

# The FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Development Framework - System level Guidelines and Considerations : **The Talent Levels**

A systems and best practice approach for empowering and supporting NSW citizens through life-long active living, recreation and sport.



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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 who was an original co-author of the original FTEM Athlete Framework developed by the Australian Institute of Sport, led the development of the FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Framework 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 with FTEM NSW –

Andrew Putt – Director, Sector Performance, NSW Office of Sport.

Celia Murphy – Executive Director, Policy and Planning, NSW Office of Sport.

Mia Jenkins – Principal Advisor, Integrity, Sector Performance, NSW Office of Sport.

Nadia Briganti – Graphic Designer – Communications and Marketing, NSW Office of Sport.

Rebecca Neale – Project Officer, Athlete Pathways, Sector Performance, NSW Office of Sport.

Pam Ireland – Administration Officer, South East Sports Academy, NSW Office of Sport.

Simon Woinarski – Project Officer, Coaching and Officiating, Sector Performance, NSW Office of Sport.

Kerry Fielding – Senior Project Officer, Sector Performance, NSW Office of Sport.

Deborah Howard, Principal Policy Officer, NSW Office of Sport.

Shannon Dixon – Project Officer, Integrity, Sector Performance, NSW Office of Sport.

Kerry Turner – Manager, Partnerships and Participation, NSW Office of Sport.

Chris Elasi – Manager, Sector Capability, NSW Office of Sport.

Donna Coady, Project Officer, Indigenous S&R, Northern Cluster, NSW Office of Sport.

Gerald Bradshaw, Development Officer, Northern Cluster, NSW Office of Sport.

Jeffrey Slatter – Project Officer, Sector Performance, NSW Office of Sport.

Margot Zaska – Project Officer, Sector Performance, NSW Office of Sport.

Peter McCue – Principal Policy Officer, NSW Office of Sport

Dr Phil Hamdorf – FMR Executive Director, NSW Office of Sport.

Anne Gripper- FMR Executive Director, NSW Office of Sport.

Dr Kevin Thompson – CEO, NSWIS.

Claire Prideaux – FMR CEO, NSWIS.

Anna Longman – FMR Project Officer, Policy and Planning, NSW Office of Sport.

Chris Yeomans – Senior Coordinator, Talent Program, NSWIS.

Madison de Rozario & Ben Tudhope, Paralympians.

Jessica Fox & Lauren Burns, Olympians.

Dr Clare MacMahon, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

**Suggested citation:**  
Weissensteiner, J.R. The FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Framework: System Guidelines and Considerations - The Talent Levels. Sector Performance, Policy and Planning, NSW Office of Sport. 2021. <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development/FTEM-NSW>



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# Future Champions Strategy

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, the strategy provides clear recommendations for the NSW sports sector to review and refine their operational strategies and related education, networking and support systems.

Directly informed and aligned with the **FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Framework**, the strategy comprises 16 recommended actions across 6 key strategic drivers - Pathway Leadership, Coaching, Empowered Participants and Athletes, Pathway Intelligence, Competition and Development and Performance Environments.

The **Future Champions** strategy has a deliberate focus on building the foundations of the NSW pathways system through effective and agile leadership, strategy, knowledge sharing, networking and building the evidence-base. Informed by the best practice principles of the **FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Framework**, guidance provided to NSW Sporting Organisations and their network partners will not only cover their Talent strategies, but also importantly their underpinning Foundational strategies and fit of programs and delivery.

Attending to a key action of the Future Champions strategy, this interactive resource was developed specifically to support our stakeholders and sector within NSW, in their understanding and application of the FTEM NSW Framework.

For more information on the NSW Office of Sport's Future Champions strategy please visit <https://sport.nsw.gov.au>



# Some information about this resource



## What is the purpose of this resource?

The following resource provides detailed information and best-practice guidance on the **Talent levels of the FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Development Framework (T1 to T4)**. Substantial expertise and practical learnings sourced from within the NSW sector, contributed to the development of this resource and its practical recommendations.

## Who is it for?

All stakeholders and organisations and their personnel who oversee or assist the development of emerging athletes within NSW.

This includes but is not limited to -

- Emerging (Pre-elite) Athletes
- Parents, Guardians and Carers
- Coaches, Managers and Clubs
- Teachers and Schools
- Lecturers, scholars and Universities
- Practitioners
- State Sporting Organisations
- National Sporting Organisations
- State and National Government Agencies

## How do I use this resource?

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

## How will it assist me in my role?

It is envisaged that this information will be of value to facilitate -

- the review and refinement of current strategy and practice within a sport's Talent levels and pathways
- clarity in mapping, aligning and communicating a sport's Talent strategies and operations
- the ongoing engagement, education and support of emerging athletes and support providers including parents, coaches, schools, clubs etc.

## Where do I find more information?

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 **FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Framework: System Level Guidelines: All levels** document or separate **Foundational and Elite/Mastery** versions.

An FTEM NSW resource specific to Coaches and Instructors has also been developed to complement this resource. Please visit <https://sport.nsw.gov.au> to access the **FTEM NSW Best Practice Tips for Coaches and Instructors** resources.

