

Athlete Pathways

Off to Europe in a few days to try to help a number of organisations, coaches and athletes. One element of the agenda is an examination of 'Pathways'. I will attempt to steer decision-makers away from any further investment in the current interpretation of this exercise. In all the 'Pathways' I have witnessed in the last two decades I have seen the demise of appropriate athlete retention and progression. The bottom-line on current interpretations is that the minute you create a linear, one-dimensional series of administrative steps you say goodbye to any chance of an individual, holistic journey.

Because there are many valid ways of reaching the required outcome for each individual athlete as they attempt to journey towards optimal performance as an adult, any attempt at locking them into an inflexible series of steps, titles and boxes seems counter-productive. It may allow for a more effective and economical administrative process but does nothing to accommodate anyone but the bell-curve 'average' athlete.

Every organisation I have raised this issue with immediately countered with an argument that their interpretation was uniquely adaptable, flexible and in the interests of every coach and athlete. Strange that this series of arguments has never been backed up by the coaches and athletes. Time to try again.

"The fact that there is not a single, normal pathway for any type of human development (biological, mental, moral, or professional), forms the basis of the 3rd principle of individuality." Todd Rose – 'The End of Average'.

May 2019
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