

Reaching Beyond 2012: A Proposal for a Pilot Athletics Development Framework for Newport Harriers Athletics Club.

Background: Welsh Athletics launched the Athletics Development Centres in three centres across Wales, Cardiff, Swansea and Deeside in September 2008. The simple concept of the Development Centre was to give athletes and coaches the best possible foundations in order to realise their true potential. Within the philosophy of the Development Centre was the need to support athlete development and education in athletes aged 11-15-years by following the UK athletics 5 rings model: establishing fundamental movement skills, conditioning, lifestyle, psycho-behavioural and technical/tactical competencies within a multi event focus (run, jump, throw). A second element of the philosophy was club development to be achieved through an integrated support programme, creating closer working relationships and increasing interaction between the Development Centre and clubs. This proposal has been developed within the Athletics Development Centre philosophy to ensure that Newport Harriers young athletes are given the best opportunities to realise their potential.

Newport Harriers Coach Commitment to the Proposal: There are many coaches at the Newport Harriers who have been involved in the development of this proposal and are committed to its philosophy and implementation. They include:

Hillary Goodger – Level 3 Multi-events Coach
Deborah Hill-Howells – Level 2 Jumps Coach
Kathryn Hudson – Level 2 Sprints Coach
Elwyn Jarrett – Level 4 Sprints Coach
Ian Morgan - Level 2 Hurdles Coach
Jean Rogers – Level 2 sprints Coach

We are all committed to the following:

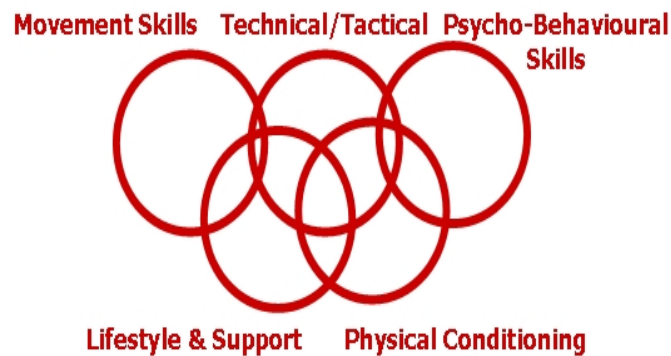
“We at Newport Harriers care passionately about our young athletes and aim to work together to give them the best opportunities and support to achieve their potential.”

As coaches and in partnership with Welsh Athletics and the Athletics Development Centre we propose to provide the following training and development to our young athletes:

Proposed Training and Development Plan:

The proposed training is built around the UK Athletics 5 rings model of athlete development shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. UK Athletics 5 rings model



Fundamental movement skills, which are basic to advanced motor skills that underpin athletic performance in every event

Psycho-behavioural aspects – the mental abilities and fitness required to train and compete with peak efficiency and effectiveness

Lifestyle, the often neglected external factors that can play a significant part in enhancing or detracting from top performance

Technical and tactical, the techniques and tactics required to master specific events

Strength and conditioning, systematic and sustained preparation of the physical components necessary to address the demands of the event

Fundamental Movement Skills Programme:

All coaches will train their young athletes on the fundamental movement skills using a competency based framework that will be worked through over the training year. Each athlete will have a named coach who is responsible for the young athlete's development, but all young athletes will have the opportunity to participate in the programme which will require working with different coaches for different elements of the programme. The competency based fundamental movement skills programme will take place on one of the two main training nights at the Newport Harriers. The young athletes will be rotated around the different coaches to ensure that this is achieved within manageable groups.

Psycho-behavioural aspects:

Learning to manage self. Training on relaxation and breathing exercises are provided by Kathryn Hudson at the club on both training nights and all young athletes will be encouraged to attend at the end of their training session. In addition one of the coaches is trained in visualisation techniques to assist all young athletes to overcome psychological barriers to achieving their potential.

Positive behaviour. All athletes are encouraged to adopt positive behaviour and responsibility towards their fellow athletes and coaches at the Club. Coaches outline the expectations of behaviour from all athletes on the track and field and the consequences of non-adherence to these expectations. Positive behaviour is rewarded with additional responsibility within the athletic group e.g. leading a small part of the session as appropriate.

Improving confidence and self-esteem. As a means to encourage all athletes to build confidence and have good self-esteem, all athletes are encouraged to play a part in supporting and training other athletes. This may take place through simple partnerships when practicing a skill or technique through to leading a dynamic warm-up session under the supervision of coaches. Athletes are also encouraged to play an active role in assisting new athletes into the training group under the supervision of coaches. An athlete with an older training age would be asked to mentor a new athlete for a few sessions to assist the new athlete to settle in and learn the various training schedules.

Lifestyle: Within this category we have chosen to include a number of training opportunities.

