



PARA-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

World leading Para performance sport
that enables athletes to thrive, excel and win

**POWERING SUCCESS.
INSPIRING IMPACT.**





PARA-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Contents

Para-Athlete Development Framework (PADF)	4
PADF Overview	5
PADF Illustration	6
PADF Fundamentals	8
Pillar 1: Training & Competition	10
Pillar 2: Health & Well-being	12
Pillar 3: Para sport journey	15
Pillar 4: Career Transitions	17

PARA-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (PADF)



Framework Purpose

The PADF supports individuals with disabilities who are engaging in Para-sport ('Para-athletes') by providing a structured guide to important elements of sporting and personal development.

Athlete-Centred Approach

The PADF emphasises an approach that is athlete-centred and can be tailored to individual needs and goals.

Continuous Development

The PADF is intended to be an ongoing reference throughout the developmental journey of a Para-athlete as they aspire to fulfil their potential in sport and life.

PADF OVERVIEW

Purpose and Audience

The PADF supports current and aspiring Para-athletes by providing guidance for them, their parents/guardians, their coaches and their support teams throughout their developmental journey in sport.

Framework Structure

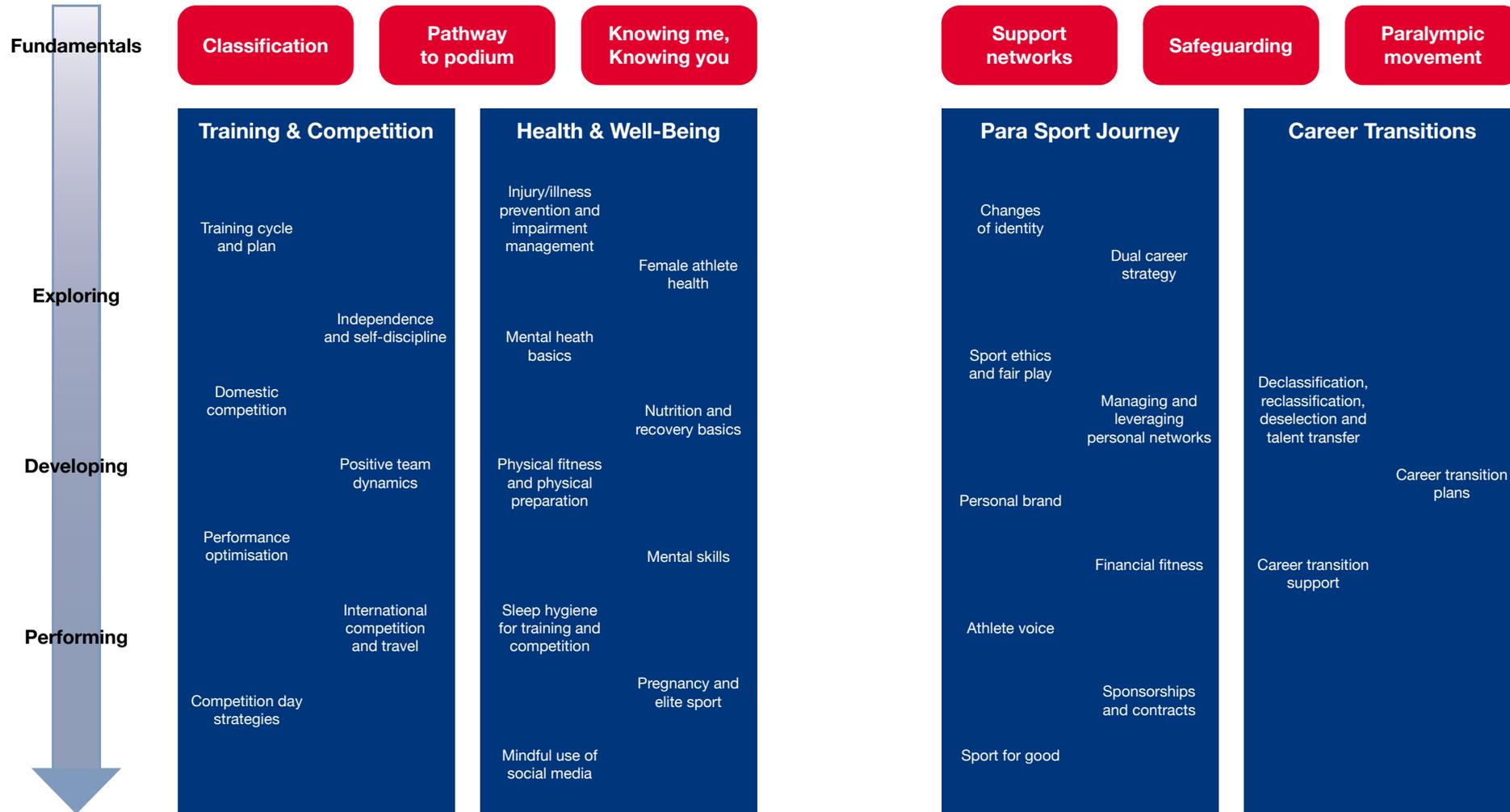
The PADF consists of four core pillars and associated essential areas that support holistic Para-athlete development. The PADF has application across multiple stages of the Para-athlete journey as individuals move from exploring sport(s), to developing in sport(s) and performing in sport(s).