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

# Unpacking the **Talent levels** of **FTEM NSW**



## **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?

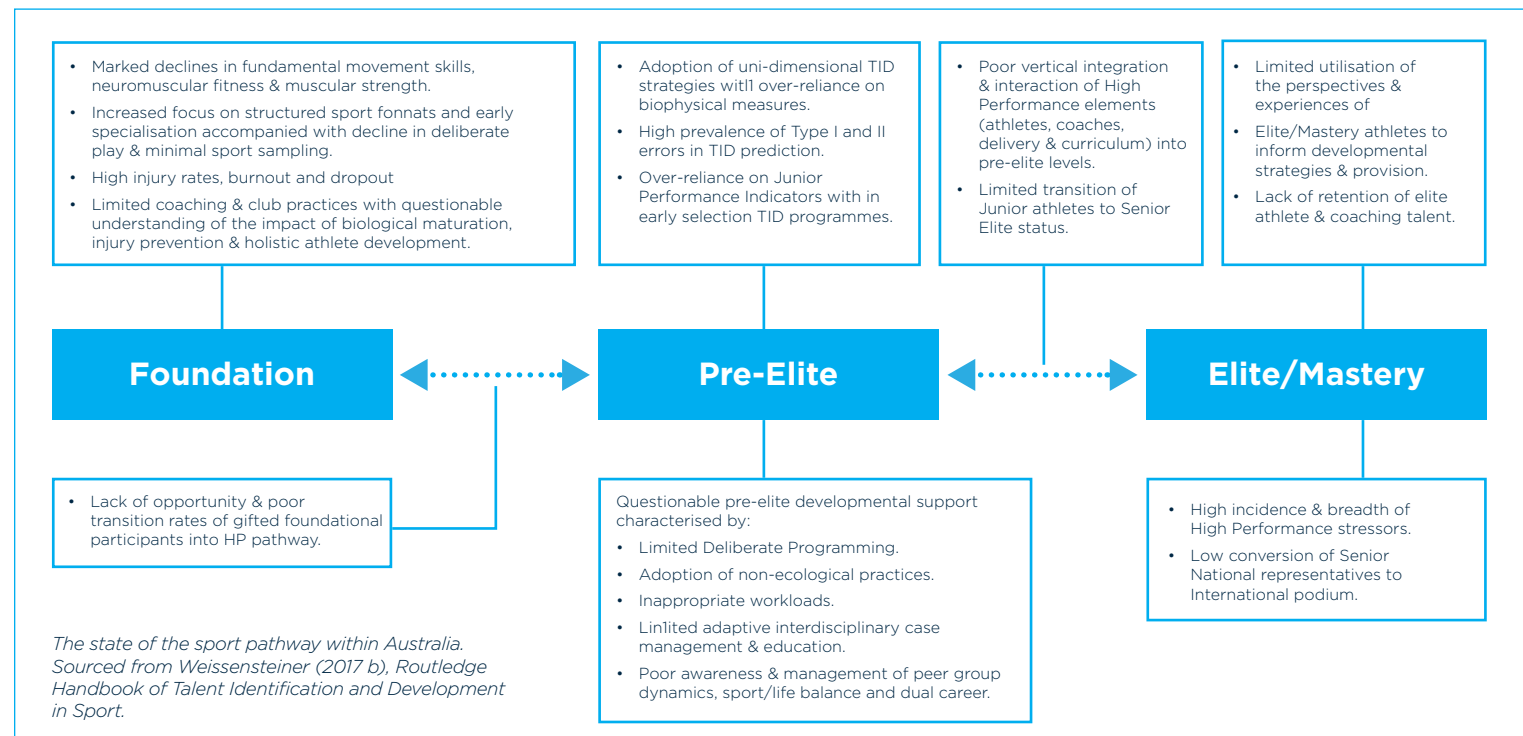
Underpinning sustainable elite success, the Talent or 'pre-elite' levels of the sport development continuum, are arguably the most important component of the High-Performance Pathway. These are the critical years of the emerging pre-elite athlete who is committed and dedicated to honing their craft and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

