

“THE ROAD TO TOP SPORT” THE STAGES OF TECNIFICATION

This steep and difficult road is far from being a motorway; I define it as being the **stages, rules, actions, and methodologies** that we have to plan and apply in the phase of the **specialisation** and **improvement** training of sportsmen and sportswomen. In this way the maximum performance in competition can be obtained in the shortest possible time, with the main aim being the best sporting results of the group of players supervised in this area or segment.

The process is therefore included in the overall planning of **technification**, which must be projected by the **Sporting Federations**, Associations, and clubs, generally by sporting calendars, cycles, or periods of preparation for major events or competitions such as World and European Championships, Olympic Games if appropriate, etc.

This road is maintained over time and is therefore a long-term aim, by means of which a sportsman/sportswoman with the right profile for the **Top Level or Elite** takes no less than a **minimum period of from six to eight years** if his/her training is satisfactory, disciplined, and continuous so as to make good results possible. This is a process of **improvement** from when talent for the practising of a certain mode is detected to when the top level is achieved. The period of time mentioned above runs from the initial basic work until the elite is attained, which is obviously reserved for a very select minority.

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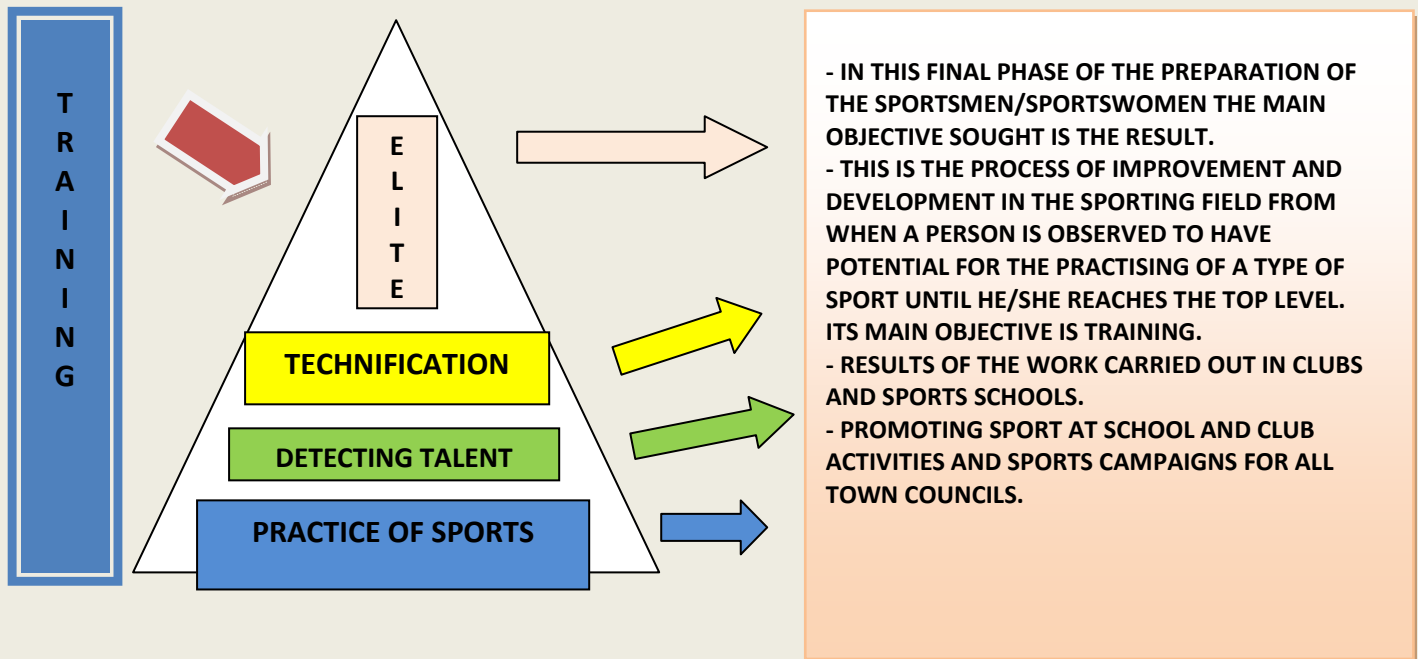


