

sports coach UK

Coaching Essentials Workshop

**An Introduction to
Long-term Athlete Development
(LTAD)**

*For use only by those accredited through
sports coach UK*

First edition, May 2005

Workshop Outcomes

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

- identify and recognise the key principles and stages of LTAD
- identify and recognise the reasons for adopting LTAD
- apply the stages of LTAD to your coaching
- recognise and respond to the implications for coaches and coaching
- identify appropriate action to integrate LTAD into your coaching

A Question Carousel

Choose a different partner each time to briefly discuss and answer the following questions:

- How did you become a participant in your chosen sport?
- Did you reach your potential in this sport? If not, why not?
- What influence did your coach have on your involvement in this sport and other sports?
- When were you first introduced to competitive sport?
- Are you *really* a practising advocate of lifelong sport?

Outcome 1

Identify and recognise the key principles
and stages of LTAD

Identify and recognise the reasons for
adopting LTAD

What is LTAD and Why is it Important?

LTAD

*In simple terms it is intended
to produce a long-term approach
to maximising individual potential
and involvement in sport*

***Coaching for Long-term Athlete Development:
To Improve Participation and Performance in Sport
Stafford, 2005***

LTAD Background

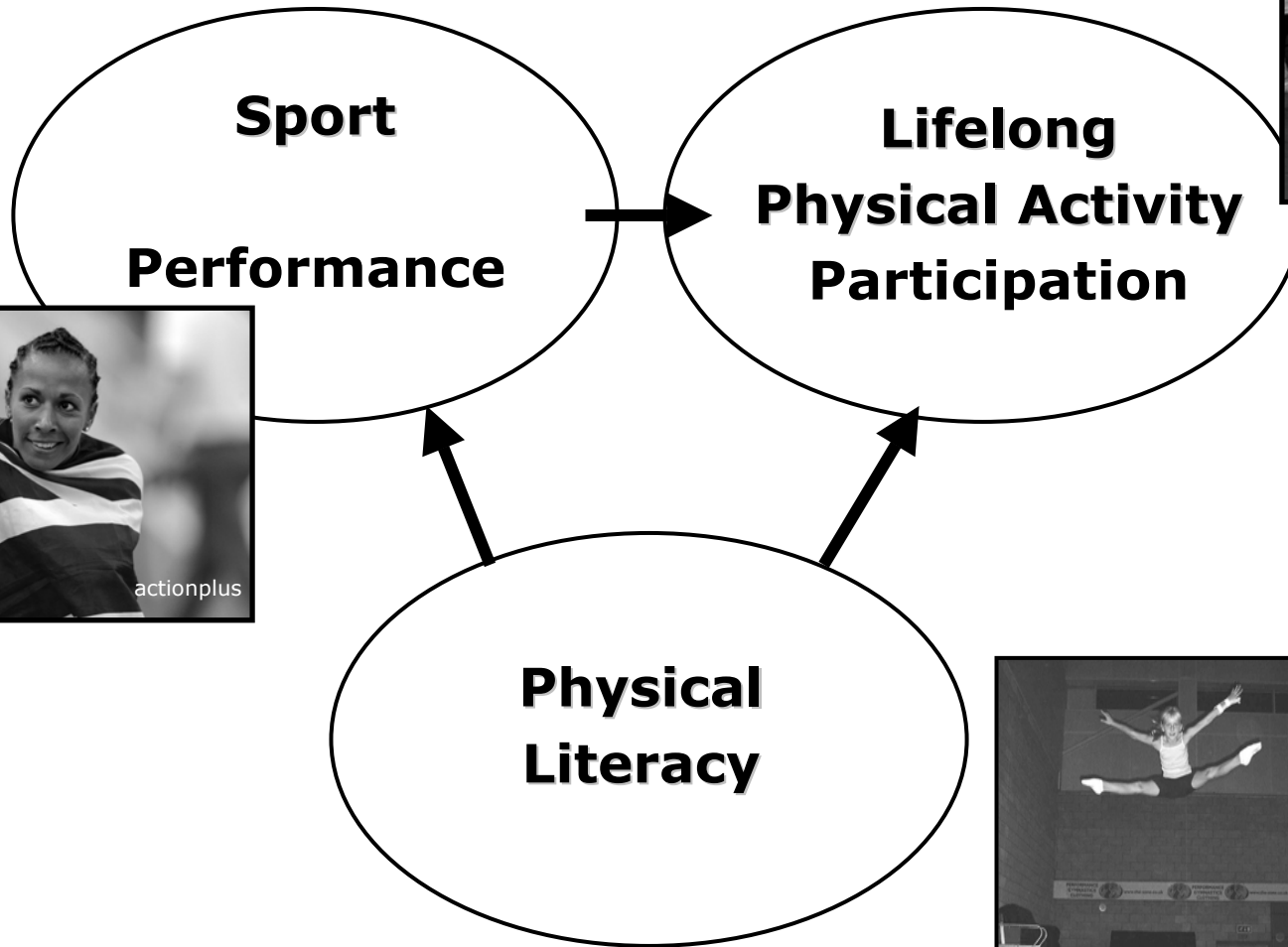
The evolution of athlete development models has incorporated:

- the work of Istvan Balyi, Jean Coté and others
- an inclusive (all people, all levels) approach

LTAD is not a new concept but:

- it is built upon scientific research
- it reflects the applied knowledge and experience of coaches from around the world
- it moulds complex phases of child/adult development into a simple and flexible model

Win-Win Outcome



Balyi and Way, 2000



LTAD Key Principles

- Remember the 10-year rule – there are no shortcuts
- Consider the nature of the growing child
- Categorise early- or late-specialisation sports
- Identify FUNdamental skills and physical literacy
- Introduce windows of trainability
- Plan coaching and competition programmes
- Involve significant others
- Integrate participants into the system
- Commit to continuous improvement

Sport Categories

EARLY- SPECIALISATION SPORTS

5-stage model



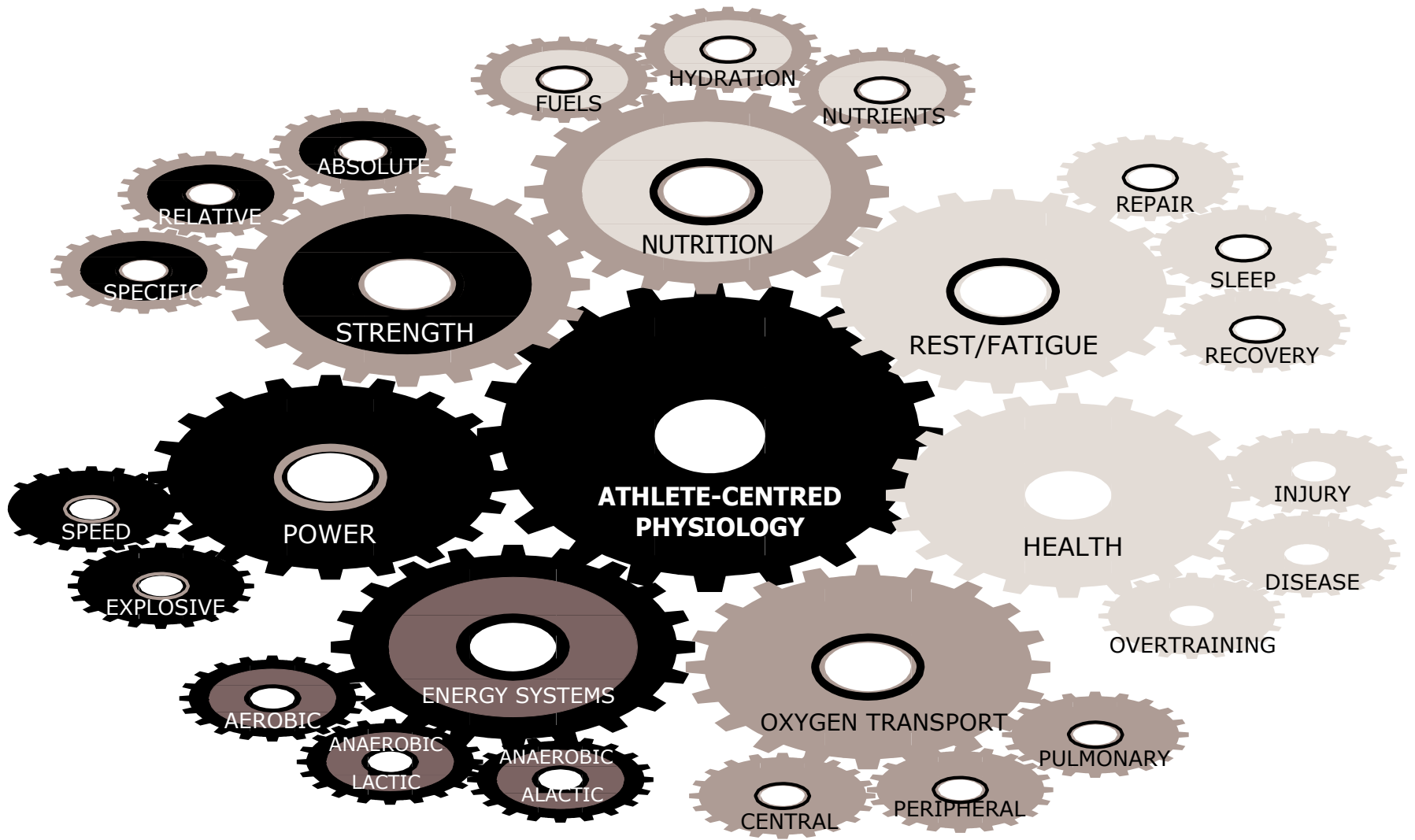
diving, figure skating,
gymnastics and table
tennis