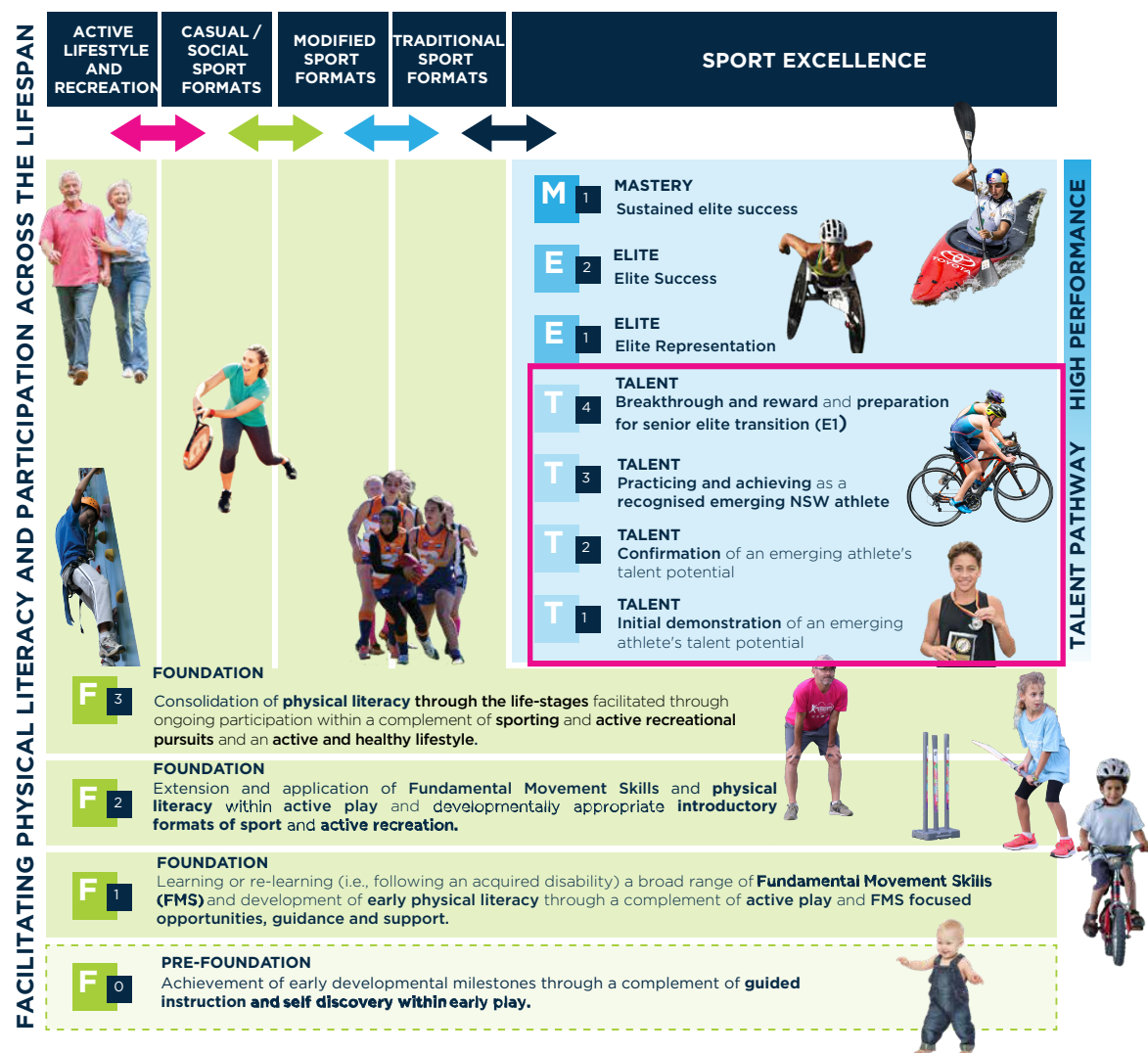
- multi-dimensional, evidence-informed, valid and inclusive talent identification strategies and limited reliance on juvenile competition indicators
- dedicated confirmation strategies whereby an athlete's future potential is verified over a dedicated time period, within rich training and competition-like 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.

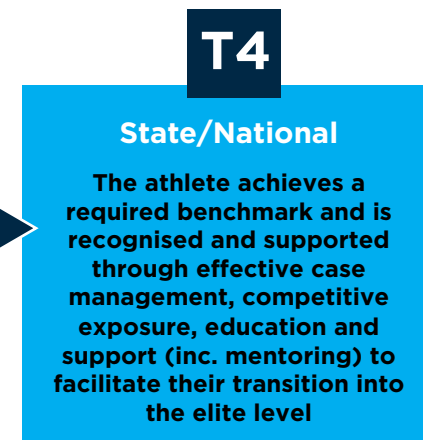
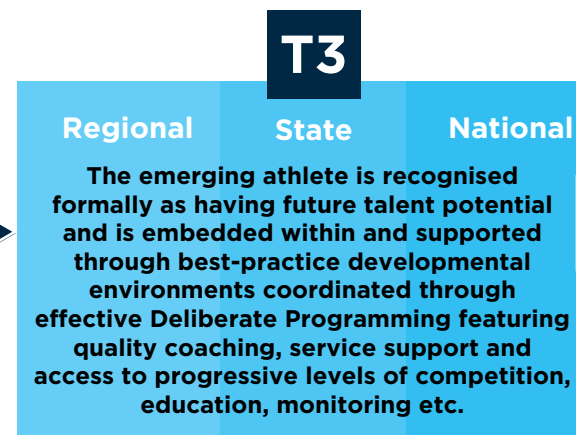
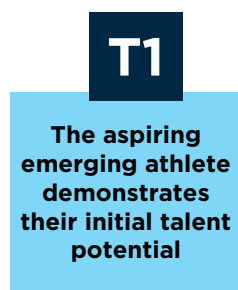
**Key operational focus for overseeing Organisations and their delivery partners**

