

# FTEM NSW: Best Practice Tips for Coaches and Instructors - **Complete** **version inclusive of Foundational and Talent levels**

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# Acknowledgment of Country

The NSW Office of Sport acknowledges that we are living and working on Aboriginal land and recognises the strength, resilience and capacity of Aboriginal people on this land.

We would like to acknowledge all of the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay respect to Aboriginal Elders past and present.



# Acknowledgements

**Dr Juanita Weissensteiner, Pathways Advisor** at the NSW Office of Sport led the development of the FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Framework (FTEM NSW) and was the author of this accompanying resource.

FTEM NSW was informed by the **original FTEM framework** developed in and around 2011/12 by the Athlete and Pathways Development team at the **Australian Institute of Sport** comprising of Dr Jason Gulbin, Morag Croser, Elissa Morley, Dr Juanita Weissensteiner and Alicia Mathews. FTEM is recognised within the International Olympic Committee's consensus statement on youth athletic development released in 2015 within the British Journal of Sports Medicine (See Bergeron et al., 2015).

Special mention must go to the following people who have assisted Juanita more recently in putting this FTEM NSW resource for coaches together –

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# Future Champions Strategy:

## Supporting Coaching within NSW



The NSW Office of Sport's **Future Champions** strategy was launched in December 2019. Its primary focus is to ensure that the participants and emerging athletes of NSW, have the right fit of sporting engagement, knowledge and support to fulfill their sporting ambitions and success on and off the sporting field. To achieve this and utilising a consolidated best practice approach informed by the **FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Framework**, the strategy provides clear recommendations for the NSW sports sector to review and refine their operational strategies and related education, networking and support systems.

It is well recognised that our **Coaching workforce** is integral to achieving favourable outcomes within the Foundational and Talent levels of sport and active recreation.

Educating and empowering coaches who support and mentor the participants and athletes of NSW is a key priority recognised within the **Future Champions** Strategy.

The following interactive resource was developed specifically to support **coaches and instructors within NSW**, in their understanding and application of the FTEM NSW Framework.

For more information on the Future Champions strategy including its key actions to better support coaches within NSW, please visit <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/>



# Some information about this resource

## Who is this resource for?

The considerations presented within this resource are pitched towards **all organisations that oversee the engagement, education and support of coaches and instructors within their Foundational (Participation) and Talent (Pre-elite) levels** including -

- clubs
- schools and universities
- local, regional, state and national level sporting organisations and agencies

## How was this resource developed?

Substantial expertise and practical learnings sourced from the contemporary knowledge base of coaching and current practitioners and coach educators within the NSW sector, contributed to the development of this resource and its practical recommendations.

## How do I use this resource?

This resource can be viewed either in its entirety or you can access specific information for each Foundational or Talent level by clicking on the interactive tabs on the right hand side of pages 16 and onwards, clicking on the tabs on the Contents page or the images on page 12.

## How will it assist me in my role?

This comprehensive resource provides -

- a brief background on the FTEM NSW framework
- a description of each level of FTEM NSW within its Foundational and Talent stages
- a checklist of practical considerations for Coaches and Instructors, for each level

Importantly, the recommendations tabled are not intended to be exhaustive but provide a 'checklist' of considerations for progressing current strategy and practice. It is envisaged that this information will be of value to facilitate -

- effectiveness, efficiency and alignment of coaching practice
- coach recruitment
- coach engagement, development and retention strategies
- curricula and educational initiatives
- accreditation processes.

## Where do I find more information?

Specific to supporting Coaching capability and capacity within the Talent levels, please refer also to the **Pathway Development Success Coach Profile developed in partnership with NSWIS @ <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au>**.

For detail specific to the background and features of the FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Development Framework please visit our website **<https://sport.nsw.gov.au>**.

To view detailed 'whole of sport' information incorporating the FTEM NSW Talent and Elite and Mastery levels please access the **FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Framework: System level Guidelines - All levels** document or separate **Talent** and **Elite/Mastery** versions.

For more information and advice for parents, schools, clubs and sporting organisations please visit our website **<https://sport.nsw.gov.au>**.



Image courtesy of Simo Vilhunun

# Introducing **FTEM NSW**

The **FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Development Framework** developed by the NSW Office of Sport is an **integrated and progressive framework and whole of system approach:**

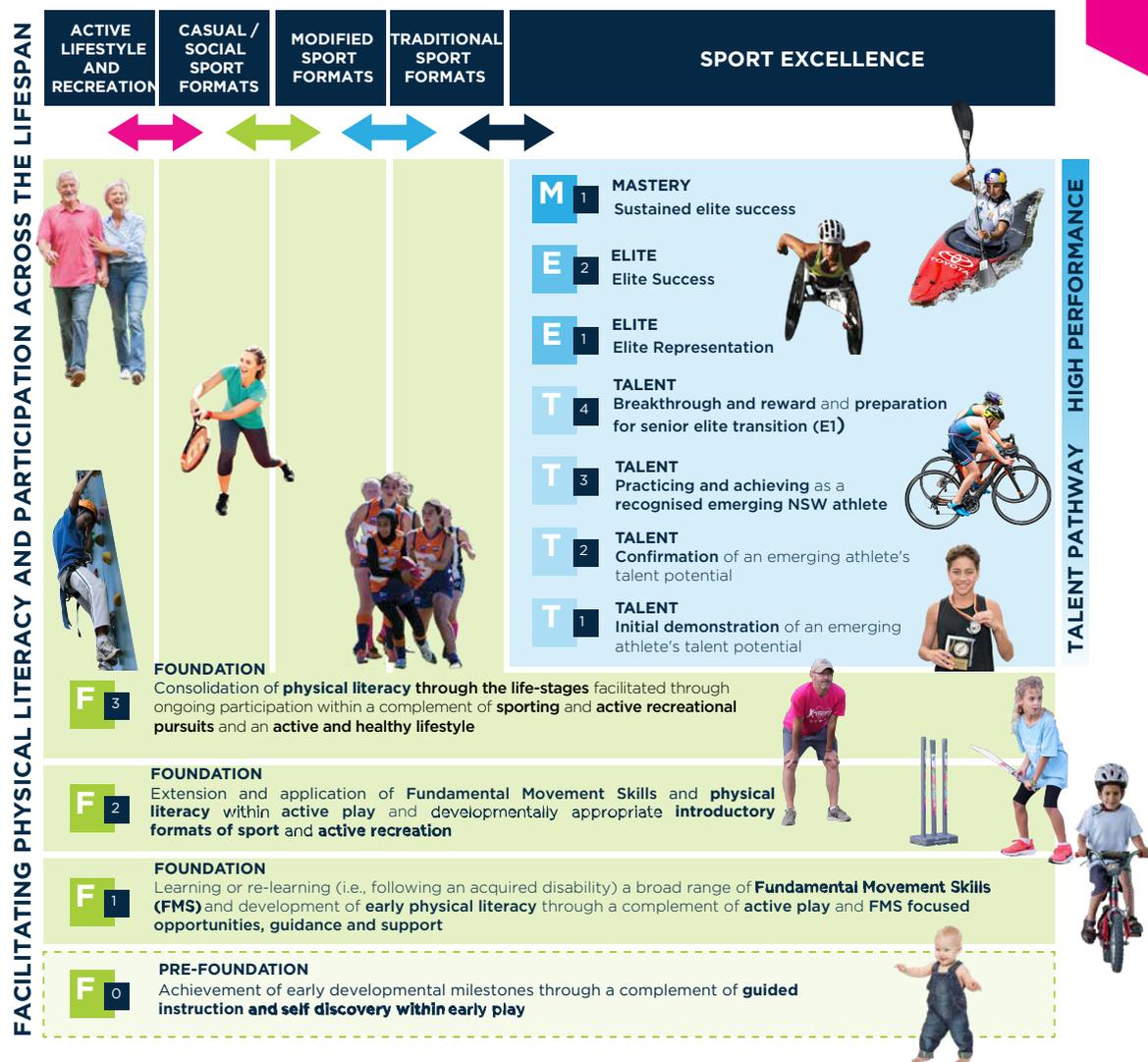
- providing a strategic and practical blueprint for NSW and the sporting active recreation sector for supporting all outcomes of Physical Activity including Active Recreation, Community Sport Participation and High-Performance sport.
- empowering the participants and athletes of NSW and supporting them through their life-long journey in sport and physical activity.
- supporting stakeholders (i.e., parents, coaches, volunteers, schools, universities, clubs, sporting organisations and providers etc.) by providing best-practice guidance for each level of the developmental continuum from grass roots to podium.

FTEM NSW is directly informing and supporting current policy, strategy, practice and delivery within the NSW sport sector including the **Future Champions** strategy.

The translation and application of FTEM NSW is considerate of international best practice and benefits from accumulated practical learnings from within the NSW and National sector including the perspectives and experiences of participants, athletes and coaches.

FTEM NSW was informed by the original FTEM framework developed by the Australian Institute of Sport, a fully integrated evidence based framework representing the major phases of Foundation, Talent, Elite and Mastery of the whole sport pathway continuum.

