

# Relative Age Effect – Early Borns

Malé (žádné) národy by neměly ztrácet sportující děti díky tomu, že jsou pouze mladší! Žádný jiný důvod v převaze dříve narozených nebyl nalezen.

Některé státy, federace, kluby a akademie řeší tento jev tzv. „shadows“ týmy.



# 2018

## International Sports Convention

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**Environmental  
talent  
development  
factors**

# What I hope to cover

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What is the Relative Age Effect (RAE)?



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Impact on youth football and talent development pathways



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How / why does it happen?

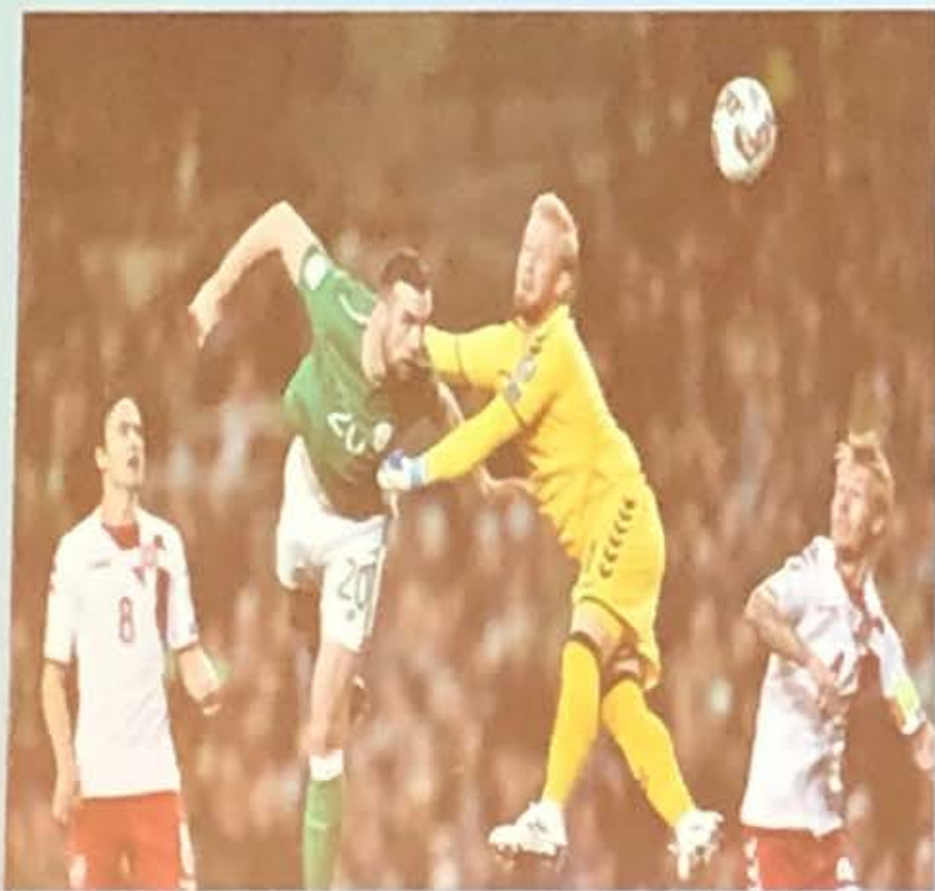


04

Practical strategies for coaches and development pathways influencers

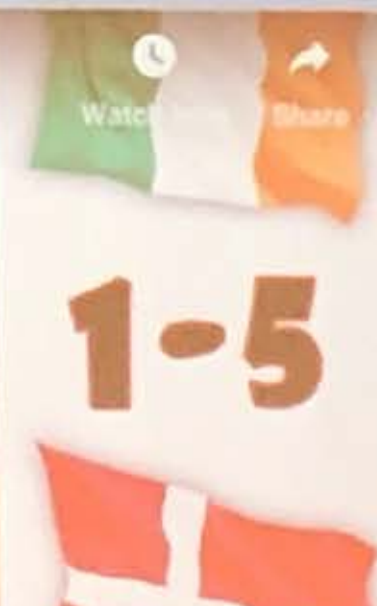






## Ireland v Denmark...

- 6 minutes in, free kick halfway line
- January 14 takes it, launches it forward into the box.
- Denmark's January 15 gets a toe to it but can only spoon it up in the air. Ireland's January 1 gets his head to it.
- GOAL!! Ireland go in front!



