Participant development is a central aspect of any sports development framework as it is concerned with the activities experienced, the pathways followed and the obstacles encountered by players during their sporting and/or physical activity careers. This review seeks to identify the main findings/principles associated with participant development, the methods used to generate this information, and the strengths and weaknesses of the supporting research. It does so by focusing on three broad areas of inquiry: the biological domain, the psychological domain and the social domain. The UK Coaching Framework aims to ‘promote a holistic view of the child, athlete and player’. At its best, a participant development model must be holistic, addressing the complexity of interactions between different domains of functioning and offering clear practical guidelines and directions for further investigation and development, while also providing an empirical and theoretical justification for these statements. Unfortunately, the current state of research in this crucial area does not provide a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the key interactions between domains, nor provide a sufficiently firm base for future progress and application.

There is little doubt that the recent emergence of participant models like LTAD and Côté’s Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP) has brought significant advances in the understanding of sports participation. The same could be said for the progression of the UK Coaching Framework. Each model has sought to move beyond the informal approaches that have characterised sports development in the past, and offers an excellent basis for debate and evolution. This Academic Review moves the debate further by gathering, analysing and summarising relevant scientific literature, together with summary recommendations.
Editor's comments - The approach adopted in this Academic Review sought to gain the advantages of collaborative research, while benefitting from the specialist expertise within the group. Bailey and Collins directed the project and developed the overall strategy adopted in the analysis. Bailey coordinated the process of literature searching and reviewing, and led the writing of sections other than the domain-based sections; Collins provided the structure of the sections through development of certain key definitions and constructs. Pearce acted as project manager and was responsible for searching for and disseminating literature among the team. Ford led the writing of the biological domain section. MacNamara and Collins led the writing of the psychological domain section. Toms led the writing of the social domain section. All members of the Review Team participated in the process of gathering and sharing of literature, reading and critiquing sections and preparing the final report. All take ownership of the final document.

We at sportdevelopment.info like the peer reviewed elements of this academic review yet we remain rather sceptical of some of the narrative regarding the value of the LTAD and the UK Coaching framework and are minded of the sponsors' requirements in this review.

The above reference is in the APA style. See why this is important in our [how to reference] us guide.