## FTEM NSW PARTICIPANT AND ATHLETE FRAMEWORK



# FTEM NSW

## supports coaching capability and delivery

Through its aligned and advocated principles, **FTEM NSW** provides guidance as to what is the right fit of coaching competencies, experience and delivery specific to a participant or athlete's developmental level, aspiration, motivation, capability and capacity.

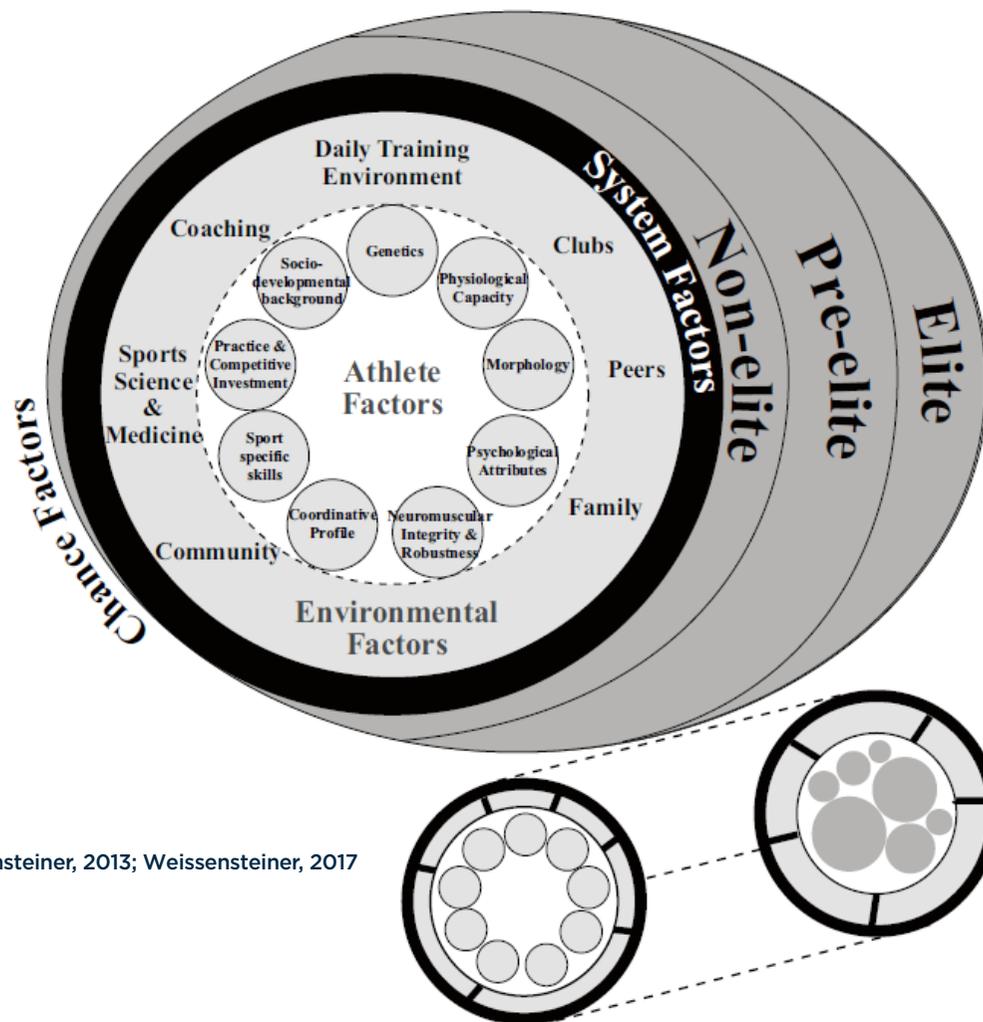
As such **FTEM NSW** provides critical guidance to all coaches to maximise their engagement, focus, delivery and impact, no matter what Foundational, Talent and Elite and Mastery levels they are supporting.

Considerate of the recognised fluidity in coaching engagement (i.e., experienced high-performance coaches mentoring and supporting athletes and their coaches within the Foundational and Talent levels), **FTEM NSW** not only provides best practice guidance but also provides flexibility in its application, catering for this important aspect of coach development, impact and networking.



# The 3D-AD Development Model

Informed directly by the **3DAD (Three-Dimensional Athlete Development)** ecological model, **FTEM NSW** is holistic in its coverage and application, recognising and supporting the required integration and interaction of **individual, environmental and system factors** at each level.



Gulbin & Weissensteiner, 2013; Weissensteiner, 2017

The 3DAD2 Athlete Development model demonstrates the multi-dimensional, longitudinal and interactive nature of athlete development across the sporting journey.

# 3D-AD In Action:

## Participant holistic profile and development

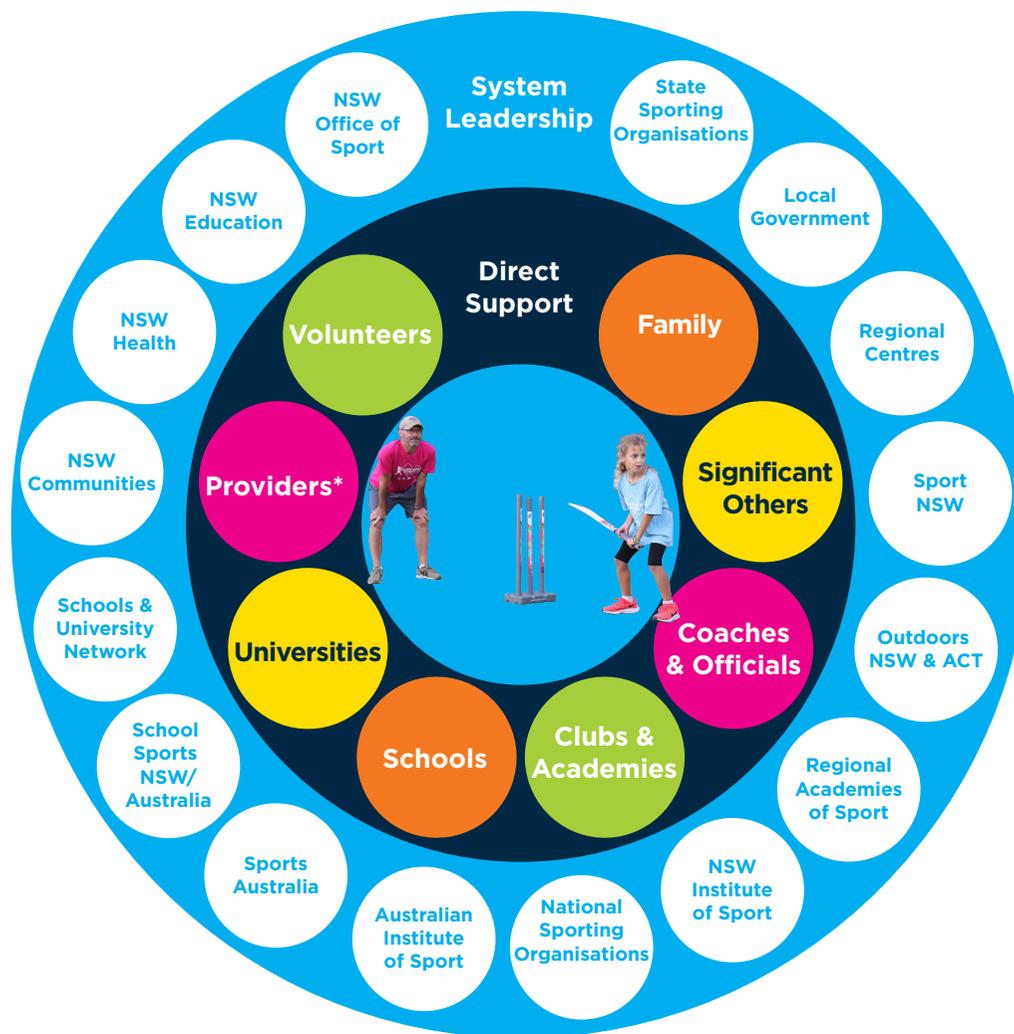
At the core of FTEM NSW, is building on the early elements of physical literacy and effectively integrating them (*the right complement at the right time*) to **support the participant's holistic development and competencies**, in and out of sport.



# 3D-AD In Action:

## Integrated environmental and system support

To adequately facilitate an individual's development at each level of **FTEM NSW** and ensure the **right support at the right time**, requires a dedicated integrated approach and effort including importantly, positive engagement and collaboration of direct support providers who are in turn, adequately supported through effective system level leadership and support.



\*Includes Sport & Recreational, Sport Science & Medicine and Private Providers



# Unpacking the levels of **FTEM NSW** for Coaches and Instructors



### **F** stands for strong **FOUNDATIONS**:

facilitating the building blocks for lifelong physical literacy and supporting ALL outcomes of Physical Activity including Active Lifestyle & Living, Recreation and High-Performance sport.

CLICK on the image above for detail and advice on the **Foundational levels of FTEM NSW**.



### **T** stands for **TALENT**:

effectively identifying, confirming, developing and transitioning pre-elite athletes in preparation for future elite level competition and representation.

CLICK on the image above for detail and advice on the **Talent levels of FTEM NSW**.