## The birth dates of the 23-man Irish squad that played Denmark in the World Cup second-leg playoff

QUARTER ONE	QUARTER TWO	QUARTER THREE	QUARTER FOUR
January-March in Ireland September-November in UK*	April-June in Ireland December-February in UK*	July-September in Ireland March-May in UK*	October-December in Ireland June-August in UK*
11 (48%)	7 (30%)	5 (22%)	0
<p><b>Shane Duffy</b> (January 1)</p> <p><b>Paul McShane</b> (January 6)</p> <p><b>Glenn Whelan</b> (January 13)</p> <p><b>Robbie Brady</b> (January 14)</p> <p><b>Shane Long</b> (January 22)</p> <p><b>Ciaran Clarke</b> (September 26)*</p> <p><b>Cyrus Christie</b> (September 30)*</p> <p><b>Jeff Hendrick</b> (January 31)</p> <p><b>Conor Hourihane</b> (February 2)</p> <p><b>Keiren Westwood</b> (October 23)*</p> <p><b>Daryl Murphy</b> (March 15)</p>	<p><b>James McClean</b> (April 22)</p> <p><b>Harry Arter</b> (December 28)*</p> <p><b>John O'Shea</b> (April 30)</p> <p><b>Darren Randolph</b> (May 12)</p> <p><b>Wes Hoolohan</b> (May 20)</p> <p><b>David Meyler</b> (May 29)</p> <p><b>Colin Doyle</b> (June 12)</p>	<p><b>Aiden McGeady</b> (April 4)</p> <p><b>Scott Hogan</b> (April 13)*</p> <p><b>Callum O'Dowda</b> (April 22)*</p> <p><b>Kevin Long</b> (August 18)</p> <p><b>Stephen Ward</b> (August 30)</p>	

**James McClean**



# Relative Age Effect (RAE)

- RAE refers to a preference for selecting athletes born earlier in the age-band due to enhanced **maturational factors**.
  - A child with a chronological age of 12 years may possess a biological age of between 9 and 15 years (Borms, 1986)
  - Uneven birth-date distribution favouring players born early in the selection year and discriminating against participants born later in the year (Helsen et al., 1998).



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Youth born early have participation and performance advantages compared to youth born later in the age bands.



Youth sport grouped into annual age categories / bands







• Jan-  
March

• Apr-  
Jun

Q1

Q2

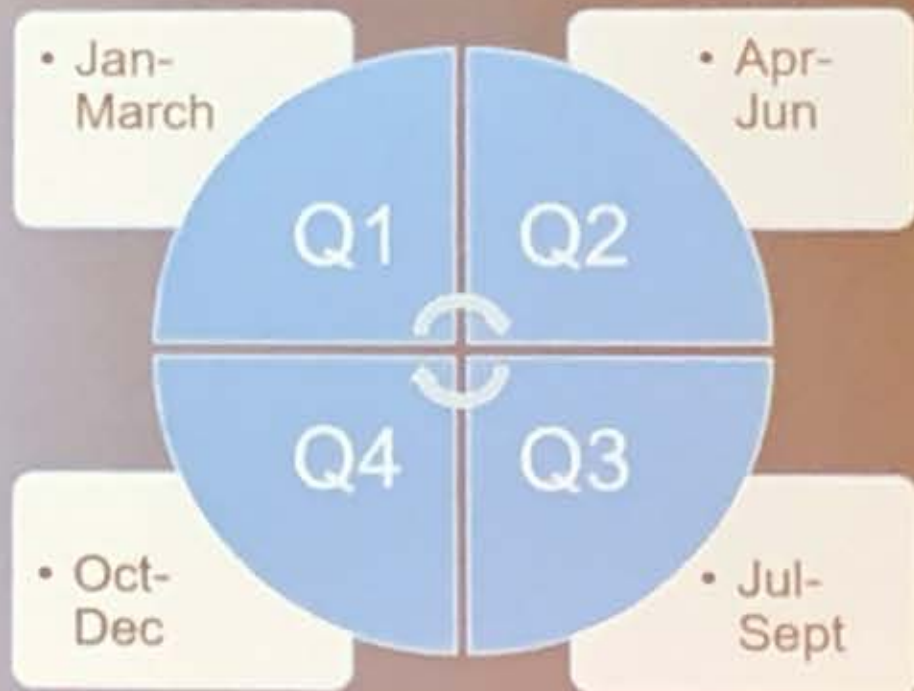
Q4

Q3

• Oct-  
Dec

• Jul-  
Sept

Quarter of birth depends on the calendar for the sport (i.e. most countries = January 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>)



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**Task:** Identify what quarter of birth you are?