LATE- SPECIALISATION SPORTS

6-stage model



athletics, combative
sports, cycling, rowing
and team sports



Balyi and Wenger, 2000

Long-term Athlete Development

FUNdamental



Learning to Train



Training to Train



Training to Compete



Training to Win

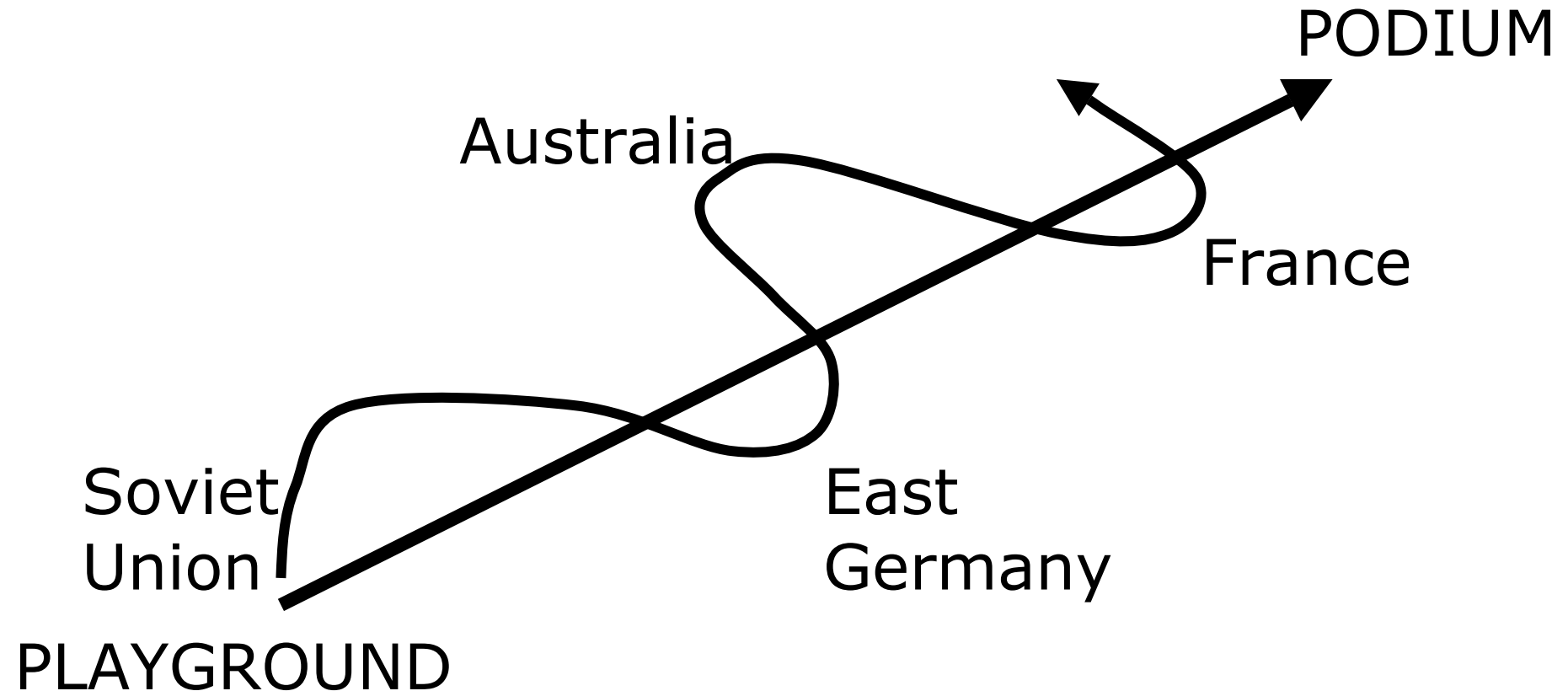


Retaining



Stafford, 2005

The Talent Development Ladder



Balyi and Earls, 2003

Current Dangers

- Young athletes may under-train and over-compete
- Adult training and competition may be imposed on young athletes
- Male programmes may be enforced on females
- Chronological age may dominate training as coach/teacher education tends to skim the growth, development and maturation of young people
- Resources and investment may be targeted at competition
- The 'best' coaches may be encouraged to work at the elite level