### **E** and **M** stand for **ELITE** and **MASTERY**:

engaging our athlete ambassadors and providing holistic and integrated support to adequately prepare them for elite performance and life during and after sport.

# Unpacking the Foundational Levels of FTEM NSW for Coaches and Instructors



## Pre-Foundation 0

Achievement of early developmental milestones through a complement of guided instruction and self discovery within early play.

## Foundation 1

Learning or re-learning (i.e., following an acquired disability) a broad range of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) and development of early physical literacy through a complement of active play and FMS focused opportunities, guidance and support.

## Foundation 2

Extension and application of Fundamental Movement Skills and physical literacy within active play and developmentally appropriate introductory formats of sport and active recreation.

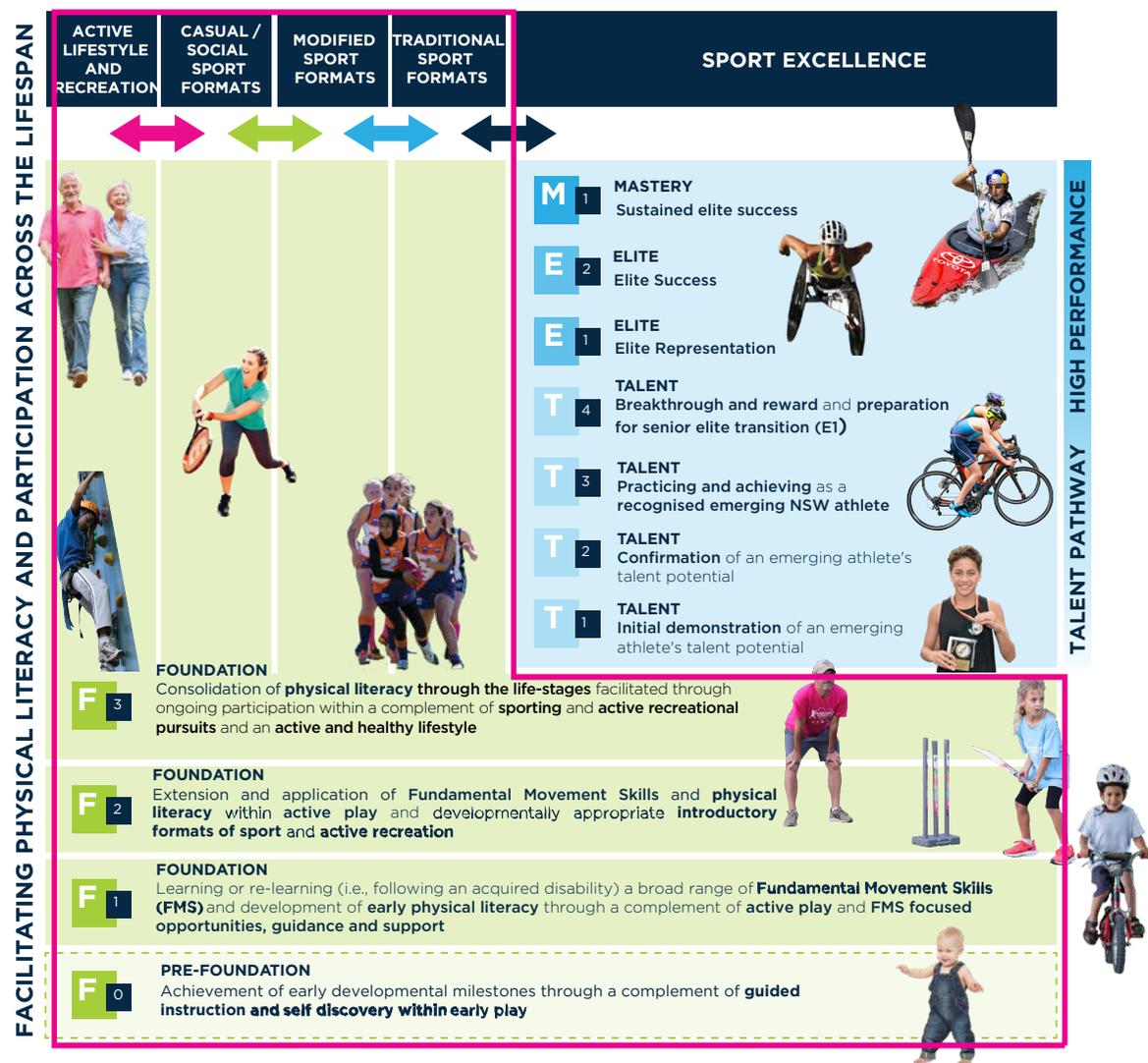
## Foundation 3

Consolidation of physical literacy through the life-stages facilitated through ongoing participation within a complement of sporting and active recreational pursuits and an active and healthy lifestyle.

# Key features of the **Foundational levels**

Provides a **whole of system blueprint** for supporting physical activity through its -

- chronology of **four progressive Foundational levels** to develop and facilitate physical literacy and support positive engagement in sport and active recreation.
- coverage of the **lifespan of the participant** (i.e., baby, child, youth, adult, senior) - A **pre-Foundational FO level** has been added to **FTEM NSW** to ensure coverage across the lifespan.
- capture of the participation landscape including the **complement of formats** from active lifestyle pursuits to casual, modified and traditional sport and caters to concurrent involvement in these opportunities by the participant.
- guidance informed by **contemporary best practice principles** specific to child motor development, physical literacy, pedagogy/coaching, ecological systems and skill acquisition and national and international **evidence, practice and consensus**.
- visualisation of **participation opportunities** (programs, products, delivery) specific to each life stage that are a fit to the motivation, demographic, capacity, capability and commitment of the participant.



# Why are the **Foundational Levels** so important?

The genesis of the original **FTEM** framework was borne from an imperative to attend to the **FOUNDATIONAL** levels of sport and active recreation. The Foundational levels are critically important to not only ensure life-long physical literacy but also effective and enjoyable sport engagement including providing the key foundations for developing future elite sporting performance.

Based on compelling and objective evidence specific to a diminishing sports participation base due to -

- declines in fundamental movement competencies and physical literacy
- an increase in youth participating in organised sport formats and specialisation in one sport much earlier

- corresponding declines in diversified sports and recreational participation and free play
- decreasing engagement in sport with increasing age
- increase in inactivity, sedentary lifestyles, obesity and related health issues
- recognised constraints specific to fit and sustainability of participatory sport strategies, underpinning programs and delivery.

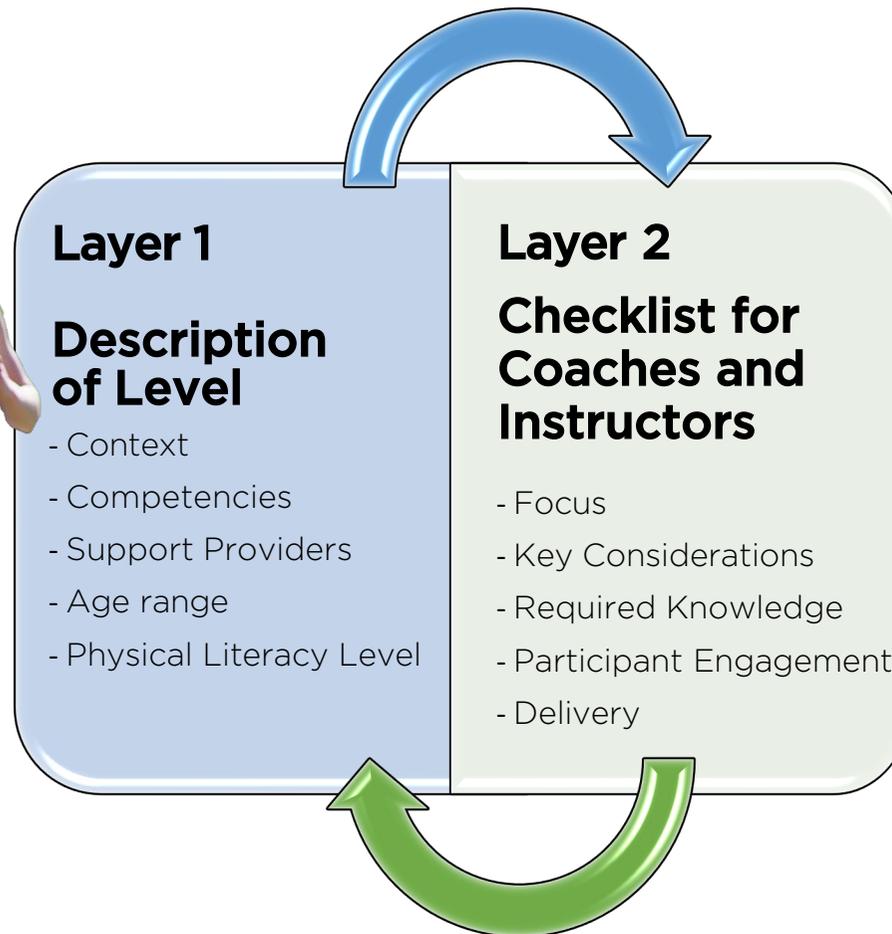
it was apparent that an evidence-based and practicable strategy that addressed these issues and truly supported the delivery and coordination of best practice within the critical foundational levels of sport and active recreation was warranted.



