



# 'Managing Talented Young Players - Avoiding Burnout'

Visit of Dr Istvan Balyi to Loughry College Cookstown  
Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2003

## Report to Ulster Council and Lottery Unit

### Introduction

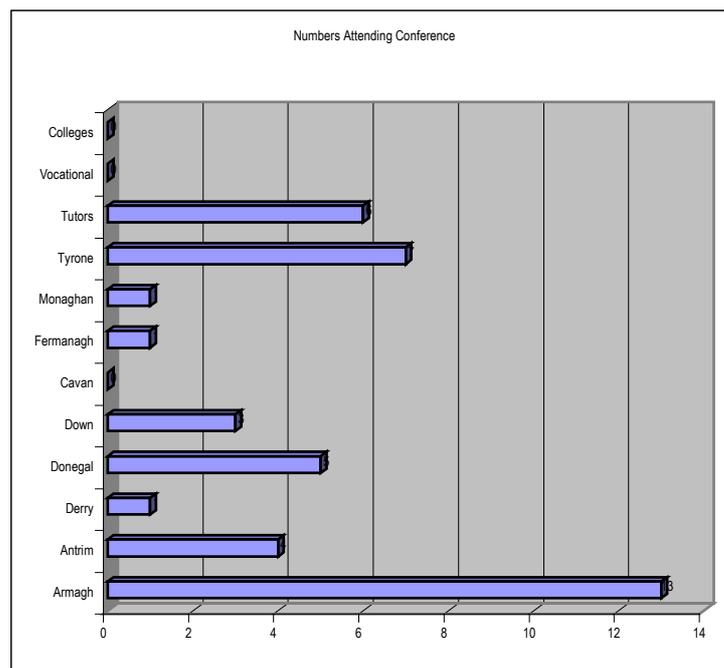
Following a workshop on the 31 March 2003 on Player Burnout this Conference was designed to help Ulster Coaches and Administrators address some of the issues in relation to the Management and Development of Talented Young players. The issues of player burnout have again manifested themselves with the intake of the current Sports Institute Squad. Up to 75% have chronic injuries that will take considerable time to put right. It call into question the system of training and competition that we currently have in the preparation and development of young players.

Dr. Pat Duffy (National Coaching and Training Centre, Limerick) and Dr Istvan Balyi (International Advisor on Long Term Player Development) are driving the National initiative to address the NGB systems for development. Dr Balyi presented the Keynote at the one-day Conference on the Management and Development of Young Players. The opportunity was provided to schools, colleges, counties and higher education to have an input to the proceedings.

Dr. Duffy provided an overview of the current trends in development of young players in Irish Sport and introduced the idea that it takes 10 years to make an elite player. Dr Balyi picked up from this point and delivered his keynote on the Long Term Player Development Model. Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English Sports Councils are currently adapting this. After lunch workgroups reviewed allocated stages of the model and key issues within each of the stages emerged. Dr. Balyi took questions and made some observations. These are summarised below.

### Attendance

Overall the attendance was disappointing given the publicity for the event and the fact that we had a world-class speaker presenting





new and innovative material.

This highlights the pressure and problems the Coaching and Games Development Officers have marketing events within their counties. In addition the non-attendance by the Schools and Colleges was disappointing as the subject material was directly relevant to the young player under their supervision during a key stage of their development. There are numerous coaches who would have loved the opportunity to listen to Dr. Balyi and unfortunately this opportunity has now passed them by.