Flexible Approach

While the PADF is a unifying framework, it is non-prescriptive by design. This allows the content to be applied in a manner that is relevant to the unique needs, circumstances and aspirations of individual Para-athletes.



PARA-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (PADF)



For more information about the Para-Athlete Development Framework contact: joe.taylor@uksport.gov.uk



PADF FUNDAMENTALS



Classification

Understanding the classification system and eligibility criteria within Para-sports is essential for Para-athletes. Knowing that Para-athletes can be classified and declassified is also important as these events can have significant personal and professional implications.

Pathway to Podium

Understanding what Para-athlete development journeys may look like will aid progression towards individual sporting aspirations. Knowing how to navigate and engage with local and national sport systems will assist in being able to access the right things, at the right times and in the right ways. This could include elements such as coaching, equipment, funding, carers, performance support personnel and training partners.

Knowing Me, Knowing You

Para-athletes should have the opportunity to share information about themselves. This should include relevant impairment-specific information and the impact of impairment(s) on daily living, training and performance. It is important to understand how a commitment to sport fits with all other aspects of life as a Para-athlete including personal care requirements, family circumstances and work/study demands.

Support Networks

Para-athletes should appreciate the crucial role that support networks play in assisting their holistic development and progress towards achieving their aspirations. A shared understanding of aspirations and needs can help align the Para-athlete and their support network to clear goals.

Safeguarding

Prioritising Para-athlete safety and respect ensures well-being throughout their sporting experience. Knowing individual rights and how to raise concerns contributes to safe and supportive training and competition environments.

The Paralympic Movement

The history, vision and values of the Paralympic Movement should be understood by Para-athletes. This should include knowledge of the Paralympic Movement's role in promoting inclusion and equal opportunities for people with disability in sport and wider society.



PILLAR 1: TRAINING & COMPETITION



Training Cycle and Plan

Planning and managing training cycles helps Para-athletes develop sport-specific skills and maintain peak performance levels.

Independence and Self-Discipline

Developing skills to manage time and commitments aids Para-athletes in taking ownership of their developmental journey.

Domestic Competition

Understanding what to expect at domestic competitions, and identifying the development and performance opportunities that these competitions provide, enables Para-athletes to progress performances and develop skills that can be transferred into international competition.

Positive Team Dynamics

Building effective relationships and fostering positive team dynamics enhances trust, respect and effective communication amongst Para-athletes and their support networks in training and competition environments.

Performance Optimisation

Para-athletes should understand the training approaches that most effectively aids their development and performance, and how coaches support this. Optimisation can include preparation strategies for different environments (e.g., heat, altitude) and the use and application of equipment and technology.

International Competition and Travel

Gaining international competition experience prepares Para-athletes for selection, different competition formats and overseas travel scenarios.

Competition Day Strategies

Experiences of preparing for, and rehearsing, competition day plans supports Para-athletes in being able to deliver required outcomes on a given day.