# Guidelines and practical tips

Over the next few pages, we will unpack the **F1 to F3 Foundational levels of FTEM NSW** integrating a holistic and ecological approach inspired by the 3D-AD (*Three Dimensional Athlete Development*) model. Guidance specific to the Pre-Foundational level F0 is not provided in this resource. Two layers of information and advice centred around the sport participant, will be provided for Coaches and Instructors specific to each level as depicted in the graphic below.

Please use the interactive tabs on the right of this page and throughout this section to access specific information for each level.



Foundational level 1

Foundational level 2

Foundational level 3

\* For more information on the 3DAD model, please refer to the following documents

- FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Development Framework: A Systems Overview - Complete Version
- FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Development Framework: A Systems Overview - An Introduction and Background to FTEM NSW

# Foundational level 1

## Description of level

**Focus:** Learning or re-learning (i.e., following an acquired disability) a broad range of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) and development of early physical literacy through a complement of active play and FMS focused opportunities, guidance and support.

### Context for the participant

The participant is learning or re-learning (i.e., child, teenager or adult following an acquired disability) a broad complement of Fundamental Movement skills (FMS) including locomotor, object control, balance, aquatic and acrobatic skills and applying them within a complement of free play at home and at school, organised FMS programs, and through active recreation and an active and healthy lifestyle.

### Key support providers

- Early Childhood Education Providers and Teachers
- Medical and Allied Health Providers
- Rehabilitation Providers
- Schools
- Providers within Sport, Outdoor and Recreational programs specific to early acquisition of FMS

### Approximate age range

Generally 4 to 7/8 years but for individuals with an acquired disability it could be any age.

### Physical Literacy Phase

Foundation & Exploration

- Swimming in a pool or the ocean

### Aquatic skills

- Forward rolls
- Tumbling
- Somersaults

### Acrobatic skills

### Locomotor skills

- Running
- Hopping
- Jumping
- Using a wheelchair or prosthesis for participants with a disability

### Interceptive and object control skills

- Kicking
- Catching
- Throwing or Hitting a ball

### Dynamic Balance skills

- Riding a bike,
- Standing on a surfboard
- Riding a skateboard or snowboard



Developing a complement of FMS Competencies

Foundational level 1

Foundational level 2

Foundational level 3

# Foundational level 1

## Coaching principles and considerations

### The Coach or Instructor -

- ✓ Possesses good teaching, inter-personal, communication and influencing skills.
- ✓ A repertoire of different learning/teaching styles to support the individual needs of young sport participants.
- ✓ Ensures inclusion, safety and a positive learning environment for all participants.
- ✓ Engages positively with the participant's parents, guardians etc.
- ✓ Possesses a sound understanding of key motor/skill aspects of the relevant fundamental movement skills (locomotive, object control, balance, acrobatic, aquatic) underpinning a sport or recreational pursuit and can integrate these into the coaching curriculum and delivery.
- ✓ Possesses a sound understanding of the relevant level of physical literacy and related competencies (physical, psychological, technical, social) specific to the developmental level of the individual participant and can integrate these into the coaching curriculum and delivery.
- ✓ Possesses a sound understanding of best practice skill acquisition principles including game/play based learning.
- ✓ Delivers the right fit of engaging and age/developmentally appropriate tasks and activities for the developmental needs, attentional capacity and motivation of the participant.

# Foundational level 1

## Coaching principles and considerations cont.

### The Coach or Instructor -

- ✓ Ensures the right fit of equipment, play dimensions, surfaces etc. for the participant to support their early skill acquisition.
- ✓ Has the ability to create an environment where participants take ownership of their own learning to facilitate their early self-regulatory skills e.g., self awareness, self reflection, problem solving etc.
- ✓ Encourages participants to sample within and across all relevant fundamental movement skills and this is incorporated in the coaching curriculum and delivery.
- ✓ Possesses a good understanding of the importance of active play activities to complement organised instruction within programs to ensure FUN, promote early skill acquisition, physical literacy and more specifically, facilitate early problem-solving ability, creativity and adaptability.
- ✓ Encourages participants to further develop and apply their fundamental movement skills in the home environment through active play.

# Foundational level 2

## Description of level

**Focus:** Extension and application of Fundamental Movement Skills and physical literacy within active play and developmentally appropriate introductory formats of sport and active recreation.

### Context for the participant

The participant is applying and extending their FMS and early Physical Literacy within organised introductory formats of sport, diverse unorganised Play experiences within the home and school environment and through active recreation and an active and healthy lifestyle.

### Key support providers

- Parents
- Teachers, Coaches/Instructors and Private Providers
- Schools
- Sports and their club network
- Recreational and Outdoor Providers

### Approximate age range

Generally 8 to 11 years for the majority of participants but could be any age for individuals with an acquired disability or youth/adults being introduced to a sport or recreational activity for the first time.

### Physical Literacy Phase

Acquisition and Accumulation



**Applying Fundamental Movement skills and extending Physical Literacy**

Foundational level 1

Foundational level 2

Foundational level 3

# Foundational level 2

## Coaching principles and considerations

### The Coach or Instructor-

- ✓ Possesses good teaching, inter-personal, communication and influencing skills.
- ✓ A repertoire of different learning/teaching styles to support the individual needs of young sport participants.
- ✓ Ensures inclusion, safety and a positive learning environment for all participants.
- ✓ Engages positively with the participant's parents, guardians etc.
- ✓ A sound understanding of all relevant fundamental movement skills and the required level of physical literacy for a participant at this level and can integrate these into the coaching curriculum and delivery within introductory sport programs.
- ✓ A sound understanding of the holistic nature of participant development and its integrated dimensions (e.g. physical, technical, psychological, social elements etc) specific to the sport and participants they are instructing/coaching.
- ✓ Possesses a sound understanding of best practice skill acquisition principles including game/play based learning.
- ✓ Delivers the right fit of engaging and age/developmentally appropriate introductory formats of sport and activities for the developmental needs, attentional capacity and motivation of the participant.

## Foundational level 2

### Coaching principles and considerations cont.

#### The Coach or Instructor -

- ✓ Ensures the right fit of equipment, play dimensions, surfaces etc for the participant to support their early skill acquisition.
- ✓ Has the ability to create an environment where participants take ownership of their own learning to facilitate their early self-regulatory skills e.g. self awareness, self reflection, problem solving etc.
- ✓ Encourages participants to sample within and across sports through a complement of organised introductory sport formats and active play within the home and school environment.
- ✓ Possesses a good understanding of the importance of active play activities to complement organised instruction within programs to ensure FUN, promote early skill acquisition, physical literacy and more specifically, facilitate early problem-solving ability, creativity and adaptability.
- ✓ Encourages participants to further develop and apply their sporting skills in the home environment through active play.

# Foundational level 3

## Description of level

**Focus:** Consolidation of physical literacy through the life-stages facilitated through ongoing participation within a complement of sporting and active recreational pursuits and an active and healthy lifestyle.

### Context for the participant

The participant is consolidating their Physical Literacy and required knowledge structures and applying them effectively through the life stages within a complement of -

- active lifestyle and recreational pursuits
- casual, modified (age and capability appropriate) and traditional formats of organised sport
- unorganised formats of sport and recreational activity
- diversified Play experiences.

For gifted athletes, consolidation of their holistic sport-specific skills, expressed through commitment to learning within training and competition, sampling a broad range of sport, recreation and play and specialising later, provides solid foundations for future high performance.

### Key support providers

- Parents
- Teachers, Coaches/Instructors Duke of Edinburgh and Private providers
- Schools, Universities
- Sports and their club network
- Recreational and Outdoor Providers (Sport and Recreational Centres)
- Regional Academies of Sport (if recognised as a Foundational level program by their respective SSO).

### Approximate age range

YOUTH 12-18 years;  
ADULT >18-65 years;  
SENIORS >65 years

### Physical Literacy Phase

Consolidation & Mastery,  
Transfer & Empowerment



Foundational level 1

Foundational level 2

Foundational level 3

**Extending on Strong Foundations and being Physically Active for Life!**

# Foundational level 3

## Coaching principles and considerations

### The Coach or Instructor –

- ✓ Possesses good teaching, inter-personal, communication and influencing skills.
- ✓ Possesses a repertoire of different learning/teaching styles to support the individual needs of different groups of participants i.e., Youth, Adult, Seniors.
- ✓ Ensures inclusion, safety and a positive learning environment for all participants.
- ✓ Engages positively with the young participant's parents, guardians etc.
- ✓ Has a good understanding of underpinning fundamental movement skills and the required level of physical literacy for the life stage, capacity and capability of the participant at this level.
- ✓ Can effectively integrate the required competencies for the sport or recreational activity they are coaching into their coaching curriculum and delivery (i.e. technical, tactical, physical, physiological, psychological and social components).
- ✓ Promotes participation through the life stages, within a complement of 'best fit' casual/social, traditional and modified formats of sport and recreational activities.
- ✓ Promotes and ensures good management of training and competition loading for the aspiring athlete and awareness/education specific to injury prevention.
- ✓ Has a good understanding of the impact of biological maturation on participant/athlete development and can effectively interpret an individual's maturational status which informs the right fit of competitive level/formats.

