

G16 – A Guide to Training Programmes for Young People

The policies and guidelines referenced within this document are those of British Canoeing and its Home Nation associations.

HOW MUCH HOW OFTEN?

A question often asked is “how much training should a young person undertake – is it enough – is it too much? Whether a coach or parent - how do we train and support young people on the road to elite performance whilst taking account of the needs of a growing mind and body – supporting ambition and avoiding burn out? This is a complex issue with no easy answers. It requires experienced and appropriately qualified coaches working with the paddler and parents to establish the most appropriate training for the child based on the Long Term Paddler Development Framework.

The British Canoeing Long Term Paddler Development (LTPD) pathway gives a clear framework to guide coaches, volunteers and parents in this respect. The framework has been established based on the principles behind human growth and development and maximises the opportunities this offers to paddlers. The model aims to provide a base of Paddlesport movement skills that will give individuals the opportunity to enjoy Paddlesport and to achieve at the level they choose. At each stage of the LTPD pathway specific principles and guidelines for physical, psychological, technical, tactical and ancillary development are identified.

Planning the Training Programme

Variety, fun, skill development and quality are essential when setting a programme. At all levels fun can be incorporated in sessions – it’s not just about playing games! The development of good technique is essential – the foundation for going faster as they progress. As with all good coaching practice the training programme will need to take account of a range of other factors, such as weather conditions, time available, discipline requirements, safety (both on and off the water) and such like.

Additional factors include:

Other Sports - The LTPD framework includes guidelines on “other training”. Talented young people can sometimes find themselves training and competing in several sports/teams – all of which need to be taken into account when agreeing their training programme.

Life outside Paddlesport - Other issues that need to be taken account of to ensure a healthy balance for the young person include such things as family life, school/ academic demands, and friends/ social life.

Rest and Recovery – an essential part of training! Training programmes need to allow for sufficient recovery (usually one complete rest day a week) and paddlers must be encouraged to refuel and hydrate both after training and later at home.

The chart that follows is a summary of the LTDP pathway framework. Fuller guidance is given in the British Canoeing publication LTPD Pathway. There is also a British Canoeing workshop and online course – details from www.britishcanoeing.org.uk. In addition, the British Canoeing Coaching Young Paddlers workshop is a useful further reference for coaches.