So...why LTAD?

- It is a model that prepares athletes for a healthy life in sport
- It encourages participants to move between sports and provides them with the confidence and skills to do so
- It avoids the problem of athletes dropping out at an early age
- The players/athletes/participants are put first
- National governing bodies (NGBs) have adopted the model and applied it to their specific sports

LTAD Values and Beliefs

- High-quality coaches are provided to work with children and young people during the early stages of their involvement in sport
- It empowers coaches to support participants at every level to fulfil their potential and encourage a lifelong involvement in sport
- The model has an evolving and flexible approach to developing sporting abilities
- Continuous improvement is at the heart of the LTAD model

Happy Accidents or Freaky Beasts?

- Currently, how do athletes succeed?
 - Do we have a sports system that allows all athletes with potential the opportunity to succeed?
 - Do athletes succeed *because* of a system or in spite of it?
 - Is success at the highest level due more to good luck than good management?
- How does your sport identify and develop talent?

Outcome 2

Apply the stages of LTAD to your coaching

Practical Application of LTAD

Summary of *FUNdamental* Stage

Boys: 6–9 years

Girls: 6–8 years

- Incorporate FUN and participation.
- Encourage general, overall development.
- Include basics of athletics – running, jumping, throwing.
- Introduce ABCs of athleticism – agility, balance, coordination, speed.
- Incorporate Medicine ball, Swiss ball, own body strength exercises.
- Introduce the simple rules of ethics of sport.
- Include observational assessments to identify key variations in development (eg height, weight, skill capacities).
- Do not include periodisation but use well-structured programmes.
- Encourage physical activity five to six times per week.

No specific ratios are specified, but participation in a wide range of activities is recommended.

Stafford, 2005: 30

FUNdamental Stage

Within a 60-minute session, a recommended practice plan may include the following elements:

- warm-up (5–10 mins)
- work on general technical skills including the ABCs (15–20 mins)
- modified games or activities with simple tactics and rules (25–30 mins)
- cool-down (5 mins)

What kind of activities would you use at the *FUNdamental stage*?

Summary of *Learning to Train* Stage

Boys: 9–12 years

Girls: 8–11 years

- Encourage overall sports skills.
- Recognise that this is a major skill learning stage – all basic sports skills should be learnt before proceeding to next stage.
- Understand mental/cognitive and emotional development.
- Introduce mental preparation.
- Incorporate appropriately weighted Medicine ball, Swiss ball, own body strength exercises.
- Introduce ancillary capacities.
- Understand talent identification and development.
- Distinguish between double/single periodisation (although double periodisation is more common).
- If there is a favoured sport, ensure that at least 50% of the time is allocated to other sports/activities that develop a range of skills.

Training/Competition Ratio

80 : 20

Stafford, 2005: 35

Learning to Train Stage

Within a 90-minute session, a recommended practice plan may include the following elements:

- warm-up (10–15 mins)
- combination of fitness and general technical skill development (20–30 mins)
- modified or conditioned games and activities with simple tactics (30–40 mins)
- cool-down with stretching (5–10 mins)

What kind of activities would you use at the *Learning to Train* stage?

Summary of *Training to Train* Stage

Boys: 12–16 years

Girls: 11–15 years

- Concentrate on sport-specific skills.
- Understand that this is a major fitness developmental stage (aerobic and strength; PHV is the reference point).
- Understand mental/cognitive and social/emotional development.
- Develop further mental preparation.
- Introduce free weights.
- Develop further ancillary capacities.
- Conduct frequent musculoskeletal evaluations during PHV.
- Understand selection.
- Distinguish between single or double periodisation.
- Encourage sport-specific training six to nine times per week.

Training/Competition Ratio

60 : 40

Stafford, 2005: 40

Training to Train Stage

How will you progress your training sessions and how will you introduce competition to your athletes at this stage?