# Foundational level 3

## Coaching principles and considerations

### The Coach or Instructor -

- ✓ Integrates education on Sporting Smarts which includes - effective nutrition, hydration, injury prevention, effective competition preparation, adequate management of training and competitive load, sleep, recovery, anti-doping, sport integrity, psychological skills (e.g. self regulation, performance strategies, coping skills etc.).
- ✓ Offers good advice to Parents and other relevant stakeholders specific to appropriate training and competition loads and demands of the youth participant and liaises with other stakeholder groups e.g., school, club etc. to moderate these demands.
- ✓ Has a good understanding of the importance and benefits of sampling across sports and later specialisation.
- ✓ An understanding of the importance of active play and self-directed learning and practice to complement organised coaching sessions, to further hone the participant's technical, tactical skills and promote problem-solving, creativity and adaptability.
- ✓ The ability to create an environment where participants/athletes take ownership of their own learning to facilitate their self-regulatory skills.
- ✓ Has sound knowledge regarding the importance of promoting sport/life balance, well-being and positive and effective engagement in their participants.

# Unpacking the Talent Levels of FTEM NSW for Coaches



## Talent 1

Initial demonstration of an emerging athlete's talent potential.

## Talent 2

Confirmation of an emerging athlete's talent potential.

## Talent 3

Practicing and achieving as a recognised emerging NSW athlete.

## Talent 4

Breakthrough and reward and preparation for the senior elite transition (E1).

# Why are the **Talent Levels** so important?

Underpinning sustainable elite success, the Talent or 'pre-elite' levels of the sport development continuum, are arguably the most important component of the High-Performance Pathway. These are the critical years of the emerging pre-elite athlete who is committed and dedicated to honing their craft and preparing for their breakthrough into the elite levels (E1-M).

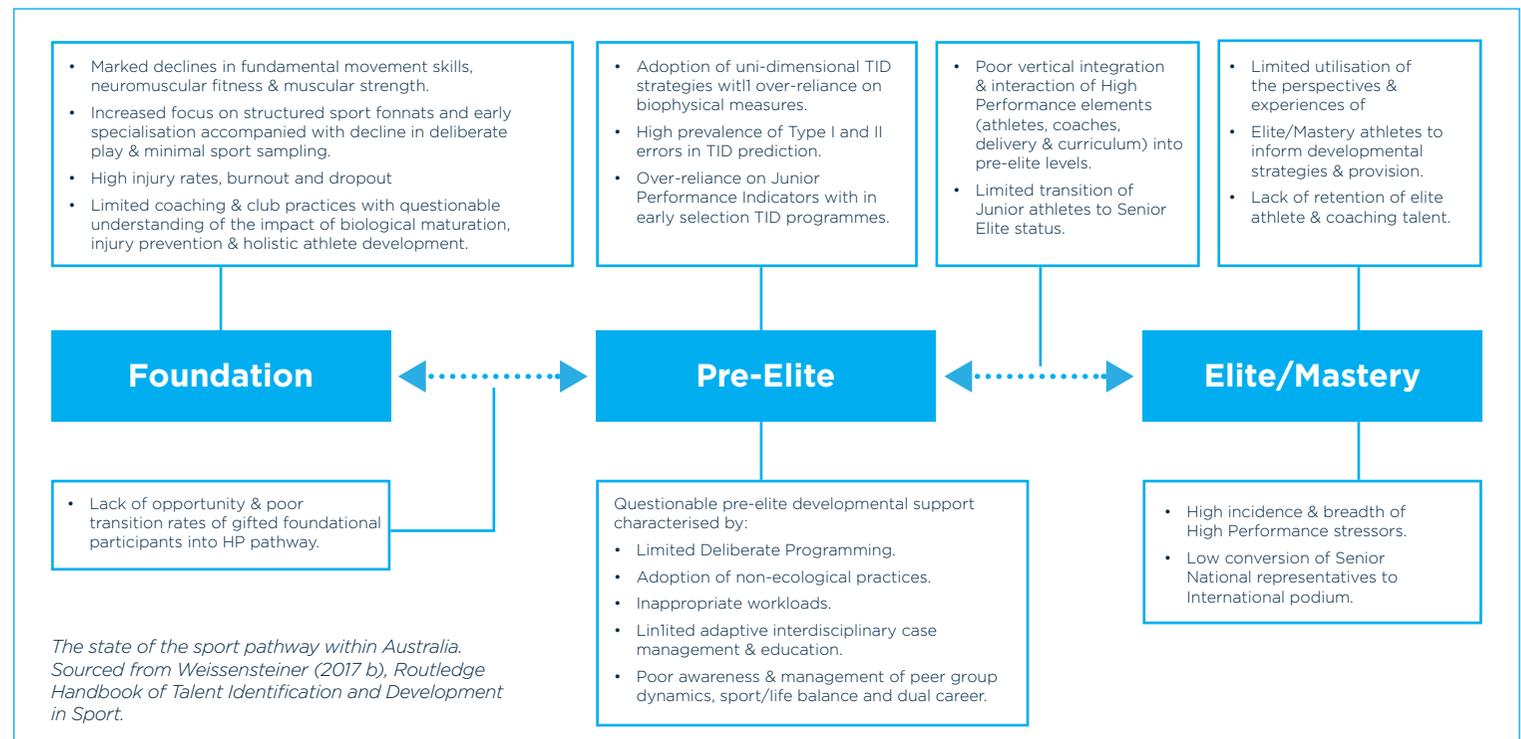
Commonly, however, the journey through these levels can be arduous and long with limited opportunity, recognition, guidance, coordinated support and funding for these athletes, whilst they are juggling their sport, vocational and life commitments. If not case managed appropriately, this can often lead to the pre-elite athlete not realising their talent potential, burning out and dropping out (see Figure).

The best-practice recommendations showcased within the Talent levels of **FTEM NSW** provide a logical and progressive framework for all stakeholders to better **IDENTIFY**, **CONFIRM**, **DEVELOP** and **TRANSITION** emerging athletes within **NSW**.

Central to this approach, is the **criticality** of :

- multi-dimensional, evidence-informed, valid and inclusive talent identification strategies and limited reliance on juvenile competition indicators
- dedicated confirmation strategies whereby an athlete's future potential is verified over a dedicated time period, within rich training and competition-like settings
- transparent and consistent selection processes
- best practice development environments led by quality planning, athlete management and coaching and coordinated through effective deliberate programming (Bullock et al., 2009)

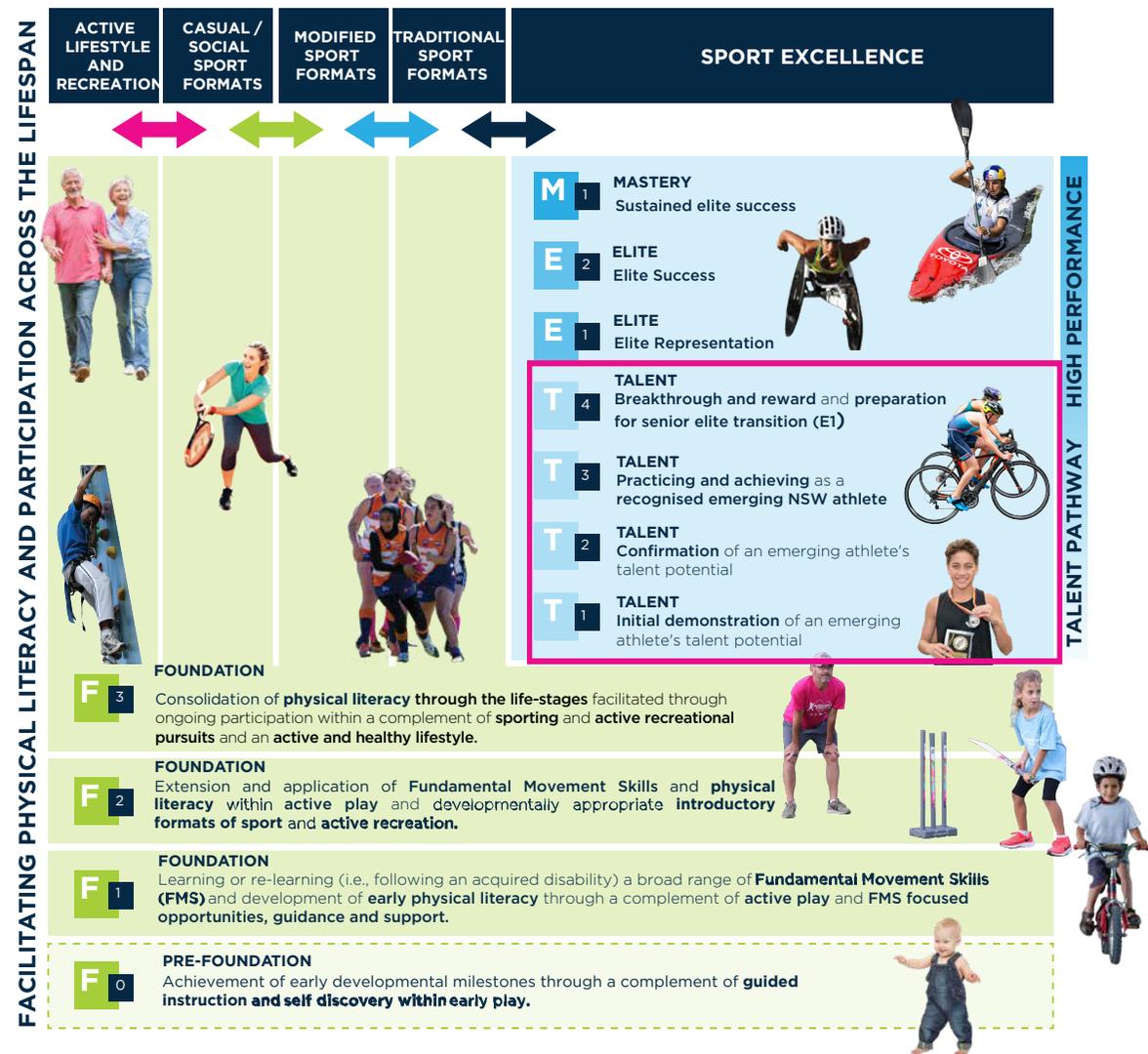
- longitudinal athlete monitoring that informs an athlete's day to day individual case management
- appropriate and well timed domestic and international competition opportunity and exposure
- strong support networks in and out of sport
- best practice athlete and coach education
- pre-emptive, support strategies to assist an athlete's management of their dual career and maintenance of sport-life balance
- proactive transitional strategies to the elite levels.



