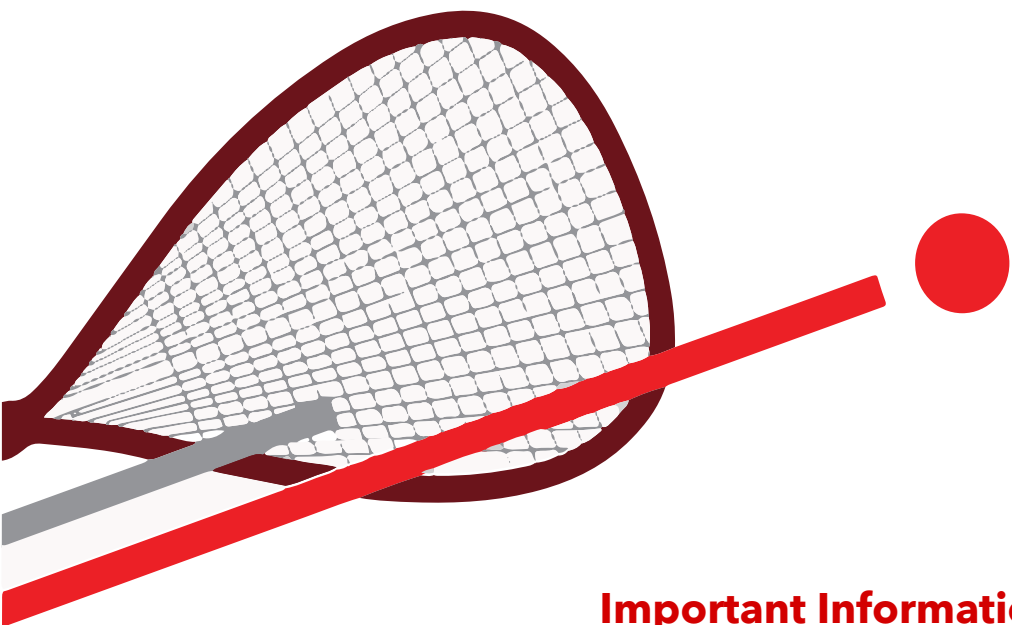




2021

Long-Term Development in **Racquetball**

Version 1.30: July 2021



Important Information

This is a living document, designed from the start to be shared electronically. You are welcome to print personal copies, and the design allows you to print the document as a small booklet on 8.5 x 11 paper. In addition, double-page spreads can be printed on 11 x 17 paper to be used as mini-posters dealing with a single topic.

Being distributed this way means the document can be easily updated to ensure it contains the latest information. For this reason readers are encouraged to ALWAYS download the latest version from the Racquetball Canada website, www.racquetballcanada.ca and to check out additional information that can be found there.

In addition, useful information on long-term development can be found at: www.sportforlife.ca, and information on coaching at www.coach.ca.

Racquetball Canada welcomes everyone to join our sport, regardless of age, sex, gender identity, gender orientation, religion, culture or socio-economic circumstances, and is committed to making our sport safe, inclusive, diverse and welcoming.

Canada

Racquetball Canada gratefully acknowledges the financial contribution from Sport Canada

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Long-Term Development in Racquetball

Racquetball Canada's original framework for developing athletes was published more than a decade ago, and the Canadian sporting landscape has changed a great deal since then, including:

- *Sport for Life: Has updated its generic framework for Long-Term Development in Canadian sport.*
- *Own the Podium: Has expanded its support of high performance to include non-Olympic/Paralympic sports.*
- *Safeguarding of sport participants has become increasingly important.*
- *Sports, including racquetball, better understand their responsibility for providing more equitable access to non-traditional participants, and their responsibility to make sport more open, accepting of differences, and free of racism and other forms of discrimination.*

About this document

The process: In preparing this document, Racquetball Canada has undertaken a major review of its programs, including:

- An in depth analysis of the technical , tactical, and mental skills athletes need to develop, and the physical capacities (fitness, strength etc.) that are required, to reach full potential.
- The creation of the **Racquetball Canada Badge Program**, to help athletes systematically progress in the development of their skills, and be rewarded for their progress.
- An extensive review of its competition structure and rules.

This document therefore replaces the Racquetball Canada Long-Term Athlete Development Plan (2009) and represents current best practice in attracting athletes to the sport, retaining them, and helping them reach their full potential.

For those athletes with the potential to excel it also provides a pathway to excellence and to developing Canadian athletes who can bring back PanAm and World Championship medals, and, if they so desire, play professionally.



Photo credit: Christopher Morris, COC

Not just Racquetball - but Quality Racquetball

This framework lays out how Racquetball Canada will develop athletes in the coming years as it strives to help Canada achieve its twin goals of creating a healthier, more active, population while increasing Canada’s racquetball success on the world stage.

To do this means moving from a focus on athlete development to a focus on all elements of quality sport - not just athletes, but also coaches, officials, and volunteers.



Plus a focus on

Attracting more people to the sport, ensuring that their experiences in the sport are positive right from the start, keeping them active in the sport for longer, and help them reach their full sporting potential in racquetball, be that in local recreational play or on the courts at World Championships when wearing the Team Canada Uniform.

The BIG Picture

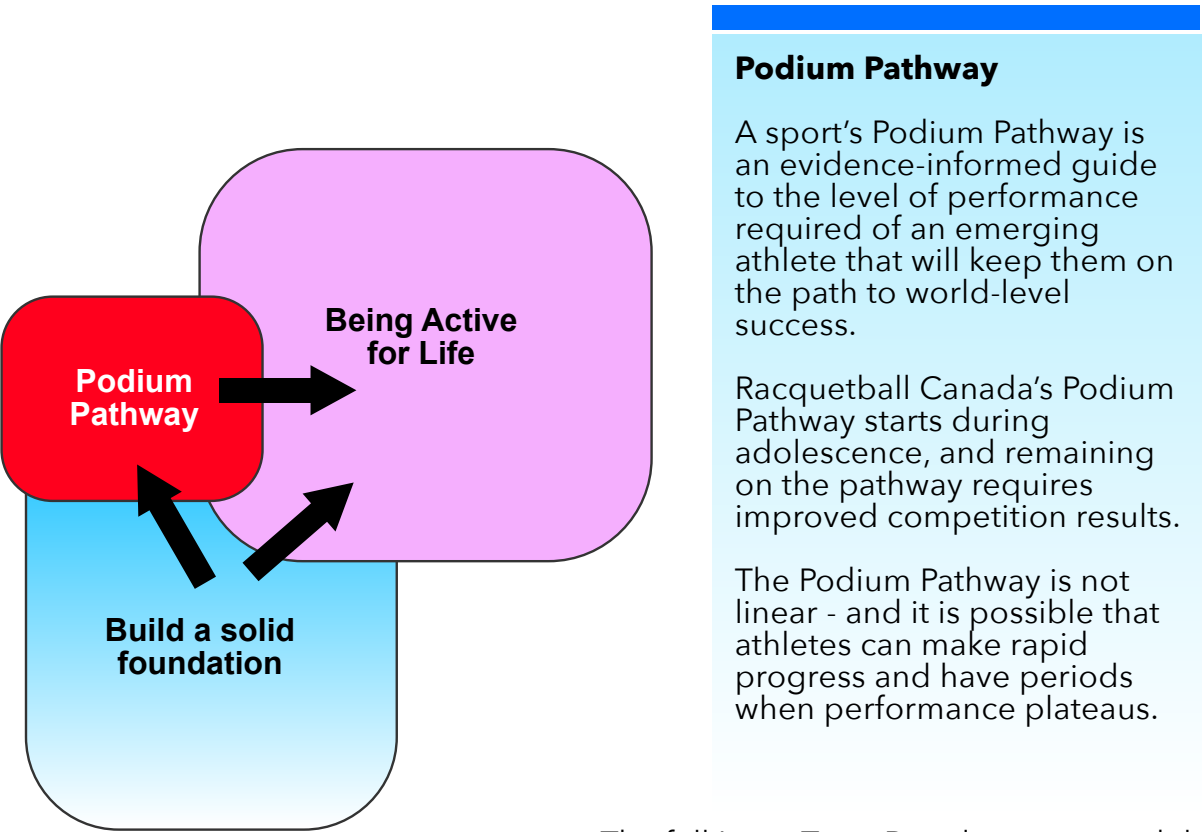
Long-Term Development in Racquetball means:

- **Doing the right things:** Optimizing the kind of training being done, and support for the athlete.
- **At the right time:** Doing what is right for the athlete at each stage of their growth and development.
- **In the right way:** Using appropriate, evidence informed, teaching and coaching methods.

