

## How do I know if my child is talented?

Talent identification refers to finding young people who possess qualities that may predict future excellence. Some clubs or NGBs identify and select athletes in a very systematic way. In other cases it comes down to individual coaches' preferences or "taste". In either case it is difficult, and early talent identification programmes generally have low success.

### Why is identification difficult?

- It is not possible to see potential, only current skill level
- When a child is seen as talented, he or she may in fact simply be more mature, older than other athletes in the same age group, or have practiced more
- These differences tend to even out with time and practice.

### Why is identification problematic?

- It often leads to a singular focus on and structured practice in one sport at the expense of all-round skill development
- Being labeled a "talent" can make athletes complacent in times of success or frustrated in adversity
- Early selection can lead to groups of friends being split up.

### What do I do if my child is (not) recognised as talented?

- Place less emphasis on "natural talent"
- Encourage your child to keep training and engage in other activities they enjoy
- Talk to your child about handling adversity and pressure in a good way
- Explain that children develop skills in different rates and the "next-best" in the early years often end up in front later.