

P2P News

Official Newsletter of the Pathways to the Podium Research Project



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Issue 3

From the Research Team

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<http://expertadvantage.wordpress.com>

Hello and thank you for reading Issue 3 of P2P News, the official newsletter of the Pathways to the Podium Research Project.

This issue will outline the timeline of the Pathways to the Podium Research Project, including what we have completed, what we are currently working on, and what we plan to do in the future. We will also profile Pathways to the Podium Research Team member Dr. Joe Baker from York University, Toronto, and give you a sneak peak of our latest Expert Advantage blog post on early specialisation as a pathway to elite performance.

As always, for up-to-the-minute information on the Pathways to the Podium Research Project, follow us on Twitter: [@pathways2podium](https://twitter.com/pathways2podium); like us on Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/podiumfacebook>; and add our website to your favourites bar: <http://www.yorku.ca/podium>.

Please also feel free to distribute this newsletter to your teammates, friends, family, colleagues, and sporting communities. If you have any questions, comments, or feedback relating to P2P News or the Pathways to the Podium Research Project please contact at podium@yorku.ca. We would love to hear from you.

Thanks again for joining us,

Lead Researcher
Pathways to the Podium Research Project

The Expert Advantage

The Pathways to the Podium Research Team is:

Melissa Hopwood
Victoria University /
York University

Dr. Joe Baker
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Dr. Clare MacMahon
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For those of you who are new to P2P News, The Expert Advantage is the official blog of the Pathways to the Podium Research Project. Every few weeks an informative article is posted discussing the latest research relating to skill acquisition, motor learning, and the development of sport expertise.

The Expert Advantage is currently covering a series on Pathways to Elite Performance, and the following is an extract from a recent post on "Elite performance via early specialisation":

"Specialisation in sport refers to year-round participation in a single sport, at the exclusion of other sports... Although early specialisation can lead to early success in sport, the benefits are typically short lived... As parents, coaches, and sport administrators, we should carefully consider the benefits and risks of early specialisation and how our behaviours may be unintentionally promoting it."

To read more about early specialisation as a pathway to elite performance and other interesting articles, check out The Expert Advantage at:

<http://expertadvantage.wordpress.com>

Pathways to the Podium Timeline

The Pathways to the Podium Research Project began just over 2 years ago in early 2009. The first step was to create the measurement tool to be used within the project - The Developmental History of Athletes Questionnaire (DHAQ). This step involved an extensive literature review and synthesis of previously utilised questionnaires and interview guides. Step 1 took place from March – June 2009.

Step 2 required detailed pilot testing in order to validate and refine the DHAQ so that we were sure to have a reliable tool to collect trustworthy data. Pilot testing occurred from July 2009 – July 2010, including data collection, data analysis, and refinement of the DHAQ.

Next, the DHAQ was converted from its previous pen-and-paper format to an interactive online questionnaire, requiring further pilot testing to ensure the web-based version was in full working order. This step took place from August – October 2010.

Since November 2010, athletes have been completing the online DHAQ, and data collection will continue until the end of June 2011. Following closure of the online questionnaire, it is expected that data analysis will occur from July – December 2011. We anticipate that our final report of results and recommendations will be prepared in January – February 2012, with dissemination to participating athletes, parents, coaches, and sporting organisations in March 2012.



Research Team Profile: Dr. Joe Baker

Dr. **Joseph (Joe) Baker** received his PhD in Applied Exercise Science from Queen's University (Canada) in 2003 followed by postdoctoral studies in exercise epidemiology.



Currently, Joe is an Associate Professor and head of the Lifespan Health and Performance Laboratory in the School of Kinesiology and Health Science, at York University, Canada. He has also held visiting researcher/professor positions in the Carnegie Research Institute at Leeds Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom, Victoria University and the Australian Institute of Sport in Australia, and the Institute of Sport Science at Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster in Germany.

His research considers the varying influences on optimal human development, ranging from issues affecting athlete development and skill acquisition to barriers and facilitators of successful aging.

Joe is Past President of the Canadian Society for Psychomotor Learning and Sport Psychology and the author/editor of 4 books, 2 journal special issues (Baker & Davids, 2007, *International Journal of Sport Psychology* and Baker & Schorer, 2010, *Talent Development and Excellence*) and more than 100 peer reviewed articles and book chapters.

More information about his research can be found at www.yorku.ca/bakerj. He lives in Barrie, Canada with his wife Ann-Marie and is an avid cyclist and runner.

Thank You!

The Pathways to the Podium Research Team would like to acknowledge the support of the following organisations that have joined us since the last edition of P2P News. Your assistance is invaluable to the project, and the quality of our research will benefit greatly from your involvement. Thank you very much to all coaches, athletes, parents, and administrators from the following organisations:

Singleton Amateur Swimming Club	Canadian Sport Centre Saskatchewan	University of Montreal Women's Volleyball
Squash Australia	Ontario Soccer Association	University of Western Ontario Rowing Club
Brandon University Men's Volleyball	Ontario Water Polo	Whitewater Ontario
Canadian Sport Centre Ontario	Toronto Sport and Social Club	York University Men's Volleyball
	TriRudy.com	

Pathways to the Podium Research Project Supporting Organisations:



The Pathways to the Podium Research Project is being conducted by a team of sport scientists from Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia, York University, Toronto, Canada, and the Australian Institute of Sport, Canberra, Australia. This project aims to gain a detailed understanding of the pathways that elite athletes follow on their way towards attaining peak performance. Most importantly, we are interested in how the pathways of elite athletes differ from those of lesser skilled athletes. The information obtained from this research will be used to provide recommendations relating to the conditions of sport participation and practice that are optimal for the development of sport expertise. Visit www.yorku.ca/podium for more information.