

THE TRAINER MAGAZINE

FOR PARENTS & COACHES

EARLY SPECIALISATION, DOES IT REALLY WORK ?

Stephen Green consultancy

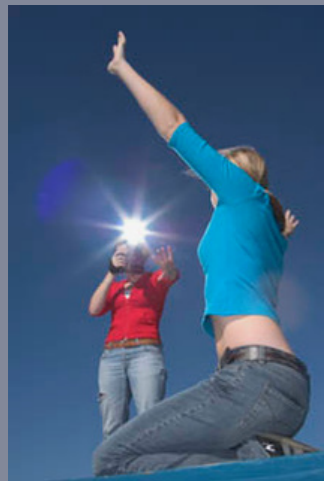
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Welcome to our guests, Julian Goater & John Powell



A new practical guide to training for runners of all abilities and ages, drawing on Julians experiences in the 1980's which are equally relevant today. This book concentrates on the art rather than the science of running and forms a valuable view point on high level performance.



Professional photographer John Powell has worked in the field for many years. Here he shares his knowledge on how to take high quality shots and the pitfalls to avoid. John will be writing a tip a month to help parents record their child's progress in sport with great photographs

Editors note

In this issue I have brought together some more people who excel in their field. I have also written some pieces based on discussions and questions that I have had with coaches and parents. As always in these matters it's just my view point. It doesn't make it a statement of fact. Human beings come in many different packages and it's virtually impossible to state that one way is right or wrong.



