

Chapter 8

Psychological Factors in Talent Identification and Development: Frameworks and Strategies for Youth Athlete Success

Iain Aberdeen

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-3968-1644>

University of Sunderland, UK

ABSTRACT

Identifying and developing talent in youth sports is a complex challenge that goes beyond just physical abilities and technical skills; it also includes important psychological factors vital for athlete growth and success. This chapter highlights the evolution of talent identification methods, shifting from a focus on observable physical traits like speed and strength to incorporating psychological characteristics that influence long-term performance. Current systems struggle with challenges such as prioritizing immediate results and relying too heavily on subjective assessments, often overlooking the psychological aspects essential for nurturing young athletes. By exploring frameworks that integrate psychological evaluations into talent identification, this chapter aims to enhance the effectiveness and fairness of talent development systems. Furthermore, it emphasises the need for practices that support not only athletic excellence but also the overall well-being and motivation of youth athletes, ultimately promoting healthier, more inclusive talent development strategies in sports.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-2160-8.ch008

INTRODUCTION

Talent identification and development in youth sports represents one of the most complex challenges facing contemporary sports science and pedagogy. The process of identifying, selecting, and nurturing young athletes with potential for future excellence demands a sophisticated understanding of not only physiological and technical factors but also the psychological dimensions that underpin athletic development and performance. Within the broader context of emerging pedagogical practices in physical and sports education, the psychological factors that influence talent identification and development have emerged as critical yet often underexplored components of youth athlete success.

The landscape of talent identification has evolved significantly over recent decades, moving from approaches primarily focused on physical attributes and technical skills toward more holistic frameworks that recognise the essential role of psychological characteristics in predicting future performance potential. This evolution reflects a growing recognition that athletic excellence emerges from a complex interplay of physical capabilities, technical proficiency, tactical understanding, and psychological attributes that collectively determine an athlete's capacity to navigate the demanding journey from novice to elite performer.

Current talent identification systems across various sporting contexts continue to face significant challenges, including the tendency to prioritise current performance over future potential, the overreliance on subjective assessment methods, and the insufficient attention paid to psychological factors that may significantly influence long-term development trajectories. As Xiang et al. (2022) highlight, physical, psychological, coach, and environmental factors represent the four main aspects affecting sports talent identification, with psychological factors playing a particularly significant role in the process of talent identification and development. Despite this recognition, psychological assessment often remains secondary to physiological measures in many talent identification programs, creating potential gaps in the identification and development of promising young athletes.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the psychological factors that influence talent identification and development in youth sports, with a particular focus on frameworks and strategies that can enhance the effectiveness and equity of talent development systems. By integrating contemporary research evidence with practical applications, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of how psychological assessment can be meaningfully incorporated into talent identification processes, how developmental considerations should inform these approaches, and how evidence-based strategies can be implemented to support the holistic development of youth athletes.

32 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/psychological-factors-in-talent-identification-and-development/387578

Related Content

The Counterproductive Effects on Learning Achievement and Intrinsic Motivation for Ludicization as an Online Learning Pedagogy Involving Game Elements

Qi Zhang and Zhonggen Yu (2022). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 1-18).

www.irma-international.org/article/the-counterproductive-effects-on-learning-achievement-and-intrinsic-motivation-for-ludicization-as-an-online-learning-pedagogy-involving-game-elements/309080

Handling Massive Enrollment for Achieving Results: A Flipped Classroom Approach

N. Noraini, T. Ramayah and Sarina Muhamad Noor (2020). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 45-58).

www.irma-international.org/article/handling-massive-enrollment-for-achieving-results/262187

Designing Ethical and Engaging Chatbots for K-12 Education: Voice, Story, and AI

Rama Yusvana and Aisyah Mohamed Rehan (2026). *Virtual Tutors and AI-Powered Instructional Tools in K-12 Settings* (pp. 327-378).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/designing-ethical-and-engaging-chatbots-for-k-12-education/404355

Using Flipped Classes to Develop Scientific Communication and the Attitude Towards Technology Acceptance in Science Learning in Intermediate Schools

Sahar Mohammed Yousef Ezzeldin (2022). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 1-15).

www.irma-international.org/article/using-flipped-classes-to-develop-scientific-communication-and-the-attitude-towards-technology-acceptance-in-science-learning-in-intermediate-schools/282722

The Effect of Students' Engagement on Their Learning Achievement in EFL Online Courses: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach

Sultan Hammad Alshammari and Oqab Alrashidi (2024). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 1-18).

www.irma-international.org/article/the-effect-of-students-engagement-on-their-learning-achievement-in-efl-online-courses/357875