Planning for Long Term Success
The Long Term Athlete Development Model for Cricket

Guidelines and Principles

www.ecb.co.uk
This document is intended as a guide for coaches, managers, administrators, parents, teachers and others who play a part in the development of young cricketers.

It should be viewed as a route map which sets out guidelines and provides player development principles using the philosophies of the Long Term Athlete Development model for cricket.

It describes the performance pathway for players at school, club, district, county, regional and national levels and identifies the appropriate programme content for each skill and ability level along a child’s cricketing journey from novice to accomplished performer. If all those involved in this process understand what is required, when, how and by whom then we can create the best environment for realising individual potential in the sport.

This model provides a framework which all those involved in the development of that individual can use for guidance. It should not be viewed as a rigid set of rules but more as a guiding set of principles which can inform decision making. It will and should evolve over time and be progressively adapted to the specific needs of the sport.

The LTAD model for cricket delivers on the ECB’s four strategic key pillars as described in “Building Partnerships: Cricket’s Strategic Plan 2005-2009 – from playground to test arena”:

- **Vision**
  - To become and remain the most respected cricket nation in the world

- **Objective 1**: Effective Leadership and Governance
- **Objective 2**: Vibrant Domestic Game
- **Objective 3**: Enthusiastic Following & Participation Amongst Young People
- **Objective 1**: Successful England Teams
Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) is about providing the player with the right training and practice, competition and recovery over the course of their career, in particular in relation to the important early growth and development years of young people.

It is also about trying to make all individuals as good as they can be. Therefore this model should not be seen as exclusively about producing elite players but providing everybody with the opportunity of realising their potential within the sport. It is just as important to create a positive, dynamic and rewarding cricket environment in order to encourage participation and an early love of the sport, as producing England cricketers of the future.

The model has the potential to assist coaches in responding to critical and sensitive periods of maturation and trainability. Whilst a training benefit may occur at any time during the Fundamentals to Training to Win Stages, it is thought that there are optimal times or Windows of Opportunity when accelerated adaptation takes place or a greater likelihood of a particular skill improvement can be predicted.

One of the key philosophies of LTAD is ensuring that the model is “player centered” which means that developmental programmes are appropriate to that individual’s specific needs and not just generic to a group of players within a team whom happen to be the same chronological age. Everybody goes through the same developmental stages from childhood to adulthood, although the timing and intensity of those physical, mental and emotional changes vary from individual to individual. Identifying an individual’s particular stage of growth and development forms the basis for effective and fulfilling programmes for both player and coach.

### The Long Term Athlete Development Model for Cricket

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Approximate Age Range</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals</td>
<td>6-9 boys 6-8 girls</td>
<td>• Fun and Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Overall Athletic Development including a wide range of movement activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of the ABC’s – Agility, Balance, Coordination &amp; Speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to the basic skills of throwing, catching &amp; striking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to modified and simple games not formal matches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participation in as many other sports &amp; activities as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to simple rules &amp; ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Well structured and monitored programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn To Train</td>
<td>9-12 boys+ 8-11 girls+</td>
<td>• Introduction to general physical conditioning for cricket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Shaping &amp; patterning of more specific cricket skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue developing athletic skills including ABC’S as part of programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Modified games to teach understanding (incl. decision making &amp; game awareness) with 4:1 Practice:Competition ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participation in at least 3 other complementary sports to cricket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Remedial programme support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of positive attitudes to self, others and activities engaged in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training To Train</td>
<td>12-16 boys* 11-15 girls*</td>
<td>• Individualised training programmes with special emphasis on developing speed, strength and stamina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide Performance Lifestyle support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of more specific cricket skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Extension of mental toughness training (incl. ECB “Winning Mind” research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Continued participation in other complementary sports with specialisation in cricket towards end of phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Remedia Programme support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Aim for a minimum 2:1 Practice:Competition ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training To Compete</td>
<td>16-18 boys* 15-17 girls*</td>
<td>• Individually structured physical, technical, tactical &amp; mental skill programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cricket specific technical &amp; tactical work in simulated competitive situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mentoring &amp; guidance by elite players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Advanced Mental Skills Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Performance Lifestyle Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ancillary Capacity Support related to Fitness (incl. Diet, Nutrition, Hydration etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Remedial Programme support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training To Win</td>
<td>18+ men 17+ women</td>
<td>• Maintenance of Physical capacities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Further development of match-specific skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on peaking for particular matches &amp; tours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on team dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Regular prophylactic breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Remedial Programme support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Performance Lifestyle support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement, Retraining &amp; Retention</td>
<td>Various chronological ages</td>
<td>• Comprehensive service of training &amp; support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Involvement of PCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Early identification of talent &amp; system for retaining talent within the sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Performance Lifestyle support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Player Development Pathway

The Player Development Pathway diagram sets out the journey from “Playground to Test Arena”, from an early introduction and involvement in the sport through to elite level. These stepping stones are typically via school, club, district, county, regional and national routes, are likely to include County Academies and may also include University or Further Education Institutions.