# Key features of the **Talent levels**

Directly informed by considerable national and international level evidence and learnings, including from the Australian Institute of Sport and the International Olympic Committee, the progressive and integrated Talent levels of the FTEM NSW (T1 to T4) framework advocate a complement of best practice strategies that will ensure that sports have a stronger and sustainable 'talent pipeline' up to the elite level, and the right fit of opportunity and support for the emerging athlete.

- **T1 - Initial demonstration of an emerging athlete's talent potential and T2 - confirmation of an emerging athlete's talent potential** are key TID events and strategies that are utilised together to support inclusive and effective talent selection.
- **T3 - Practicing and achieving as a recognised emerging NSW athlete** - a broad developmental period where an emerging athlete's development is coordinated through a dedicated deliberate programming approach.
- **T4 - Breakthrough and reward and preparation for the senior elite transition**- A key event or accomplishment achieved by an emerging athlete signaling their readiness and preparation to transition to the elite level.



# The FTEM NSW Talent Pipeline

The schematic below provides a snap shot overview of an effective talent strategy utilising the FTEM NSW Talent levels and guiding principles.

**Key operational focus for overseeing Organisations and their delivery partners**

Provision of dedicated TID opportunities and aligned processes to support inclusive and effective talent selection of athletes

Provision of holistic and coordinated developmental opportunities and support over a broad developmental period with a focus on athlete retention and progression

Clarity on performance indicators signaling an athlete's readiness to transition into open age elite level and the required case management, competitive opportunity and support

**Description of level**

Traditional Talent ID opportunities (within athlete's main sport)

**T1**  
The aspiring emerging athlete demonstrates their initial talent potential

Talent Detection/Transfer opportunities (outside athlete's main/original sport)



**T2**  
The athlete's talent potential is confirmed through an ecological and holistic approach



**T3**  
Regional State National  
The emerging athlete is recognised formally as having future talent potential and is embedded within and supported through best-practice developmental environments coordinated through effective Deliberate Programming featuring quality coaching, service support and access to progressive levels of competition, education, monitoring etc.



**T4**  
State/National  
The athlete achieves a required benchmark and is recognised and supported through effective case management, competitive exposure, education and support (inc. mentoring) to facilitate their transition into the elite level

Provision of multiple and complementary TID recruitment opportunities and **entry points** for the aspiring athlete to **enter and/or re-enter** into the talent pathway

\*\*\* Emerging athletes in reality, may cycle through the T1 to T3 levels and aligned processes several times as they traverse up age/competitive and representative levels (e.g., talent selection and development within U14, U16, U18; Regional, State, National Junior competitive/representative levels etc.) or re-enter the talent pathway in their sport or in another sport.

# What the **Talent Levels of FTEM NSW** are not

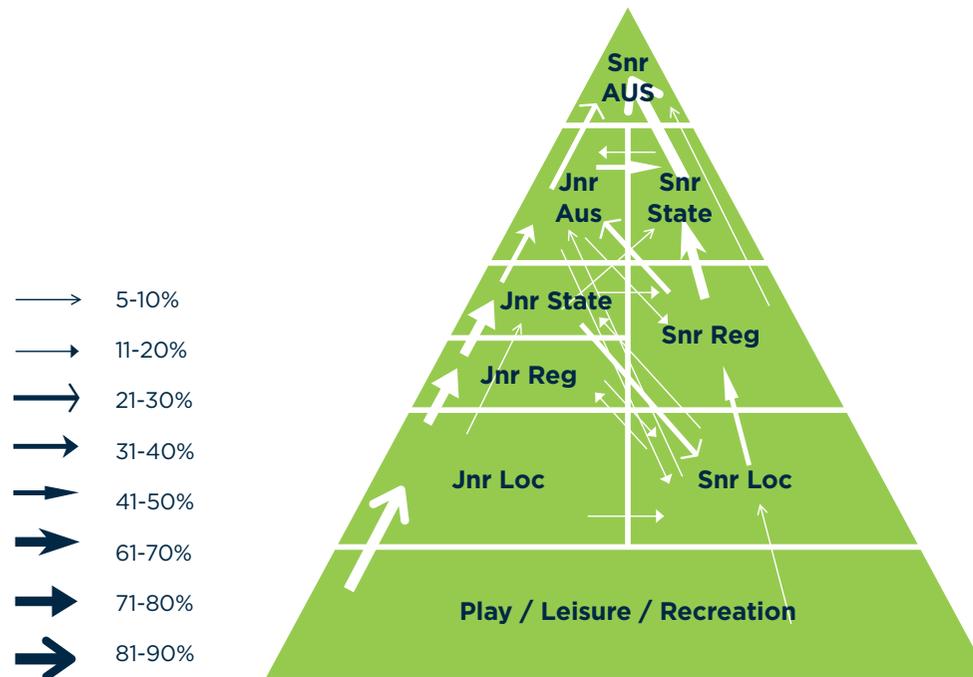
**The Talent levels are not predicated on chronological age, competition levels or simply an overlay of programs.**

Considerate of -

- the realistic variance in ages of emerging athletes within the Talent levels of sport (consider an older athlete transferring into another sport at a T1/2 level).
- the developmental trajectory of emerging athletes (See Figure) commonly characterised by selection (ascent) and de-selection (descent).
- compelling evidence showing that competitive performance at a junior age is not a strong correlate of future senior performance success.

the Talent levels of FTEM NSW advocate that sport and their delivery partners within the Talent pathway apply a progressive set and coordination of key talent identification and development strategies to -

- maximise opportunity, inclusion and support of the emerging athlete.
- support the sport's operational alignment, efficiency and effectiveness.

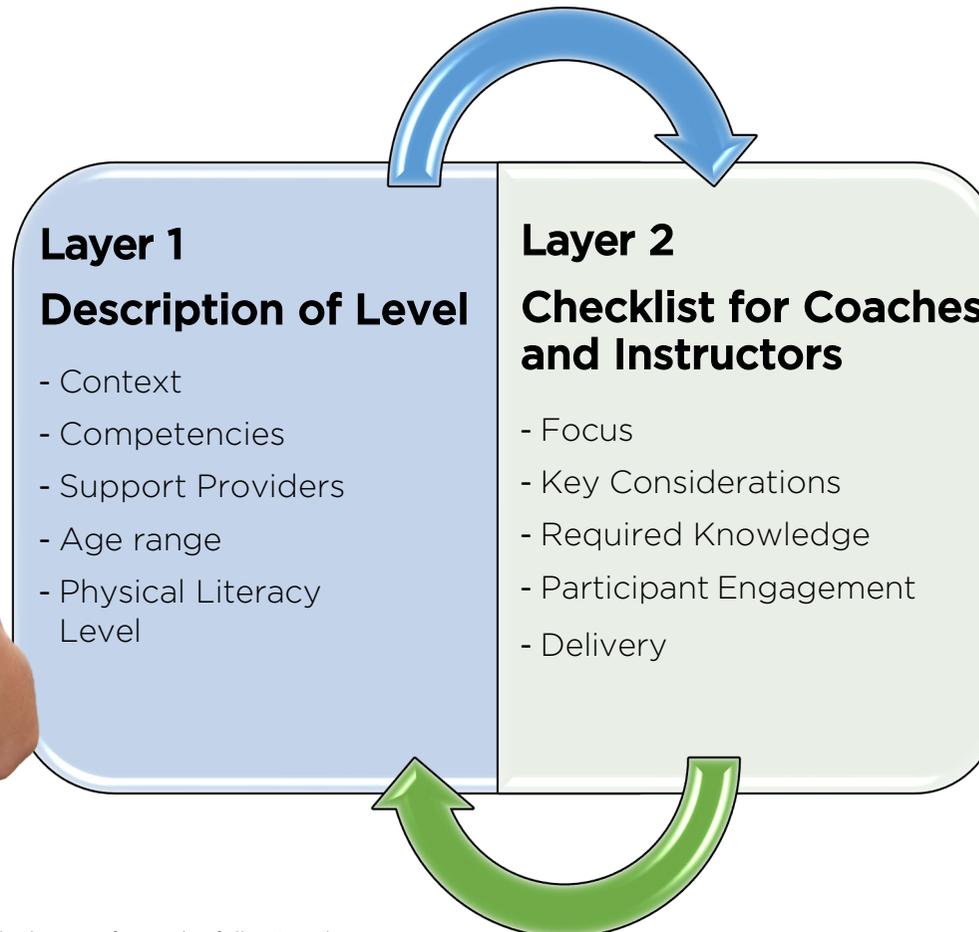


The varied developmental trajectories of 256 Senior Elite Athletes (Gulbin, Weissensteiner, Oldenziel and Gagné, 2013)