Nutrition. These will include educational sessions on nutrition which will have a practical focus to encourage the young athletes to learn to prepare and manage their own nutrition. The first session took place in January in partnership with the Athletics Development Centre.

Social Support. There is considerable research evidence to show that good social support is related to good health outcomes both physically and mentally. As a club we therefore encourage the development of social support between the athletes and coaches through a regular programme of social events and events that foster social responsibility. These include: Club social evenings; Christmas training and fun at Merthyr Mawr; Children In Need fundraising training session; and other future events.

Physical Exercise in other areas. All athletes are encouraged to discuss all aspects of physical activity that they undertake outside of athletics including school PE and Games sessions to ensure that the appropriate level of training is adopted for each athlete to prevent injury.

First Aid and the prevention of injury. We aim to plan a first aid and injury prevention training session for all young athletes. The aim would be to provide the young athletes with the knowledge and skills to prevent injury and manage first aid for themselves and others at the club and at competitions. This already occurs within some primary schools when children are in year 6. This will benefit the individual athlete in managing themselves and in supporting other athletes where necessary.

Athletics Lifestyle. We aim to offer the young athletes opportunities to experience an athletics lifestyle by taking them to watch professional athletics events and to encourage experienced athletes to work with our young athletes. Christian Malcolm and Doug Turner are a regular presence at Newport Harriers and have always been supportive of our young athletes.

Fundraising. Funding is a major issue in the development of athletes. We aim to work as a club with athletes, parents, coaches and committee members to raise funds to support athletics at Newport Harriers. A small fundraising group has just started to look at planning a full year of fundraising events in 2009. We aim to use the funds to support equipment purchases, visits to professional athletics events, social opportunities, additional training opportunities, and specific funds for assisting athletes who may need funding in the future. We accept that in making a proposal for this Development Programme that we have a responsibility to self-finance some elements.

Technical and Tactical:

Newport Harriers has a good range of specific event coaches that can work with the young athletes on developing the techniques and tactics for specific events. At this stage of development the young athletes will be encouraged to rotate between coaches to build up a range of techniques for different events. The specific technical sessions will be held on the second training night at the club.

Strength and conditioning: This part of the proposed development programme consists of a number of sessions: core stability sessions; circuit training; ball circuit training; plyometrics; and monthly body conditioning and rhythm sessions. The coaches already build in core stability sessions, circuit training, and plyometrics, but will be utilizing the skills of a qualified dance teacher to implement the body conditioning and rhythm courses on a monthly basis for 6 months. Dance and rhythm has been demonstrated as an important element in building core stability, flexibility, strength and overall conditioning, crucial for young developing athletes to prevent injury. Rhythm is an important aspect of running, jumping and throwing in athletics, often illustrated by high jumpers and long jumpers at competitions when they encourage rhythm clapping before they jump. The cost per monthly session is as follows:

Hire of room : £8

Dance teacher fee = £30

The first session was held on Tuesday 20th January at the Newport YMCA and 25 young athletes attended. There was excellent feedback from the athletes and requests for a continued programme.

Competition: We aim to offer all young athletes a stepped programme of competition dependent upon their chronological age and training age. We aim to use the annual club championships held at the start of the athletics season to identify their own standard and set targets for their development. Throughout the winter season we aim to work with the Development Centre to encourage athletes to attend the Development Nights for competitions at UWIC. It is anticipated that through the implementation of the proposed Development Programme athletes and coaches will be able to identify the most appropriate events and competitions in which to participate.

Equipment: Developing athletes within this five rings philosophy requires flexibility in approach to coaching and an open-mind to using various techniques to develop the young athletes co-ordination, flexibility, fundamental movement skills, athletic technical skills, strength, speed and stamina within a safe environment. We aim to work with the Athletics Development Centre to utilise facilities available within Wales to achieve this, e.g. National Indoor Athletics Centre. There is a need for some basic equipment to support coaches at the club level in the provision of appropriate equipment, e.g. exercise mats, skipping ropes, balls and safe jump equipment.

Summary: This proposed young athlete Development Programme is based on the concept and philosophy of the Welsh Athletics Development Centre and as such is based on the UK Athletics 5 rings model of athlete development. At its heart is our passion to work in partnership with Welsh Athletics and other organisations to give our young athletes at Newport Harriers the best opportunities and support to achieve their potential. The Athletics Development Centre have given their support to the coaches in implementing the competency based fundamental movement skills framework, and to put on practical nutrition workshops for young athletes. We are still in need of funding for

the body conditioning/rhythm sessions, and for basic equipment. The motivation and commitment of the athletes and the coaches is already in place to implement this exciting new initiative at Newport Harriers.

Finally Our Young Athletes:

At Newport Harriers we have a thriving number of young athletes who are committed to their athletics and we want to support them! Here are a few of the athletes enjoying the Christmas training at Merthyr Mawr 2008.



And here they are enjoying the Body Conditioning/Rhythm course in January 2009