Underpinning and supporting the Pathway are the six phases of LTAD which provide guidance and establish principles for optimum development at each stage of a player’s journey in the sport.

**Competition Framework**

- **Enthusing Participation and Following**
- **Community**
  - Boys, Girls, Men, Women, Disabilities
- **Primary & Secondary School Competitions**
  - Focus & Affiliated Club Competition
- **District, County & Regional Age Group Cricket**
  - Premier Leagues
  - UCCEs
  - County Academy
  - Disability County & Regions
  - Women’s County/ Super 4s
  - Minor Counties Competition
  - First Class County Competitions
- **Vibrant Domestic Game**
  - Boys, Girls, Men, Women, Disabilities
- **Successful England Teams**
  - Boys, Girls, Men, Women, Disabilities
- **England U15, U17 & U19 Competition**
  - National Academy Programme
  - England Women’s Development Squad Competition
  - England Women’s Academy Programme
  - England Men’s, Women’s & Disability Competition

**Start** ➔ **Stay** ➔ **Succeed**
Enthusiastic Following and Participation Amongst Young People

At the entry level the children begin their journey by being introduced to cricket at school through exposure to the Kwik Cricket game, the Howzat! teaching resource, Playground Markings, the Cricket Factory and other grassroots initiatives. During this phase, which lasts approximately 3-4 years, children can try the sport out and get a basic understanding of catching, striking and throwing skills. Those who are identified as having either a more genetic disposition to the game or show keenness are introduced to a local accredited club or focus club which will provide the opportunity for more targeted development. The emphasis during this Fundamentals phase is on fun and participation. It aims to develop crucial physical capacities such as agility, balance, co-ordination and speed (ABC’S) alongside basic cricket-specific skills. The children should be encouraged to participate in as many other sports as possible.

Coaches should always encourage a positive perception of the activities and of the children themselves. They must create a non-judgemental and unthreatening atmosphere where equal praise is given for all forms of effort. It is important that the children have a positive early experience of cricket if they are to develop a future love for the game and continue their participation.
Vibrant Domestic Game

As the players grow and develop they enter the Learning to Train, Training to Train, Training to Compete and Training to Win phases. Representation will be at District, County and Regional level and may also include Premier League, County Academy, UCCE, England Development Squad and Super 4’s, Disability County and Regional, Minor County and First Class County.

The developmental aims of each of the stages focuses on Sport-Specific Skill development (L2T), “Building the Engine (T2T), Competition and Competitive Development (T2C), and Specialisation and Performance Development (T2W).

If performance is to be enhanced it is critical that appropriate play:practice:rest ratios are in place as part of the player’s Individualised Development Programme. Coaches should aim for a minimum 1:2/3 ratio of competition to practice/train to avoid the dangers of over competing at the expense of training and skill development.

In the early years programmes should emphasise personal mastery of skills rather than performance outcomes and include an element of appropriate competition.

Whilst young children are encouraged to play at least 3 other sports at junior level with a ratio of 80% other sports to 20% cricket, towards the end of the Training to Train phase it is likely that specialization will take place and that figure will become nearer 80% cricket to 20% other sports.

Coaches will need to be positive role models by helping shape the correct values and beliefs as well as supporting players with appropriate life skills training.
Successful England Teams

National Representation occurs at U15, U17, U19 mens, England Disabilities, England Women and England Men and signifies the pinnacle of achievement within the sport.

Whilst those playing for England at junior levels are likely to be in the early stages of their journey towards elite level, those who are representing England Disabilities, England Women and England Men are likely to be elite performers.

It is expected that the performers will have acquired the critical competencies at each stage of LTAD and that all relevant capacities have been developed. Focus now will be on optimising performance and peaking for special events.

Not everybody will enjoy the achievement of playing for their country, but through the LTAD Model for Cricket performers can be helped to achieve their genetic potential through a carefully planned and systematic approach to developing participants.
Fundamentals Stage

Key principles

The abc’s & specific movement skills
- agility
- balance
- coordination
- speed
- striking
- catching
- throwing

Positive attitudes
- about themselves
- about others
- about the activities
- about the sport

The learning environment
The programme should:
- Be Fun.
- Well Structured.
- Be Regularly Monitored.
- Have no formal Competition Schedule at this Stage.