- The percentages of elite youth footballers born in the first half of the year have been reported as **between 60-80%** (Finnegan et al., 2017; Gill et al., 2013; Carling et al., 2009)





Jan to Mar

Apr to Jun

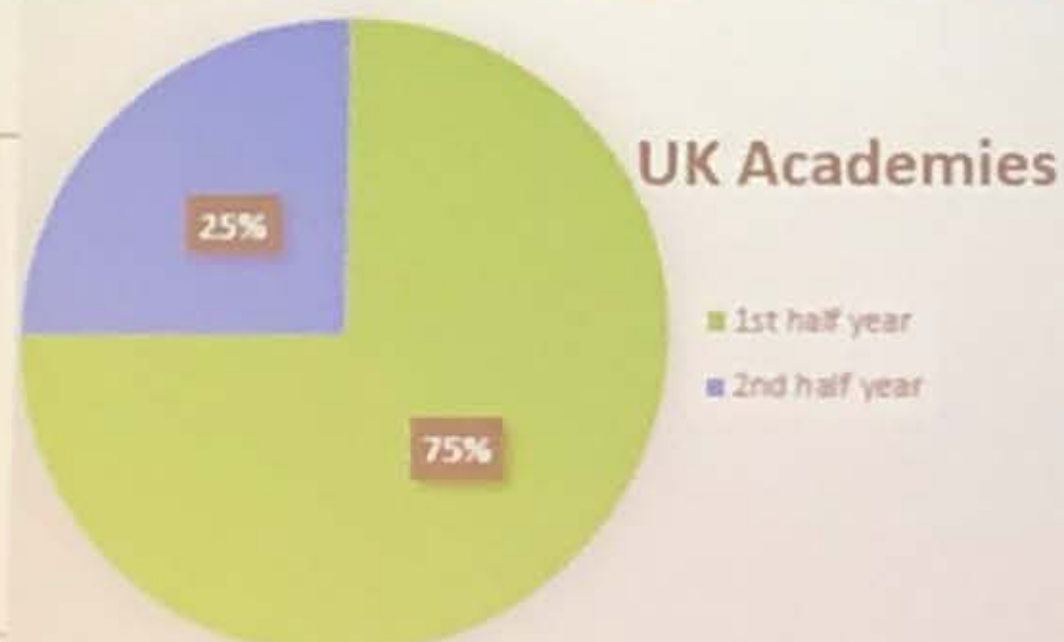
Jul to Sep

Oct to Dec



(Tucker, 2016)

