

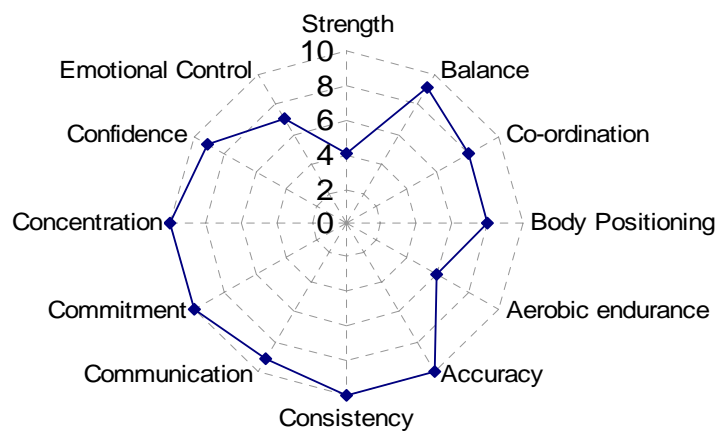
Peter Harrison Centre
for Disability Sport

Performance profiling and its use in talent identification in Paralympic sports

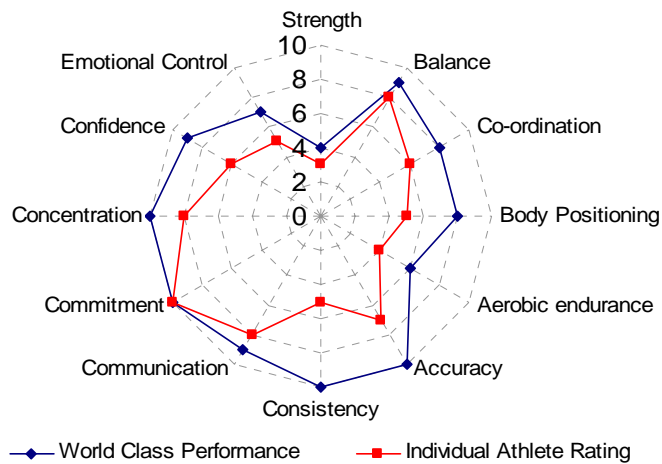
By Helen Alfano, EIS ParalympicsGB Sport Science Officer

Performance profiling has become a widely used tool, aiding the analysis and monitoring of performance in high level sport. The process involves breaking up the complexity of top performance into certain key qualities and then assessing performance based upon these. The qualities identified typically fall into four main categories: physical, psychological, tactical and technical. Both coaches and athletes are involved in this process.

The qualities identified must be clearly defined and agreed upon. Each quality is then given a rating of importance in terms of top performance in the sport. This is assessed on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is of most importance. The significance of each quality to performance then becomes apparent and a profiling diagram can be formed. The figure below shows a number of qualities within all categories of performance and indicates where a performer trying to achieve top performance may focus attention.



The coach and athlete themselves then assess their performance against these essential qualities, again on a scale of 1-10 with the score indicating how strongly they possess the quality. Where possible performance tests take place to quantify an athlete's possession of a certain quality, e.g. strength testing. Input of the information into the profile allows simple assessment and identification of strengths and weakness and assists goal setting and training design (see figure below). Reassessment over time allows monitoring of progression towards goals and re-evaluation of performance qualities.



Main objectives:

- To develop awareness of important qualities essential for success in a sport
- To consider performance from a joint coach and athlete perspective
- To aid in identifying an appropriate intervention in desired areas of change
- To assist in training programme design with focus on best performance
- To monitor changes over time

Key benefits:

- Assists focus and progress towards common agreed goals
- Provides a visual display easy for reference and feedback
- Maximises the athlete's motivation and adherence to a program

Performance Profiling in Talent Identification

With 2012 fast approaching we have a fantastic opportunity to unearth some new talent and have GB representatives in all events across all sports. At ParalympicsGB we have recognised the potential for the use of performance profiling in our talent identification initiatives.

All experienced coaches can tell you when they think someone has potential or talent, but often on reflection they find it hard to express why and almost never record the justifications for focusing support on an identified individual. With several talent initiatives running it is imperative that we are clear on the qualities we are looking for and record, measure and monitor potential talent. Performance profiling assists us in doing this. The only difference to the process described above is that input comes only from the coaches and the qualities assessed are those they feel an individual must possess in order to be identified as talented and be fast tracked ready for top performance in 2012.

Forms are produced where each quality can be assessed quickly in a talent ID environment. Potential athlete's strengths and weaknesses based on coach perceptions are then easily identified. Where possible an objective measure is also taken to support this subjective assessment, for example a score is taken in Shooting. This process is completed for all potential athletes in a sport allowing for easy identification of the talented individuals a sport should focus on. The continued use of these forms during the development of the athlete assists in tracking progression and monitoring performance improvements.

To find out further information about this factsheet or the Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport, please email: phc@lboro.ac.uk or alternatively visit the website at: <http://www.peterharrisoncentre.org.uk/>