Games
Make them simple and modified to increase understanding and improve game awareness

Structure games so that tactical awareness and decision making are key outcomes of a session allowing children with different abilities to succeed.

Coaches should ensure that:
- Endurance, speed and power are developed through fun active games.
- Any strength work only involves children supporting and moving their own body weight.
- The basics of flexibility are introduced through fun activities.
- The focus is on developing overall athletic ability and basic striking, catching and throwing in a fun environment rather than grooving cricket techniques – that can come later!
- All forms of effort are praised.
- They remember development is a long slow process and be patient with players and their progress!

“A journey must begin with a single step”

Lao Tzu

Age Range Of Player
6-9 boys, 6-8 girls

Years In Stage
3-4

Developmental Phase
General Athletic Formation

Aims
To provide the young performer with overall athletic skills in addition to an introduction to basic throwing, catching and striking skills with the focus on fun and participation.

Windows Of Opportunity
- General Athletic Formation
- Speed #1 (Training for the Central Nervous System)
Some Appropriate Examples of Coaching Style

“Set up & stand back” Learning Approach

- Encourage Discovery Learning by providing minimal instruction.
- Create a non-judgemental environment and give praise for all forms of effort.
- Allow children to create own play and try out different activities and movement experiences (ensuring that the children and the environment are safe at all times).
- Watch and observe movement and monitor progress.
- Note which activities the children enjoy and why.
- Challenge children to set own goals.
- Children are very often creative in their play and may produce drills and activities that the Coach would never have thought of!
- Can sometimes produce exciting and unexpected results!

“Directed or prescripted” Learning Approach

- Create more structured routines such as circuits or regulated games.
- Provide appropriate instruction and set rules.
- Help children set goals.
- Predict session outcomes.
- Test understanding, learning and knowledge.
- Provision of simple and achievable proficiency tests can create a reward system, increase focus, increase challenge and provide a sense of achievement.
Key principles

- Introduction to general physical conditioning including the key components of endurance, strength, flexibility and speed.
- Encourage participation in 3 other complementary sports i.e. those that develop complementary energy systems and movement patterns for performance in cricket.
- An introduction to more specific cricket skills including the safe and consistent patterning of movement associated with batting, bowling, fielding and wicket keeping techniques.
- Flexibility programme with particular emphasis on shoulder, elbow, spine, core and ankle stability.
- Medicine ball, swiss ball & own body weight exercises for strength and power.
- An introduction to mental skills and mental toughness training towards the end of the phase.
- Remedial programme support i.e. help with technical skills or other areas of skill deficiency.
- Respecting and understanding the history of the game.
- Positive attitudes and behaviours on and off the pitch.
- Emphasis on learning to train and practicing rather than performance outcomes.
- Modified games for increased understanding and match awareness.

“We all love to win, but how many people love to train!”
Mark Spitz - Olympic Swimming Gold Medalist
Key principles

- Emphasis on general physical conditioning including the key fitness components of endurance, flexibility, strength and speed.
- Special window of opportunity for developing speed and strength.
- Increased technical work on front foot and back foot offensive and defensive techniques; pace and spin bowling techniques; enhanced keeping and fielding skills; effective practice techniques; raising awareness and increasing responsibility.
- Introduce Individualised Training Programmes dependent on specific needs associated with roles within the game and stage of growth and development.
- Split squads into early, average and late maturers for physical conditioning and training work.
- Fitness test protocols established to benchmark and monitor development of physical capacities.
- Monitored flexibility programme 5-6 times per week if flexibility to be improved.
- Onset of PHV (Peak Height Velocity i.e. beginning of growth spurt) is an important reference point and determines extent and frequency of training. Seek expert advice to ensure appropriate training and for optimum benefit.
- Extension of mental skills and mental toughness training.
- Remedial programme support i.e. help with technical skills or other areas of skill deficiency.
- Monitoring of growth and development including regular height checks to identify key periods for appropriate training.
- Reinforce positive attitudes and behaviours on and off the pitch.
- Teaching of Performance Lifestyle Skills including the important ancillary areas such as health and nutrition, communication skills, media, balancing study and play, time management etc.
- Continued participation in complementary sports although towards end of phase moving towards specialisation.
Key principles

- Creating the optimum environment for learning to take place including the development of autonomy, independence and individual responsibility.
- Cricket specific technical and tactical work in competitive situations replicating the opportunity to make key decisions; decide on methods; make judgements; assess risks; learn from mistakes; create pressure; recognising key match moments etc.
- Coaches manage and engineer environment rather than managing every action.
- Mentoring and guidance from elite players.
- More specific Performance Lifestyle advice and support including future training and skill needs; managing touring; financial advice, drug education, career advice, education guidance and support.
- Continue Individualised Training Programmes dependent on specific needs associated with roles within the game.
- Fitness test programme to benchmark and monitor development of physical capacities.
- Integrated sport science support to ensure appropriate and individualised programmes.
- Maintenance flexibility programme.
- Remedial programme support i.e. help with technical skills or other areas of skill deficiency.
- Specialisation in cricket during this phase with other sport activity to provide training variety and interest.
- Potential for double periodised year through overseas tour i.e. 2 competition phases during the year which will influence timing, intensity and volume of training.

