



"I see boys when they arrive at our academy and it seems obvious to me that despite being the best young footballers there are, many of them are lacking in what I can only describe as basic athletic skills!"

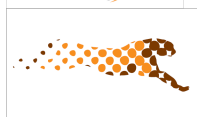
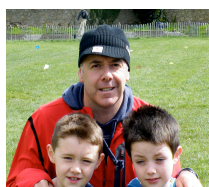
Sir Alex Ferguson, May 2003

Well done to everyone over the last term. You have all been great this term, and many thanks for all your hard work.

The work we covered this term relates on how best to develop speed, acceleration, deceleration and dynamic agility etc. Our focus is on creating a **multilateral athletic development programme**. So what do we mean by this.? Children are not mini adults !. We wouldn't expect our 10 year son to find a full time job or get our 15 year old daughter to pay the mortgage !. Why then in the sporting context do we expect young athletes to train, compete, think and react like adults ? Young athletes are exposed to conditioning programmes that are often too challenging for their physical and neurological capacities, and often mentally to approach matches like elite sporting stars. I see this far too often in young children aged 8-14 years olds.

Young athletes are NOT mini adults. They have very specific and physical laws associated with their development. Children go through huge changes physically, physiologically, emotionally and socially as they ascend in age and it only makes logical sense that coaches, teachers and parents understand these age related issues and learn how to programme for them.

From being in the children's fitness industry full time I see so many young athletes on high impact "peaking by Saturday" programmes. Schools and sports club who train twice a week in preparation for the BIG match on Saturday ?. Within our programme we try and refer to the slow progression or development of an athlete over several years. The concept essentially relates to exposing the athletes to as much athletic stimuli as possible as they mature. From a practical point of view, that no under no circumstances should young athletes become specialist in any one sport. The whole point of multilateral athletic development is to generate as much athleticism as possible



Scientific research states that it takes eight-to-twelve years of training for a talented player/athlete to reach elite levels. This is called the ten-year or 10,000 hour rule, which translates to slightly more than three hours of practice daily for ten years (Ericsson, et al., 1993; Ericsson and Charness, 1994, Bloom, 1985; Salmela et al., 1998). Unfortunately, parents and coaches in many sports still approach training with an attitude best characterized as "peaking by Saturday," where a short-term approach is taken to training and performance with an over-emphasis on immediate results. Over emphasis on competition in the early phases of training will always cause shortcomings in athletic abilities later in an athlete's career.

I hope you find the information both relevant and interesting in terms of your own child's development. Our FUN sessions for the children have an underlay of theory which we try and follow throughout the year. If they follow the programme on a yearly basis, then the young athlete will enhance their athleticism. But also become stronger, faster, have increased ROM and also become safer on the field of sport. If you do have any queries in regards to the above please feel free to contact me

I look forward to seeing you again within our classes and I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year. **Aled**