# Guidelines and practical tips

Over the next few pages, we will unpack the **T1 to T4 Talent levels of FTEM NSW**, integrating a holistic and ecological approach inspired by the 3D-AD (*Three Dimensional Athlete Development*) model. Two layers of information and advice centred around the emerging athlete, will be provided for Coaches and Instructors specific to each level as depicted in the graphic below.

Please use the interactive tabs on the right of this page and throughout this section to access specific information for each level.



Talent level 1

Talent level 2

Talent level 3

Talent level 4

# Talent level 1

## Description of level

**Focus:** Initial demonstration of an emerging athlete's talent potential.

**Type of Level** - Key TID EVENT.

### Context for the Participant

The aspiring athlete initially demonstrates their talent potential and are recognised by their respective SSO/SSOD and/or regional system partner (e.g., Regional Academy of Sport etc.) after being identified -

#### a) Within Their Main Sport (Traditional Talent Identification) through -

- being talent spotted at a Regional or State Under-age or Club level championships/event
- attending a designated TID testing day.

#### b) Talent spotted from Within Another Sport (Talent Detection or Transfer)

and considered to have high performance potential in the future.

As a consequence, the athlete is offered an opportunity to progress to the CONFIRMATION level (T2) to verify their talent potential and readiness.

An athlete's biological maturational status, developmental history and training age is formally recognised and directly informs related decisions,

**Approximate Age Range**  
Variable

**Physical Literacy Phase**  
Consolidation & Mastery /  
Transfer & Empowerment



Emerging Athlete Profile

Talent level 1

Talent level 2

Talent level 3

Talent level 4

# Talent level 1

## Description of level cont.

### Talent Pathway Governance:

State Sporting Organisations (SSO/SSOD) oversee the overarching TID strategy for their sport within NSW and advocate an INCLUSIVE and BEST PRACTICE approach. Requires effective LEADERSHIP from SSO/SSODs regarding -

- development and communication of TID strategy, assessments, decision making/selection criteria to athletes, parents, coaches and delivery partners to ensure sector alignment, collaboration and effectiveness
- oversight of right fit of coaches and other personnel IDENTIFYING athlete talent within Delivery Partners
- alignment with National Sporting Organisation's (NSO/NSOD) Talent Pathway TID strategy.

### Delivery/Support Partners:

- SSO/SSODs and network of Regional Sport Associations
- NSWIS (Specific to sports within NSWIS Talent Program)
- Regional Academies of Sport
- Sport High Schools
- Schools and Universities that support the implementation of talent identification processes
- Clubs
- Professional Clubs



**Emerging Athlete Profile**

Talent level 1

Talent level 2

Talent level 3

Talent level 4

# Talent level 2

## Description of level

Talent level 1

Talent level 2

Talent level 3

Talent level 4

**Focus:** Confirmation of an emerging athlete's talent potential.

**Type of Level** - Key TID Event.

### Context for the Emerging Athlete

Aspiring athletes identified within T1, are immersed into a formalised, observational trial period within their daily training environment (e.g., 1-3 months) AND/OR attend dedicated Talent Confirmation camps/events to formally confirm their readiness and suitability to progress to the T3 level and be supported through a SSO/SSOD recognised talent development program.

Emerging athletes are required to demonstrate their 'full' athletic profile within both training and competitive contexts which encompasses their -

- sport-specific skills (technical, perceptual & cognitive)
- psychological skills (e.g., character, motivation, commitment, learning potential, self-regulation, resilience/coping skills, self management etc.)
- social/emotional skills and sport-life balance

- sporting smarts (knowledge structures)
- physical literacy and neuromuscular robustness
- physiological capacity
- coachability and adaptability.

An athlete's biological maturational status, developmental history and training age is formally recognised and directly informs related decisions.

**Approximate age range**  
Variable

**Physical Literacy Phase**  
Consolidation & Mastery / Transfer & Empowerment



**Confirmed Athlete Profile**

# Talent level 2

## Description of level cont.

### Talent Pathway Governance:

State Sporting Organisations (SSO/SSODs) oversee the overarching T2 strategy for their sport within NSW and advocate an INCLUSIVE and BEST PRACTICE approach. Requires effective LEADERSHIP from SSO/SSOD regarding –

- development and communication of talent confirmation strategy, assessments, decision making/selection criteria, to athletes, parents, coaches and delivery partners to ensure sector alignment, collaboration and effectiveness.
- oversight of right fit of coaches and other personnel CONFIRMING talent within Delivery Partners.
- alignment with National Sporting Organisation's (NSO/NSOD) Talent Pathway TID strategy.

### Delivery/Support Partners:

- SSO/SSODs and network of Regional Sport Associations
- NSWIS (Specific to sports within NSWIS Talent Program)
- Regional Academies of Sport
- Sport High Schools
- Schools and Universities that support the implementation of pre-elite confirmation processes
- Clubs
- Professional Clubs.



**Confirmed Athlete Profile**

Talent level 1

Talent level 2

Talent level 3

Talent level 4

# Talent levels 1 and 2

## Coaching principles and considerations

### ROLE -

Oversee/ have direct input into initial TID (T1) and confirmation processes (T2) and aligned decision making.

Liaises with fellow coaches, Pathway staff, SSSM staff and overseeing Sporting Organisation.

### THE COACH -

- ✓ Possesses excellent teaching, inter-personal, communication and influencing skills.
- ✓ Invests in their own learning and development e.g., accessing information and research, attending educational and networking events, supported by a mentor etc.
- ✓ Ensures their athletes are supported through a safe, positive and facilitative environment and culture where the 'athlete's voice' is heard and their physical and psychological wellbeing is paramount to their 'duty of care'. Consistently upholds and demonstrates child safe practices, strong integrity and sportsmanship.
- ✓ Has a sound understanding of the complement of FTEM Talent Identification and Talent Confirmation strategies and adopts an inclusive approach to talent recruitment.
- ✓ Possesses a sound understanding of the different approaches to Talent Identification including talent selection, talent detection, talent transfer and talent amnesty.
- ✓ Has a good understanding of existent Talent Identification/Confirmation assessments that are valid and reliable and are specific to the demands of their sport and required athlete profile and if relevant, sub-discipline/event AND are advocated by their respective SSO/NSO.
- ✓ Possesses a good understanding of the required holistic athlete profile (e.g., physical, technical, tactical, psychological, social components etc) and how it is expressed within tailored talent identification/confirmation assessments/scenarios and verified behaviourally (e.g., within training and competitive contexts etc.).

# Talent levels 1 and 2

## Coaching principles and considerations cont.

### THE COACH -

- ✓ Utilises consistent Coaches Eye Assessments covering the required holistic athlete profile, endorsed by SSO/NSO.
- ✓ Moderates selection decisions relative to an athlete's training history/age/maturation (e.g., utilising relevant age and maturational benchmarks).
- ✓ Can measure/recognise an athlete's maturational status (e.g., late, neutral and early maturing) and is able to moderate decision making and management of that athlete accordingly.
- ✓ Has a sound understanding of an athlete's current life context and associated demands (i.e., school, university, vocation, family etc.) and available support network.
- ✓ Has prior experience specific to the effective talent identification/confirmation of talent transfer athletes if assisting in talent transfer initiatives.
- ✓ Can employ effective integration of inter-disciplinary expertise to support talent identification and confirmation processes.
- ✓ Provides clear communication to both the athlete and parents regarding next steps if selected or not selected.
- ✓ Can effectively communicate to an athlete their areas for development and provide specific recommendations to address these areas.
- ✓ Has effective documentation processes and can effectively and consistently interpret talent identification and confirmation assessments.

# Talent level 3

## Description of level

**Focus:** Practicing and achieving as a recognised emerging NSW athlete.

**Type of Level** - Broad Developmental Level (Could span 1 to 6+ years)

### Context for the Emerging Athlete

The identified and confirmed pre-elite athlete is formally recognised and supported by their respective SSO/SSOD and in some cases their NSO/NSO (i.e. representation with a National Training Youth squad/team) and are committed to achieving higher levels of sport performance.