Training to Compete Stage

"The fight is won and lost far away from witnesses... behind the lines, in the gym, and out on the road, long before I dance under those lights"

Muhammad Ali
Key principles

- Maintaining the optimum environment for learning to take place including the development of autonomy, independence and individual responsibility.
- Cricket specific technical and tactical work in competitive situations replicating the opportunity to make key decisions; decide on methods; make judgements; assess risks; learn from mistakes; create pressure; recognising key match moments; dominating situations etc.
- Coaches manage and engineer environment rather than managing every action.
- Continue Individualised Training Programmes dependent on specific needs associated with roles within the game.
- Integrated sport science support to ensure appropriate and individualised programmes.
- Maintenance flexibility programme.
- Focus on team dynamics.
- Maintenance of physical capacities.
- Importance of planned rest breaks to avoid injury and burn out.
- Remedial programme support i.e. fine tuning technical work.
- Potential for double periodised year through overseas tour i.e. 2 competition phases during the year which will influence timing, intensity and volume of training.
- Extension of Performance Lifestyle programme but with a focus on career development and education guidance.
Key principles

- To provide a comprehensive service of training and support resources within and outside of cricket.
- Early identification of talented individuals and skill sets that can benefit other areas within cricket e.g. umpires, coaches, scorers, administration, management, ground staff etc.
- To provide welfare and social support for those players who have had to retire early through injury or ill health.
- To provide a clearly defined support structure for players from the “playground to test arena” through a comprehensive Performance Lifestyle Advisory service which includes transitional support, education guidance, career advice and work experience opportunities.
Key principles

The Player Development Pathway
The developmental journey that a young player undertakes from “Playground to Test Arena” which provides them with the best opportunity of realising their potential within the sport.

Stages of Growth and Development
The phases of LTAD which relate to the physical, mental and emotional maturation of the individual.

Optimal Performance
The balance of play, practice, train and rest over a player’s career which provides the best opportunity for successful performance.

Play:Practice:Rest ratios
The weekly, monthly and annual balance between play, practice and rest experienced by players.

Chronological Age
The age of a child by date of birth.

Biological Age
Age gauged by the physiological development of the organs and systems in the body.

Remedial Support
Programmes designed to correct any shortcomings in skill at a time later than they would normally have been acquired.

Peak Height Velocity (PHV)
The onset of the period of most rapid physical growth and maturation during the early years of a young person’s life - often referred to as the “growth spurt”.

ABC’S
Agility, Balance, Coordination & Speed. The building blocks of any sporting movement.

Growth
The measurable changes in body size.

Maturation
The development of body organs and systems.

Development
The interrelationship between growth and maturation over time.

Windows of Opportunity
The time during a person’s physical maturation when they have a greater opportunity for accelerated adaptation of certain skills than at other times.

Periodisation
A player’s programme of training periods, each of which will have different goals and training methods. The periods are designed to maximise gains in the different components of performance and are normally split into Macros cycles (a few months to several years); Meso cycles (usually 2-6 weeks duration); and Micro cycles (usually 7 days duration).
Where can I find out more?

LTAD References


Coaching, Coach Education, Coaching Courses

www.ecbca.co.uk

ECB Coach Education Office & ECB Coaches Association Office, Warwickshire County Cricket Ground, Edgbaston, Birmingham B5 7QX.

Tel: 0121 440 4332.

Equipment & Resources

www.ecbca.co.uk
www.cricketfactory.co.uk
www.1st4sport.com

Further Information on LTAD On-line

www.ecbca.co.uk
www.sportengland.org
www.sportscoachuk.org/improve/LTAD/Index.htm
www.talentladder.org/

Performance Lifestyle

www.ecb.co.uk/performancestyle
www.cricnet.com

MCC University Centres of Excellence

www.lords.org
www.ecb.co.uk
England and Wales Cricket Board
Lord’s Cricket Ground, London NW8 8QZ.
Telephone: 020 7432 1200 Fax:020 7289 5619
www.ecb.co.uk

From Playground to Test Arena

©2005 ECB