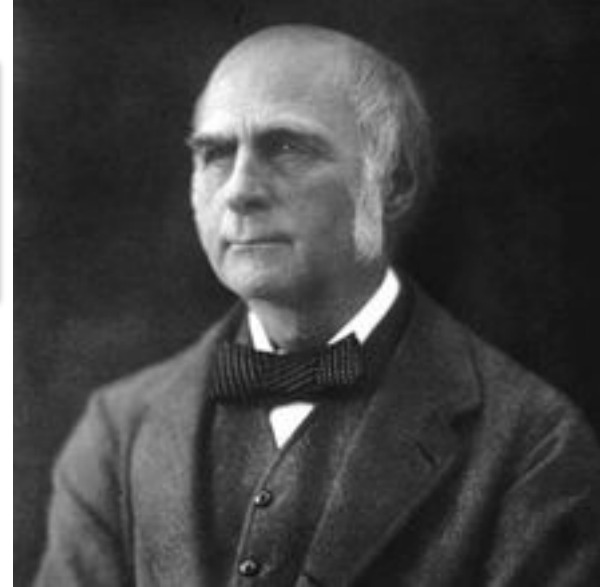
Train to Train

Physical Literacy  
FUNdamentals  
Active start

Athlete Development  
TALENT? GIFTED? NATURAL?

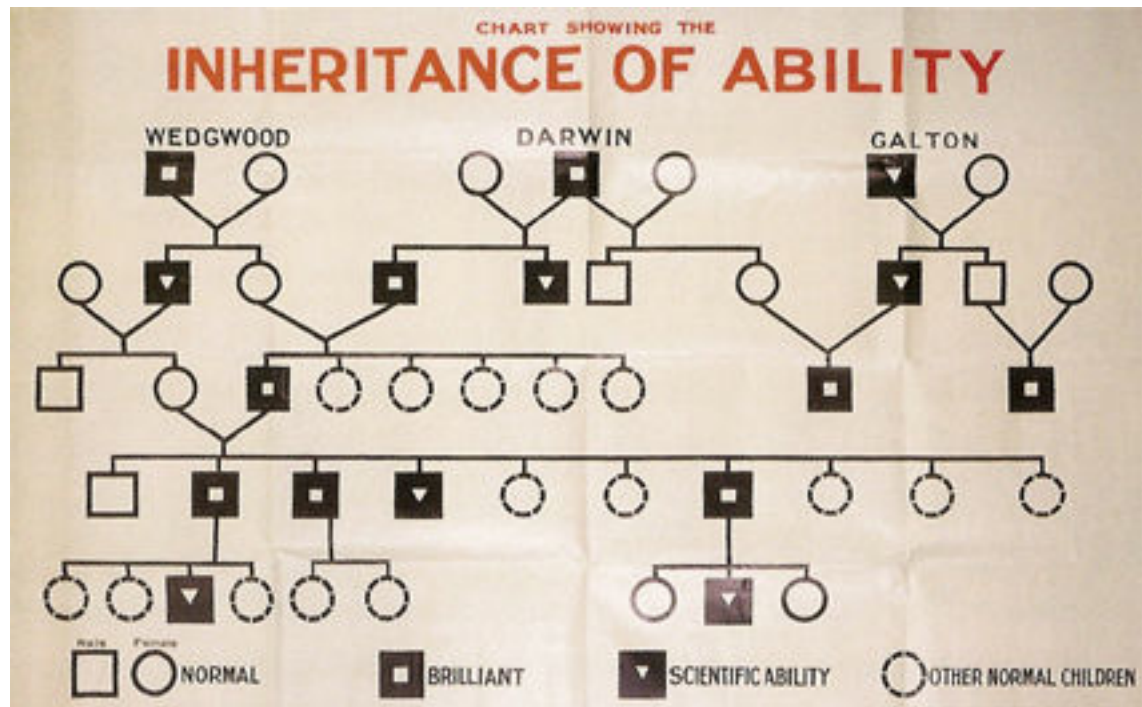


# Francis Galton (1869)



## High achievement and expertise:

- innate capacity
- zeal
- power to work hard





*Please, please*  
tell me!!!  
What is this  
“TALENT”?  
What should I  
look for?  
Tell me how to  
measure it!!

