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A Holistic Approach to Athletic Talent Development Environments

Kristoffer Henriksen, Natalia Stambulova and Kirsten Roessler, Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 2010

Why the environment around a young athlete matters as much as their talent.

The big idea

Henriksen and his colleagues argued that we focus too much on the talented individual and not enough on the environment that develops them. By studying a successful environment as a whole, including coaches, older athletes, clubs and life outside sport, they showed how the setting itself produces talent.

The famous example

Their case study was a successful Danish sailing environment.

ROLE MODELS
Close by
Young sailors trained with elite ones

CULTURE
Open
Knowledge shared freely

FOCUS
Long term
Development over results

Talent didn't just appear. It was grown by an environment where experienced athletes helped the next generation.

Why it matters

Wonderkids rarely make it on talent alone. The clubs and counties that keep producing players are the ones that build the right environment around them.

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Read the original
Henriksen, K., Stambulova, N. & Roessler, K. K. (2010). Holistic Approach to Athletic Talent Development Environments: A Successful Sailing Milieu. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 11(3), 212–222.

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