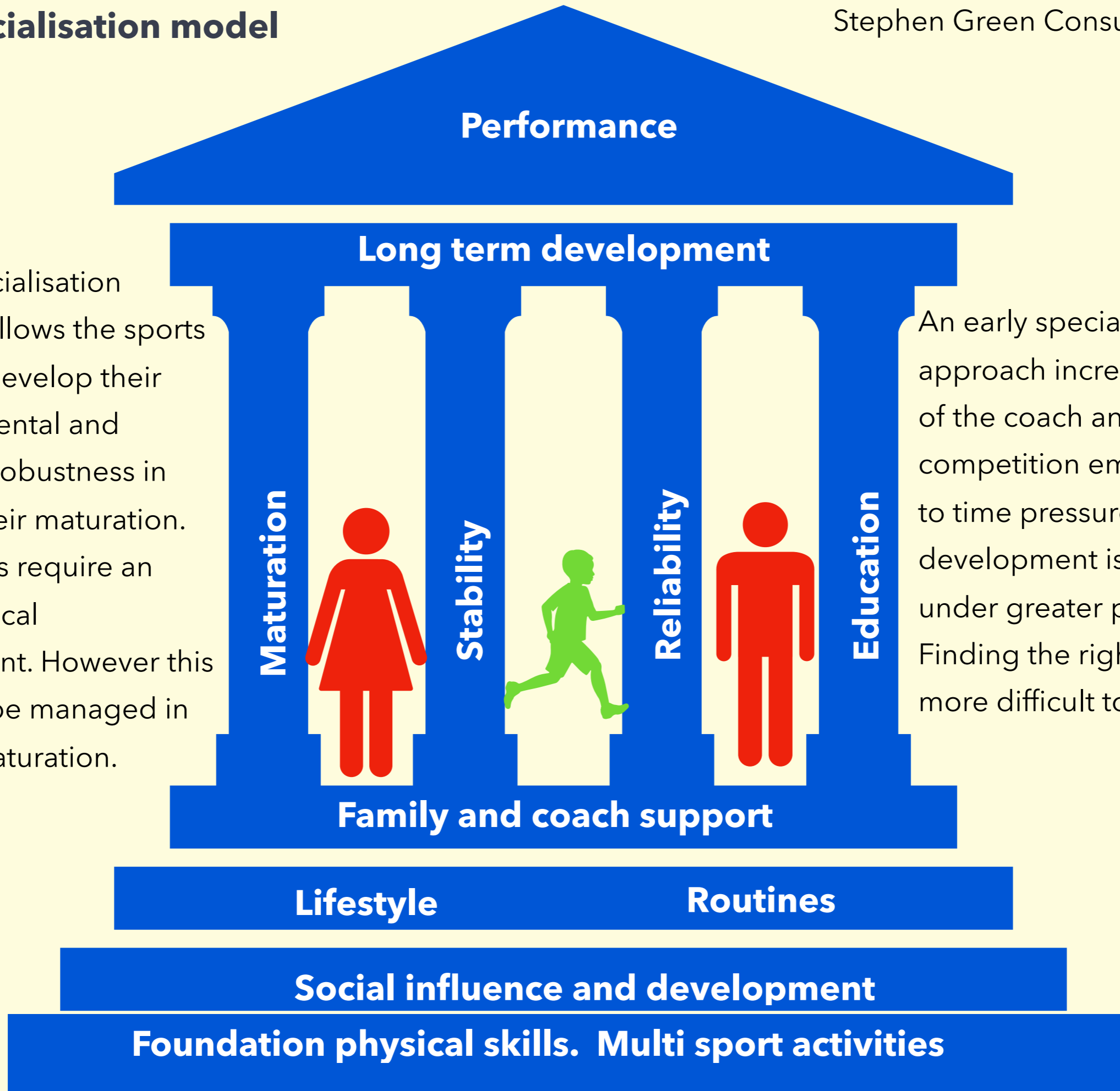
EARLY SPECIALISATION

Is it a case of 'act in Haste, repent at leisure'?

Throughout my time in high performance sport I have been involved in many projects that have sought the early identification and selection of young talented sports people. Methods have been adopted, applied and monitored, results have been analysed and discussed. Educational institutions throughout the world trawl the planet for talent to populate their sports programmes. Governing bodies do their best to offer guidance and support in order to maintain a balanced approach to a young sports persons development. Parents are often torn between making the right or wrong decisions. Coaches who have often developed and nurtured this talent from a young age are cut from the loop without a second thought to the invaluable insight that they have built up over the formative years. I believe that transition through the different levels, which often involves a change of coach and or venue could be handled more effectively by simply attaching the gathered information to the young sports person. The new coach would then have the benefit of saving time on having to rediscover what is already known

Some sports require earlier specialisation than others. This is very understandable and often involves the area of technique. Establishing a technique brings with it physical challenges on a young persons body and mind. In the case of a senior sports person, changes and development of new techniques are often preceded by physical preparation in order to avoid injury. In the case of the young this is often not the case as the child has started the sport with the intention of improving physical health.

A later specialisation approach allows the sports person to develop their physical, mental and emotional robustness in line with their maturation. Many sports require an early technical development. However this has still to be managed in line with maturation.



An early specialisation approach increases the role of the coach and competition emphasis, due to time pressures the social development is placed under greater pressure. Finding the right balance is more difficult to manage.

THE ART OF RUNNING FASTER by JULIAN GOATER

We live in a so called Age of Enlightenment when we expect to be able to explain anything and everything in terms of pure science, cause and effect. We are constantly bombarded with the science of peak performance and all the jargon that goes with it. Anaerobic threshold levels, blood lactate levels heart rate zones etc.

Athletes may find it interesting even comforting to know this information but the knowledge it self does not get you any fitter, nor does any set of measurements guarantee a particular performance in a race.

Nobody has yet succeeded in proving the link between one training session and any resulting improvement in performance. Nor is there any concrete information on the time it takes for any training effect to take place. The optimum volume and intensity of training sessions and the speed with which it takes effect varies, not only between individuals but also at different times for the same individual. And all this is before you start to consider the power of the mind and the effect that has on performance. Visualisation, concentration, psyching yourself up and other people out are all very well.- but what stimulates and controls the real power and energy of the mind.

The numerous studies in this field often result in confusing and sometimes downright contradictory advice on how often and how hard to train ! Just because a certain training regime has worked for one athlete does not necessarily mean it will work for you! There is no magic formula, there are no magic sessions. We are all individuals with different strengths and weaknesses , with different lifestyles and with different environments in which to train.

So training should of course be founded on scientific principles and observations, but training is not all about science- perhaps 50% is about the art of training, Intuition, feelings, motivation. Not to mention the inevitable drift towards chemically aided performance.