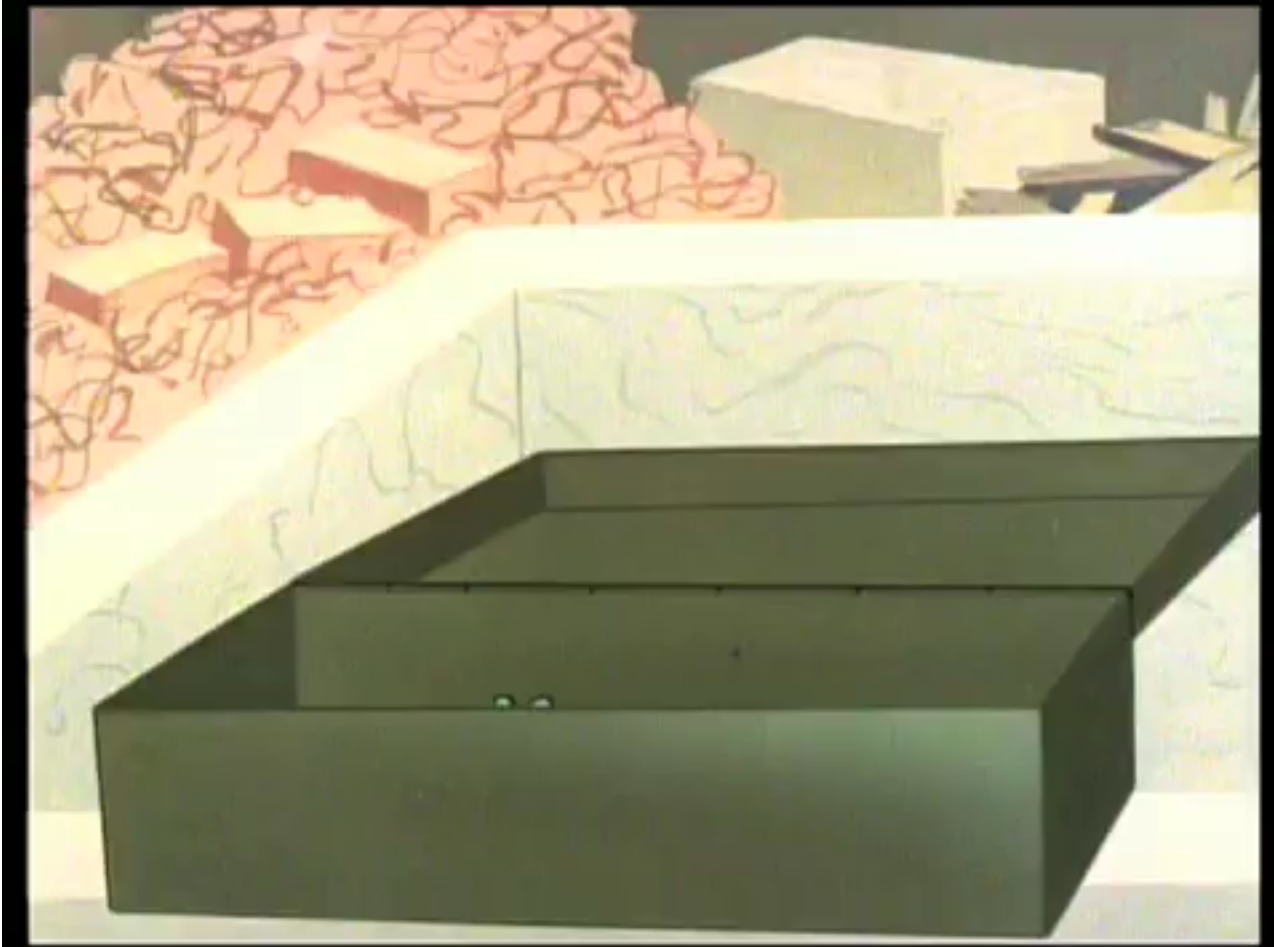
**COMING  
Attractions**

# Talent Show





**Do you know talent when you  
see it?**





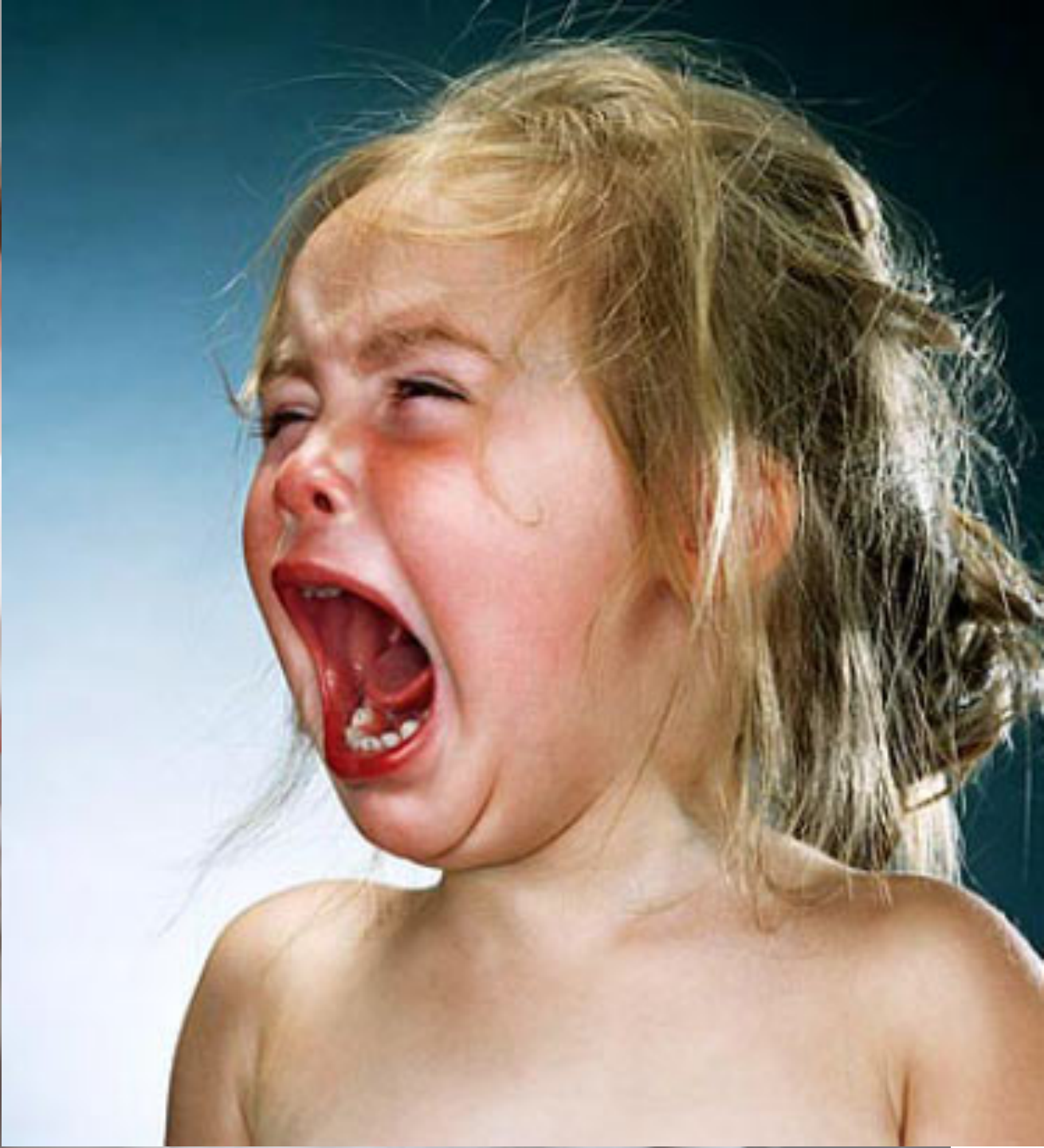
What does it mean  
to be Gifted and  
Talented?



# Competitive Parenting









So does a person's  
genetic platform  
dictate their talent?

Can coaching  
influence talent?

What about the  
environment's  
influence on  
talent?



**Begin with the  
End in Mind.**

# Take Home Message

- ✓ There is more than 1 way to make a champion (regardless of sport, team or individual, male or female)
- ✓ Cultural influence is **LARGE** (“Hunger in paradise”)
- ✓ Design, deliver and support programs for mental skill development (often distinguishes better performers)
- ✓ Discourage year-round, single-sport specialization during childhood (with the exception of sports where peak performance is achieved before puberty)
- ✓ Be patient – wait for performance to emerge (select and eliminate too soon)

# Main points...

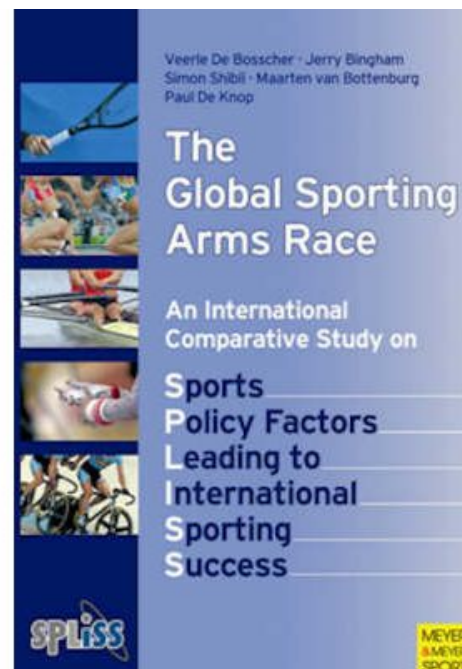
1. Consider the **BIG PICTURE** of performance.
2. Consider what makes the **INDIVIDUAL** athlete great.