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**



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

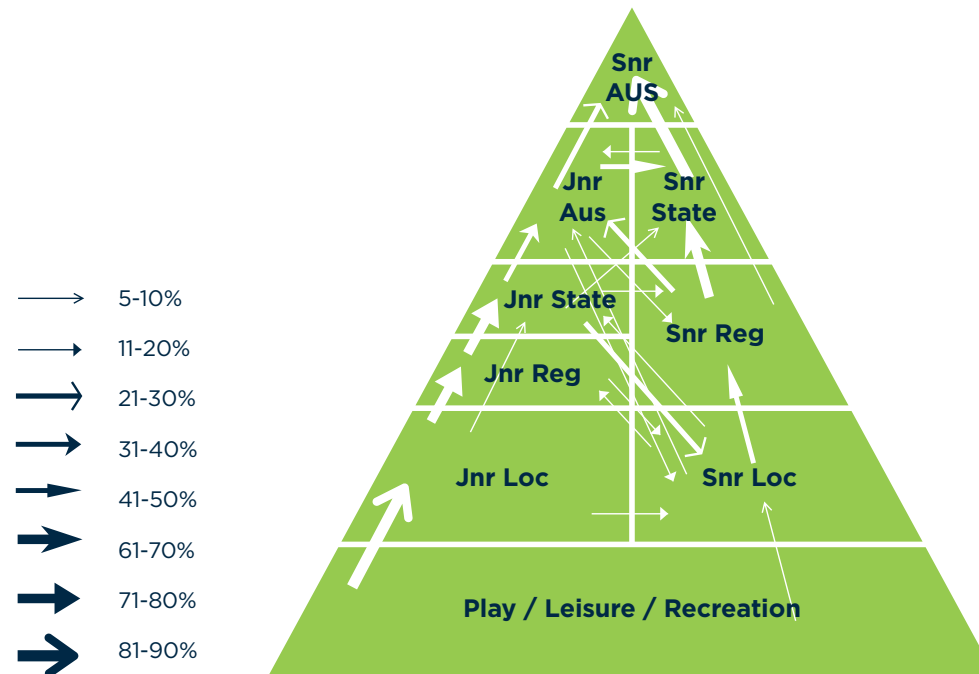
**The Talent levels are not predicated on chronological age, competition levels or simply an overlay of programs.**

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, Oldenzel and Gagné, 2013)

# Personifying and operationalising the **Talent levels**

Over the next few pages, we will unpack each of the Talent levels of the FTEM NSW Framework.

Integrating a holistic and ecological approach to athlete development, performance and support inspired by the 3D-AD\* (Three Dimensional Athlete Development) model, three progressive layers of information and advice centred around the emerging athlete, will be provided specific to each level and as depicted in the graphic below.

Please use the interactive tabs on the right of each page to access information and advice specific to each level.

## **Layer 1:** Description of Level

- Focus
- Desired competencies & knowledge
- Support Providers
- Approximate age range
- Physical Literacy Level

## **Layer 2:** **In ACTION:** Key Considerations for Best Practice

- Key strategies
- Key activities
- Key support

## **Layer 3:** **In ACTION:** Key Considerations for Environmental and System Support

- Strategy, Engagement & Planning
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Program fit and delivery
- Coaching
- Insights



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

## Description of level cont.

### Talent Pathway Governance:

State Sporting Organisations (SSO/SSOD) oversee the overarching T1 strategy for their sport within NSW and advocate an inclusive and best practice approach. Requires effective leadership from an SSO/SSOD 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 (e.g., RAS, SHS etc).
- 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**

# In Action - Key considerations for best practice

Dedicated **talent identification strategy** is consistently implemented by overseeing SSO/SSOD to ascertain an athlete's talent potential and effectively communicated to all delivery partners and stakeholders.

**Specificity of TID processes and assessments to TID strategy employed** (e.g., traditional talent identification vs talent detection/transfer).

**Accessible and Inclusive TID** opportunities are provided for gifted and aspiring emerging athletes across NSW including athletes with disability, regional and remote, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, CALD and LGTBI athletes.

**Valid and reliable multi-dimensional assessments** are utilised to gauge an athlete's true talent potential (i.e., considerate of integrated physical, technical, tactical, psychological, physiological dimensions etc.).

A junior level athlete's physical attributes and competencies and their competitive performance is **moderated by their level of maturational status (e.g., late vs early maturing athletes)**.

Effective **feedback** is provided to athletes and parents specific to **selection or non-selection** and the next steps and opportunity for the athlete.

Formalised and consistent **Coaches Eye** assessments are implemented that are **holistic** in coverage (i.e., psychological, technical, tactical, physical) and are considerate of the **maturational level and training age/history** of the athlete.

**Inclusive recruitment and selection processes** that are in accordance with the SSO/SSOD and are considerate of the emerging athlete's –

- holistic profile (i.e., physicality, technical, tactical, psychological skills)
- level of biological maturation
- skill learning potential (i.e., talent detected or talent transfer athletes)
- future talent potential.



Talent level 1

Talent level 2

Talent level 3

Talent level 4

# In Action- Key considerations for environmental and system support

## Higher level Strategy, Engagement and Planning

- Provide best practice guidance to SSO/SSODs and partner NSO/NSODs to assist them in reviewing, refining and implementing their Talent Pathway strategy inclusive of their –
  - recruitment and TID strategies
  - TID assessments, incorporation of valid benchmarks to moderate athlete data, interpretation of data and advice on data management
  - operational alignment and governance with key delivery/support partners
  - inclusive opportunities and engagement of all athletes (i.e., female, athletes with disability, rural and remote, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, CALD, LGTBI athletes etc.)
  - coach education and resources
  - educational and networking initiatives for stakeholders.
- Provide educational and networking initiatives to support key stakeholders in better understanding and implementing TID strategies and interpreting data considerate of an athlete's maturational level and training age/history.
- Oversee ongoing data capture and related insights informing organisational prioritisation and ongoing evaluation and review of TID strategies, planning, and resource allocation.