And the right thing, done in the right way, depends on the stage of physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of each individual.

Sport in Canada has identified seven stages of human development and they can be grouped into three main, linked, blocks;

- Building a solid foundation
- The Podium Pathway to high-performance success, and
- Being Active for Life.



The full Long-Term Development model is shown on the next Page

Emergence of High Performance Athletes

Racquetball’s Podium Pathway is our sport’s road map to success at the highest level - winning World Championships, and bringing home Pan Am Championship and Games medals.

Of the many youth who learn and love the game, only a very few enter this pathway. It is for those with the innate capacity to excel, who are dedicated to reaching the top and prepared to put in the hard work this takes. Of the few who enter the Podium Pathway, fewer still make the National Team and the highest level of Train to Win.

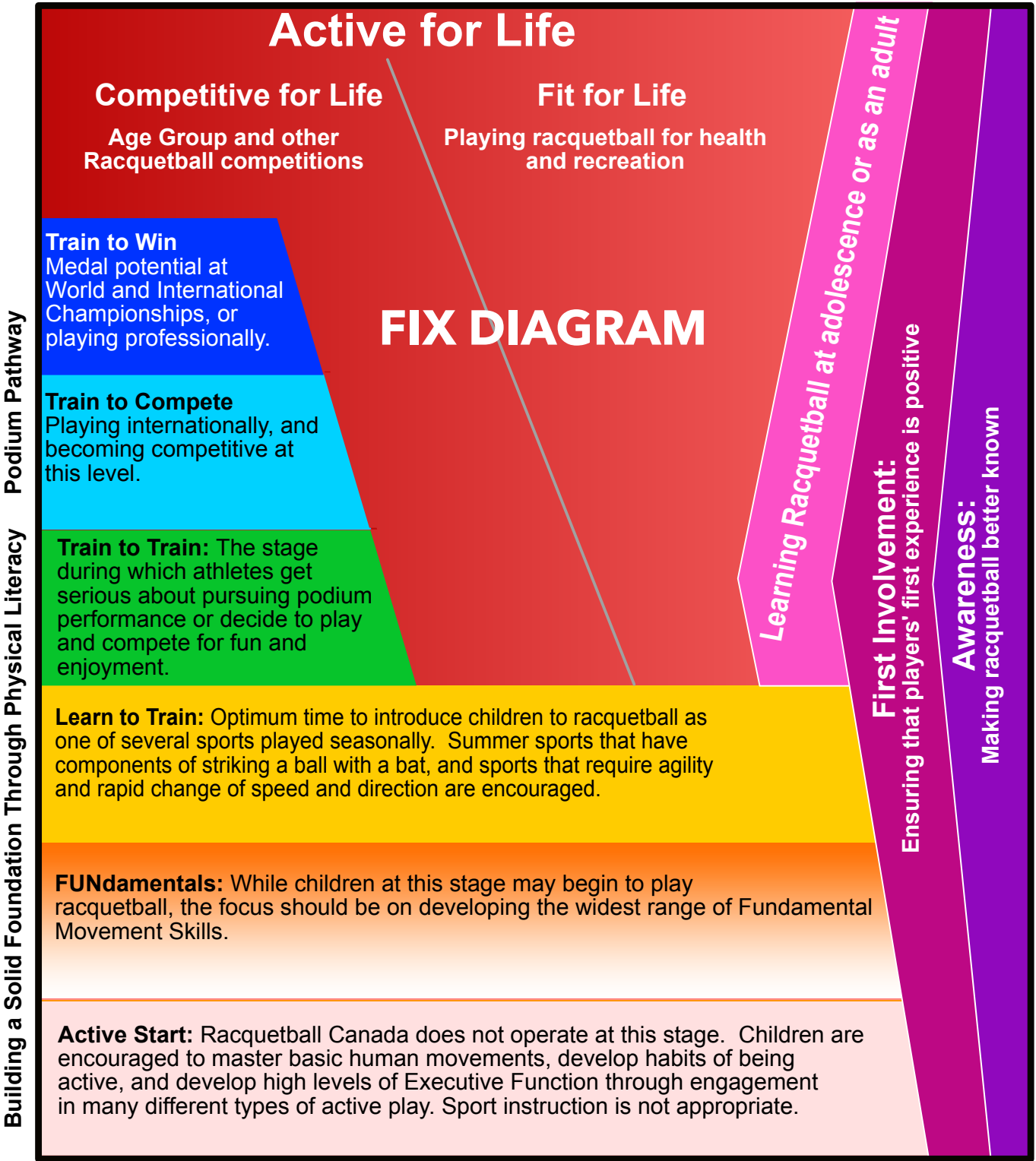
The separation of those who aspire to ultimate high performance from those who for reasons of ability or preference decide not to attempt the Podium Pathway often occurs during adolescence - the Train to Train stage.

But there is a problem: Not all children go through their adolescent growth spurt at the same age, and in age-group competition late developing males, and early developing females can be at a significant disadvantage.

It is therefore CRITICAL to keep as many athletes in the sport as possible until they have completed their adolescent growth and reached their adult size - since it is only at this point that athletes’ ULTIMATE potential emerges.

Racquetball loses too many adolescent athletes, and to combat this, new competition structures are being designed. Details can be found in Racquetball Canada’s Competition Review document.

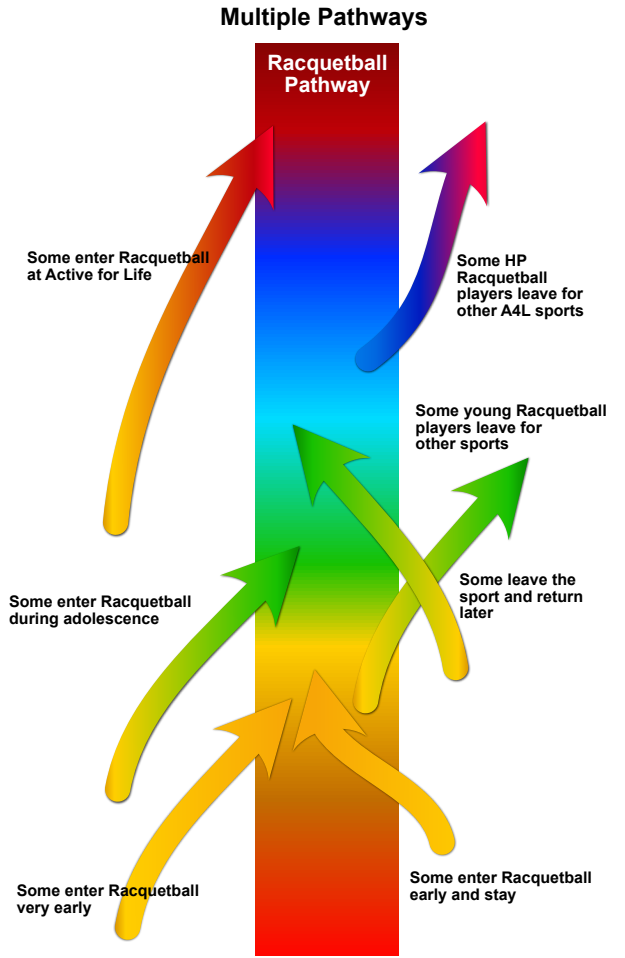
Racquetball Canada’s Long Term Development Framework



The Racquetball Canada framework is laid out primarily for a young athlete who enters the sport early, and stays with the sport through to the highest levels of play, and then continues to play for the rest of their life.