*To achieve BOTH, you must be a "student of your sport"*



# A Conceptual Framework for Analysing Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success

*European Sport Management Quarterly,*  
Vol. 6, No. 2, 185–215, June 2006



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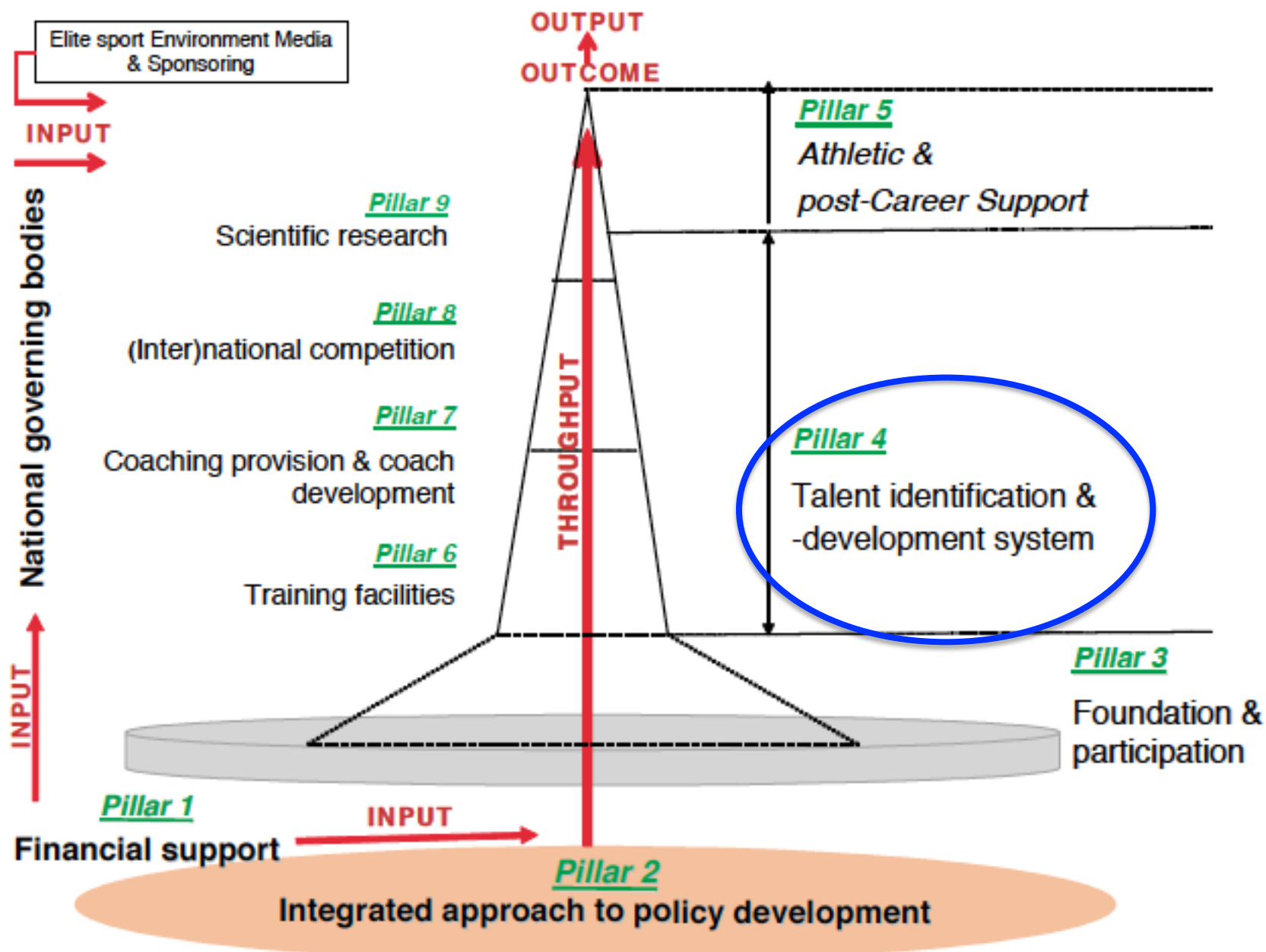
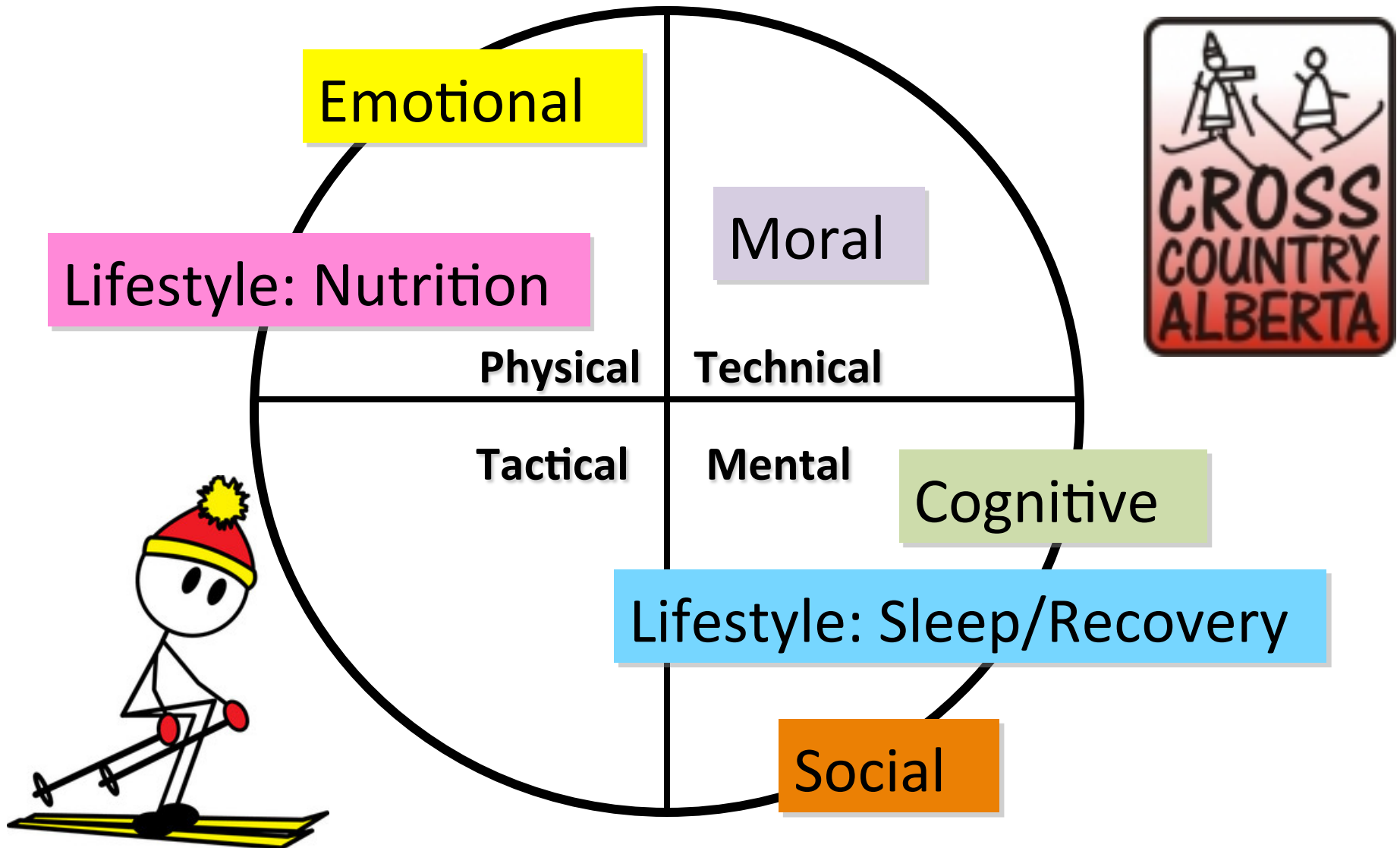


Figure 2. The nine pillars of sports policy factors influencing international success



# Components of Performance



# Definitions?

## **TALENT**

- a special natural (innate) ability or aptitude
- a capacity for achievement or success