## State Sporting Organisations and State Sporting Organisations for People with Disability.

- Ongoing review and refinement of TID strategies. Ensure alignment with partner NSO/NSOD's TID strategy. Ensure an inclusive approach to TID across the NSW sector.
- Leads and oversees TID strategy and implementation by key TID delivery/support partners and formalises these partnerships (e.g. memorandum of understanding (MOU) with clear and required processes and expectations).
- Effectively communicates talent identification strategy to all sector partners (e.g., RAS, Clubs etc.).
- Provides ongoing leadership, direction and guidance to all sector partners involved in athlete TID to maximise alignment and good practice.
- Ensures inclusive opportunity and engagement for all athletes including female athletes, athletes with disability, regional and remote, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, CALD and LGTBI athletes.
- Ensures all coaches have the commensurate skills, knowledge, experience, expertise, analytical and communication skills to support TID processes.
- Ongoing education and support of coaches and inclusive opportunity
- Engages and educates parents, coaches and providers regarding best practice TID.

## Regional Academies of Sport, NSWIS, Clubs, Professional Clubs

Ongoing linkage and alignment with partner SSO/SSOD regarding TID strategies.

Ensures TID initiatives implemented are aligned with and supported by their respective SSO/SSOD which includes:

- fit of TID strategy (e.g., talent selection, detection or transfer)
- strategies and processes facilitating inclusion of all athlete groups
- targeted athlete cohort for TID (i.e., starting age and range, fit with required holistic athlete profile etc.).
- athlete recruitment processes, implementation of TID assessments, utilisation of relevant benchmarks to moderate an athlete's performance
- provision of experienced personnel (e.g., coaches, recruiters etc.) overseeing TID processes and decisions including SSO/SSOD staff
- selection decisions are informed by an athlete's holistic and future potential and cognisant of their maturational status and are aligned with SSO/SSOD
- effective ongoing data management
- ongoing education and support of coaches and inclusive opportunity
- effective communication to athletes and their parents regarding selection and non-selection and next steps and opportunities.



# In Action- Key considerations for environmental and system support cont.

## Schools and Universities

Ongoing linkage with partner SSO/SSOD, RAS regarding TID strategies.

Ensures TID initiatives implemented are aligned with and supported by their respective SSO/SSOD which includes:

- strategies and processes facilitating inclusion of all athlete groups
- targeted athlete cohort for TID (i.e., starting age and range, fit with required holistic athlete profile etc.).
- athlete recruitment processes, implementation of TID assessments, utilisation of relevant benchmarks to moderate an athlete's performance
- provision of experienced personnel (e.g., coaches, recruiters etc.) overseeing TID processes and decisions including SSO/SSOD staff
- selection decisions are informed by an athlete's holistic and future potential and cognisant of their maturational status and are aligned with SSO/SSOD
- effective ongoing data management
- ongoing education and support of coaches and inclusive opportunity
- effective communication to athletes and their parents regarding selection and non-selection and next steps and opportunities.

## Coaches

- Does not rely solely on juvenile competitive performance to inform decisions, but considers an athlete's holistic profile considerate of their maturational status, training age and experience and learning and talent potential.
- Have the commensurate experience and knowledge to be able to effectively 'talent forecast' and make initial predictions of an athlete's future performance potential and/or engage with TID experts to assist with related processes, benchmarking and selection decisions.
- Can provide effective feedback to selected and non-selected athletes and their parents and home coaches.

## Parents

- Engaged and informed regarding TID processes and criteria for selection and non-selection.
- Provided with prompt and constructive feedback on next steps for the athlete.

# Talent level 2

## Description of level

**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 an 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 (e.g., RAS, SHS etc.)
- 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**

# In Action - Key considerations for best practice

Dedicated **Talent Confirmation strategy** is consistently implemented by SSO/SSOD to verify an athlete's talent potential and readiness and effectively communicated to all delivery partners and stakeholders.

**Specificity of TID processes and assessments to TID strategy employed** (e.g., traditional talent identification vs talent detection/transfer).

Utilisation of **valid and consistent strategies and assessments (e.g., objective, observational/behavioural measures)** that ascertain an **athlete's holistic talent potential within their training and performance environment** (i.e., psychological (motivation, commitment, coachability, self-regulation and learning aptitude) technical, tactical, physical competencies etc.)

**Valid and reliable assessments and benchmarks** are utilised to gauge an athlete's true talent potential (i.e., specific to their level of biological maturation, training age/history in the sport).

Formalised and consistent **Coaches Eye assessments** are implemented that are holistic in coverage (i.e., cover psychological, technical, tactical, physical, social elements) and are considerate of the **maturational level and training age/history** of the athlete.

Effective **feedback** provided consistently to athletes and parents specific to **selection or non-selection** and the **next steps/opportunities** for the athlete.

**Inclusive selection processes** that are considerate of the emerging athlete's –

- holistic profile (i.e., physicality, technical, tactical, psychological skills)
- level of biological maturation
- skill learning potential (i.e., talent detected or talent transfer athletes)
- future talent potential.



