

Player development systems in the performance pathway in four world-leading badminton nations: A literature review and interviews with experts from Indonesia, Korea, Denmark and Spain

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Introduction

The research investigates good practice in player development and coaching systems in badminton in the performance pathway drawing on a review of the research literature, and interviews with experts from badminton federations in Indonesia, Korea, Denmark and Spain.

It builds on work already undertaken in football for the English Football Association (North, Morgan, & Rongen, 2012a, 2012b) and Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) on player development systems (North, Lara-Bercial, Morgan, & Rongen, 2014).

‘Player development’ refers to the development of individual players beyond the beginner and recreational level, who want to, but have not yet achieved, high performance. Systems concern a complex of resources, people and activities that interrelate and connect to produce outputs – in this case badminton players competing for honours at the highest level.

Methods

Indonesia, Korea, Denmark and Spain were selected because of their recent record in world level competition. They represent four of the top six world leading nations according to our calculations (the others are China and Japan) and cover the two most successful badminton playing continents of Asia and Europe.

A multi-method approach was used including literature review, document review, and expert interviews. Nine world level experts were interviewed over 11 occasions generating over 20 hours of discussion.

Results

The work is based around a number of important principles/components underpinning effective player development systems identified in the literature and in previous research work on football:

Table: Principles/components of effective player development systems

Link to socio-cultural context and resources
Link to participation/‘sport for all’ system
Vision, culture priorities and planning
Performance model <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playing style• Elite player characteristics
Development model <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principles of human development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term approach • Age-stage differentiation • Holistic PPSTT development • Careful use of selection strategies
Training infrastructure
Effective workforce
Effective learning environments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning environments are goal focused, individualised and challenging • Constructively aligned practice structure • Developmentally appropriate competition
System implementation, coherence, and embeddedness

The research provides a description of these principles/components as they were understood and manifest in each of the four countries.

For example, with regard to ‘link to participation/’sport for all’ system’, the research highlights how performer development systems in South Korea, Indonesia and Denmark took advantage, without much conscious thought, of the young performers emerging from established and largely prolific participant/sport for all systems. In Spain, however, which has no strong tradition of badminton participation, the success of the performer development system was contingent on the federation taking active steps to provide an infrastructure for and encourage participation. This was done through major events, mobilising schools and clubs, and establishing a number of participation orientated programmes.

Discussion

The research highlights the benefits of understanding player development activities in successful sporting nations through the ‘systems lens’. The framework proposed provides an opportunity to understand the important principles/components underpinning effective player development in different contextual conditions, but crucially, how these work together. Thus, the research provides an opportunity to understand both the similarities and differences between different national systems. The similarities provide a set of good practice ideas that other less successful countries can learn from. The differences lead to warnings about the uncritical adoption of successful practices from one country into another without accounting for important socio-cultural and institutional differences.

Conclusion

The player development systems in four of the most successful badminton playing nations were analysed. The results provide both good practice ideas and warnings for other countries wanting to emulate them.