

## **The Sick Promotion of False Gods known as 'Gold Medal Makers'.**

The following is the best presentation I have seen in the last few days. It is from my colleague Wayne Goldsmith.

*"Participation is the key to everything...think about it.*

**Statement 1:** *"We've tested this kid. He's got a massive VO2 max, incredible acceleration, amazing agility and power scores off the chart".*

**Statement 2:** *He hates the sport. He doesn't come to training.*

**Statement 1:** *"We've got the latest, state-of-the-art training, strength/conditioning and recovery facilities. Best in the world".*

**Statement 2:** *Kids don't connect with or like the coach. So they don't come to training.*

**Statement 1:** *"This kid's the most talented 11-year-old we've ever seen in this sport. They could be anything".*

**Statement 2:** *Her friends stopped playing at 14. She dropped out at 15.*

*It really is this simple. Make it fun. Create an environment where friendships are formed and grow. Make it safe. Make it engaging. Build relationships then....when they turn up regularly, show them how amazing your sport, your club and your people can be.*

*The only kid who can't get better, is the one who is not there!*

*There is no PERFORMANCE without PARTICIPATION!" Wayne Goldsmith*

It is another reminder to listen to these appropriate arguments and then demand change at the Coach Development layers of your sport. Stop letting your NGB, your Club, your Schools and all the associated adult decision-makers get away with ignoring the development journey that spans the 6-18 age group layers. We have known all this for at least 40 years yet continue to see 'fast-tracking' and 'quick-fixing' to satisfy adult desires and self-serving adult strategies.

**WARNING - In the next few weeks (Paris Olympic Games) you will be swamped with the 'medal-count' language and vocabulary and the sick promotion of false Gods known as 'Gold medal makers' while the development layers continue to be ignored.**

I am happy to remind my fellow professionals that my extensive journey in high performance catalysed me to revisit the development journey. I have not been persistent in my call for a better approach to the development layers because of some misplaced ideology. Back in the early 2000s at one of Australia's 'medal factories', it became clear that the new potential medallists, recruited from the 14-17 years age groups to their medal-hunting scholarship, were in trouble. They were expected to climb the rankings in the next 3-6 years and appear in the national teams and, for the few, at Commonwealth Games, World Championships and Olympic Games. In over 90% of the cases, we often found severe limitations in their physical, technical, tactical and behavioural pillars. While they were highly ranked in the nation, we had to spend inordinate amounts of time re-building them from the ground up to a level where they could start to progress along the pathway to elite performance. Foundation movements and fundamental movements that form the building blocks of technical and tactical progression had to be started again at the beginning. Emotional and behavioural resilience had to be carefully introduced and nurtured to support all the other pillars. It was clear that our high-performance ambitions were firmly in the grasp of "what has gone before" and we were struggling.

I had encountered similar things in the recruitment and development layers of one of the country's leading Rugby League clubs a decade before this and could only pay lip service to the problems. Hence my thought that, "if your high-performance and development programs look the same, then one of them is wrong".