53% 20% 19% 8%



Q1  
Q2  
Q3  
Q4

1st half year  
2nd half year

Serie A

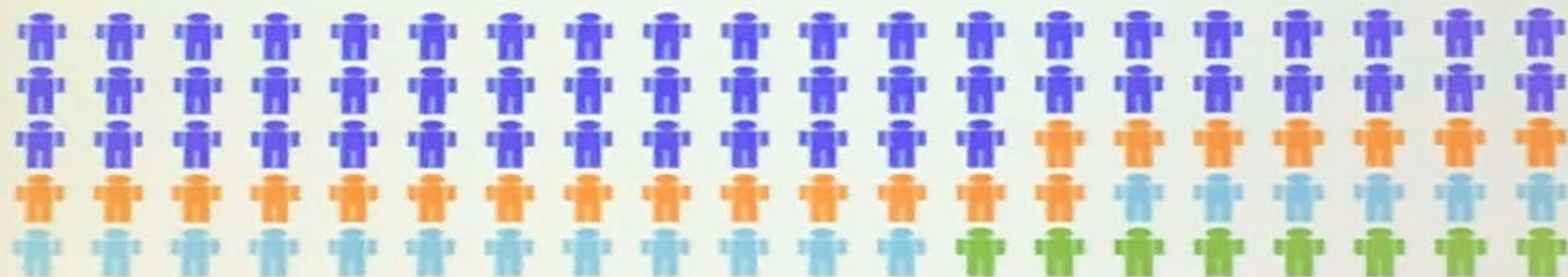


Jan to Mar

Apr to Jun

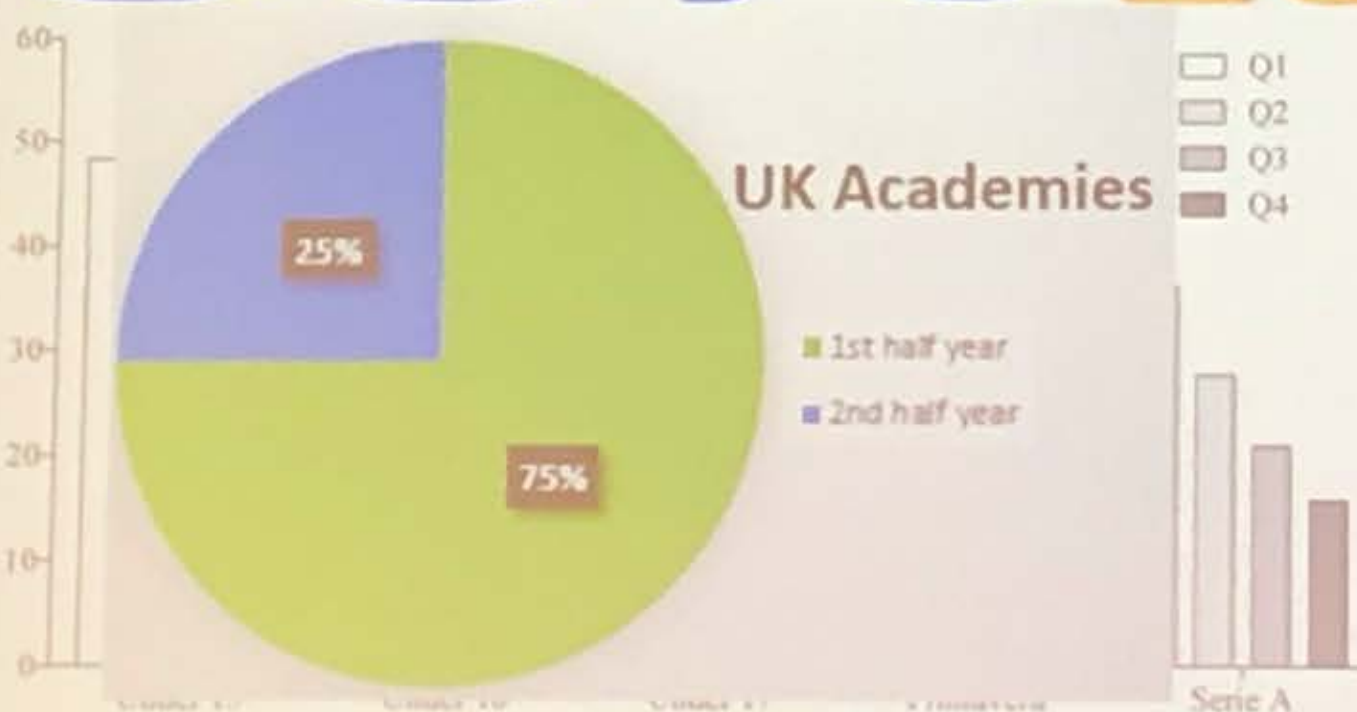