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The steps that need to be taken, developed, or taken into account within a sporting structure can therefore be set out in order to establish our general project in search of the best results for our work:



There is implicit in this pyramidal structure a major general coordination by the **main trainer** of the project. The priority objective is technical training in all its fields, given that it is only in the final phase of the elite that **sporting results** are important. The specialised work groups for our sport involve young people aged from **12 to 21**, with various subgroups being established based on their possible integration in: permanent concentrations aiming at high performance; specific concentrations aiming at the observation of the highest number of possible sportsmen and sportswomen; clinics at their clubs of origin with the intervention of qualified technicians; the organisation of specific tournaments to determine profiles; and other kinds of evaluative actions designed to achieve the objective pursued.

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At the base of this pyramid or structure we find people who practise sport in general under the protection of the official Town Council programmes (**EUROPEAN LETTER OF SPORT FOR ALL**). These are provided for citizens annually, generally to coincide with the school year, so that they may practise the sport of their choice as a form of leisure or amusement in any of the installations. Billiard halls exist in some of them, and by means of the signing of collaboration agreements with Territorial Federations or elite sports clubs, which provide their own technicians and instructors, the desired training schools are set up in their **INITIATION** phase. In them potential pupils are confirmed to us as future participants who choose billiards as their favourite sport.

This important sample of billiards enthusiasts that is generated in this initial phase, which is of vital importance if we are to increase the number of players of our sport, leads to a process of the **selection of young talent** in which a clear competition profile is observed, without yet determining the qualities of these players for **top performance and elite competition**. As soon as possible, but always following the various stages of their sports training, they must become part of the life of the clubs and of federated competition, where they will begin to acquire habits and experience that will shape their profile with a view to becoming part of the **elite**.

In my opinion and within the characteristics of billiards it is here where the true technification of our sportsmen and sportswomen lies. In each of the actions carried out with them the improvement of their movement, execution, and technical, tactical, and strategic development is sought, complementing this very specific training with physical and psychological training, if possible by professionals or directly by the programme trainer who should be ready to do so. This stage is a long one and a work period of at least four years is needed in a sports training centre, if this is available, or if not in a club with the necessary conditions for this type of **elite** preparation. In this clear period of sporting

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Simon Simonis



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improvement, the sportsmen/sportswomen must be provided with the necessary resources and experience for their development, which is mainly achieved with training and quality competition.

The essential objective of technification is **TRAINING** in the theoretical and functional basis of this activity, and the sporting results attained become of secondary importance. The ideal situation for us is the presence at this important stage of the sport of a skilled staff of technicians and instructors, who are well trained and continuously updated and integrated within the **methodological or training system**. The latter will have been designed and coordinated from the Technical Management of the National Federation for the competitive training of our players, especially of those selected for the **elite**, who have been conferred official representation of their country, and to some extent the responsibility and obligation of carrying out the work, as they are included in official programmes.