## **SYNONYMS**

Gift – Aptitude – Ability – Faculty – Genius –  
Capability

# Talent...

## **Identification**

- the search for promising performers already in a given sport

## **Development**

- advancing and improving the performance of an athlete in a given sport

## **Detection**

- the discovery of potential performers not currently in the sport of interest

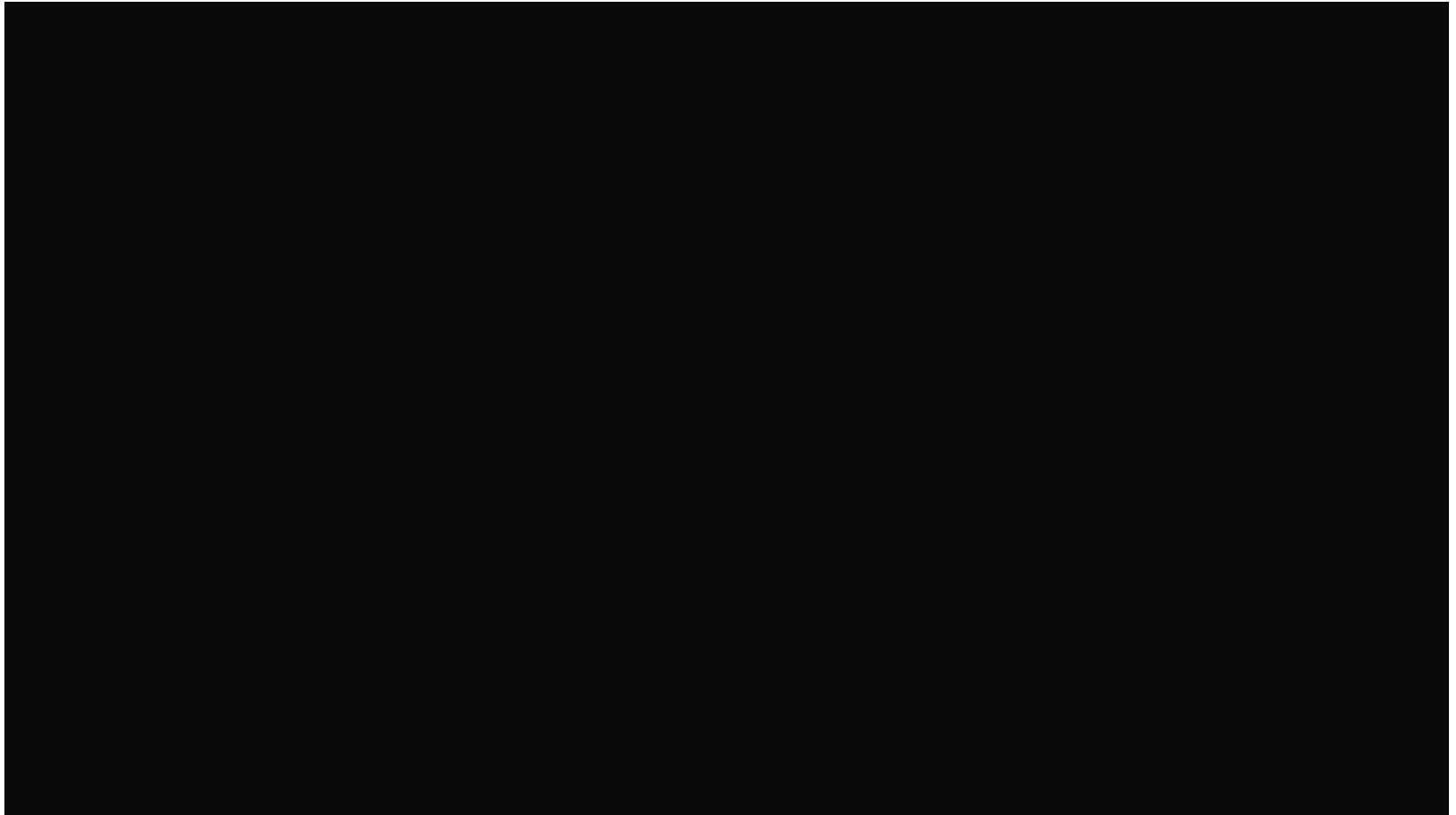
## **Retention**

- maintain contribution to high performance in a given sport

## **Transfer**

- later introduction of proven performers from other sports into a new sport

# Talent...not for the faint of heart!



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"If you manage people or are a parent (which is a form of managing people), drop everything and read *Mindset*."

—GUY KAWASAKI, author of *The Art of the Start*

# mindset

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS

HOW WE CAN  
LEARN TO FULFILL  
OUR POTENTIAL

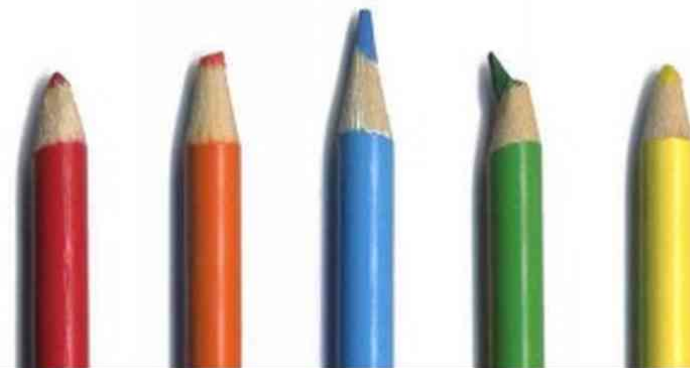
\*parenting  
\*business  
\*school  
\*relationships

"Will prove to be one of the most influential books ever about motivation."

—Po BRONSON, author of *NurtureShock*

CAROL S. DWECK, Ph.D.

# How CHILDREN SUCCEED



GRIT, CURIOSITY, and the  
HIDDEN POWER of CHARACTER

**PAUL TOUGH**

AUTHOR OF *Whatever It Takes*



**adapt**



GA

T





Perseverance

passion







MOZART, FEDERER, PICASSO, BECKHAM,  
AND THE SCIENCE OF SUCCESS



MATTHEW SYED

THE CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOK OF

## Expertise and Expert Performance

EDITED BY

K. Anders Ericsson  
Neil Charness  
Paul J. Feltovich  
Robert R. Hoffman



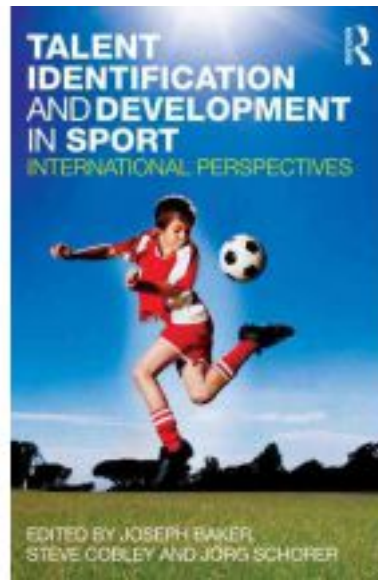
# Outliers



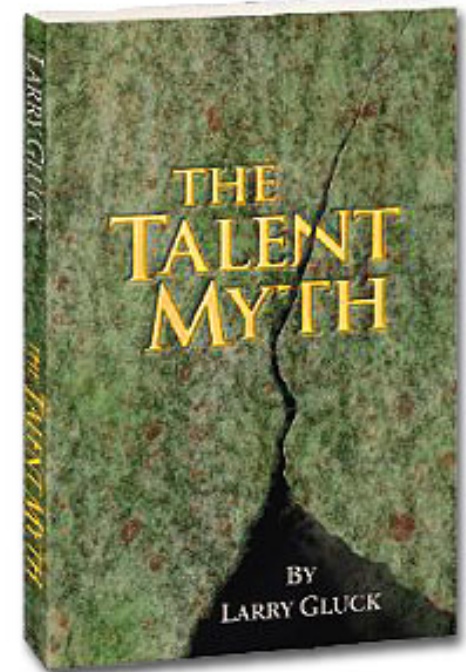
THE STORY OF SUCCESS

MALCOLM  
GLADWELL

1 bestselling author of *The Tipping Point* and *Blink*



EDITED BY JOSEPH BAKER,  
STEVE COBLEY AND JÖRG SCHÖFER



THE



CODE

UNLOCKING THE SECRET OF SKILL

IN SPORTS, ART, MUSIC, MATH,  
AND JUST ABOUT ANYTHING

DANIEL COYLE

author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Lance Armstrong's War*

How good do we  
think *WE* are?







Photo: Tyler Anderson



Photo: CP/Rowing Canada Aviron



**REGISTER NOW**  
**SPACE IS LIMITED**  
[CSIPACIFIC.CA](http://CSIPACIFIC.CA)

# DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

EVER WONDER IF **YOU** COULD BE AN OLYMPIAN?

## **PODIUM SEARCH™** Talent Identification Camp

@ Canadian Sport Institute – PISE  
 4371 Interurban Road, Victoria BC

Join us **Sunday, May 26** to test your fitness and athleticism and find out how you stack up to National Team Athletes!

### **TO PARTICIPATE, YOU MUST BE:**

- Aged 15-22
- Competing in ANY sport at a minimum of club / regional level
- Fit, powerful and strong
- Mentally tough, competitive and highly motivated
- Ready to accept the challenge of becoming part of Canada's sporting elite

# Some clarity on the language

## OWN THE PODIUM

HIGH PERFORMANCE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

### ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

Development of talented athletes within enhanced environments

### ATHLETE IDENTIFICATION

Identification of new athletes based on measurable sport specific parameters

### ATHLETE TRANSFER

Transfer of talented athletes from one sport to another, based on significant attributes gained from their previous sporting background.