What new elements of training and fitness will you encourage your athletes to use and understand?

Summary of *Training to Compete* Stage

Boys: 16–18 years

Girls: 15–17 years

- Involve event, position-specific physical conditioning.
- Involve event, position-specific technical and tactical preparation.
- Include sport, event, position-specific technical and playing skills under competitive conditions.
- Encourage advanced mental preparation.
- Optimise ancillary capacities.
- Strive for full commitment to specialisation within chosen sport – ‘a 24-hour athlete’.
- Distinguish between double or triple periodisation.
- Include sport-specific technical, tactical and fitness training 9-12 times per week.

Training/Competition Ratio

40 : 60

Stafford, 2005: 45

Training to Compete Stage

Give practical examples of how you could prepare athletes by exposing them to a wide range of simulated, yet realistic, competitive conditions

Summary of *Training to Win* Stage

Boys: 18+ years

Girls: 17+ years

- Maintain or improve physical capacities.
- Develop further technical, tactical and playing skills.
- Model all possible aspects of training and performance.
- Take frequent prophylactic breaks.
- Maximise ancillary capacities.
- Concentrate on high performance.
- Distinguish between double, triple or multiple periodisation.
- Include sport-specific technical, tactical and fitness training 9-15 times per week.
- Consider social/cultural aspects of performer development.

Training/Competition Ratio

25 : 75

Stafford, 2005: 49

Training to Win Stage

By this stage, participants could have committed themselves to 8–12 years of preparation and development programmes. Competitive events, competition-specific training and maintenance characterise this stage. However, the social and cultural education and development of the athlete is still important and may have been overlooked at previous stages.

How can coaches impact on this area of their athletes' personal development?

Summary of *Retaining Stage*

- Permanently withdraw from mainstream competitive sport.
- Fulfil other roles such as coach, mentor, administrator, official.
- Take up another sport as a hobby or for recreation.
- Elite performers should undertake a training-down programme.
- Retain the expertise.
- Ensure support for adjusting to life without high-level competition.

Retaining Stage

As a practising coach, how were you retained within your sport?

Was there a formal process or did it happen by accident?

How can you help athletes through this transitional stage?

Outcome 3

Recognise and respond to the implications for coaches and coaching

**What Does this Mean for Me
(the Coach) and What
Approach Should I Take?**

Implications for NGBs

For NGBs and key decision-makers within sport, there is a need for:

- specialist FUNdamental and multi-skilled coaches
- the inclusion of physical literature and the physical, cognitive and emotional development of children within coach education
- a systemised approach to competition
- a structured talent identification and development system
- our most knowledgeable, experienced and qualified coaches to be deployed at all stages of LTAD and not just operate exclusively with the higher level performers
- support structures that encourage and develop performers at early training ages

Implications for Coaches

For coaches within sport, there is a need to:

- manage the expectations and understanding of parents and significant others
- focus on the long-term development of athletes rather than short-term success
- manage own learning; coaches need to understand how children develop, not only physically, but also in terms of their cognitive, social and emotional pathways
- know the principles of LTAD, for example:
 - whether the chronological age or developmental stage should be considered
 - the training and competition implications and differences between males and females, if there are any

How can you help to make a difference?

- Advocate the principles of LTAD to local schools, clubs and fellow coaches
- Speak to your NGB about LTAD. Has it produced any relevant resources or guidance? What impact does LTAD have on officials and the competition structure?
- Practice the principles to help make it happen

Outcome 4

Identify appropriate action to integrate LTAD into your coaching

Summary

Time to self-reflect

Using the workbook, take some time to reflect on what you have learned today, bearing in mind:

- how you will implement LTAD into your coaching practice
- what areas of personal development this workshop has highlighted

Further Development Opportunities and Information Sources

- **scUK**'s 'The FUNdamentals of Movement' workshop
- www.sportscoachuk.org
- *Preparing for a Life in Sport* leaflet
- NGB resources
- **scUK**'s *Faster Higher Stronger (FHS)*, Issue 20, July 2003
- Stafford, I. (2005 reprint) *Coaching for Long-term Athlete Development*. Leeds: The National Coaching Foundation. ISBN:1-902523-70-9

Learning Outcomes revisited

You should now be able to:

- identify and recognise the key principles and stages of LTAD
- identify and recognise the reasons for adopting LTAD
- apply the stages of LTAD to your coaching
- recognise and respond to the implications for coaches and coaching
- identify appropriate action to integrate LTAD into your coaching