Jul to Sep

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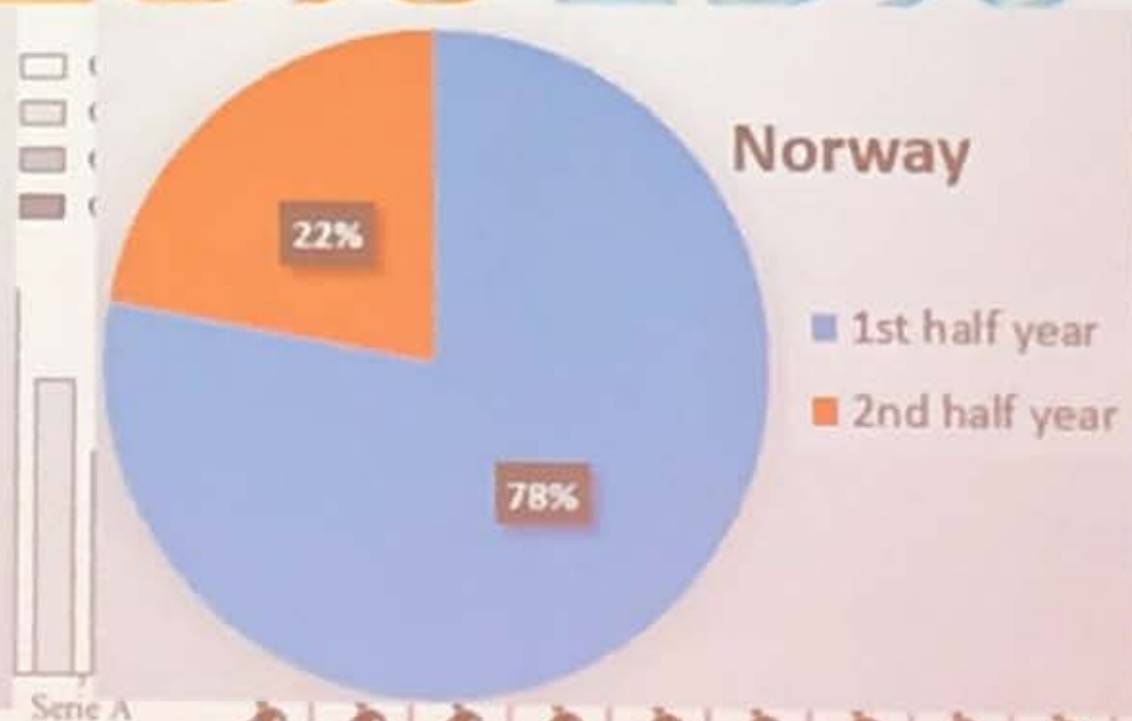
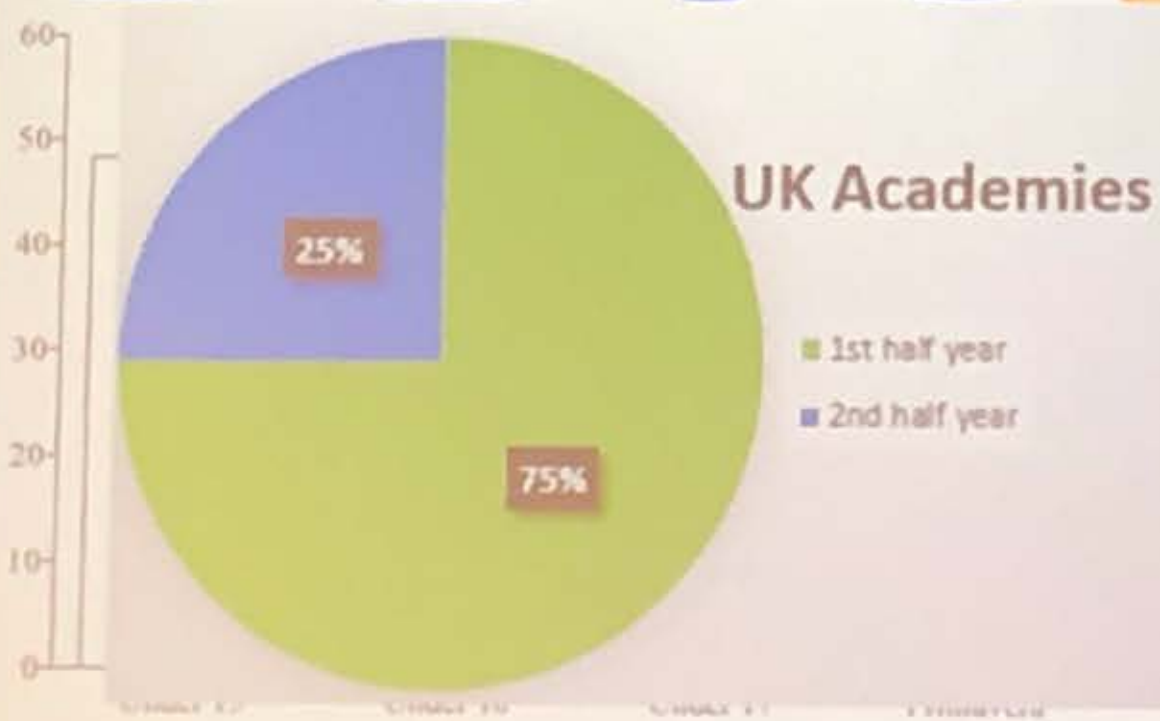
Jul to Sep