**Athlete Potential**









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SPORT FOR LIFE**




**CANADIAN  
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# Talent Development Models

1. Deliberate practice (Ericsson 1993 – 10 yrs/ 10,000 hours)
2. Developmental model of sport participation (Côté 1999 – sampling, deliberate play/ practice, specializing, investment)
3. Differentiated model of giftedness and talent (Gagné 2004)





**\*?#!**

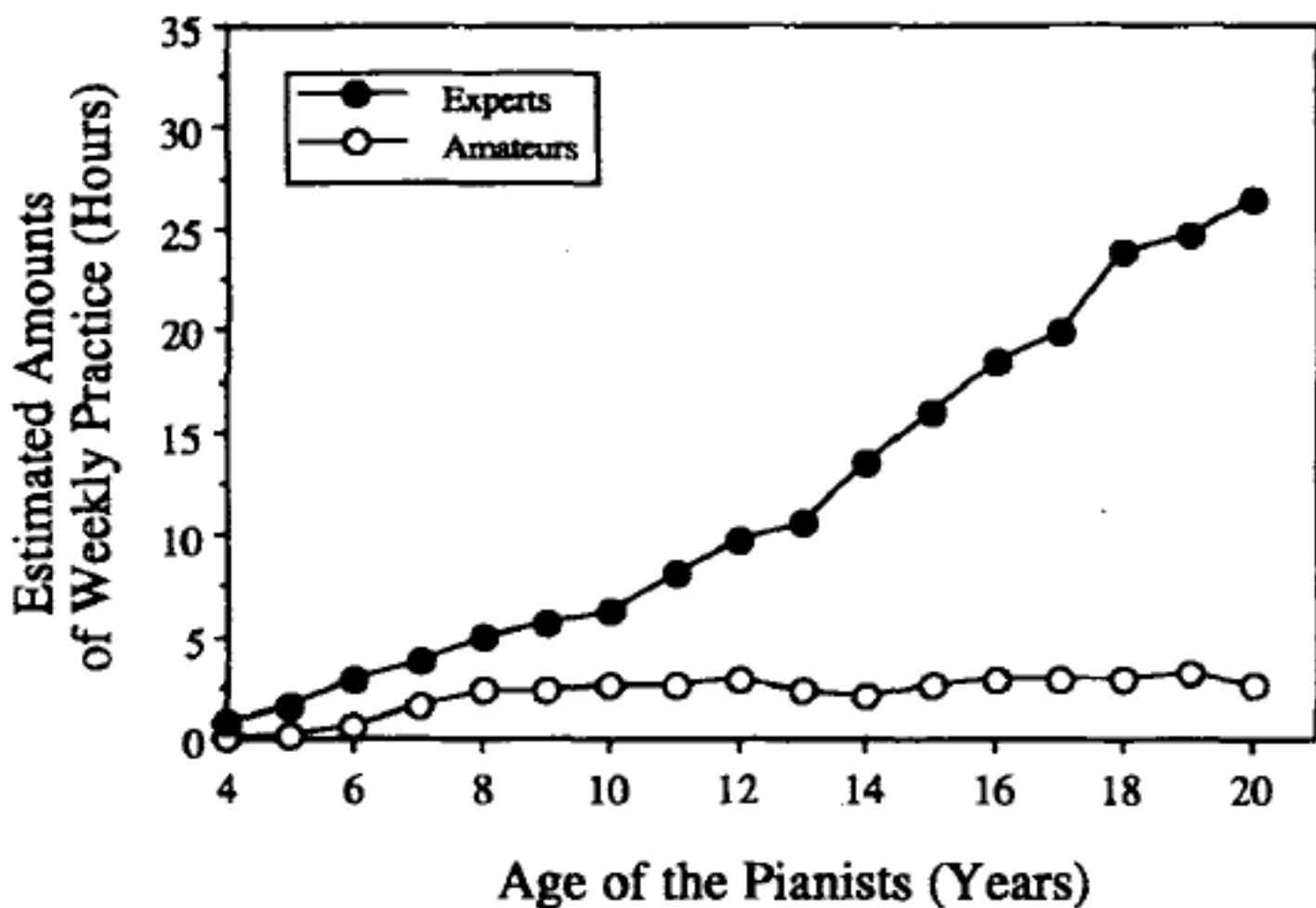
# Talent Development Models #1

1. Deliberate Practice (DPTF) – A new network of relationships that amount of time devoted to the practice of a skill is directly related to the level of performance

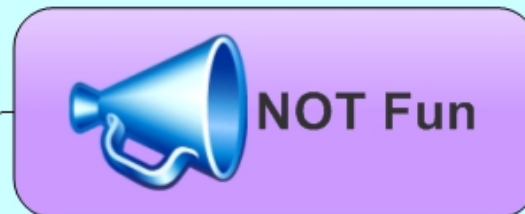
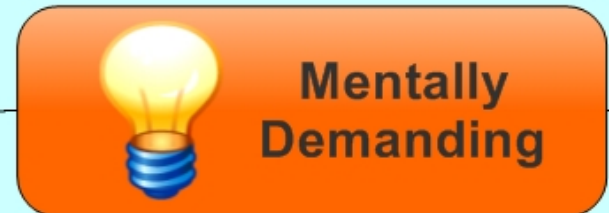
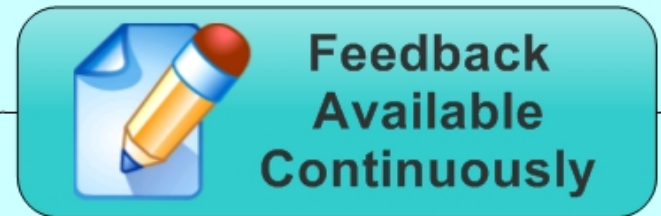
The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance  
K. Anders Ericsson, Ralf Th. Krampe, and Clemens Tesch-Römer

Psychological Review  
1993, Vol. 100, No. 3, 363–406





*Figure 11.* Estimated amount of time for practice alone at the piano as a function of age for expert pianists and amateur pianists.