FORMAT OF THE PILOT PROJECT

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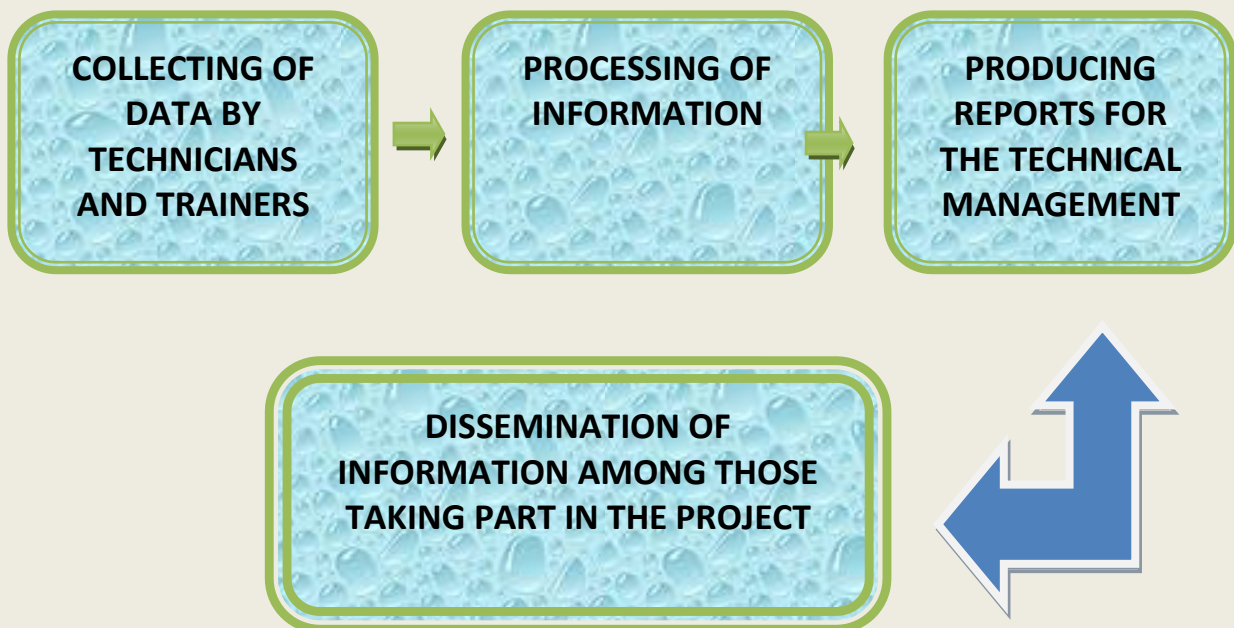


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ACTIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT

- Coordinating the actions to be carried out from the National Federation with the Territorial Federations, Clubs, Sports Associations, and other official training centres, in order to establish the control of players that have been selected to form part of the **elite** because of their profile, with the objective of assessing them with a continuous follow-up by means of their technicians and trainers, automating the process of the administration of information:



In this manner we are beginning to gather more actual scientific data on training as from the application of the test and various assessment systems, and we abandon up to a point the idea of the diagnosis of the famous **“CLINICAL EYE OR**

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PROFESSIONAL EYE", albeit not completely because it seems to me to represent a very important feeling.

- **Carrying out technical controls** on the sportsmen/sportswomen so as to appreciate their way of identifying, understanding, and developing the game, once important training phases have been carried out by means of the following personal assessment tests:
- **EFFECTIVENESS TEST (JOSE MARIA QUETGLAS 1997)**
- **TRAINING OBSERVATION LIST (JOSE MARIA QUETGLAS 1997)**
- **QUALITY TEST (JOSE MARIA QUETGLAS 2002)**
- **COMPETITION TEST (JOSE M^a QUETGLAS 2003)**

The effectiveness test must be applied by technicians and trainers when the player has completed a very full training period as to the volume and intensity of the work load and has completed the process of recovery after the tough phase of resistance training, as if he/she were to take part in an important competition. The results of this test will give us in almost **ninety per cent** of cases the actual outcome that will be obtained in the competition for which the preparation has been carried out.

- **Training sessions and groups** that we will hold with the components of this group, in which some players with a superior profile are chosen to form part of the permanent groups that characterise our Technification Centres, where they are supervised by a main trainer who is in charge of

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the general technification programme. The sportsmen/sportswomen of this group live out their sporting and teaching lives in the Centre.

The remainder of the players attend specific groups at various times of the year, in which their form and the individual training plans assigned to them that must be followed in their home towns is revised. These players carry out sporting exchanges that are highly recommended for their training and integration as far as high performance is concerned, and are clear candidates for the obtaining of places in the permanent group if their progress is accredited.