TRAINER



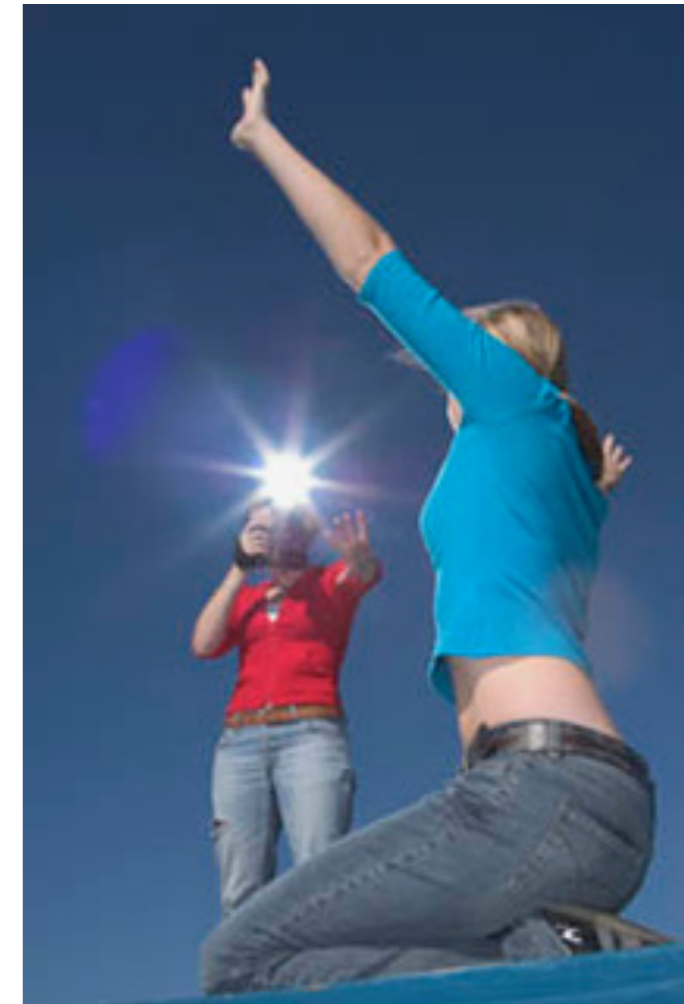
TALES

Nerves are a funny thing. Many years ago whilst representing my country in a match in Sweden I was placed on the third leg of the 4 x100 relay. The stadium was full to capacity on a warm summer evening and the points in the match were close between the five nations taking part. I prepared my marker, carefully measuring out the pigeon steps. Checked my number was properly pinned to my vest and that my hands were sweat free. The official indicated that we get ready so I took my tracksuit off and realised that in front of a capacity crowd I had forgotten to put my shorts on.

Flash! Top tips for taking better pics

Recording your child's sporting progress with photos is great, here professional photographer John Powell gives a tip a month on how to take shots like a pro.

If the subject you are photographing is moving fast, you need a fast shutter speed or a lot of light so that the image will not appear as a blur. In daylight or low light turn on the flash to help reduce the blur.



John can be contacted by email jp@644644.com

Please note that in order to comply with child protection guidelines, you must seek permission from the event organiser to take photographs that may contain images of other children. Contact your governing body for guidance.

MANAGING SUCCESS

As a sports person gains success I have followed with great interest the changing dynamic that often occurs around the group that provide support. Energy levels created around success are often one of the main causes for a programme to go off track. Recognition of the early signs and carefully managed interventions can return a programme back to its successful path.

Stage 1. Initial success. Usually created through a combination of normal coaching factors. Simple regular work rates and a settled environment.

Stage 2. The introduction of additional expertise, Strength and conditioning, nutrition. Psychology etc



Stage 3 The tipping point. Increased pressure, the breakdown of communication between the support team. Dominating commercial interests presenting time management issues Increased size of entourage leading to poor and ill informed decisions.

Stage 5. Steady return to successful outcomes.

Stage 4. Review and establish routines. Agree a clear line of decision making. Training to take priority & rest and recovery then other commitments to be managed realistically.



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sgreenfitness@hotmail.com