

Run Faster and Jump Higher:

Since the beginning of competitive sport, people have always asked the question of how can we as humans run faster and jump higher.

To answer this question, we need to have a look what physical aspects affect our ability to perform the given tasks. If we want to run faster or jump higher, firstly we need to realise that the two are not separate skills but more that they are very closely related skills and in that improving one skill will improve the other as well. What physical aspects are important for either running or jumping?

1. Co ordination
2. Strength
3. Power
4. Flexibility
5. Balance
6. High Proprioception
7. Stability
8. Technique
9. Mental Characteristics

All of these physical aspects will help us run faster and jump higher but what is the order of importance when working with children. However, when we ask this question to our coaches, what people are actually asking is not what will help but rather, "Which aspects will bring about the biggest change in performance the quickest"?

In my experience, working with elite athletes and working with children need to be kept separate. Elite athletes will hone certain skills over and over as these are the most directly linked for their sport. Young developing athletes need a more holistic view. Coaches need to make sure that they are not neglecting to basic skills need to perform most skill efficiently. Co ordination, technique, balance and proprioception must not be excluded when it comes to training developing athletes. If we hone the basics early on in their young sporting lives, the ability to perform the bigger motor skills will become easier to learn and also raise the ceiling of their ability to perform. Too many young athletes are held but by physical deficiencies due to a lack of a holistic point of view. Training the bigger movements in a gym will serve a purpose for all athletes but in conjunction with a properly structured developmental plan

Coaches can simply improve on one aspect of the athlete such as flexibility and this will improve their speed and power, but this can be said by all these aspects. This means that if we improve any of the physical trainable aspects we can improve speed and power. It is

crucial that when we look at speed and power (Running and jumping), we must have a holistic view as all physical characteristics have a role to play within these to skills. We simply cannot just apply the most important aspects that will provide huge improvements at the expense of other, just as important aspects of an athlete.