- **Training actions:** above all in the instruction and **training of trainers**, who become key figures for the success of **elite** projects and who are in short supply in all countries; we must tackle this problem urgently. At the most some qualified players have the will and the vocation to teach, but they are in a minority and each of them acts within his/her personal criteria. In this manner confusion may result even if the subject matter taught is very competitive and coherent, which should logically be the case because professionals are involved, but with little or no organisation.
- **Participation in competitions:** if possible in official ones of the **WORLD CUP**, or **JUNIOR INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS** in which the players selected acquire experience, maturity, and above all can visualise the game of the best professional players so as to compare the various systems of play and whether they coincide with their own procedures of play and training. In this sense they can also learn to **make correct decisions**, if as I say these competitions are attended with the main objective of assimilating as much as possible.

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- **The sporting installations** where we are going to carry out our activities. If Technification Centres are already available (some National Federations have them) in which our sport is established, we will follow the steps indicated in the previous points. If the opposite is the case, excellent billiard clubs and halls are available in our cities in which we can carry out our activities, by means of entering into excellent agreements that will give us the necessary resources and material for the successful carrying out of our idea, our project, and our work.



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MIKEL BARRIO: POOL TRAINER

**HALLS FOR CAROM
BILLIARDS AND POOL IN
THE SPORTS
TECHNIFICATION CENTRE
OF LOS NAREJOS IN
MURCIA, THE CENTRE OF
OPERATIONS OF THE
ROYAL SPANISH
BILLIARDS FEDERATION
FOR ELITE
PROGRAMMES**

NECESSARY ACTIONS OF THE FEDERATIONS

Specialisation in **“TOP LEVEL SPORT”** or the **ELITE** must be planned and sought from an early age among sportsmen/sportswomen with the right profile (aged no more than 14/15) as from the actions and line of work previously described. The Federations must be structured as **PROFESSIONALLY** as possible as far as technical aspects are concerned, with a highly coordinated **management** team generating ideas and projects in all segments but mainly aimed at achieving **high performance**. The key to this planning will be without doubt the figure of the **trainer**, who will work with the sportsmen/sportswomen allocated to him/her by the Technical Management of the corresponding Federation. It is for this reason that we must urgently attend to this **training on a world stage** to try to make a real

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qualitative leap in **the disciplined and methodical training of the players and in billiards as a sport.**

“Training should be understood to be the preparation of the players for the achieving of high and maximum sporting performance, taking into account factors such as physical, technical, tactical, intellectual, psychological, and moral preparation and aided by the planned work load. BETTER RECORDS IN LESS TIME (REQUENA 2006)”.

These future technicians and trainers will form part of the network of the Federation, and will be those who carry out the overall programme with the actions and the work that they are to develop in **CLUBS, TERRITORIAL FEDERATIONS, SPECIFIC COMPETITIONS, AND PROGRAMMES FOR DETECTING TALENT IN THE AUTONOMOUS REGIONS**, so that when the sportsmen/sportswomen have been elected the following can be organised:

- + **AREA GROUPINGS IN THEIR REGIONS OF CITIES**
- + **NATIONAL CONCENTRATIONS**
- + **CREATING A PERMANENT CONCENTRATION FOR TECHNIFICATION CENTRES, IF THESE EXIST**
- + **INTERNATIONAL CONCENTRATIONS**

Once these actions have been carried out, it can be said that planning with sportsmen/sportswomen for **high performance or the elite** lasts for at least **four**

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years and ends when the player reaches the age of **22 and completes the junior stage**. From this point on he/she must work either with a trainer in his/her home town or alone, provided that he/she is perfectly acquainted with the training plans and the material to be covered. Depending on his/her study or work obligations, he/she will be able to decide how much time he/she can devote to billiards in order to achieve his /her personal sporting objectives.

