

Cultivating High Performance in Pre-Elite Sports

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From the Beginning...

- Introduction
- Program Overview
- Coaching Staff Selection
- Program Assessment
- Setting the Standard of Excellence
- Creating a Winning Culture



Building a Multidimensional Performance-Driven Program

Moving beyond the X's and O's

The Foundation

- Athletic performance is a transactional relationship between neurobiological attributes, psychological processes, achievement orientation, and physiological actuation that enables one to achieve desired results.
- High-level performance results from successfully integrating the technical, tactical, physical, social, and environmental factors influencing psychological processes and behavioral output.
- Performance is 100% grounded in psychological processing.
- Maladaptive psychological processing, inability to self-regulate, lack of confidence, low motivation, pressures to perform, self- and team-expectations, and perceived debilitation impede performance.

Developing high-level performance...

Requires student-athletes to:

1. Desire and possess the ability and apply the willingness to transcend their current level of development (e.g., self-development during pre-season, in-season, & post-season).
2. Combine athletic intelligence, physical abilities, and psychological processes (Performance KSAs), increasing responsiveness to coaching leadership, communication style, and environmental context while balancing internal and external pressures to perform.
3. Enhance performance by acquiring new or modifying existing performance KSAs across psychology, physiological, social, and environmental domains.
4. Maintain positive athlete relational experiences.
5. Communicate training and development needs.

Optimizing high-level performance...

Requires Coaches to:

1. Demonstrate consistent and effective leadership and communication.
2. Understand and leverage psychomotor learning, development, and performance enhancement.
3. Maintain positive coaching relational experiences.
4. Define, set, and manage practice and performance expectations driving motivation, preparation, and goal attainment.
5. Facilitate a team dynamic leading to group cohesion.

Structuring a high-performance program...

1. Leadership and engagement.
2. Psychomotor learning, development, and enhancement.
3. Evidence-based evaluations and ethical interventions.
4. Resultant behavior modification.
5. Performance management efficacy.

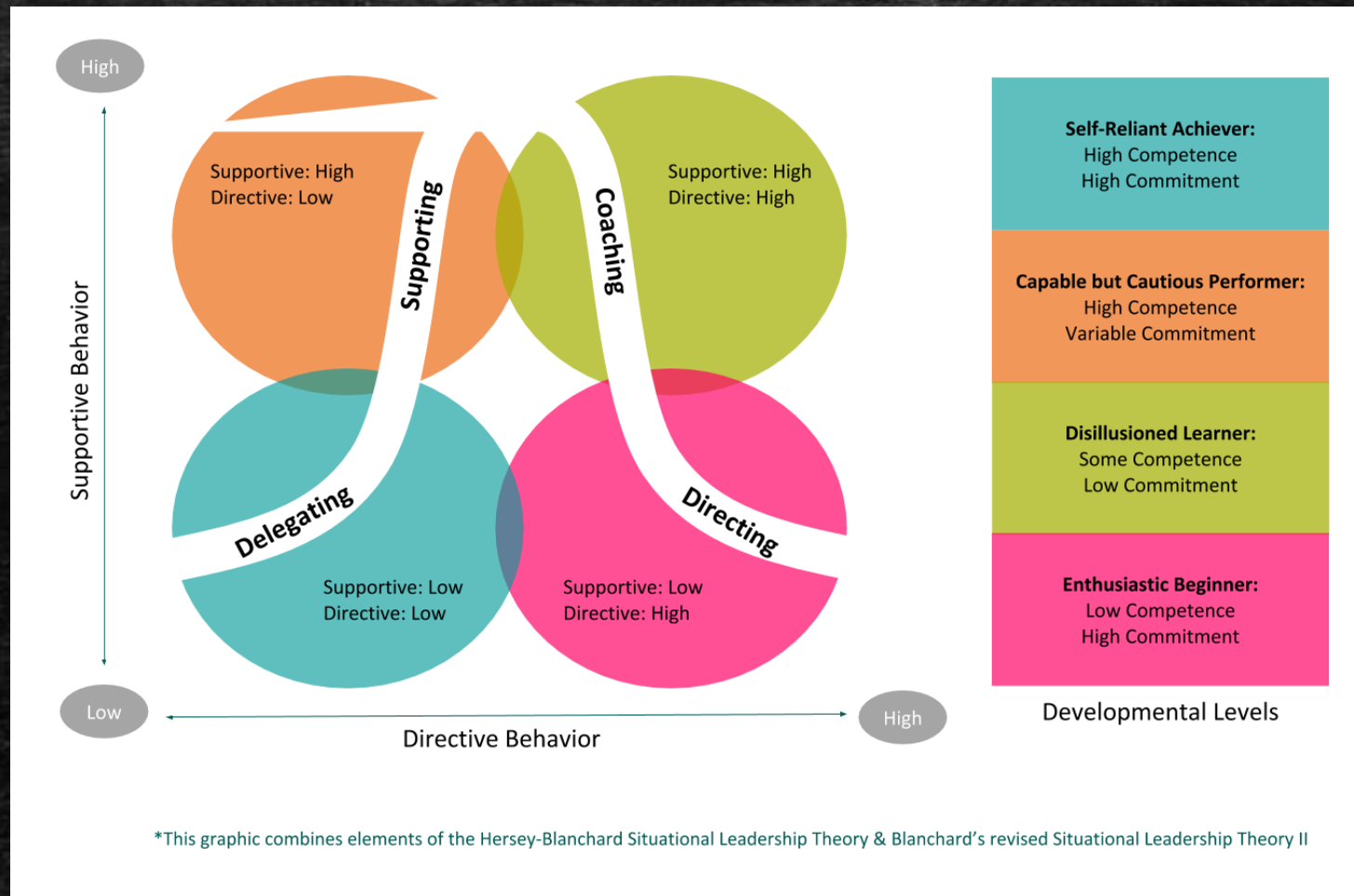
Performance Metrics:

- Anatomy & Physiological
- Athletic Intelligence
- Emotional Intelligence
- Process Communication
- Athletic Behavior & Coping

It Starts with Leadership..

- Leadership Approaches in Performance Contexts:
 - Transformational leadership inspires and motivates others toward achieving collective goals.
 - Autocratic leadership imposes rules, expectations, and standards.
 - Democratic leadership allows everyone to participate on the team to get involved and work toward a collective goal. (Most common at Freshman, Frosh, and JV levels).
 - Transactional leadership uses rewards and punishment to motivate achievement.
 - Servant leadership places the team ahead of individual achievement to achieve the collective goal(s).
 - Situational leadership is a flexible style that allows leaders to customize their approach to meet the needs of individuals and the team in goal attainment.

Situational Leadership in Sports



Leading Change

Four Phases

Phase One | The Transition

- Evaluating and understanding how student-athletes situate themselves within their sport.
- Recognizing athletic (e.g., performance KSAs) and emotional intelligence (e.g., self & others perception, regulation, and confidence).
- Evaluating student-athletes to determine developmental and performance levels.

Forming A New Team:

- Sport-specific context
- Level of knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Level of identity, personal factors
- Environmental factors
- Readiness

Phase Two | Transformation

- Assessing and connecting psychomotor development and performance enhancement through leadership and change management.
- Accept storming as a part of behavioral change.
- Create buy-in.
- Emphasize learning.
- Provide supportive and realistic feedback.

Change Management Process:

- Creating a sense of urgency
- Defining a philosophy, expectations, and a vision for change
- Forming guiding values & principles
- Communicating the vision
- Empowering student-athletes into action
- Establishing short-term wins
- Building momentum
- Institutionalizing change

Leveraging Peer Leadership..

The Role Model

- Set the example.
- Create group cohesion.
- Build team trust.
- Provide team support.
- Communicate expectations.

The Change Agent

- Fuel shared goals and motivation.
- Create team synergy.
- Build confidence.
- Use positive feedback.
- Set practice goals.
- Reinforce expectations.

Phase Three | The Mindset Shift

- Self-efficacy, control, development, confidence, & care.
- Individual competence, motivation, & autonomy.
- Peer influence & leadership.
- Goal attainment.
- Group cohesion.
- Resilience.
- Coaching leadership & support.

Normalizing Expectations:

- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Thoughts
- Behaviors
- Learning
- Coping
- Results
- Recognition (Team Success)
- Recovery

Phase Four | Peak Performance

- Leveraging, optimizing, and managing athletic and psychomotor knowledge, skills, and abilities so student-athletes consistently perform at the highest level.

