

## **POINTERS FOR PARENTS**

According to *Long Term Athlete Development: Trainability in Childhood and Adolescence*, scientific research has concluded that a specific and well-planned practice, training, competition and recovery regime will ensure optimum development throughout an athlete's career.

As stated by *Long Term Athlete Development*, it takes 8 to 12 years of training for a talented player/athlete to reach elite levels. This is the 10 year or 10,000 hour rule. Overemphasizing competition in the early phases of training will cause shortcomings in athletic abilities later in an athlete's career.

The research shows that for female athletes ages 8 – 11 years, a 70:30 training to competition ratio is recommended. A 60% training to 40% competition ratio is recommended during the years of 11 – 15 for female competitors. The 40% competition ratio includes competition and competition-specific training. These stages (8 – 11 and 11 – 15 years) are the most important phases of athletic preparation. According to the experts, during these stages 'we make or break an athlete!'

For female athletes 15 – 17 years, the training to competition and competition-specific training ratio changes to 50:50.

This research was conducted by the National Coaching Institute, British Columbia, Canada (Istvan Balyi, PH.D.) and Advanced Training and Performance Ltd, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada (Ann Hamilton, MPE).