Talent level 1

Talent level 2

Talent level 3

Talent level 4



# In Action- Key considerations for environmental and system support

## Higher level Strategy, Engagement and Planning

- Provide best practice guidance to SSO/SSODs and partner NSO/NSODs to assist them in reviewing, refining and implementing their Talent Pathway strategy inclusive of their –
  - talent confirmation strategies
  - confirmation assessments, incorporation of valid benchmarks to moderate athlete data, interpretation of data and advice on data management
  - operational alignment and governance with key delivery/support partners ensuring inclusion of talent confirmation processes
  - inclusive opportunities and engagement of all athletes (i.e., female, athletes with disability, rural and remote, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, CALD, LGTBI athletes etc.)
  - coach education and resources
  - educational and networking initiatives for stakeholders.
- Provide educational and networking initiatives to support key stakeholders in better understanding the importance of verifying an athlete's talent potential.
- Oversee ongoing data capture and related insights informing organisational prioritisation and ongoing evaluation and review of talent confirmation strategies, planning and resource allocation.

## State Sporting Organisations and State Sporting Organisations for People with Disability.

- Ongoing review and refinement of talent confirmation strategies. Ensure alignment with partner NSO/NSOD's talent confirmation strategy. Ensure an inclusive approach to TID across the NSW sector.
- Leads and oversees the implementation of talent confirmation processes by key TID delivery/support partners which is formalised (e.g., MOU).
- Effectively communicates talent confirmation processes (e.g., required athlete profile, time frames, assessments etc.) to all sector partners (e.g., RAS, Clubs etc.).
- Provides ongoing leadership, direction and guidance to all sector partners involved in athlete TID to maximise alignment and good practice (i.e., development and implementation of valid and reliable Coaches Eye tool and aligned continuing education of coaches/recruiters etc.).
- Ensures inclusive opportunity and engagement for all athletes including female athletes, athletes with disability, regional and remote, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, CALD and LGTBI athletes.
- Ensures all coaches have the commensurate skills, knowledge, experience, expertise, analytical and communication skills to support TID processes.
- Ongoing education and support of coaches and inclusive opportunity.
- Engages and educates parents, coaches and providers regarding best practice talent confirmation.

## Regional Academies of Sport, NSWIS, Clubs, Professional Clubs

Ongoing linkage and alignment with partner SSO/SSOD regarding inclusion and quality of talent confirmation strategies.

Ensures a talent confirmation process is implemented after initial TID to facilitate athlete inclusion and effective decision making.

Ensures talent confirmation processes are aligned with and supported by their respective SSO/SSOD which includes:

- fit of talent confirmation approach and assessments
- strategies and processes facilitating inclusion of all athlete groups
- provision of experienced personnel (e.g., coaches, recruiters etc.) overseeing talent confirmation processes and decisions including SSO/SSOD staff
- implementation of talent confirmation assessments including endorsed and consistent Coaches Eye assessments with coverage across physical, technical, tactical, psychological and social components.
- utilisation of relevant benchmarks to moderate an athlete's performance
- effective ongoing data management
- ongoing education and support of coaches and inclusive opportunity.
- effective communication to athletes and their parents regarding selection and non-selection and next steps and opportunities.



# In Action - Key considerations for environmental and system support cont.

## Schools and Universities

Ongoing linkage with partner SSO/SSOD, RAS regarding talent confirmation strategy and processes.

Ensures a talent confirmation process is implemented after initial TID to facilitate athlete inclusion and effective decision making.

Confirmation processes are aligned with and supported by their respective SSO/SSOD which includes:

- fit of confirmation process and assessments
- provision of experienced personnel (e.g., coaches, recruiters etc.) overseeing talent confirmation processes and decisions
- strategies and processes facilitating athlete inclusion
- utilisation of relevant benchmarks to moderate an athlete's performance
- selection decisions are informed by an athlete's holistic and future potential and cognisant of their maturational status and are aligned with SSO/SSOD
- effective ongoing data management
- ongoing education and support of coaches and inclusive opportunity
- effective communication to athletes and their parents regarding selection and non-selection and next steps and opportunities.

## Coaches

- Have the commensurate experience and knowledge to be able to effectively verify and confirm an athlete's talent potential and/or engage with TID experts to assist with related processes, bench marking and selection decisions.
- Does not rely solely on juvenile competitive performance to inform decisions, but observes and considers an athlete's holistic profile within practice/training, and competitive contexts and factors in their maturational status, training age and experience, learning and talent potential, coachability, readiness and commitment.
- Utilises effectively formalised Coaches Eye processes to underpin and justify selection decisions.
- Can provide effective feedback to selected and non-selected athletes and their parents and home coaches.

## Parents

- Engaged and informed regarding talent confirmation process and criteria for selection and de-selection.
- Provided feedback on next steps and opportunity for the athlete.

# 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



# In Action- Key considerations for best practice

SSO/SSOD has a dedicated **talent development strategy** informed by best practice **deliberate programming** and **ongoing analytics specific to talent pipeline** (athlete and coach churn, progression etc.) and is effectively communicated to all delivery partners and stakeholders

## Effective strategy, planning and management inclusive of :

- Individual Athlete Performance Plans (IAPP)
- ongoing athlete monitoring and adaptive case management
- quality and progressive camps and competition calendar

## Effective interdisciplinary case management inclusive of:

- well coordinated, interdisciplinary sport science/ sport medicine service support
- athlete career and education
- physical and psychological wellbeing and engagement
- competition and training load management.

