

Catapult Coaching

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I'd like to introduce you to a term I call 'Catapult Coaching.'

It involves pulling an athlete back in order to propel them forward, metaphorically of course. □

All too often our athletes are restricted in skill level by sub-standard physical and technical preparation, what we often loosely refer to as 'basics.'

These basics are of course the foundation of all skill development in our sport. It goes without saying that with poor foundations we will eventually have poor performance, or in many cases no performance at all due to injury etc.

The great Muhammed Ali famously quoted:

'It's not the mountains ahead that wear you out, it's the pebble [stone] in your shoe.'

What a great quote. And how relevant to our athletes.

How many stones is your athlete metaphorically dealing with?

In all the excitement of skill development, it's very easy to get ahead of ourselves coaching and push a little too early [and that's ok, we've all been there]. But knowing when to stop and take action is critical.

In these times, the catapult needs to come out.

Although it may seem your athlete *can* move forwards with skills, often it might not be the right thing to do. In fact not only should they not move forwards, perhaps some prior skills and preparation needs revisiting as a higher priority.

Gymnastics coach Carol Angela Orchard, a dear friend and mentor alludes to this concept as not actually going

'BACK to basics' as you are helping the athlete move FORWARD by working on their basics. She therefore refers to it as moving 'forward to basics!' A nice paradigm shift through a change in language.

Drawing that catapult back is preparation for propelling them forwards.

So, you can see the mountain ahead. **But are you also looking for the stones?**

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