Good sport development environments

*a study on successful Swedish elite sport environments.*

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Successful talent development environments

...teams or clubs (environments) which continuously manage
to produce elite sport athletes from their junior sport
programs and give them resources to manage future career

(Alferman & Stambulova, 2007)

The aim of the project

...to study the dynamic processes of successful Swedish
talent development environments
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Underlying questions:

• How do different actors describe successful sporting environments?

• Is it possible to identify similarities and differences in the successful environments that continuously develop new elite athletes from their youth program?

ATDE: Athlete Talent Development Environment

(Henriksen, 2010 Bronfenbrenner)
Methods

STEP 1
• Interviews 12 Sport federations:
  • Badminton, Basketball, Soccer, Athletics, Handball, Floorball, Ice hockey, Figure skating, Orienteering, Swimming, Shooting and Tennis.

STEP 2
• Data collections on regional/local level within inom sex sports:
  • Basketball, Soccer, Athletics, Ice hockey, Swimming and Tennis

STEP 3
• Summarizing of interviews
• Analysis in relation to research and theoretical framework
• Report

STEP 4
• Interviews with top athletes:
  • Significant factors on the road to elite level
  • Special focus on environmental factors – “on the way”
  • Critical incidents/periods of significance for their development.

Results
Successful development environments

- Organisation, culture and material resources
- Social factors
- Coaches’ sport and pedagogical competence

Organisation, culture and material resources

- Culture with clear goals – open-minded, no prestige
- Established, value-based and clear vision: a positive slowness
- Confidence: in this environment you can develop and become successful.
- Structured, well organised activities
- Progression, long term perspective – a red thread
- **Long-term perspective**
  - regarding goals and strategies
  - individual development
- **Significant persons** (i.e. coaches) importance for structured activities and long-term development of young athletes.

- **Material resources** – physical training environment
- **Relevant facilities** – close to the facilities – Access
- Not necessarily the best facilities but **most possible access**...

- **Competence** regarding the material resources **within the team of coaches**, significant others of great importance
Social factors

- Holistic perspective on the athlete
  - Not a young female football player – a young girl playing football
  - Holistic program design – sport/school family/friends
- Not only focus on sport – consideration is given to other factors that concern the athletes and allow them to focus on their sporting development
- Social safety net
  - Social support from coaches, parents, friends, etc. but also a support system – ex. medical service, nutrition, and mental training/support
- Importance of coaches and managers

Social factors

- Training group very important for a good social and motivating environment
- Access to suitable sparring, challenging training/development.
- No barriers between training groups, development from junior – elite
- Interaction between established and younger athletes – good role models
- Supporting relations and friendship regardless of athlete’s level/performance
Coaches’ sport and pedagogical competence

• Coaches significant:
  • Long-term focus, cooperation, open-minded/development-oriented climate, etc.
  • Training methods according to age and level, interaction between age groups and level – good role models
  • A good relation between children, parents and sport.
  • How facilities are used.

• Total competence within the group of coaches and leaders/managers crucial
  • Coach competence not person-related, makes the training environment less vulnerable for changes in staff
  • Open atmosphere no prestige between coaches/managers – even in other environments.

• Planned development of coaches and managers
• Strategy for recruitment of “talented” coaches
Coaches’ sport and pedagogical competence

- Total sport and pedagogical competence in the coach group.
- Sport can/has learn from knowledge about development environments for young people, i.e. from schools (?)
- Genuine sport (content) knowledge – but also pedagogical competence = pedagogical content knowledge:
  - Coach must have genuine knowledge within his/her sport
  - Good knowledge about how good training is organised,
  - how different knowledge is taught/trained,
  - Good understanding of athletes learning

Summary

- Organisation, culture and material resources
- Social factors
- Coaches’ sport and pedagogical competence
- The coaches need extended competence to run and lead good development environments.
- Further the organisations need administrative competence to manage the environments and to take the overall responsibility for the development with a long-term perspective.

Education?! Recruiting Development
Socio-cultural Perspectives on Successful Talent Development Environments in Sports.

Q & A

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