## Engaging and evidence informed athlete education

- understanding of the processes and time frames of athlete development
- knowledge of what it takes to be a successful athlete (i.e., competition preparation, injury prevention, strength and conditioning, nutrition, recovery, sleep etc.) and putting this into practice effectively
- psychological skills, self -management and performance readiness

**Effective coaching practice** incorporating ecological training practices, holistic development and promoting skill adaptability and robustness.

## Safe and facilitative daily training environments inclusive of :

- positive culture and values
- espousing holistic athlete development and the importance of athlete wellbeing and sport-life balance
- coaching innovation and support
- vertical integration of athletes.

Quality **camps** and Domestic/ International level **competition** opportunities.

## Dedicated educational initiatives for:

- athletes
- parents/significant others
- coaches and managers.



Talent level 1

Talent level 2

Talent level 3

Talent level 4

# In Action- Key considerations for environmental and system support

## Higher level Strategy, Engagement and Planning

- Provides best practice guidance to SSO/SSOD and partner NSO/NSOD to assist them in reviewing, refining and implementing their overarching talent development strategies and ensuring regional/state/national operational alignment.
- Provides educational and networking initiatives to support key stakeholders in better understanding and supporting pre-elite athlete development
- Provides guidance and advice specific to support strategies for regional and remote athletes, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander athletes (e.g., dedicated engagement and ongoing support for athletes who relocate from Country), CALD athletes, athletes with disability, female athletes etc.
- Oversees ongoing data capture and related insights to inform organisational prioritisation and evaluation of impact of talent development strategy, planning, and resource allocation. Dedicated analytics to monitor and explore athlete and coach churn and progression with a mixed methodological approach.
- Formally and periodically engages the 'athlete voice' to inform ongoing advocacy, strategy and prioritisation.

## State and National Sporting Organisations and Organisations for People with Disability

- Have a dedicated overarching pre-elite development plan considerate of all aspects of deliberate programming – quality coaching, quality and accessible Daily Training Environments (DTE), quality camps and competition provision, athlete and coach education, Individual Athlete Performance Plan (IAPP) process, ongoing athlete monitoring and management system (AMS), effective training and competition load management, focus on supporting the ongoing physical and psychological wellbeing of athletes etc.
- Effectively communicates Talent Development strategy to all delivery/support partners (e.g. RAS, SHS, Clubs, NSWIS etc.) inclusive of dedicated strategies to support Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, CALD, LGTBI, Female and Athletes with Disability.
- Leads and oversees the talent development strategy and implementation by key delivery/support partners and formalise partnership (e.g. MOU with clear and required processes and expectations).
- Implements a shared athlete/coach roster and IAPP with delivery/support partners (e.g. RAS).
- Ensures inclusive, safe engagement and positive culture within dedicated DTEs including child-safety checks of all personnel..
- Ensures all coaches have the required commensurate skills, knowledge, experience and delivery.
- Implements dedicated performance support strategies and utilisation of recognised service providers through the NSW network.
- Engages and educates athletes, parents/significant others, coaches, providers regarding effective talent development.
- Seeks periodic and formal feedback from collaborative stakeholders, athletes, coaches, managers etc. to inform ongoing evaluation.

## Regional Academies, NSWIS, Clubs and Professional Clubs

- Accords with the pre-elite development plan set by their partner SSO/SSOD (i.e, within dedicated MOU and other related documentation etc.).
- Utilises effective deliberate programming by providing quality coaching, quality and accessible DTEs, quality camps and progressive competition provision, ongoing athlete, parent/ significant others and coach education and support, implementation of IAPPs, AMS, effective training and competition load management, focus on supporting the ongoing physical and psychological wellbeing of athletes etc.
- Has a shared athlete and coach roster with respective SSO/ SSOD that includes location of DTE, support provision, current status etc. and which is periodically updated.
- Communicates regularly with SSO/SSOD and other delivery/ partners specific to the case management of each athlete in their care.
- Ensures inclusive, safe engagement and positive culture within dedicated DTEs including child-safety checks of all personnel.
- Provides continuing education, networking and support of coaches.
- Monitors and manages the individual athlete's ongoing psychological and physical wellbeing.
- Monitors prevalence of injury and illness and provides prompt and effective management.
- Ensures all coaches have the required commensurate skills, knowledge, experience and delivery.
- Implements dedicated performance support strategies and utilisation of recognised service providers through the NSW network.
- Engages and educate athletes, parents/significant others, coaches, providers regarding effective talent development.
- Seeks periodic and formal feedback from collaborative stakeholders, athletes, coaches, managers to inform ongoing evaluation.



# In Action- Key considerations for environmental and system support cont.

## Schools, Sport High Schools, Universities

- Ongoing connection and liaison with the athlete's or sport's SSO/SSOD specific to the talent development of recognised emerging athletes.
- Aligned with SSO/SSOD talent development strategy and shared implementation of IAPP and AMS of recognised athletes.
- Provides flexible academic delivery, ongoing evidence-based and contemporary athlete, coach and parent education, access to interdisciplinary service support for the athlete, quality coaching, access to quality DTEs and access to the right match of progressive competition for the athlete.
- Monitors the individual athlete's training, competition and education load and ensures sport-education balance and not overload.
- Monitors and supports the individual athlete's ongoing psychological and physical wellbeing.
- Provides continuing education, networking and support of coaches.
- Seeks periodic and formal feedback from collaborative stakeholders including the student-athlete, their parents/significant others, coaches and managers to inform ongoing evaluation.