But life is more complicated than that. Athletes enter and leave the sport at different time and for a variety of reasons.

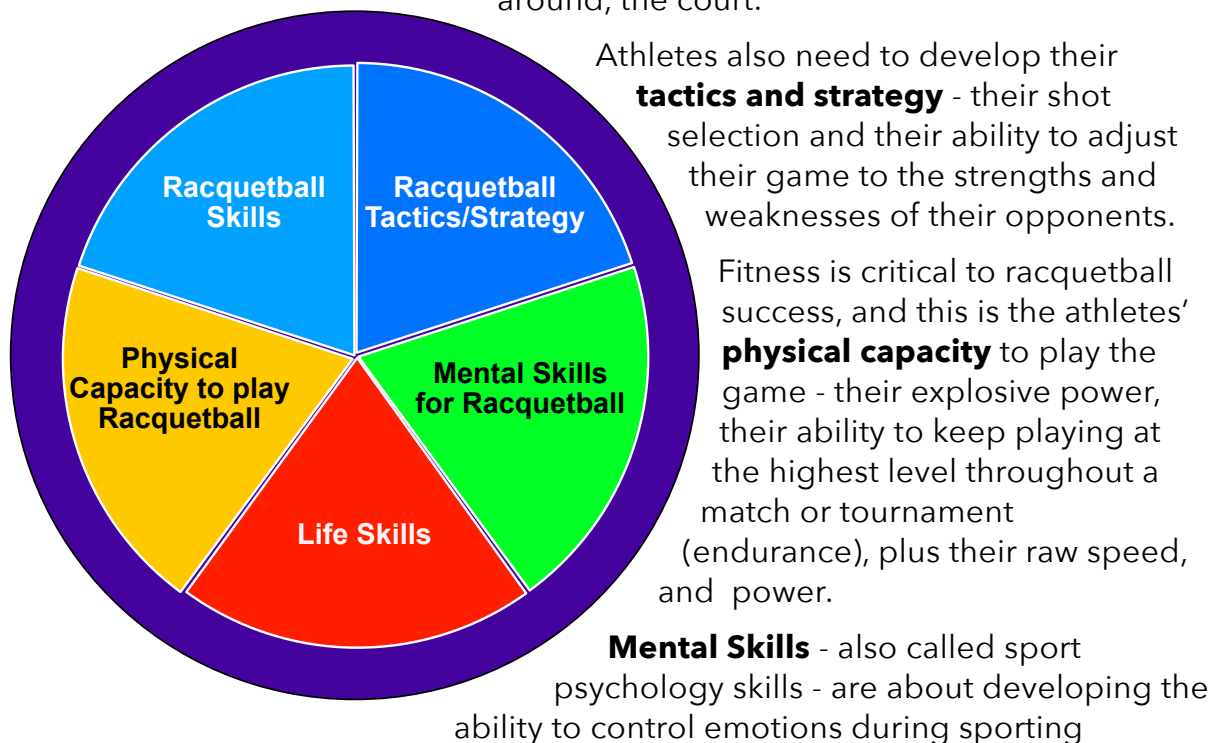
The framework clearly identifies what young athletes need to be working on when they are IN racquetball regardless of whether they stay or leave.



The complete athlete

To succeed in racquetball, athletes need to develop **five** different components of their game.

Obviously, they need to develop their racquetball **technical skills** - the execution of their shots, and their position on and their speed of movement around, the court.



moments of high stress, and being able to reduce anxiety or increase motivation at will, while also rapidly recovering from both major and minor setbacks. These skills are about being able to consistently produce performance "on demand".

While great **Life Skills** won't make anyone a great racquetball athlete, poor life skills can sabotage performance of the best athletes in the world. Life skills are about good mental health, good relationships (with coaches, teammates and people the athlete is close to), and establishing life-sport-educational/work balance, leading to personal autonomy and life satisfaction. Life skills also cover more day-to-day issues such as sound long-term nutrition/hydration (especially when on the road for long periods), and getting adequate sleep.

Life skills also includes moral issues such as integrity in sport - including anti-doping, and ensuring that racquetball is free of racism, discrimination of all types, and all forms of maltreatment.

Details of skills necessary for the development of the complete athlete can be found in **Racquetball Canada's Athlete Development Matrix**.

<https://racquetballcanada.ca/coach-resources/>

But kids are not miniature adults

While both younger and older beginning athletes need to develop all five components of the game, and will learn the basics of the game - strokes, court position and rules - in roughly the same sequence, the learning process is quite different.

Young Racquetball Learner (Long-Term Development)	Older Racquetball Learner (Active for Life)
Skill learning takes TIME as the body develops greater capabilities.	Skill development takes PRACTICE as the mature brain learns what to do.
Learning skills requires development of neural pathways and their frequent reinforcement.	Learning skills requires modification of existing neural pathways.
Developing brain needs to gradually build up control of the body, meaning that learning racquetball skills takes a long time and many, many repetitions.	Brain has control of the body, and only needs to incorporate new racquetball skills into already developed patterns of movement.
There are limits to physical capacity development due to pre-adolescent hormone levels in the body.	Higher hormone levels permit greater gains in physical capacity, especially in strength and explosive power.
Brain is unable to process abstract ideas, and instruction needs to be very specific and concrete.	Brain able to process abstract ideas and easily draw parallels between learning racquetball and skills previously learned from other sports.
Generally a shorter attention span, with a need for frequent change of activity or focus.	More developed attention span and greater ability to focus for longer periods.
Control of eye muscles needs to be developed to allow accurate tracking of fast moving objects - like racquetball balls.	Eye control fully developed and ball tracking automated.
Generally poorer emotional control when things go wrong.	Generally better emotional control and ability to remove themselves from the situation individually.

What this means: Excellence takes time, and this especially true of younger athletes whose racquetball **progress can only be as fast as their brain and body development allows**. How fast the brain and body of a young person develops is pretty much determined by their genetic makeup and can't be rushed or accelerated.

Developing the skills and capabilities appropriate to the emerging athlete's stage of development will produce the best long-term results. Be patient.

Active Start

Children from Birth to Age 6 - both Girls and Boys

Racquetball Canada has no official programs for this stage of development even though some young children might be beginning to play, especially if they have older siblings already in the sport. If your club is working with athletes at this stage of development, here are things to think about

About this Stage: Birth to age six is a time of great change in the human body. The most important changes are in the brain, and the connections (nerves) between the brain and the muscles. As the child grows the nerves connecting the brain and muscles become individually “insulated” which means that muscles can become much more finely controlled. Around age 6, kids have their maximum number of brain cells, and after that, unused brain cells are pruned, and this is why it is really important for kids to have as wide a range of activity experiences as possible.