Oct to Dec

Players born right at the very start of the year were nearly **20 times more likely** than those born at the very end to be recruited by academies at Galatasaray (22.58), Liverpool (19.28) and Barcelona (19.17) (Doyle & Bottomly, 2018)

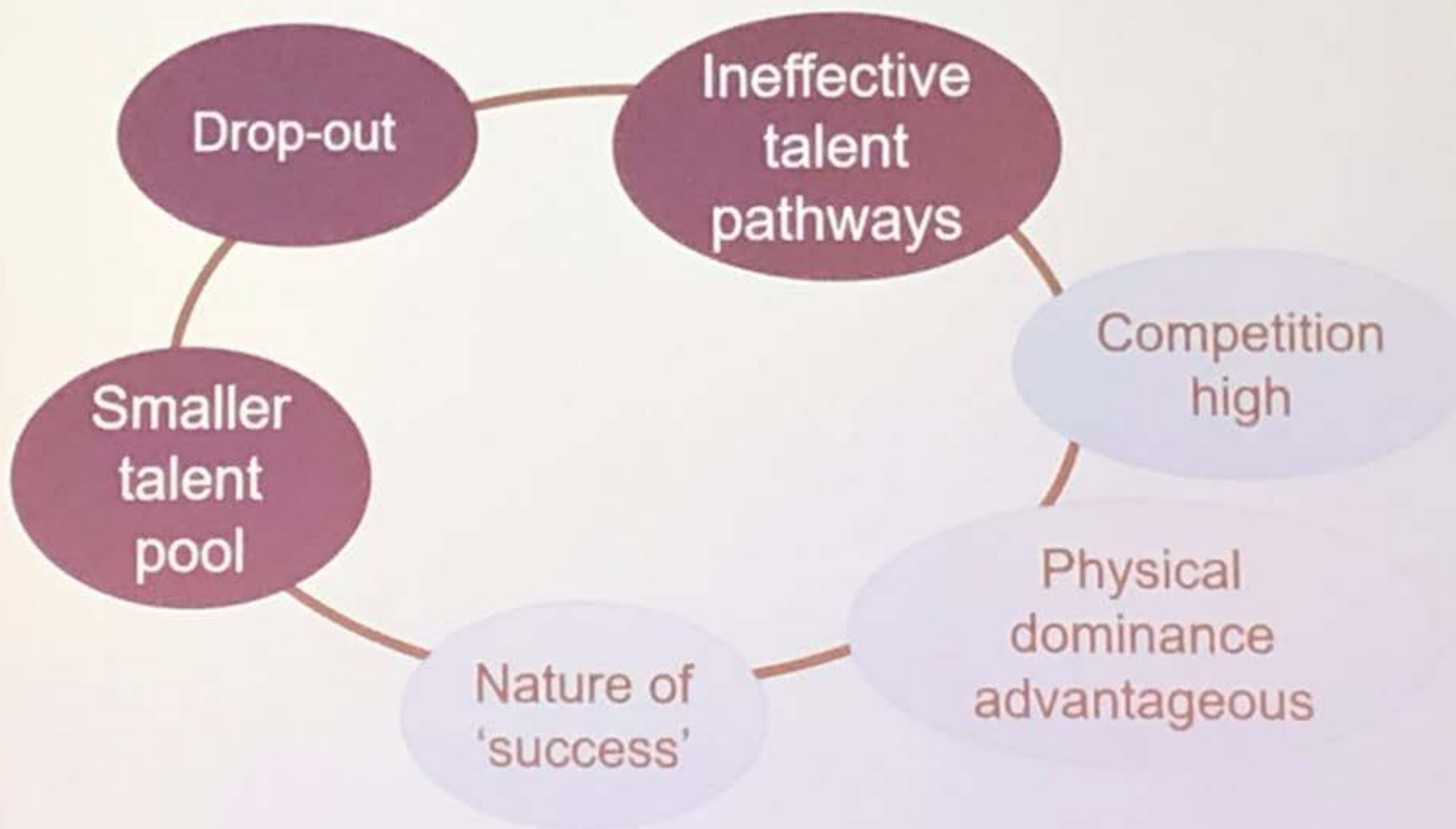
(Tucker, 2016)