## Coaches

- Have the commensurate experience and knowledge to be able to effectively support the pre-elite athlete's holistic development and engage effectively with inter-disciplinary expertise/support to assist.
- Oversees the development, implementation and periodic review of an athlete's IAPP.
- Oversees effectively an athlete's training and competition calendar, load and management.
- Utilises ecological and holistic training strategies informed by best-practice skill acquisition principles.
- Adapts guidance and support in line with an athlete's developmental and performance status through dedicated athlete monitoring and management (e.g. AMS system).
- Ensures a positive culture, safety, integrity and inclusion within the athlete's DTE.
- Possesses a strong understanding of the life context and demands of the athlete (e.g., school, university, vocational, family etc.) and has ongoing engagement with the athlete's parents/significant others etc.

## Parents and significant others

- Engaged and informed regarding the talent development process and how they can best assist and support the emerging athlete in and out of sport.
- Monitors the individual athlete's training, competition and education load and ensures sport-education balance and not overload.
- Monitors the individual athlete's ongoing psychological and physical wellbeing and proactively supports help-seeking behaviors, strategies through connection and advice from recognised service providers (e.g., sport psychologist etc).

# 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

# In Action - Key considerations for best practice

SSO/SSOD and partner NSO/NSOD have dedicated **transitional strategies** informed by best practice **deliberate programming** and is effectively communicated to all delivery partners and stakeholders.

Strong awareness of **transitional barriers** and **facilitators** from evidence and testimonials.

Implementation of dedicated **athlete transitional education** inclusive of:

- the transitional process, planning and expectations.
- facilitation of key psychological skills (e.g. self-regulation, coping skills and performance strategies etc.) to support transition.
- wellbeing and engagement, maintenance of sport/life balance and importance of having an effective support network.
- how to be performance ready for the step up to elite level competition.
- funding and financial management.

Access to effective **mentors**.

**Effective transitional strategy, planning and management** inclusive of :

- Individual Athlete Transitional Plan (IAPP).
- vertical integration with Elite level athletes within DTE and programs/camps where appropriate.
- quality and progressive transitional camps and competition calendar.

Effective and individualised **interdisciplinary case management**.

Competition opportunities and exposure at key **National and International benchmark events**.



Talent level 1

Talent level 2

Talent level 3

Talent level 4

# In Action- Key considerations for environmental and system support

## Higher level Strategy, Engagement and Planning

- Provide best practice guidance to SSO/SSODs & NSO/NSODs to assist them in reviewing, refining and implementing their Talent Transition strategies.
- Provide educational and networking initiatives to support key stakeholders in better understanding and supporting the pre-elite to elite transition.
- Oversee ongoing data capture and related insights informing prioritisation and impact of talent transition strategy, planning, and resource allocation.

## State and National Sporting Organisations and Sport Organisations for People with Disability

- Excellent awareness of barriers and facilitators of the pre-elite to elite transition in their sport.
- Implement effective transitional strategies such as vertical integrating T4 and elite/mastery athletes within the same DTE, implement dedicated transitional camps for athletes and coaches, ensure the right match and quantity of competition experience for the athlete at key events, tours etc.
- Oversee the individualised transitional strategies/plans for athletes.
- Coordinate the individualised and inter-disciplinary case management of the athlete.
- Shared athlete/coach roster and IAPP with delivery/support partners
- Provide ongoing connection and education of athletes, coaches, providers and significant others regarding effective talent transition.
- Dedicated performance support strategies and utilisation of recognised service providers.

- Seek periodic and formal feedback from collaborative stakeholders, athletes, coaches.

## Schools, Sport High Schools, Universities and Employers - (Domestic and International)

- Ensure connection and liaison with overseeing athlete's SSO/SSOD/NSO/NSOD.
- Support an SSO/SSOD/NSO/NSOD's transitional plan for an athlete
- Provide flexible academic delivery and ongoing support inclusive of wellbeing.
- Provide and support the right match of competitive opportunities at a national and international level (e.g., World University Games etc.)

## Regional Academies, NSWIS, Clubs and Professional Clubs

- Excellent awareness of barriers and facilitators of the pre-elite to elite transition in their sport.
- Implement effective transitional strategies such as vertical integrating T4 and elite/mastery athletes within the same DTE, implement dedicated transitional camps for athletes and coaches, ensure the right match and quantity of competition experience for the athlete at key events, tours etc.

- Oversee the individualised transitional strategies/plans for athletes.
- Coordinate the individualised and inter-disciplinary case management of the athlete.
- Shared athlete/coach roster and IAPP with delivery/support partners
- Provide ongoing connection and education of athletes, coaches, providers and significant others regarding effective talent transition.

## Coaches

- Have the commensurate experience and knowledge to be able to effectively support an athlete's pre-elite to elite transition and engage inter-disciplinary expertise to assist.
- Supports the implementation of an athlete's transitional plan.

## Parents and Significant others

Engaged and informed regarding Talent transitional process and key facilitators and knowledge and experience required.

Support the implementation of an athlete's transitional strategy/plan.

Talent level 1

Talent level 2

Talent level 3

Talent level 4

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# The FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Development Framework - System-level Guidelines and Considerations : **The 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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