They are embedded within recognised and dedicated pre-elite programs featuring the right fit of individual case management and effective integration of collaborative support partners (e.g., SSOs, RAS, Developmental Academies, Schools, Universities Clubs etc.).

There is a shared understanding and commitment between ALL collaborative support partners specific to ensuring the effective case management of each athlete (e.g., monitoring training and competition loads and demands, injury incidence, wellbeing etc.) and where the right fit of

competition opportunity and progression is provided to the athlete.

Within this level, the coordination and quality of integrated support through a dedicated and transparent deliberate programming approach is driven by transparent and shared Individual Athlete Performance Plans (IAPP) and informed by ongoing athlete monitoring, to maximise and reduce potential burnout, injury, underachievement and dropout.

**Approximate age range**  
Variable

**Physical Literacy Phase**  
Consolidation & Mastery /  
Transfer & Empowerment



Supporting the Pre-elite Athlete

# Talent level 3

## Description of level cont.

### Talent Pathway Governance:

State Sporting Organisations (SSO/SSOD) oversee the overarching T3 strategy for their sport within NSW and advocate a BEST PRACTICE approach. Requires effective LEADERSHIP from SSO/SSOD regarding -

- the best fit of Development strategy incorporating deliberate programming principles, IAPP utilisation and dedicated athlete monitoring and management, athlete education, service support and competition exposure.
- oversight of right fit of coaches and other personnel DEVELOPING talent within Delivery Partners
- alignment with National Sporting Organisation's (NSO/NSOD) Talent Pathway Development strategy.

### Delivery/Support Partners:

Specific to recognised Talent Development initiatives -

- SSO/SSODs (and in some instances NSO/NSODs)
- NSWIS (Specific to scholarship recipients in NSWIS supported sports)
- Regional Academies of Sport
- Schools with dedicated programs supporting SSO/SSOD recognised athletes (e.g., Sport High Schools, Private and Independent schools with emerging athlete programs)
- Universities and Employers
- Clubs
- Professional Clubs



Supporting the Pre-elite Athlete

# Talent level 3

## Coaching principles and considerations

### ROLE -

Oversees the development, case management and monitoring of the pre-elite athlete. Liaises with fellow coaches, Pathway staff, SSSM staff and overseeing Sporting Organisation.

### THE COACH -

- ✓ Possesses excellent teaching, inter-personal, communication and influencing skills.
- ✓ Invests in their own learning and development e.g., accessing information and research, attending educational and networking events, supported by a mentor etc.
- ✓ Ensures their athletes are supported through a safe, positive and facilitative environment and culture where the 'athlete's voice' is heard and their physical and psychological wellbeing is paramount to their 'duty of care'. Consistently upholds and demonstrates child safe practices, strong integrity and sportsmanship.
- ✓ Manages effectively the 'athlete-coach' partnership and promotes the autonomy of the athlete through embracing challenge, utilisation of self regulatory strategies and investment in learning and improvement (i.e., appropriate levels of feedback, setup of challenging tasks/scenarios/environments, promotion of continual self-reflection and problem solving.
- ✓ Implements effective and consistent talent development strategies informed by an athlete's holistic developmental status, requirements and goals (i.e., as articulated within a dedicated Individual Athlete Development or Performance Plan (IAPP) with oversight from their respective SSO/SSOD.
- ✓ Oversees a formalised IAPP process with Athlete/Coach input that is transparent and accountable between SSO/SSOD and other collaborative support partners (e.g., NSWIS, NSW RAS/School/University/Club)

# Talent level 3

## Coaching principles and considerations cont.

### THE COACH -

- ✓ Effectively utilises athlete monitoring tools (e.g. AMS) to monitor an athlete's performance progress and physical and psychological wellbeing and then can in turn, adapt and enhance that athlete's case management.
- ✓ Effectively integrates inter-disciplinary expertise to support holistic athlete development.
- ✓ Evidence-based, contemporary, ecological and holistic coaching delivery characterised by strong sport-specific knowledge and informed by best practice skill acquisition.
- ✓ Incorporates ecological training practices to further refine an athlete's profile and related skill proficiencies (e.g., required complement of technical/tactical/psychological skills) within competitive-like conditions (e.g. under pressure, fatigue, differing environmental and competitive conditions etc.).
- ✓ Ensures that an athlete has the required 'Sporting Smarts' and regularly and effectively applies these skills in training, competition, outside of sport (i.e., nutrition, hydration, recovery, sleep, injury prevention, psychological and well-being and engagement strategies, anti-doping awareness and compliance, dealing with the media etc.).
- ✓ Manages effectively the competitive progression and exposure of their athlete/s.
- ✓ Oversees the delivery of quality camps and and related developmental opportunities.

# Talent level 3

## Coaching principles and considerations cont.

### THE COACH -

- ✓ Integrates elite/mentor athletes and coaches where appropriate.
- ✓ Is aware of the contextual background of an athlete and assists the athlete in managing concurrent demands such as career and educational commitments, family and peers.
- ✓ Ensures effective training/load awareness, monitoring and management.  
Oversees appropriate frequency and timing of tapering of athletes relative to key competitions.
- ✓ Effectively incorporates injury prevention and management strategies.
- ✓ Includes appropriate strength & conditioning programs featuring an ecological and evidence-based approach e.g. postural, core and major joint stability, strength and power, neuromuscular control/coordination and fitness.
- ✓ Is cognisant of strategies to empower an athlete's learning potential and self-regulation (e.g. encouraging goal setting, self reflection, critical thinking, problem solving etc.).
- ✓ Has a strong awareness of and can adequately manage peer dynamics.

# Talent level 4

## Description of level

**Focus:** Breakthrough and reward and preparation for the senior elite transition (E1).

**Type of Level** - Key Breakthrough event.

### Description of Level

The pre-elite athlete achieves a significant breakthrough and is recognised formally by their respective SSO/NSO, SSOD/NSOD as a prospective elite athlete and is directly assisted in their transition to the elite ranks (e.g., for prioritised Olympic and Paralympic sports an NSWIS or NSO Scholarship/funding; for a Professional sport being a recipient of a rookie contract within a top-tier state squad or professional team etc.).

They are commonly considered a 'categorised athlete' in line with their NSO/NSOD and may receive additional monetary and service support (e.g., dAIS payments).

Holistic and integrated support is provided to the athlete as listed for the T3 level as well as dedicated and individualised education, preparation and management of the pre-elite to support their pending transition to the elite level through :

- an aligned and agreed understanding of potential barriers and facilitators;
- implementation of proactive strategies to mediate the transition.

**Approximate age range**  
Variable

**Physical Literacy Phase**  
Consolidation & Mastery / Transfer & Empowerment



**Consolidated Athlete Profile**

# Talent level 4

## Description of level cont.

### Talent Pathway Governance:

State Sporting Organisations(SSO/SSOD) in partnership with their respective NSO/NSOD oversee the overarching T4 strategy within NSW and advocate a BEST PRACTICE approach. Requires effective LEADERSHIP from SSO/SSOD regarding -

- Transitional strategies, planning and support
- Alignment with NSO/NSOD High Performance strategy
- Oversight specific to right fit of coaches and other personnel within Delivery Partners.

### Delivery/Support Partners:

- SSO/SSODs & NSO/NSODs
- NSWIS (Specific to Categorised athletes within OLYMPIC and PARALYMPIC prioritised sports)
- Clubs and Professional Clubs
- Regional Academies, Schools, Sport High Schools, Universities and Employers that support SSO/NSO recognised T4 level athletes transitioning to elite level
- Parents and Significant others



Consolidated Athlete Profile

# Talent level 4

## Coaching principles and considerations

### ROLE-

Oversees the transition planning and preparation of the pre-elite athlete.

Liases with fellow coaches, Pathway staff, SSSM staff and overseeing Sporting Organisation.

### THE COACH -

- ✓ Possesses excellent teaching, inter-personal, communication and influencing skills.
- ✓ Invests in their own learning and development e.g., accessing information and research, attending educational and networking events, supported by a mentor etc.
- ✓ Ensures their athletes are supported through a safe, positive and facilitative environment and culture where the 'athlete's voice' is heard and their physical and psychological wellbeing is paramount to their 'duty of care'. Consistently upholds and demonstrates child safe practices, strong integrity and sportsmanship.
- ✓ Delivery and support within an athlete's Daily Training Environment as per Talent level T3.
- ✓ Has a good understanding of the concurrent demands and stressors specific to the T4/E1 (pre-elite to senior elite) transition.
- ✓ Adopts a pro-active approach to supporting an athlete negotiate this transition including preparatory strategies, relevant education, exposure and experience through key benchmark competitions, dedicated camps featuring vertical integration with senior elite athletes and coaches.
- ✓ Promotes further facilitation of an athlete's self regulatory skill to empower their autonomy, self organisation and management, adaptability, progression and preparation.

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# FTEM NSW: Best Practice Tips for Coaches and Instructors

Complete version inclusive of  
Foundational and Talent levels

For more information and advice on FTEM NSW please  
email: [futurechampions@sport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:futurechampions@sport.nsw.gov.au)

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