**53%** **20%** **19%** **8%**





# Where and so what?



## 'Shouting talent'

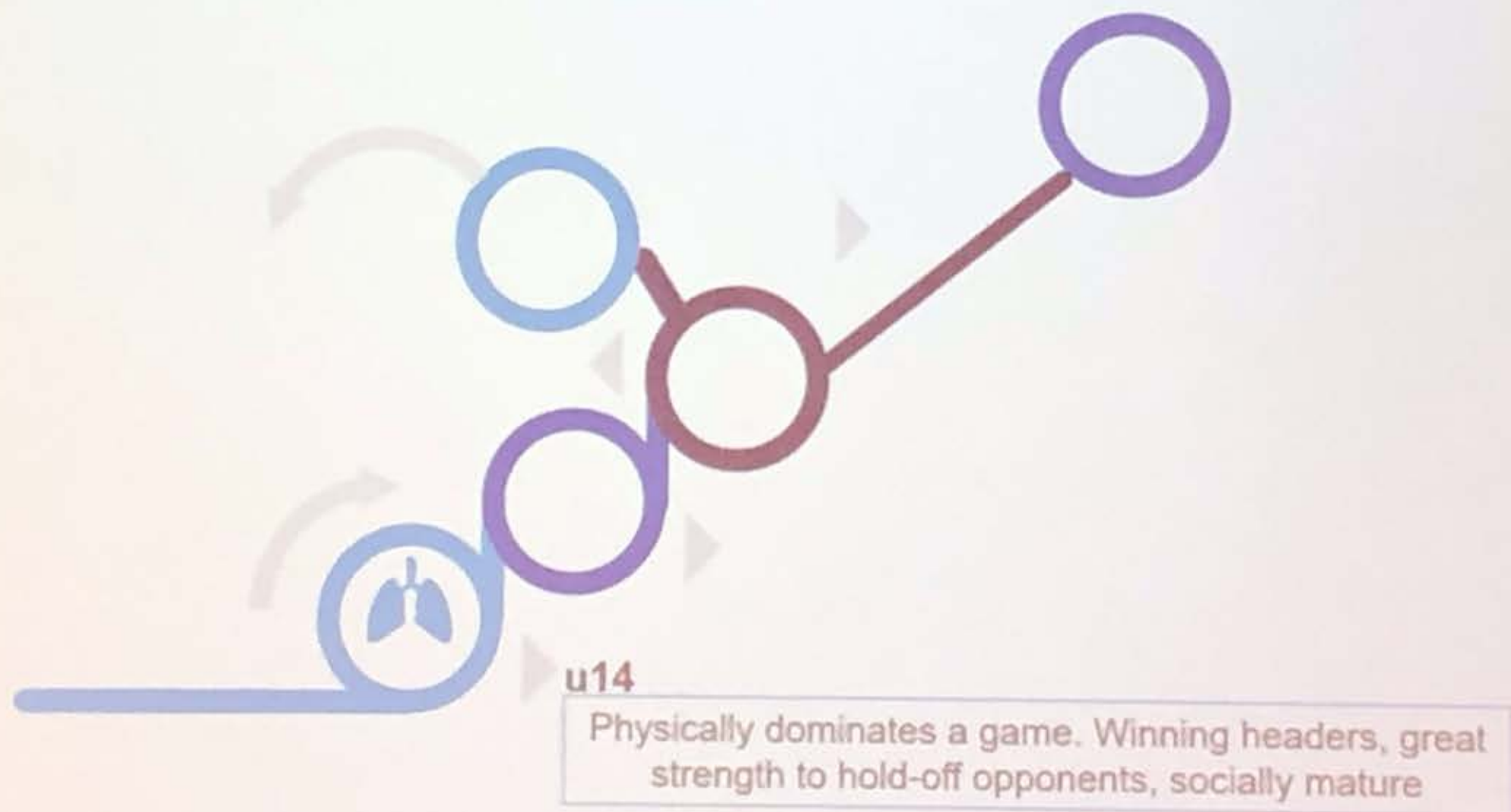
- Early maturer
- Stand out, dominate
- Gain experience, develop
- May rely on physicality
- Can impede technical/tactical development



