The objective of this paper is to shed some light on some of the key issues facing the British Columbian and Canadian sport systems. To achieve this objective, this article will briefly:

- describe British Columbia’s athlete development model, which has been accepted worldwide and endorsed by the Coaching Association of Canada;
- identify some of the major gaps in the current British Columbian and Canadian sport systems;
- explain SportMap, a tool developed by British Columbia’s System Integration Group.

In principle, sports can be classified as either early specialisation or late specialisation sports (Balyi and Hamilton, 1999). Early specialisation refers to the fact that some sports, such as gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, figure skating, diving and table tennis require early sport-specific specialisation in training.

Late specialisation sports, such as athletics, combative sports, cycling, racquet sports, rowing and all team sports require a generalised approach to early training. In these sports, the emphasis of training should be on the development of general, fundamental motor and technical-tactical skills. Reviewing the existing literature helped us to conclude that early specialisation sports require a four-stage model, while late specialisation sports require a five-stage model.
Editor's comments - [ This documents describes the five (5) stage “Long Terms Athlete Development” model and analyses it’s application in the British Columbia sports system context [model updated to six stages in 2003/4].

The model is an extension of a periodisation model in coaching that Balyi published in 1990. See our Ruff guide to the Talent development ] {tooltip}Reference this?{end-link}Cryer, J. (Year).

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