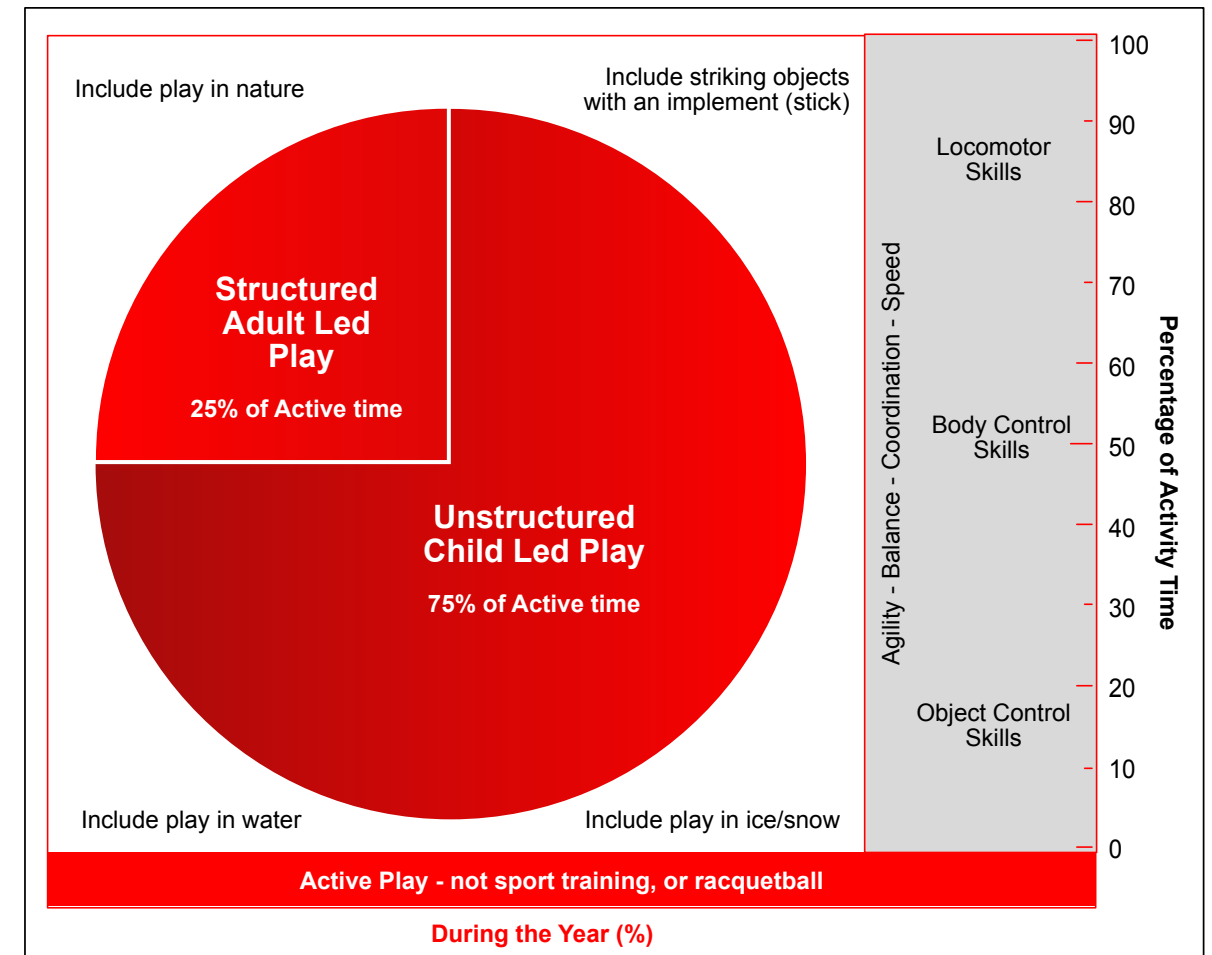
What Kids Need to Develop: In or out of racquetball, by the end of this stage children need to develop three things:

- Competency in basic human movements; walk, run, catch, throw, kick etc. as well as agility, balance and coordination.
- A positive attitude towards physical activity through active play, and,
- Brain development that will help them in life and in later sport performance. This means developing Executive Function - their ability to plan and execute increasingly complex actions. There are three major components to Executive Function:
 - **Working Memory** - being able to hold multiple bits of information in the brain at the same time (keeping track of your opponent and the ball).
 - **Cognitive Flexibility** - Being able to see a situation from different perspectives, (when you do this, what does your opponent see?).
 - **Inhibition Control** - being able to stop the body from an immediate response, when a longer-term action would provide better results (not retaliating when opponent collides with you).

For great information on activities to build Executive Function, see materials from the Harvard Centre on the Developing Child; www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

During Active Start there are great variations in when children learn different movement skills, some learn to walk by 9 months, and other not until 18 months. In general, these differences are unimportant with early developers sometimes plateauing, and late developers leap-frogging them. Each child develops at their own pace, and can't be rushed. Let them develop through exploration of different environments, and experimentation with varied equipment.

Active Start at a Glance



Activity Guidelines

	Activity	Sleep	Screen Time
First Year of Life	Tummy-time 2-3 times/day for 3-5 minutes	12-15 hours	None
Early Active Start	At least 180 minutes every day	11 - 14 hours of regular sleep + naps	No more than 1 hour of screen time
Middle Active Start	180 min. including 60 min. of moderate to vigorous activity	10-12 hours/day	No more than 1 hour of screen time
Late Active Start	60 min/day. Moderate to vigorous activity per day including strengthening activities	9-12 hours/day	Under 2 hours/day

If your club has programs for kids this age: This is the stage for them to develop a wide range of fundamental movement skills, not for them to specialize in racquetball. All activities need to be FUN to keep kids with a short attention span involved. Towards the end of this stage the transition from fundamental movement skills to broad, foundational, sport skills (including racquet skills) is encouraged.

About this Stage: Girls are already developing faster than boys making this stage shorter for them. Body growth is steady and brain power is increasing. Athletes are able to follow concrete instructions and basic rules of the game, but brains are not yet able to fully understand tactics or strategy. The concept of “fairness” is important at this stage. This is NOT a stage for over-specializing in racquetball - doing so will likely provide early success, but may limit long-term potential.

Key club focus: Develop broad physical literacy and sound fundamental movement skills, in all children, with an emphasis on fun games that promote hand-eye coordination and eye-tracking of fast moving objects. For greater detail see [www.sportforlife.ca/physical literacy](http://www.sportforlife.ca/physical-literacy).

Message for Parents: Don’t be surprised if you drop by the club and the coach or program leader is organizing activities that look nothing like racquetball. They are likely working on developing fundamental movement skills that are the foundation of LATER racquetball performance. Rushing things now is not in the child’s best interest.

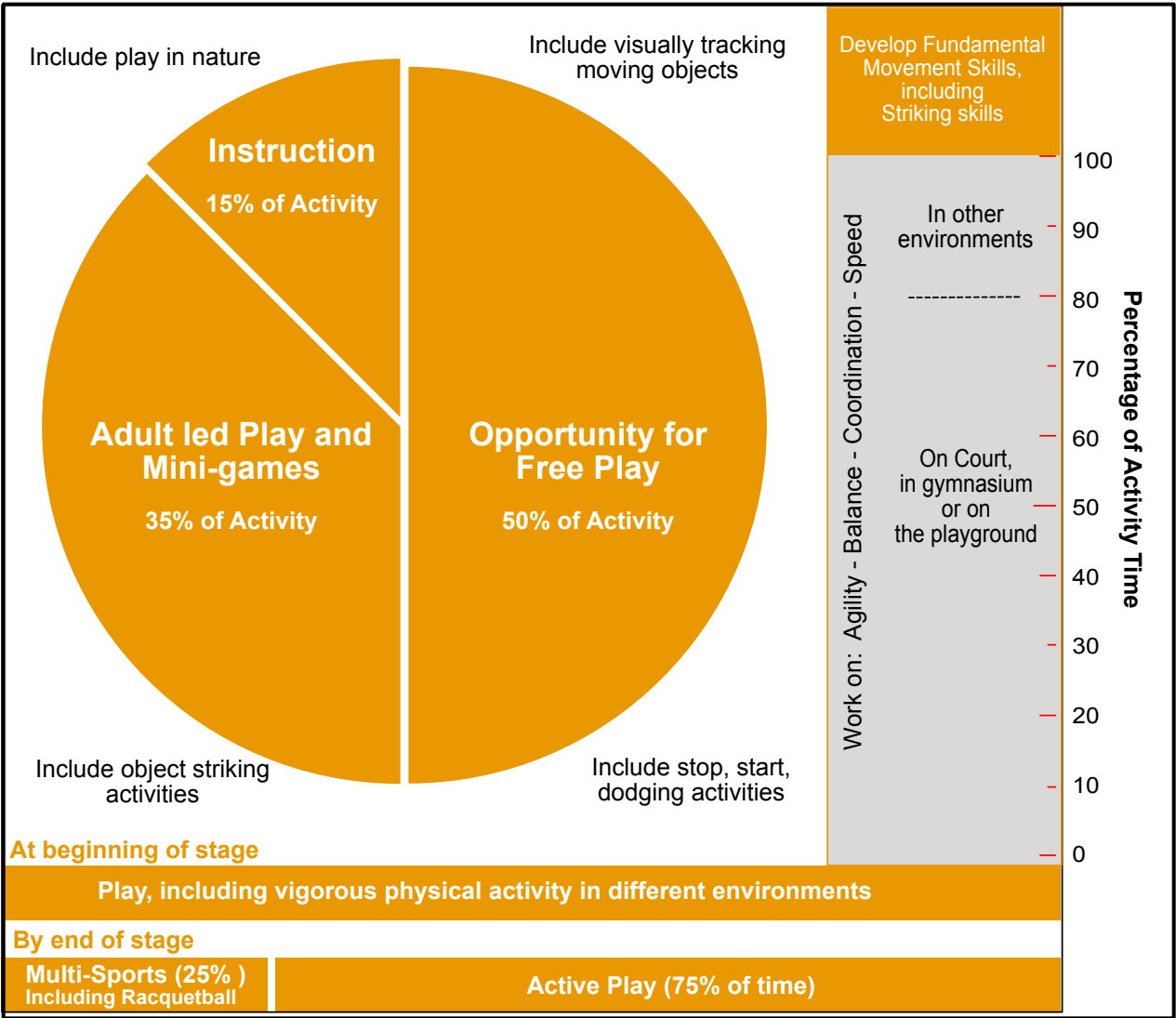
Help FUNdamentals participants to work on:

- **Physical Capacity:** Develop physical capacity through extending duration of on and off court play (with periods of rest), and through exercises using body-weight, or medicine/Swiss balls. A focus on short bursts of high intensity effort followed by adequate rest is important.
- **Mental Skills:** Continue to develop Executive Function, and work towards anxiety reduction when stepping on the court. This is a good time to introduce visualization drills as kids are less self-conscious. Ensure activity is, and remains, fun.
- **Life Skills:** Participants responsible for bringing their own equipment, and being ready to start activities on time.

The season: Year-round racquetball is discouraged, while taking part in many different activities and trying lots of other sports should be the norm.

Equipment and Playing area: Use lightest possible small racquets with grip size adjusted for the size of the child. Consider playing mini-games across the court.

FUNdamentals at a Glance



Racquetball Competition

- Modified Games - Including multi-bounce and time-limit games.
- Alternate athlete serves every rally
- Limited in-club tournaments

Badge level

1

Learn to Train

Girls 8, Boys 9 - until onset of adolescent growth spurt

This is a great time in a child’s development to learn different sports - including racquetball: Physical growth is stable, and the brain is nearing full adult size, although it is far from functioning at an adult level. Kids this age enjoy mastering skills and enjoy the practice required. These are sometimes called “*the skill hungry years*”.

About this Stage: Both boys and girls are able to take part in meaningful competition with a solid understanding of basic rules of different games. While racquetball skills should be developed, it is still too early to specialize in a single sport, and it is recommended that athletes take part in at least three different sports during the year - each in their own season.

Key club focus: Develop sound foundational racquetball skills in a safe and welcoming environment. Introduce athletes to both informal and low-pressure formal competition, with the emphasis on enjoying participation, and using the skills they have learned in practice.

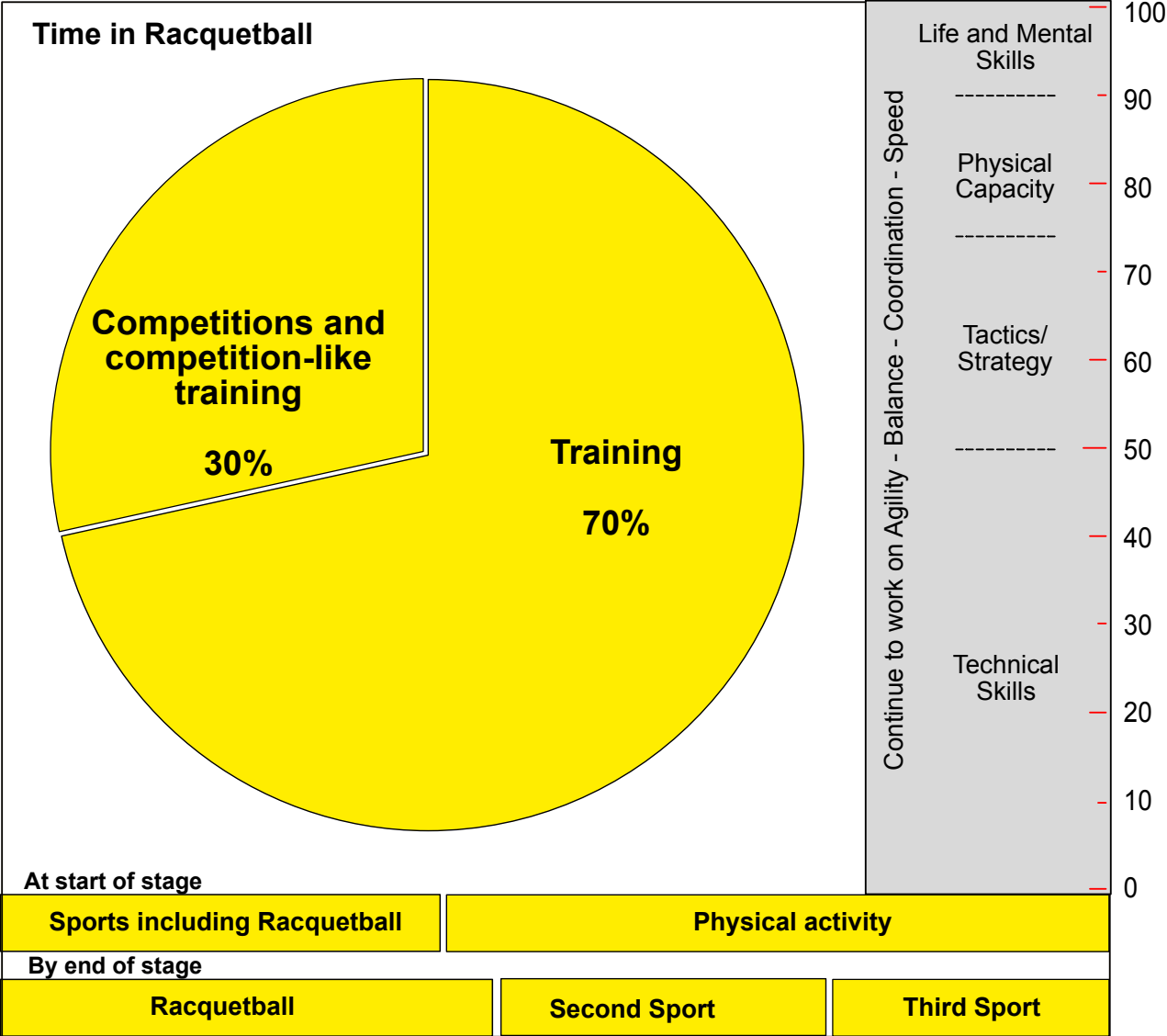
Message for Parents: Don’t put pressure on athletes for competition results! Encourage the child to use the skills they are developing in practice during competitions even if this results in a loss. If athletes use only the shots they like and are good at, their game will not be balanced, and this will hurt them later. Encourage athletes at this stage to be responsible for their own equipment, and for following practice and competition schedules.

Help Learn to Train athletes to work on:

- **Physical Capacity:** A great time to work on hand and foot speed, and on developing and maintaining flexibility (especially for boys). It is not too early to start off-court workouts, but the focus **MUST** be on developing correct techniques.
- **Mental Skills:** Continue to work towards anxiety reduction when stepping on the court, and start building a between-rally routine. Build visualization skills, and make sure racquetball remains fun. Good time to introduce off-court group activities to build social connections.
- **Life Skills:** Build athlete responsibility for pre- and post- game routines including equipment checks, nutrition and hydration. Encourage sport-school balance and participation in a range of different activities.

The season: Year-round racquetball is discouraged. Build the racquetball season to end with a single major event (single periodization). Work on basic skills and general fitness at the start of the season, and develop more tactics, strategy and competition readiness nearer the end. Ensure a break from racquetball following season end.