PILLAR 2: HEALTH & WELL-BEING



Injury/Illness Prevention and Impairment Management
Tailored injury/illness prevention and impairment management strategies support Para-athletes in achieving good physical health that contributes positively to performance.

Female Athlete Health
A focus on the unique physiological and psychological needs of females in Para-sports so that they can be supported effectively on their developmental journey.

Mental Health and Resilience
Emphasis on areas such as stress management, resilience building and positive self-image for mental well-being.

Nutrition and Recovery Basics
Effective nutrition, hydration and recovery are essential for training and competition success.

Mental Skills

Focus on psychological attributes and skills that can help Para-athletes successfully navigate their sporting journey.

Sleep Hygiene for Training and Competition

Emphasis for Para-athletes on the role of sleep and recovery for performance and overall well-being, including understanding of impairment specific factors that may impact on the quality of these critical periods of recuperation.

Pregnancy and Elite Sport

Para-athletes should be aware of pregnancy guidance, resources and policies so that they can effectively manage pregnancy and being a parent alongside sport.

Mindful Use of Social Media

Understanding the benefits and drawbacks of social media as a Para-athlete so that platforms can be used for positive influence while maintaining personal integrity and online safety.





PILLAR 3: PARA SPORT JOURNEY

Changes of Identity

Understanding how personal identity evolves during commitment to sport and career transitions is essential for Para-athletes to navigate their sporting journey and for their personal growth.

Dual Career Strategies

Balancing education and work alongside sport helps Para-athletes manage their sporting journey while preparing for life beyond their athletic career.

Sport Ethics and Fair Play

Anti-doping, match fixing, intentional misrepresentation and boosting are important areas for Para-athletes to understand to maintain fairness, trust and integrity in Para-sport environments.

Managing and Leveraging Your Network

Para-athletes showing personal leadership and taking accountability for their development and performances. Using individual support networks to contribute to positive outcomes in and out of sport.

PILLAR 3: PARA SPORT JOURNEY



Personal Brand

Building a personal brand as a Para-athlete to help secure sponsorships, create personal opportunities, inspire others, and provide a platform for social impact.

Financial Fitness

Develop sound financial understanding and skills to support the achievement of personal goals and reduce stress, particularly given the unpredictability of sport.

Athlete Voice

Para-athletes should understand the significance of their voice and the role of athlete representation. Para-athletes being leaders, role models and advocates within their sporting community and beyond.

Sponsorships and Contracts

Recognising the opportunities around sponsorship and how to maintain positive relationships to maximise financial and professional opportunities.

Sport for Good

Para-athletes should understand how sport can contribute to sustainable development and societal change while recognising their own role in giving back by leveraging their platform to advocate for causes that are important to them.

PILLAR 4: CAREER TRANSITIONS

Reclassification, Declassification, Deselection and Talent Transfer

Understanding of critical moments such as declassification, reclassification and deselection, including how these impact during career transitions. Para-athletes should also be aware of opportunities to experience and move between sports.

Career Transition Plan

Planning for a life beyond sport and developing skills such as time management and effective communication are vital for successful career transitions.

Career Transition Support

Support includes planning, mentorship and guidance to help Para-athletes find suitable career paths.





Image credits

Front cover: **Victoria Kingstone** / DeFodi Images / Getty Images
Inside front cover: **Meggan Dawson-Farrell** / Carmen Mandato / Getty Images
P4: **Will Bayley** / Fiona Goodall / Getty Images
P5, top: **Ellie Challis** / Adam Pretty / Getty Images
P5, bottom: **James Barnes-Miller** / Matthew Stockman / Getty Images
P8: **Dan Bethell** / Steph Chambers / Getty Images
P9: **Neil Simpson** / Lintao Zhang / Getty Images
P10: **David Smith** / Michael Steele / Getty Images
P12: **Shona Brownlee** / Alexander Hassenstein / Getty Images
P13: **Lauren Rowles and Gregg Stevenson** / Naomi Baker / Getty Images
P14: **Scott Meenagh** / Michael Steele / Getty Images
P16: **Dimitri Coutya** / Andy Lyon / Getty Images
P17: **Natasha Baker** / Alex Davidson / Getty Images



UK Sport
6th Floor
10 South Colonnade
London
E14 4PU