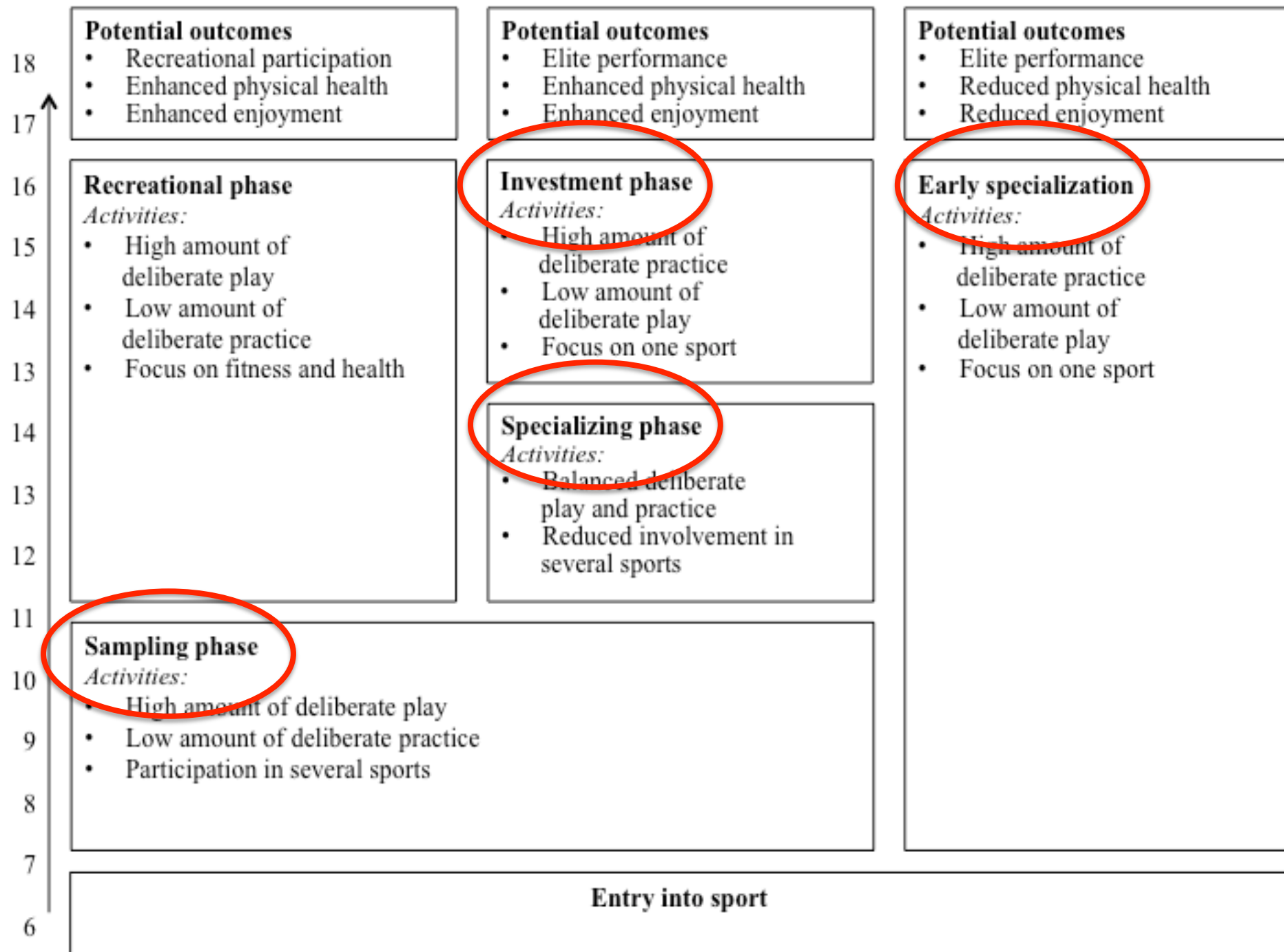


# Talent Development Models #2

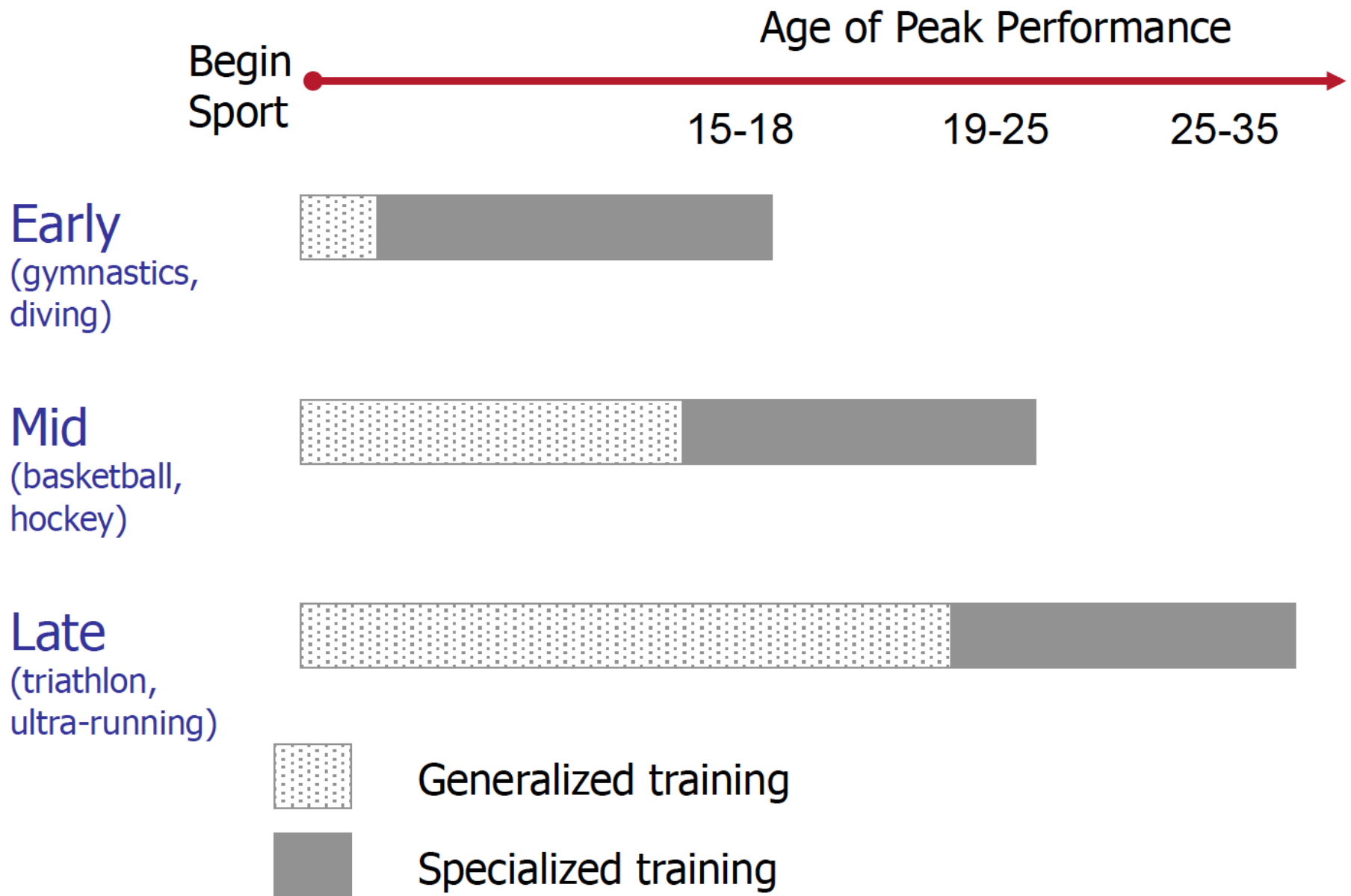
Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP – Cote 1999) -- identifies two distinct pathways to elite performance, namely early specialization and early sampling/diversification