Learn to Train at a Glance



Racquetball Competition - Modified rules

- Multi-bounce, progressing to double bounce and then single bounce as skills improve
- Rally point scoring
- Time limit games
- Limited local in-club tournaments
- Tournament divisions based on badge levels

Badge level

2-4

The Adolescent Athlete

This is a **CRITICAL** stage in the development of high performance racquetball athletes, and is often the stage during which athletes' careers are made or broken. It is the stage of development during which athletes decide if they will enter Racquetball Canada's Podium Pathway or become Active for Life racquetball athletes.

Train to Train's unique challenges

1. Early vs late development: While all teenagers go through adolescence, they don't go through it at the same AGE, and this makes a difference when racquetball competitions are based on age-groups; Under-12, under-14, under-16 etc.

For males: Males who hit their growth spurt early become bigger, stronger and more powerful than others who hit their growth spurt up to four years later. This gives them a significant advantage, especially at U-14 and U-16 and they are often successful in competitions. This can discourage late developers who, without success in competitions, tend to drop out of the sport. However once the late developers who stayed in the sport catch up and start winning against the early developers, it is the early developers who tend to drop out. This is a huge waste of talent.

For females: The situation is reversed for females. Early developing females with widening hips, greater percentage of body fat, and breast development are at a disadvantage to those who retain their pre-adolescent body shape longer. This tends to cause early developing females to drop out - again a waste of potential talent.

2. Drop-outs: This is a stage of development when many youth drop out of sport, and there are a number of reasons.

- They see sport as too focused on results, too expensive, requiring too much travel, and think it is no longer fun.
- Athletes don't feel welcome, don't feel physically or psychologically safe, and can't balance sport, school, work and friendships.
- Forced to choose between different sports or teams, training loads increasing too rapidly (prone to injury), or are required to take part in meaningless competitions.



About this Stage: During this stage potential elite athletes begin to emerge, while other athletes recognize that they may not have the talent to reach the very top, or do not wish to put in the time and effort required to do so. By the end of this stage the vast majority of athletes will be in Active for Life, while a few will be good enough and dedicated enough to enter Racquetball Canada's Podium Pathway. Not all who aspire to the Podium Pathway will make it. Keeping as many adolescent athletes in racquetball as is possible should be a high priority.

Key club focus: Build training loads systematically and progressively to avoid overuse injury or loads so high that athletes drop out. This is a time to build up all components of the athlete's game, with individualized training that builds on athletes' strengths and systematically eliminates weaknesses. This is a complicated time for athletes, and accommodations need to be made for them to focus on important school activities such as exams. Good racquetball athletes are also likely to be good school athletes involved in multiple sports, so care should be taken to ensure that their OVERALL training load from all sports combined is appropriate.

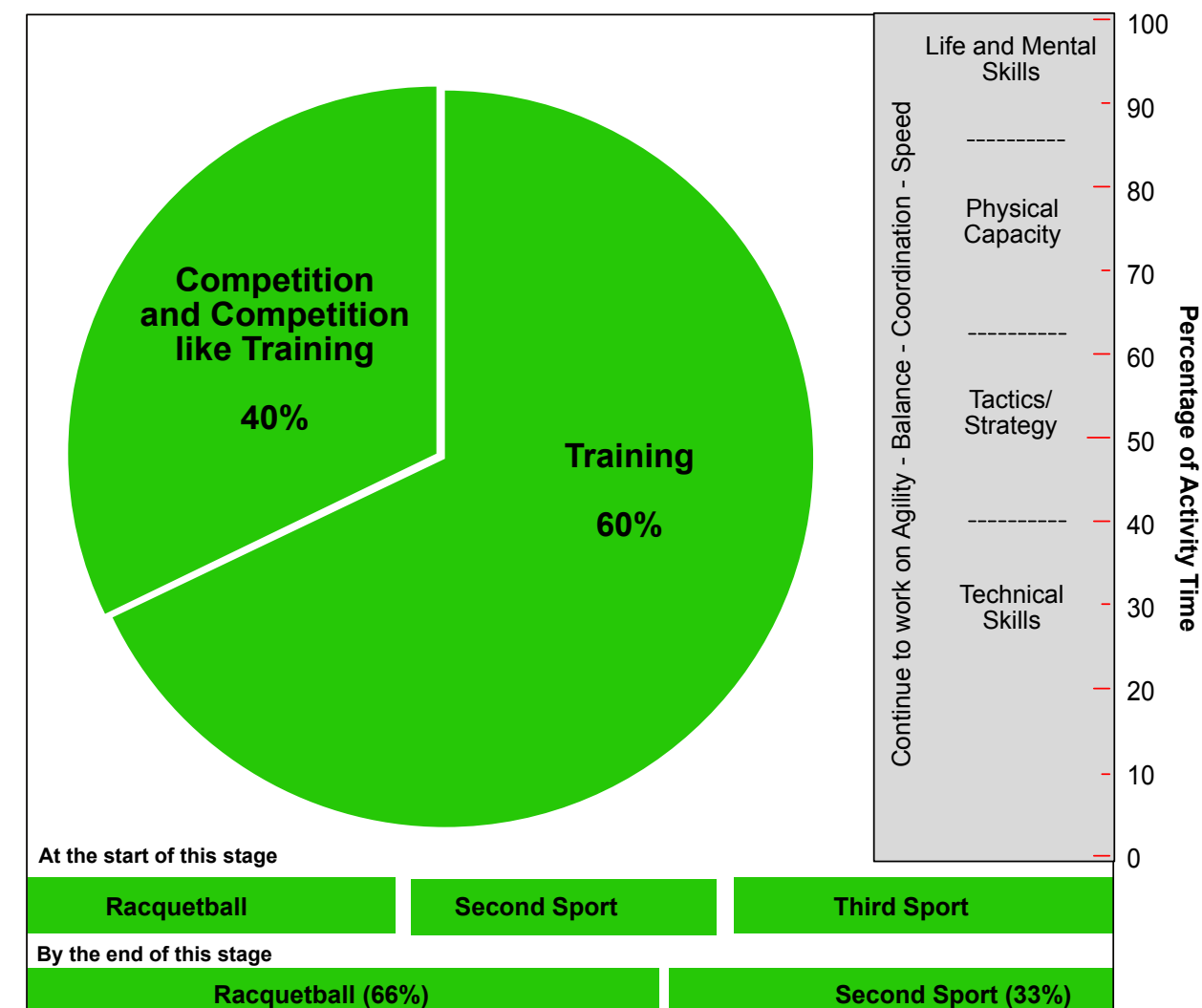
Message for Parents: With adolescent changes comes inconsistency, and athletes' performance may fluctuate, with good and bad days. Consistent support for playing and trying, rather than for results is important. Athletes are developing autonomy and need to learn to make their own training and competition decisions, and be supported to accept the consequences of those decisions.

Help Train to Train athletes to work on:

- **Physical Capacity:** This is a time to build fitness, both aerobic and anaerobic, and to build core stability and strength. Work on court speed is encouraged and athletes (male more than female) need to work on maintaining flexibility. Off-court strength and conditioning should be used to build capacity for greater on-court practice.
- **Mental Skills:** With the brain at very close to adult capability the focus should be on shot-selection, decision making, emotional control (getting fired up or calming down) and on mental recovery from adverse on and off court events, such as bad losses, or referee decisions that they think are wrong.
- **Life Skills:** Poor life skills can seriously impact athletes as they navigate the complexities of balancing school, part-time employment, leisure activities, emerging relationships and sport. Mental skills developed in sport can and do help in life skills as well .

The season: Year-round training for racquetball is encouraged through a well planned racquetball season and time away from the game building physical capacity and mental regeneration through playing other sports. Maintaining a healthy body weight, building strength and endurance, and full recovery from any racquetball-overuse injuries is a high priority.

