

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF YOUTH ATHLETES

SKLZ Sport Training Programs are recipes to get strong for sport. The ingredients are simple, SKLZ performance training products, EXOS proven methodology and professional athletes. Each program is sport – specific and designed for the 12 to 18 year old athletes. These programs are designed for the 12 to 18 year old athlete who is in the “Training to Train stage” of development. Take a look at the trusted model for youth long-term athletic development, based on the work of Balyi and Hamilton (2004):

FUNDamental Stage—Ages 6–9. This stage focuses on exactly what the title states: having fun and learning the basics, involving coordination, agility, balance, and speed in various directions. These skills should be mastered before sport-specific drills are introduced.

- **Learning to Train**—Ages 8–12. Once motor skills are established, the goal is to learn specific sport skills. This stage sets up young athletes for future success.
- **Training to Train**—Ages 11–16. This stage is critical in building the performance “engine” of the young athlete by targeting their aerobic base and performing strength exercises to elevate sport-specific skills.
- **Training to Compete**—15–18. At this stage, athletes have prepared for training and are ready for a 50/50 approach. Sport position development and fitness/performance are split, focusing on each approach for 50% of the training time.

SKLZ Sport Training Programs include sessions in strength, power and speed to support the “Training to Train” stage. In addition, the required training tools (Mini Bands, Training Cables and Slidez) provide significant resistance that can be increased or decreased by simply moving toward or away from the anchor point. This means the athlete is not at risk of dropping heavy plates on themselves and do not require a spotter.