

Paris 2024 Olympic Games - Australian Athletics Statistics

While the media and the bureaucracy love their 'medal tables' (pity the majority only count Gold medals – the medal tables would look a little different if they totalled ALL medals on a 3-2-1 scale), I am certain that performance assessment must look at other elements.

I would suggest that a means of assessing the health of a nation's senior High-Performance strategy is to focus on the productivity of the coach-athlete unit. Such an investigation would illustrate the height and depth of performance in the senior athlete population (which in turn would reflect the qualities of the longer-term Development strategies for the younger age-groups that feeds the elite layer). It would also illustrate the health of the coaching population in terms of expertise and experience. This would allow us to have a clearer picture of the focus of the bureaucracies and how much effort is put into the attraction, education, recruitment and lifelong support for coaches across ALL layers of the sporting journey.

Such an investigation would also illustrate the efficacy of the support mechanisms of sports-science and sports-medicine and administration. No matter what, the centre of focus must be on the coach-athlete unit which, for some bureaucracies, has proven to be a bridge too far.

In one sense the delivery of a personal best performance at the designated championship (in this case the Olympic Games) would be a natural measure. In many cases the coach-athlete unit is given a general four-year window in which to navigate the cycles and phases of work that hones the edge of the Physical, Technical, Tactical and Mental components. Usually, about 12-18 months out from the championships, more detail becomes available that assists the coach-athlete unit in their preparation. This secondary detail usually illustrates the time of day and the sequence of qualifying rounds to navigate.

Because of the usual quirks of any journey a 'season's best should also be considered as an appropriate measure of this health.

Based on the 71 athletes competing for Australia in Athletics in individual events the following statistics tell us much.

Personal Bests – 11.26%

Season's Bests – 15.49%

The 7 medalists displayed the following percentage of their personal best performances.

1. 98.5%
2. 96.5%
3. 100.97%
4. 99.79%
5. 100.61%
6. 99.94%

These medal standards display the critical importance of progression. In the early years, large chunks of progression occur simply because of natural growth and development. Progression in the 18-24 years age group (suggested as the high-performance apprenticeship period) depends on the number and type of limitations that have been brought forward from the development years and the performance actions taken within the coach-athlete unit.

It is time for the bureaucracies to transfer all performance matters back into the hands of powerful coaching infrastructures led by coaches, administered by coaches, for all coaches.