### **Feedback from Work Groups**

Feedback from each Group is based on the Six Stages identified within the Balyi Model is outlined below. It is important that all agencies have an input so that we can work together to protect our talented performers. Key concepts are identified and issues raised at each stage are highlighted:

#### **FUNdamentals (Male 6-9) (Females 6-8)**

##### ❖ Key Balyi Concepts

- FUN and Participation
- General Overall Development
- ABC's of Athletics, Run, Throw, Jump
- ABC's of Agility, Balance, Coordination
- Medicine Ball, Swiss Ball, Own body for Strength Exercises
- Simple Rules of the Game
- Well Structured Programme activity 5/6 times per week
- Training to Competition Ratio 50:50

##### ❖ Key Points Emerging

- ✓ Lack of volunteers with a current focus on games and drills
- ✓ Poor club / school links
- ✓ Coaches are success driven and not qualified
- ✓ Games played 15 a side with adult rules
- ✓ Lack of coaching knowledge re this stage of development
- ✓ Small sided Games with conditions and fun
- ✓ Foundation Course changed to FUNdamentals Course
- ✓ Forum for Best Practice for Underage
- ✓ County Board be Proactive in Driving FUNdamentals

#### **Learning to Train (Males 9 -12) Females (8-11)**

##### ❖ Key Balyi Concepts

- Overall Sports Skills taught at this stage
- Major Skill Learning Phase, All basic sports skills learnt
- Mental - Cognitive and Emotional Development
- Introduction to mental preparation



- Medicine ball, Swiss ball, own body weight exerciser to develop strength
- Introduce Ancillary Capacities
- Talent Identification Stage
- Single Periodisation during the year
- Sports specific training 3 times per week, other sports 3 times per week
- Training to Competition Ration 75:25

#### Key Points Emerging

- ✓ Coded mini game focusing on ABC
- ✓ Quality coaches within two evolving pathways for performance and development - organised by the NGB
- ✓ Creation of a Badge system for technical achievement
- ✓ FOD and GPO working in Primary Sector with FUNdamentals programme
- ✓ Get the right equipment - Awards for All program can help.
- ✓ Physical Fitness - introduce the use of medicine balls and as such the need for specific courses that teach coaches how to use these with this age group
- ✓ Child centred - child prepared for coaching at this stage.

#### Training to Train (Males 12-16) Females (11-15)

##### ❖ Key Balyi Concepts

- Sports Specific Skills
- Major Fitness Development Phase (aerobic and strength, PHV (peak Height Velocity) is the reference point)
- Mental- Cognitive and emotional development
- Develop further Metal Preparation
- Introduce Free weights
- Develop further Ancillary capacities
- Frequent musculoskeletal evaluations during PHV
- Selection
- Single or Double Periodisation
- Sports specific training 6-9 times per week
- Training to Competition Ration 60:40

##### ❖ Key Points Emerging

- ✓ Define the Engine and Build the Engine
- ✓ Focus on Five S's
- ✓ Coach the Coaches to deliver at this stage
- ✓ Emphasis on skill development and reduce competition
- ✓ Teach technique for strength training
- ✓ Develop speed with every session
- ✓ Develop Games Sense
- ✓ Share Good Practice



## **Training to Compete (Males 16-18) Females (15 - 17)**

- ❖ **Key Balyi Concepts**
  - Event position specific physical conditioning
  - Event, position specific technical preparation
  - Sport, event, position specific technical and playing skills under competitive conditions
  - Advanced mental preparation
  - Optimise Ancillary preparation
  - Specialisation
  - Double or triple Periodisation
  - Sports Specific technical and tactical and fitness training 9 - 12 times per week.
  - Training to Competition Ratios 40:60
- ❖ **Key Points Emerging**
  - ✓ Ration of training to Competition not correct
  - ✓ Result is the huge drop out at this age at club level
  - ✓ Coach education focusing at this stage crucial
  - ✓ Structures and development at club level essential for development at elite level
  - ✓ Apply technology at this level

## **Training to Win (Males 18+) Females (17+)**

- ❖ **Key Balyi Concepts**
  - Maintenance or improvement of physical capacities
  - Further development of technical, tactical and playing skills
  - Modelling all possible aspects of training and performance
  - Frequent prophylactic breaks
  - Maximise Ancillary Capacities
  - High Performance
  - Double or Triple or Multiple Periodisation
  - Sport-Specific Technical, Tactical and fitness 9 -15 times per week
  - Training and Competition Ratios: 20:80
- ❖ **Key Points Emerging**
  - ✓ Better Communication between 17 - 23
  - ✓ Hoping to peak players between 26 and 30
  - ✓ Plan and set goals for the individual
  - ✓ Training is Games Related - Play the Game with Intensity
  - ✓ Team Building and develop team system of play
  - ✓ Lifestyle management and Mental Focus