*No contribution from innate abilities or genetic predisposition*

*Does not endorse 10,000-hour target*





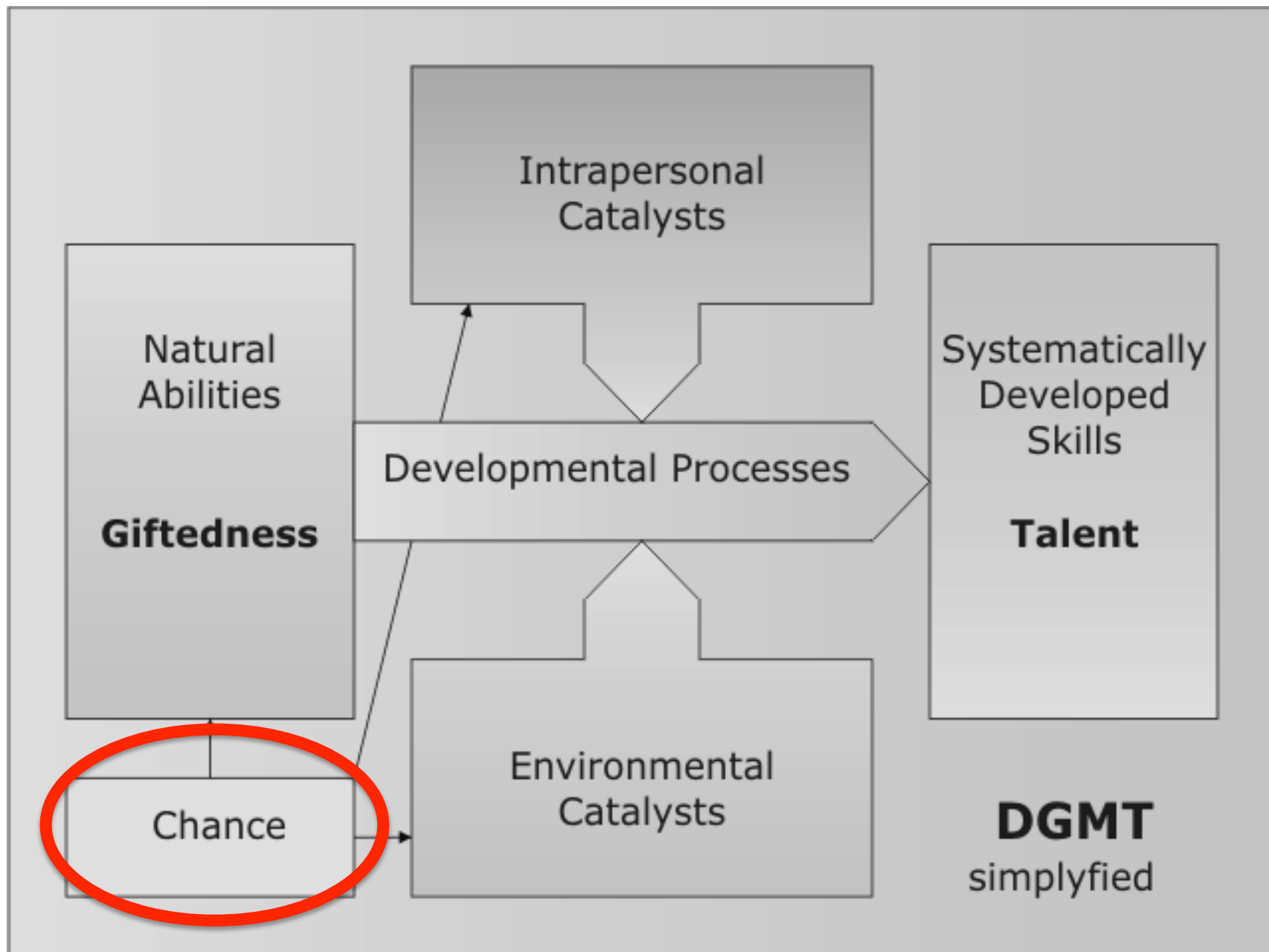


(Baker, 2011)

# Talent Development Models #3

Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) – Gagne 2004, 2010)

1. Gifts (G) “untrained and spontaneously expressed outstanding natural abilities or aptitudes”
2. Talents (T) “outstanding mastery of systematically developed competencies (knowledge and skills)”



# Distinguishes between gifts and talents

Gifts likely to show themselves in terms of how quickly and easily that an individual picks up new competencies

- in other words, “ease and speed of learning is the trademark of any type of giftedness”

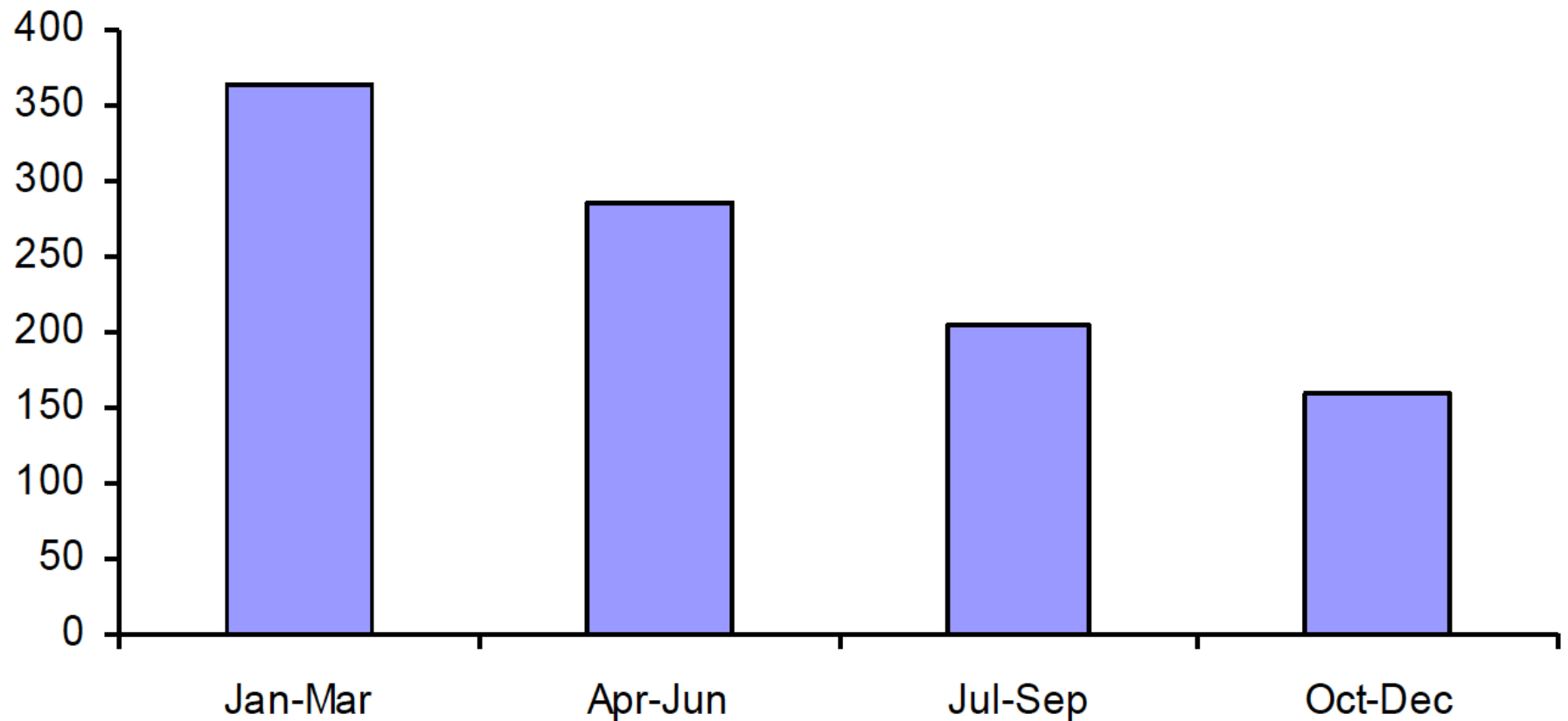


# Environmental catalysts

- size of community
- cultural value or worth of sport to the community/province/country
- relative age effect (age difference) and coefficient for age group participation
- integrated approach to athlete development (age/stage approach)
- family support (physical, emotional, logistical)
- coaches (are they a student of their sport and do they know growth and development?)

