

Causes?

On its own, increased maturity does not lead to a RAE, rather **how we interpret it.**

– (Hancock, Adler, & Côté, 2013)

- *Parents*

- Hold back younger/less physically dominant players

- *Coaches / scouts*

- False beliefs that lead to new behaviours – who are we focusing on due to expectations
- Focus on who we perceive to be the most talented.

- *Players*

- Believe expectations of others/false beliefs e.g. more committed = cycle!
- Late maturers can self-eliminate (Delorme et al. 2011).

- *Structures*

- Focus on early competitive success enhances RAE



A soccer player in a blue jersey is diving to the right to save a soccer ball from entering the goal. A bright lightning bolt strikes the ball. The background is a dark, stormy sky with other lightning bolts visible.

2 schools of thought on RAE

1. How can we change it?

Or...

2. It's a 'dog-eat-dog' game, fittest will survive, let it happen organically



Private
providers?

Grassroots?

Academy?

Practical strategies

1. Coach

2. Talent pathway
influencers/developers

National
Association?



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Practical coaching strategies


- Select smarter!
 - Reduce dependency on one-off trials & the use of anthropometric and physiological testing to select players.
 - e.g. Greater use of small sided games
- Awareness!
 - e.g. bibs representing month of birth at selections (Mann & van Ginneken, 2016) visual task.
 - Reflect and question.
- Bio-banding? Group on maturity status. Psych/tech attributes?



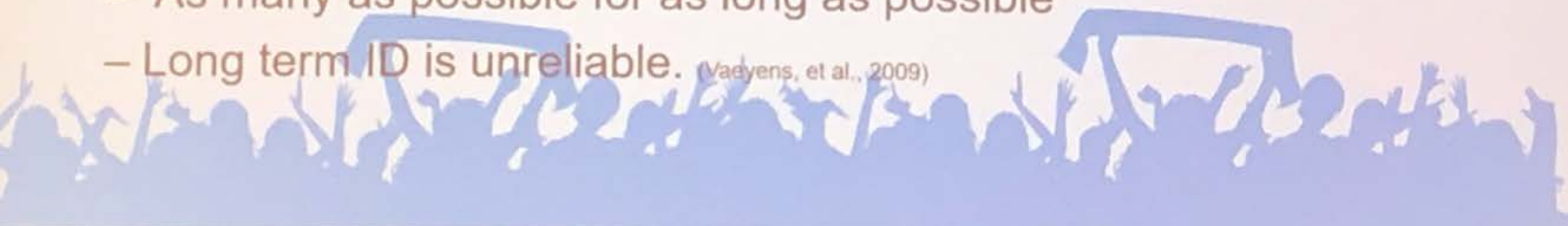
- Equal playing time and resources.
- Provide periodised challenge to all
 - e.g. place Q1 in situations where they can't rely on physical/cognitive maturity, allow Q4 opportunities for gaining success at critical stages)
 - Mixed age groupings (space to play & be creative) & flexibility
- Talk to players about maturation and its potential effects on performance.
 - Systematic benchmarking
- Look for signs related to dropout (e.g. loss of interest, lack of playing opportunities).
- Encourage diversification of sport/activities (Bridge & Toms, 2013; Berry et al, 2008; Fraser-Thomas, et al, 2008).



Talent Pathway influencer

- Consider advantages accrued (by Q1 initially and later by Q4), can they be applied to everyone?
 - Redefine 'success'
 - Have a strategy to deal with RAE
 - Buy in! Long term development focus.
 - Watch for unintended consequences (e.g. increased drop-out due to being separated from social groups)
 - Internal mini-leagues
 - 'Shadow' development squads
 - Variable cut-offs
 - Rotating cut-offs
 - School football using different cut-off times than grassroots
 - Move up on birthday
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- Influence external policy
 - Early competitive structures enhance RAE
 - Varying cut-offs, quota-systems (Musch & Grondin, 2001; Vaeyens et al. 2005).
 - ‘Average’ age tournaments
 - Enforcing % (e.g. 60% Troendelag Regional FA, Norway)
- Avoid ‘labelling’ until later – give as much opportunities as possible – delay selection
 - ‘As many as possible for as long as possible’
 - Long term ID is unreliable. (Vaeyens, et al., 2009)



Take home points



Pathway effectiveness?

Reflect, research

Strategy

Ability v Maturity ?

Appropriate opportunity



Take home

Quotas,
cut-offs,
trials?

Redefine
'success'

Pathway
effectiveness?

Reflect,
research

Strategy

Ability v
Maturity ?