## **Retirement / Retainment**

- ❖ **Key Points**
  - Players move into sports related careers, coaching, officiating or administration



## Discussion

1. This was a challenging day for the coaches but it has emerged that to move many issues forward the coaches need the support of the administration.
2. A FUNdamentals (6-9 years) programme needs to be implemented for this target group within primary schools and clubs.
3. Learning to Train (9-12 years) includes the development of basic sports specific skills. In addition basic strength training (using body weight), nutrition, lifestyle and mental preparation can be introduced.
4. Training to Train (12-16 years) is where we are currently working with our development squads. The aerobic and strength base can be established here and an introduction to free-weights. This has already happened in some counties along with the introduction of the ancillary services. We do however need to reduce competition at this stage, 60:40 in favour of training.
5. Training to Compete (16-18 years) is a key stage for the preparation for All Ireland Minor Competition. The young player has School, Club and County commitments, compounded by academic commitments. Development squads in some counties have started to address lifestyle management with this group and provide position specific training within the squads sessions, In addition however there is a need to focus on game sense and optimise the ancillary services 40: 60 in favour of competition.
6. Training to Win (18+) focuses on the players coming out of Minor. Here there is the need to maintain and improve the physical capacities of the player and model all aspects of performance maximise all ancillary capacities. The training should be sports specific from a technical, tactical and fitness perspective. Some counties have initiated an U20 squad.
7. A change in competitive structures is essential for the long-term survival and the retention of the players in the game at the top level.
8. The Level 2 Course is designed to address the needs at development squad level. It introduces the ancillary services and discusses the role of the coaches with this age group. Dr Balyi's presentation will add value to the next Level 2 Programme as all the Master Tutors were in attendance.
9. Dr Balyi promoted much debate and discussion and the time is right to transfer his thoughts and concepts into the NGB system.
10. To be successful and to make the change it is necessary to have the support of the administration within counties and at Provincial level.
11. This will be taken forward at the Provincial Coaching and games Development Symposium on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> December 2003.



## Conclusion

- In many cases mediocre players are reaching the development squads and in some cases the senior County Squads.
- Windows of trainability especially in the early years are being missed in primary and junior club sport.
- Early adaptation to strength training is important and another window of trainability is often being missed.
- There is a Turf War going on between coaches who are focused in the team not the individual.
- Players at 19 years of age are in poor physical condition and have major medical problems. The conclusion has to be the impact of our current system on their development.
- Competition and training loads need to be reviewed.
- Preparation of children through the schools needs to be reviewed to allow their progressive development.
- Information gathered at this Forum should be shared with all key interested agencies.

## Recommendations

- Determine the balance between competition and training loads based on medical research and advice. Engage Croke Park in this process.
- Implement a FUNdamentals and Learning to Train programme in primary schools and junior clubs.
- Focus on the Training to Train and Training to Compete phases in Under 16 Development Squads and within Secondary and Grammar Schools.
- Provide opportunities post Minor for development at County Level.
- Provide the necessary support, and equipment to make this happen
- Invite Dr. Balyi to talk to key administrators within the Association in Ulster

Dr Eugene Young  
High Performance Director

Cc    Ulster Council Management  
      Report to Lottery Unit  
      Ulster Coaching Committee  
      Ulster Colleges  
      Ulster Vocational Schools  
      Cumann na mbunscoil  
      Higher Education Council  
      Dr Ben Glancy, Ulster Rep on Medical Issues @ Croke Park  
      Mr Adrian McGuckin, Ulster Rep on School Sport @ Croke Park