**CHANCE**

# Relative Age Effect in NHL Draftees 2000-2005

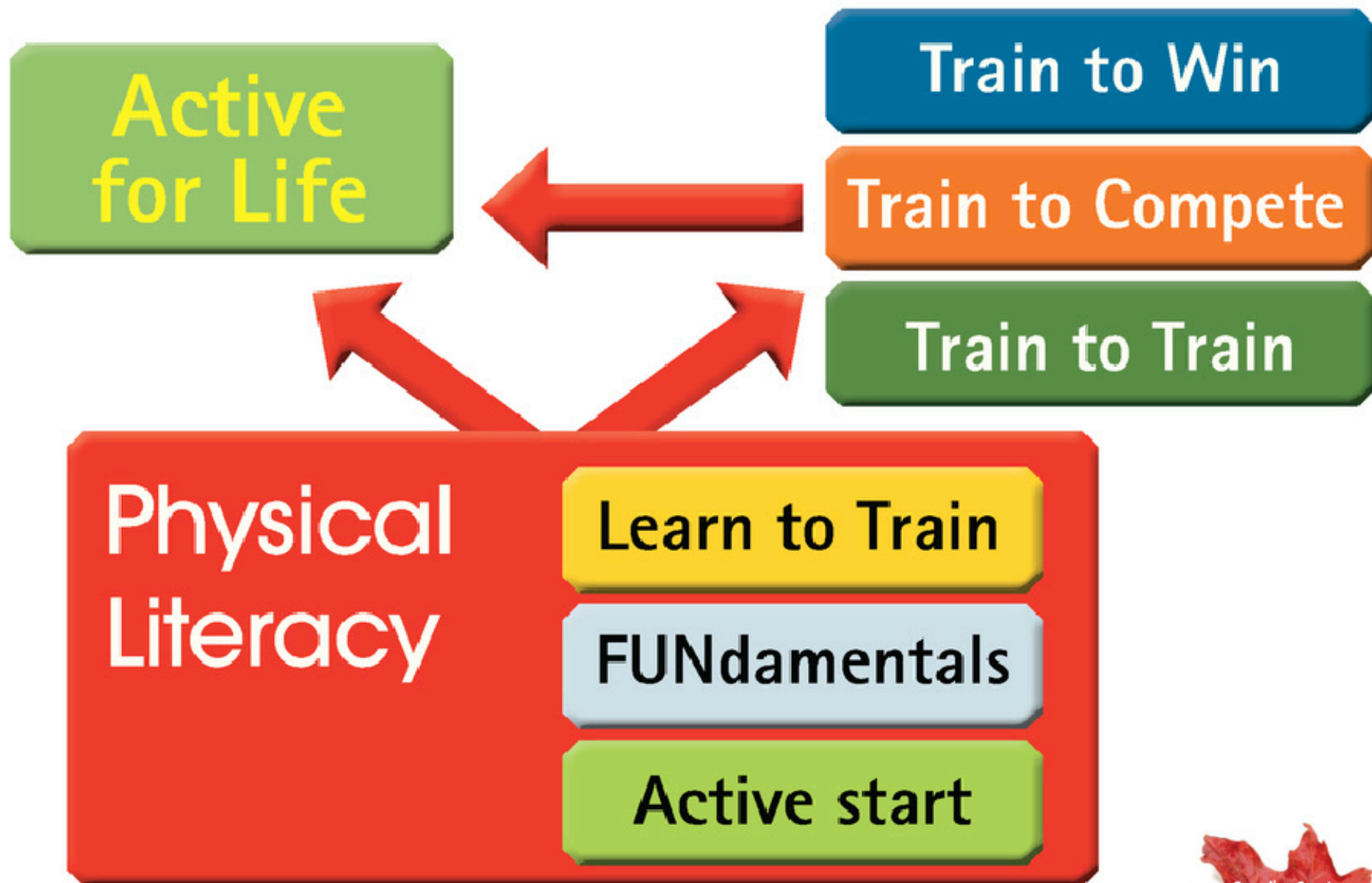


(Baker, 2011)



*Physical Literacy*





# Literacy Model

## Literacy

- ABC
- Words
- Sentences



## Numeracy

- 123
- Fractions
- Equations



## Music

- Do-re-mi
- Scale
- Score



## Physical Literacy

- Fundamental movements
- Sequences
- Tasks





Agility



Balance



Co-ordination



Speed



Jumping



Climbing



Walking



Skating



Hopping



Swimming



Skipping



Balance



Throwing



Dribbling



Kicking



Throwing



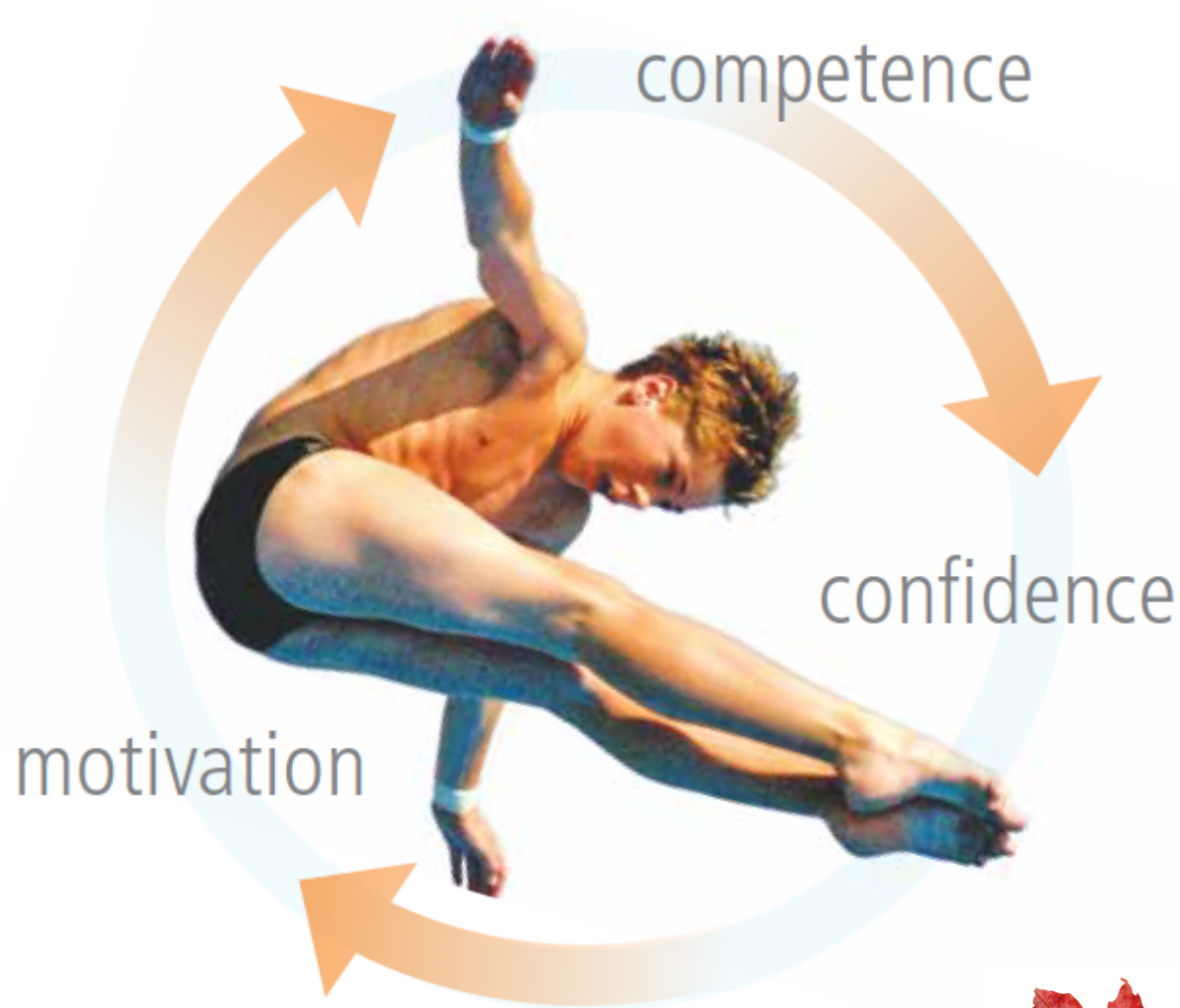
Hitting



Catching



People who are physically literate have the competence, confidence and motivation to enjoy a variety of sports and physical activities.




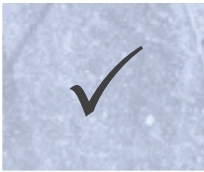












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*quality sport & physical activity*

# PHYSICAL LITERACY

STRUCTURED

INDOORS

	Ground	Water	Ice/ Snow	Air
 Body				
 Locomotor				
 Object				
	Ground	Water	Ice/ Snow	Air

UNSTRUCTURED

OUTDOORS



If you  
can't



Catch  
Jump  
**Run**  
Swim  
Throw

You won't  
take part in



If you  
can't



Catch  
Jump  
**Throw**  
Swim  
Run

You won't  
take part in

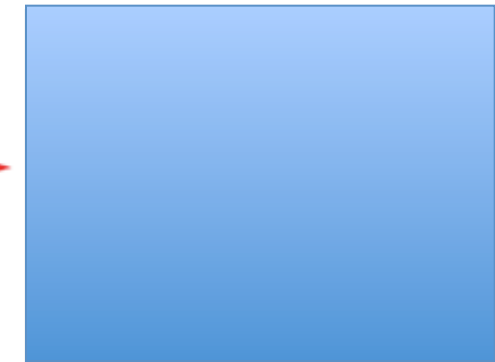


If you  
can't



Throw  
Jump  
**Swim**  
Catch  
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You won't  
take part in





# Canadian Sport for Life's Three Key Outcomes





# Take Home Message

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