Appropriate
opportunity



Take home



Quotas,
cut-offs,
trials?

Redefine
'success'

How to
select
players

Bio-band,
average
age, mixed
play

Pathway
effectiveness?

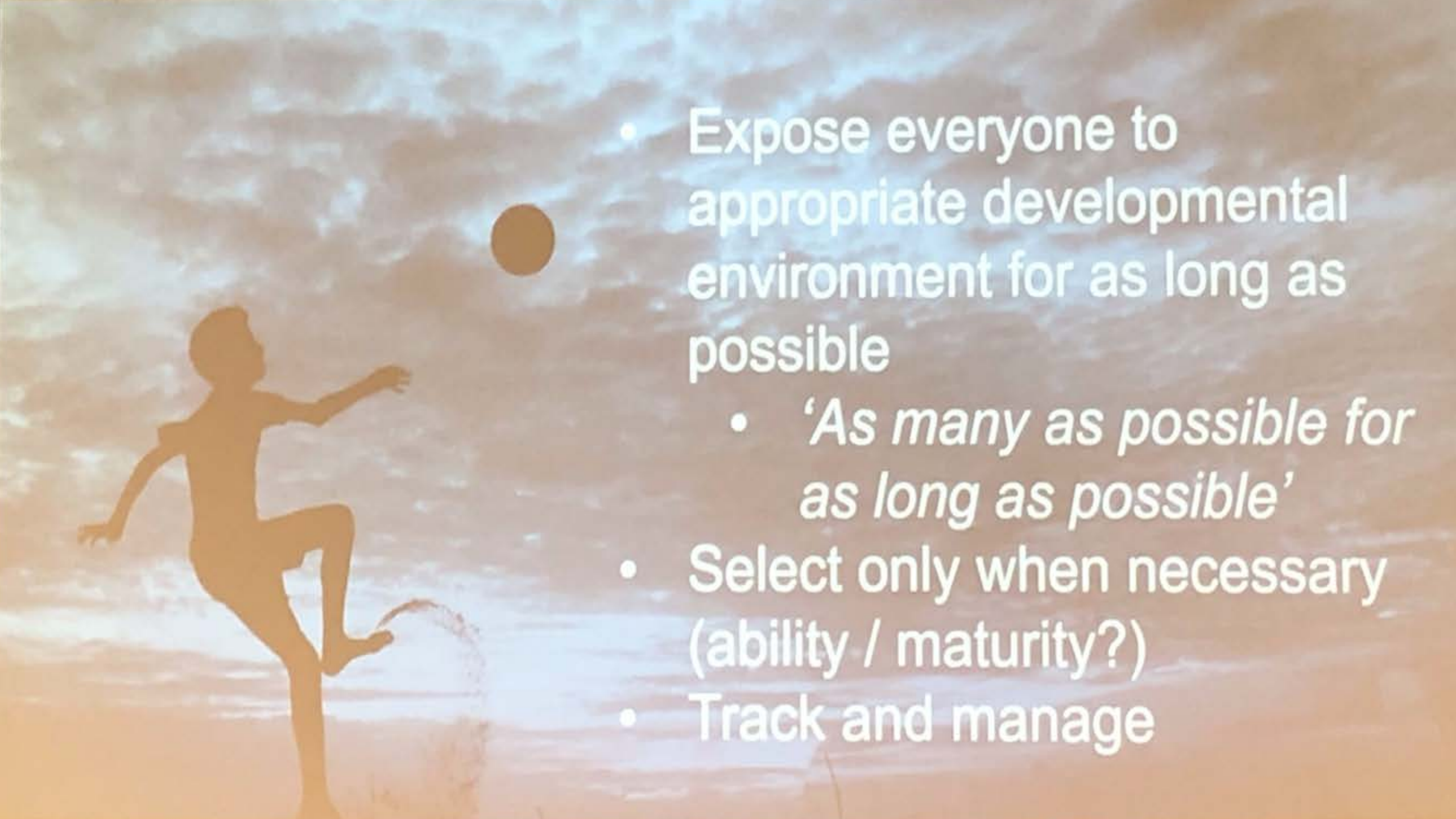
Reflect,
research

Strategy

Ability v
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Appropriate
opportunity



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- A silhouette of a child in mid-air, kicking a ball on a beach. The background is a sunset over the ocean with waves. The child is on the left side of the frame, and the ball is in the air above them. The text is on the right side of the frame.
- Expose everyone to appropriate developmental environment for as long as possible
 - *'As many as possible for as long as possible'*
 - Select only when necessary (ability / maturity?)
 - Track and manage