Train to Train at a Glance



Racquetball Competition

- Single bounce tournaments based on badge levels
- Pool play and re-ranked for championship round
- More regional (defined as East, West) competitions
- Provincial Games and Regional Championships
- Not attending Junior World Championships (unless at the T2C level)
- Play in adult tournaments impacts ranking, play in junior tournaments does not

Badge level

5-7

Train to Compete and Train to Win

The Podium Pathway and its two stages - Train to Compete and Train to Win are based on:

- The athlete having **completed** their adolescent growth and development, and
- The athlete making good progress in competitive racquetball

Podium Pathway Principles

Racquetball's Podium Pathway is about developing high performance athletes capable of winning at the highest levels of international competition, and bringing home medals from Pan Am Games or World Championships. The stages in the Podium Pathway are:

Train to Compete: For athletes on Racquetball Canada's Junior, Development, and Elite Teams. These are outstanding racquetball athletes who have a serious chance of playing for the National Team, or qualifying to go to World Championships.

Train to Win: Is reserved for athletes who have a realistic chance of a high finish or medal in World Championships. They are the best of the very best in our sport, and not everyone on the National Team will fall into this category.

The Podium Pathway and Racquetball Canada's Badge Program

Even though only a small percentage of racquetball athletes enter the Podium Pathway, ALL athletes are exposed to the skills necessary to reach it. The Badge Program measures progress in racquetball skill development, and ensures that athletes aspiring to the Podium Pathway, Train to Compete and Train to Win do not have skill deficiencies.

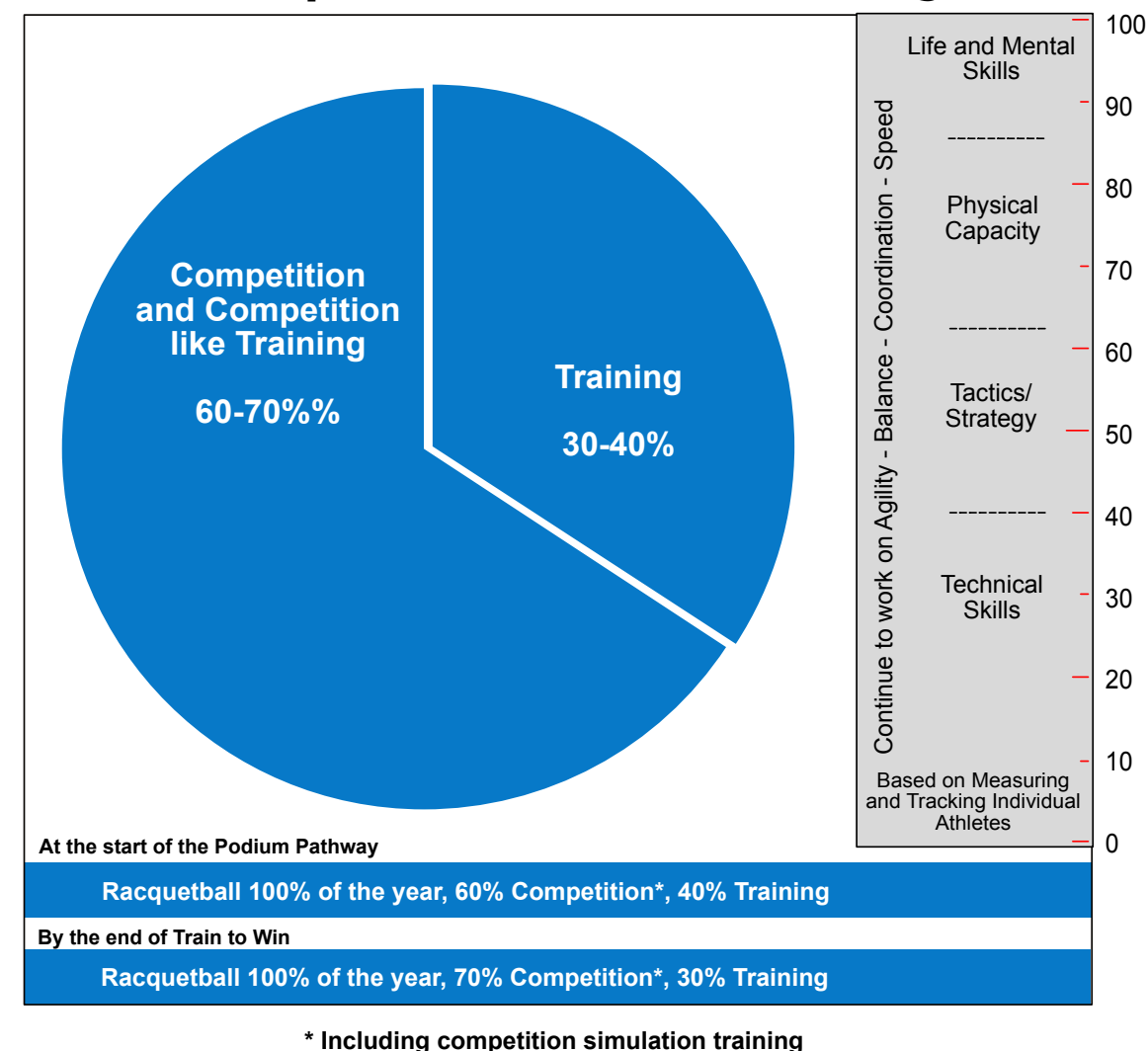
Individualized Training

Athletes at Train to Compete and Train to Win work with Racquetball's Integrated Support Team of High Performance Technical Coaches, Strength and Conditioning specialists, Sport Psychology experts, and highly trained individuals providing nutrition, hydration, sleep, rest and recovery, and life skills coaching.

In every case, training is designed for a specific athlete, based on accurate testing and measurement of the individual.

Performance testing, measuring, and tracking will be based on Racquetball Canada's Gold Medal Profile, built on expert knowledge of the skills, capabilities and attributes that are required to succeed at the very highest level. This information will provide Canadian athletes with an international competitive advantage, and details are therefore not widely shared.

Train to Compete and Train to Win at a glance



Racquetball Competition/Considerations

- These are athletes on Racquetball Canada's Junior, Development and Elite Teams, including those taking part in National Team Training Camps
- Athletes play consistently at National and World level tournaments
- Tournament divisions based on rankings
- Athletes participate in standardized testing under IST guidance.
- There is a professional commitment to training and competition

Badge level

8-10

Active for Life

The vast majority of Canadian athletes are in Racquetball Canada's Active for Life stage. They may or may not take part in formal competitions. Those who play in formal competitions are Competitive for Life, while those who are not, are considered to be in Fit for Life.

The distinction between Fit and Competitive for Life is flexible and athletes often move backwards and forwards between the categories.

About this Stage

You can't be in this stage until you can play the game and that means knowing about racquetball, having an enjoyable experience when you first try it, and staying with the sport long enough to have the skills necessary to make independent play rewarding.

Key club focus

There are four key elements that need to be addressed.

- **Awareness:** Taking action to make the sport better known to both young and mature potential athletes.
- **First Involvement:** The first time a person tries our sport is critical to their continued involvement. If the first experience is positive, they meet and interact with other athletes at roughly their same level, and know they will be welcomed back, they are likely to return - if not, their return is unlikely.
- **Badge Program:** Progressive instruction and competition: Retaining athletes is more likely when Racquetball Canada's Badge Program is used. It provides a well thought out set of skills to learn, and by encouraging competition between athletes at the same badge level embarrassing "blow-outs" are generally avoided and competition made more enjoyable.
- **Socialization:** Recreational athletes expect that their involvement in a sport will have a social component, be that pizza and beer at the end of an event, or getting together for other activities.

Message for Parents: Play with your kids and on your own!

The season:

Competitive for Life: Work on different types of competitions for variety, Singles, Doubles, shootouts, round-robin, etc.

Fit for Life - Find ways to connect athletes so that they don't play exactly the same people all the time. This builds social connections and if one athlete is injured or drops out the other play has people to play with.

Start and end the season with a playing/social event.