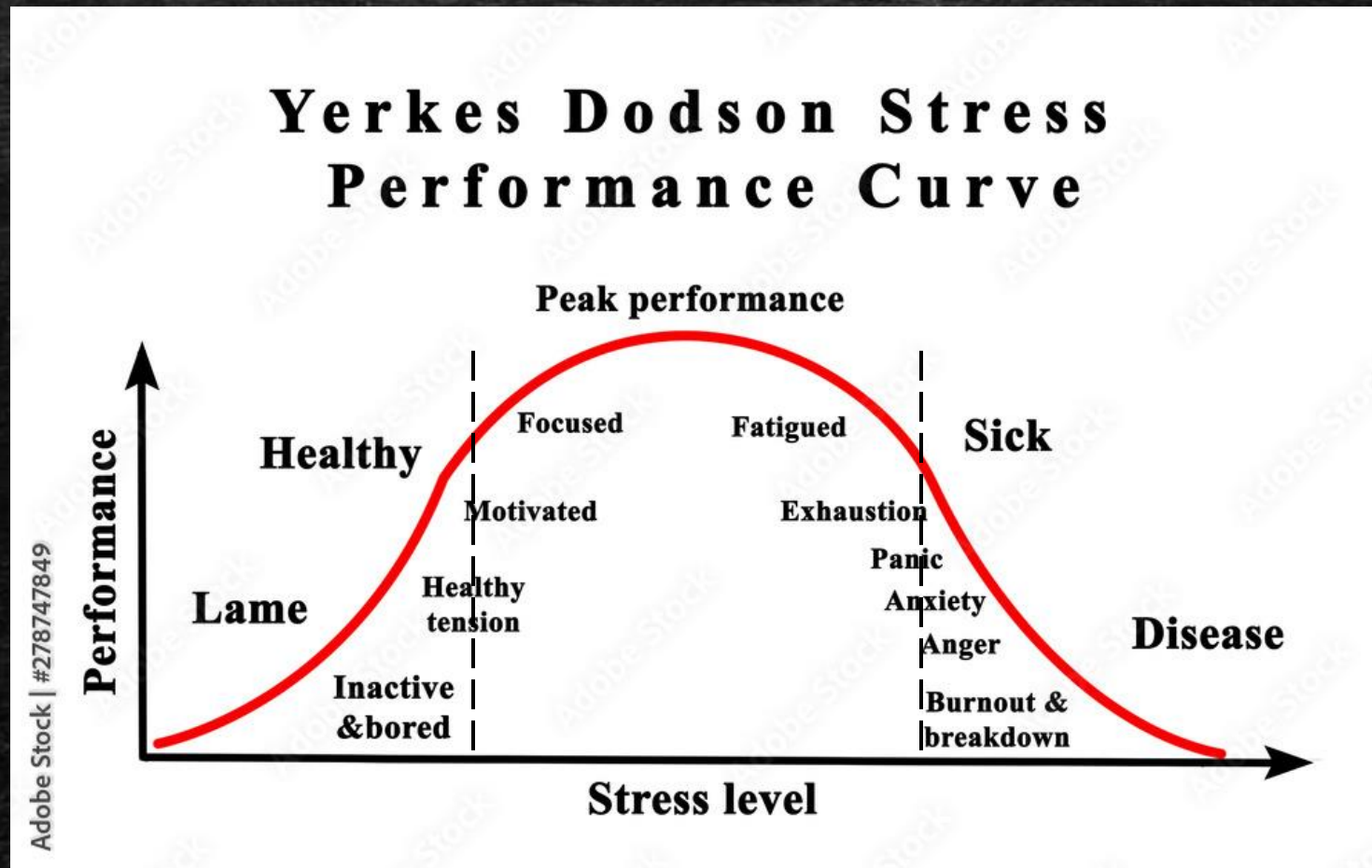
Peak Performance Measures:

- Consistency
- Proficiency
- Efficiency
- Mastery
- Synergy
- Resilience

Understanding Peak Performance

An evidence-based theoretical framework

Individual Zone of Optimal Functioning



Managing peak performance..

- Psychological processing
- Physical abilities
- Technical execution
- Tactical decision-making
- Coaching instruction & feedback
- Team communication & support
- Practice preparation routine
- Performance expectations vs. goals
- Constraints (e.g., individual, task, environmental, social)



Mental Toughness: Fact or Fiction



Mental Toughness in Sports

- Mental toughness, or more concise, performance resilience, can best be described as a challenge mindset.
- The Challenge Mindset is an individual's ability to withstand pressure and adversity while maintaining high-level performance and mental well-being throughout a discrete or series of discrete performance events.
- Characteristics:
 - Embrace challenges and even probable failure with positivity.
 - Accept flaws and mistakes as opportunities to improve.
 - Recognize setbacks as part of the learning process.
 - View intelligence and competencies as continuous development.
 - Open to external feedback and use internal feedback.
 - Willingness to learn, try new skills, and be uncomfortable.

Common disruptions to peak performance...

- Individual interpretation of feedback as negative criticism.
- Negative responses to adversity or setbacks.
- Internalization and negative self-talk.
- Inability to self-regulate and maintain attentional and emotional control, and confidence.
- Unrealistic performance expectations.
- Destructive coaching, team, peer, or family criticism.
- Uncontrolled circumstances include fatigue, poor injury rehabilitation, illness, poor nutrition, and recovery.
- Unforeseen stressors.
- Individual preparation and readiness.
- Performance plateaus.

The Performance Plateau

Beyond Chronological Age

Monitoring the Performance Plateau

- A performance plateau occurs when there is sufficient evidence that training data or performance results have leveled out with no signs or indicators of improvement.
- In pre-elite programs, many adolescent athletes plateau.
- Plateaus are linked to:
 - A participatory mindset, a lack of long-term goals, or no interest in playing at a higher level.
 - A sport is a secondary vs a primary sport.
 - Specialization that leads to burnout vs diversification and balance.

Wrapping Up

- Summary
- Alignment is key:
 - Performance Expectations
 - Performance Metrics (e.g., quantitative, qualitative)
 - Performance Evaluations (e.g., pre-, season, post-)
 - Goal Achievement Card
 - Individual Performance Card
 - Post-season development recommendations

Questions..

Practical Resources

- Richard Schechner Performance Theory
- John Kotter's 8 Step Change Model
- Ken Blanchard's Situation Leadership II Model
- Stephen Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective Leadership
- Yerkes Dodson's Stress Performance Curve
- Yuri Hanin's Individual Zone of Optimal Functioning
- Richard Ryan & Edward Deci's Self-Determination Theory

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