## 'Whispering talent'

- Late maturing
- Is physically outmuscled
- May drop out, not selected on rep squads
- If can stay in system...
- Maturation can bring more developed tech/tact/psych development

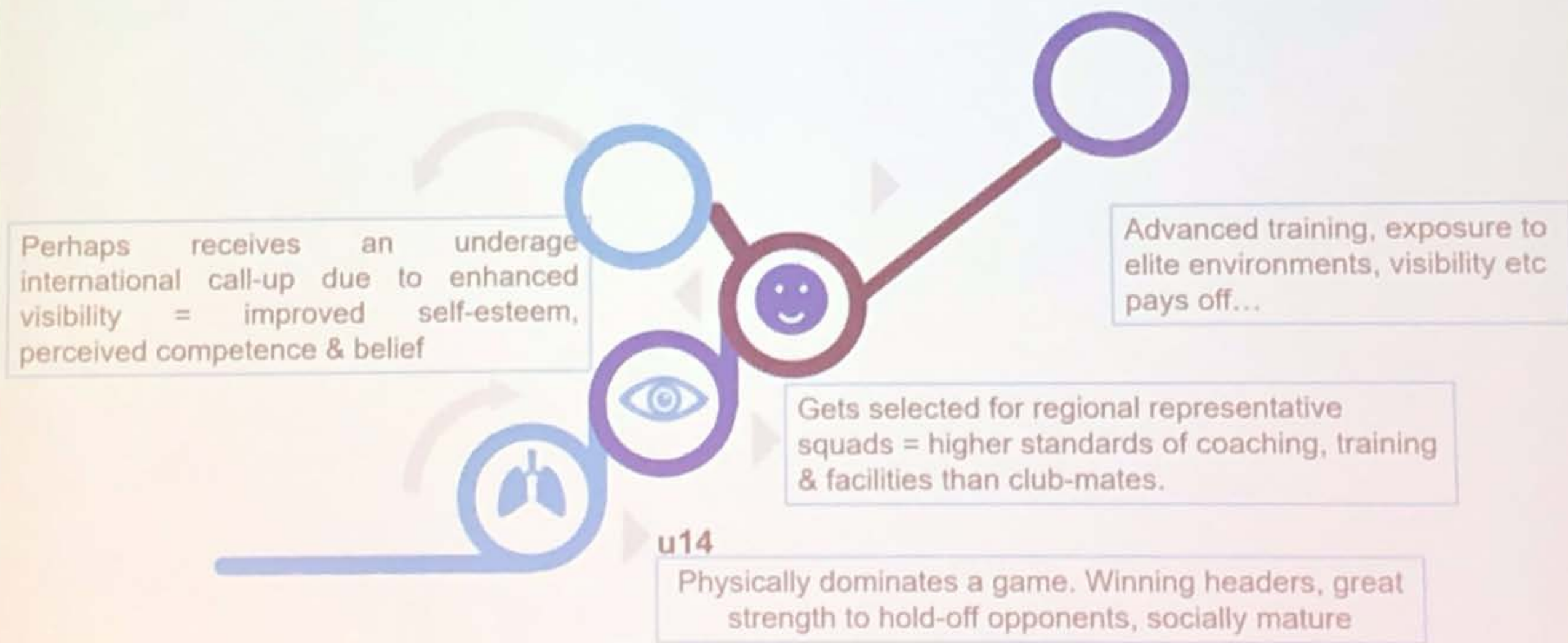
# How a journey might\* look?



Development journeys are unique and non-linear!




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\*\*Collins & MacNamara, 2012

# How a journey might\* look?



Perhaps receives an underage international call-up due to enhanced visibility = improved self-esteem, perceived competence & belief

Advanced training, exposure to elite environments, visibility etc pays off...

Gets selected for regional representative squads = higher standards of coaching, training & facilities than club-mates.

u14

Physically dominates a game. Winning headers, great strength to hold-off opponents, socially mature