Why learning racquetball as an adult is NOT Active Start, FUNdamentals and Learn to Train

People get confused between the **STAGES** of human development in racquetball - Active Start, FUNdamentals, Learn to Train and Train to Train, and the **LEARNING PROGRESSION** that teenagers and adults go through when learning a new sport.

The difference is most clear when considering the stage called **FUNdamentals** and what is happening when an adult is learning the **fundamentals** of racquetball.

A child at the FUNdamentals stage is learning skills with an immature body that they are learning to control, and a brain that is not yet sufficiently developed to deal with tactics or strategy, and that cannot process abstract ideas, such as hitting the ball away from an opponent. What the FUNdamentals child needs is activities that help them develop body control and learn basic game concepts - and for information and demands to be at an appropriate level.

An adult learning the fundamentals of racquetball does so with a body that is more fully developed, more accurately controlled, and, more importantly, with a brain that is able to process far more information far more rapidly.

Adult learners of racquetball thrive when instruction uses the key principles of adult learning; practical learning of what they need to play and enjoy the game, in a psychologically safe environment in which their autonomy is respected.

Racquetball Doubles

Doubles is a game of racquetball played with 4 athletes on the court. The rules are generally the same with a few variations to allow both athletes on a team the opportunity to serve. The court size is the same as a regulation size court for singles. Technical skills needed to play doubles follow the same development matrix as singles. Tactical skills can be different especially in regard to serve and shot selection.

Men's and Women's Doubles divisions are included in international events including the Junior World Championships, the World Championships and the Pan Am Games. Racquetball Canada's international travel teams include one doubles team per gender.

Men's, Women's and Mixed Doubles are offered at the Canadian Championships and other regional and provincial tournaments. Doubles is a popular option in the Active For Life phase as it requires less court coverage and can be more social.



Racquetball for Persons with a Disability

Racquetball is a game played by athletes with a disability both for recreation and in formal competition.

Individuals with mobility limitations can play wheelchair racquetball. For those in a wheelchair, the major rule differences are that the athlete is allowed two bounces rather than one, and the wheels of the chair replace the feet in rules related to "foot" faults.

Recreationally, one individual in a wheelchair (allowed two bounces) can play against a "stand-up" athlete allowed one bounce and this can be very competitive.

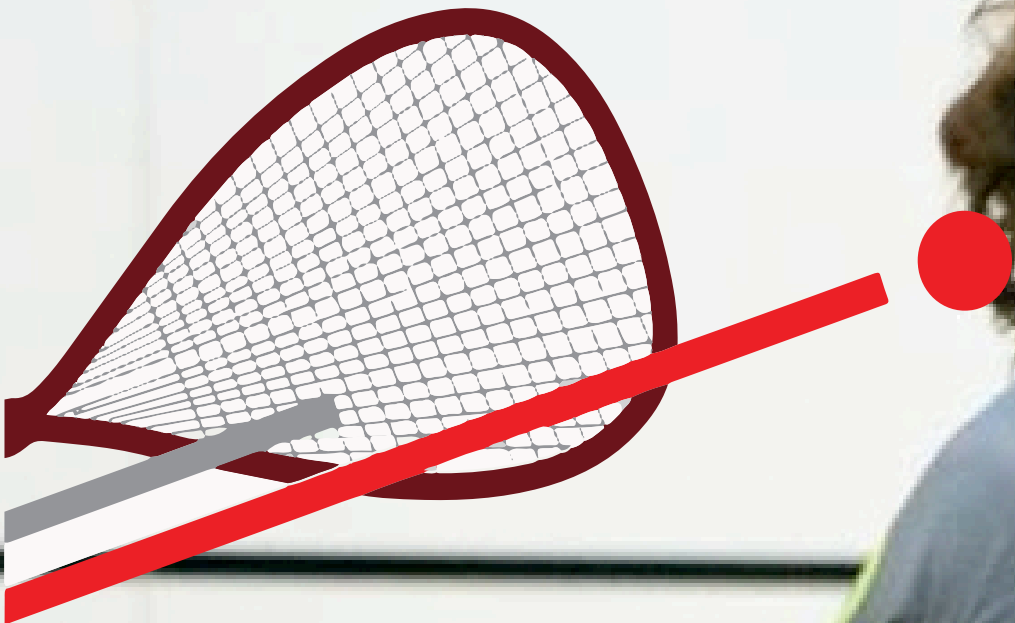
Some athletes with amputations, although eligible to play in a wheelchair, prefer to play stand-up using a sport prosthesis, and do so with unmodified rules. Individuals with intellectual impairment can play the game without modification, and by playing in an appropriate division of competition are full participants.

Currently, opportunities for high-level wheelchair racquetball competition in Canada and internationally are limited.

Racquetball Canada’s Skills Matrix

Racquetball Skill	Active Start	FUNdamentals	Learn to Train	Train to Train	Train to Compete	Train to Win	Active for Life
Basic Skills							
▪ Forehand	Too young to teach	Introduce	Develop	Refine	Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Backhand		Introduce	Develop	Refine	Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
Offensive Shots							
▪ Down the line pass			Introduce	Develop	Refine and Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Down the line kill			Introduce	Develop	Refine and Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Cross court pass			Introduce	Develop	Refine and Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Cross court kill			Introduce	Develop	Refine and Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Pinch			Introduce	Develop	Refine and Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Wide angle pass				Introduce	Develop and Refine	Master, maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Splat				Introduce	Develop and Refine	Master, maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
Defensive Shots							
▪ Ceiling balls			Introduce	Develop	Refine and Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
Serving							
▪ Drive serve		Introduce	Develop	Refine	Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Lob serve		Introduce	Develop	Refine	Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Drive Z			Introduce	Develop	Refine and Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes Choice
▪ Lob Z			Introduce	Develop	Refine and Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Kiss lob				Introduce	Develop and Refine	Master, maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Jam serve				Introduce	Develop and Refine	Master, maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Wrap-around serve				Introduce	Develop and Refine	Master, maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
Transition							
▪ Move to centre court			Introduce	Develop	Refine and Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Track ball and opponent				Introduce	Develop and Refine	Master, maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice
▪ Footwork			Introduce	Develop	Refine and Master	Maintain and adjust	Athletes’ Choice

Racquetball Canada Appropriate Competition



Active Start



No formal competition

FUNdamentals

- No formal competitions
- Limited in-club, FUN challenges
- No records kept of results

Learn to Train

- Multi-bounce, progressing to double bounce and then single bounce as skills improve
- Rally point scoring
- Time-limit games
- Limited local in-club tournaments
- Tournament divisions based on Racquetball Canada Badge Program levels

Train to Train

- Full rule single-bounce, tournaments based on Racquetball Canada Badge Program levels
- Pool play, and re-ranked for championship round
- More regional (defined as East, West) competitions
- Provincial Games and Regional Championships
- Competing at Junior World Championships (only when athletes have reached the Train to Compete level of performance)
- Play in adult tournaments earns a ranking, junior tournament play does not

Train to Compete and Train to Win

- These are athletes on Racquetball Canada's Junior, Development and Elite Teams, including those taking part in National Team Training Camps
- Full-rules, strictly applied
- Athletes play consistently at National and International tournaments under strict National and International Rules
- Tournament Divisions based on rankings, and athletes select competitions to peak at major events
- Athletes participate in standardized testing under IST guidance
- There is a professional commitment to training and competition

Active for Life

- Participants play for fitness, health, social interaction, and for their enjoyment of racquetball
- Multiple forms of competition. Singles, doubles, cut-throat, round robin, handicapped
- Age-group tournaments played from recreational up to highly-competitive international event level
- Depending on the event and the participants, rules can be relaxed or strictly enforced as appropriate

Appropriate Officiating

Games are generally self-refereed, and, when there is an adult official, their job is to make calls, explain the rules, and when appropriate let the athlete try again.

Officials progressively apply the rules more stringently and by the middle of Train to Train, athletes should compete under national/international rules, strictly applied. All athletes are encouraged to become certified officials.

Officiating strictness depends on the level of play and the needs of athletes. Self-officiating is the norm and all athletes are encouraged to become certified officials.