The sportsmen/sportswomen in these groups are chosen based on unified **criteria** that mostly attempt to define the desired profile for the carrying out of the planned actions. The most common characteristics are:

INITIATION GROUPS FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE (AGES 12 TO 15)

- **Belonging to a club or Association and holding a sports licence**
- **Participating in official tournaments in his/her area in any of the categories**
- **Participating in the finals of the National Championships in the Youth and Junior categories**
- **Accrediting a general average of more than TWO in the FREE master speciality**
- **Easy and fluent execution**
- **Passing the minimum test levels (selection protocol) for forming part of the group**
- **Being a normal student making acceptable progress**

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- **A suitable family environment**
- **Open and sporting mentality – polite**

SPECIALISATION GROUPS (OVERALL HIGH PERFORMANCE TECHNIFICATION AGES 15 TO 18)

- ↪ **Competing in Regional and National official tournaments and appearing in the respective classification ranking**
- ↪ **Personal three-cushion record from a general average of 0.600**
- ↪ **Having been among the top four in junior competitions over the last two seasons**
- ↪ **Appearing in official lists of outstanding local, regional, or national sportsmen/sportswomen**
- ↪ **Belonging to the technification programmes of his/her federation, if these exist**
- ↪ **Passing the protocol test for his/her assessment**

ELITE GROUPS (AGED 18 TO 21)

- ★ **Being a medallist in national championships in any category**
- ★ **Having won international medals in the last two years**
- ★ **Appearing in the top positions of the individual junior ranking**

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Consejo Superior de Deportes



COMITE OLIMPICO ESPAÑOL



REAL FEDERACION ESPAÑOLA DE BILLAR

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- ★ **Accrediting a minimum personal record of a general average of 0.900**
- ★ **Being among the first 50 classified in the absolute international ranking**
- ★ **Playing in teams of the National League in the Division of Honour category**
- ★ **Maximum age for selection: 21**
- ★ **Having participated for at least two years in the official training programmes of the Federation**

The sportsmen/sportswomen who will officially represent their country in official competitions will be selected from this **elite** group, with a special budget being established within the programmes of the State and the Federation. As there are few places for being able to compete, and a number of sportsmen/sportswomen with merits for winning them, the players are particularly motivated to continue with their work and improve their records day by day and also their results in competition. Their inscription during the season will depend on the three-cushion **WORLD CUP** competitions.

This will be the basic planning or project for preparing sportsmen/sportswomen with a profile that makes them capable of reaching the elite and of becoming the representatives of their country's official team in the near future.

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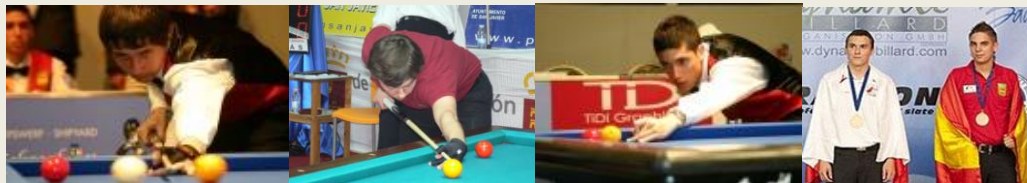


JAVIER PALAZON

RUBEN LEGAZPI

TONI ORTIZ

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DAVID MARTINEZ

JOSE M^a MAS

JUAN DAVID ZAPATA

FRANCISCO SANCHEZ

THE SPANISH MODEL

With the creation of the Technical Management of the Spanish Royal Billiards Federation (*Real Federación Española de Billar*, RFEB) and the setting in motion of our Sporting Technification Centre of Los Narejos in Murcia in 1992, we reached agreement and decided to design a work methodology that was competitive and ambitious enough regarding results and quick to assimilate by the sportsmen/sportswomen in training. In this way the idea is to once and for all, with discipline and perseverance, facilitate their improvement and preparation with a guarantee of success in important competitions, as from a spectacular improvement in their personal records or averages.

The media repercussion in our sport of the **Grand Master, Professor, Idol, and Undisputed Champion RAYMOND CEULEMANS**, the true instigator and catalyst

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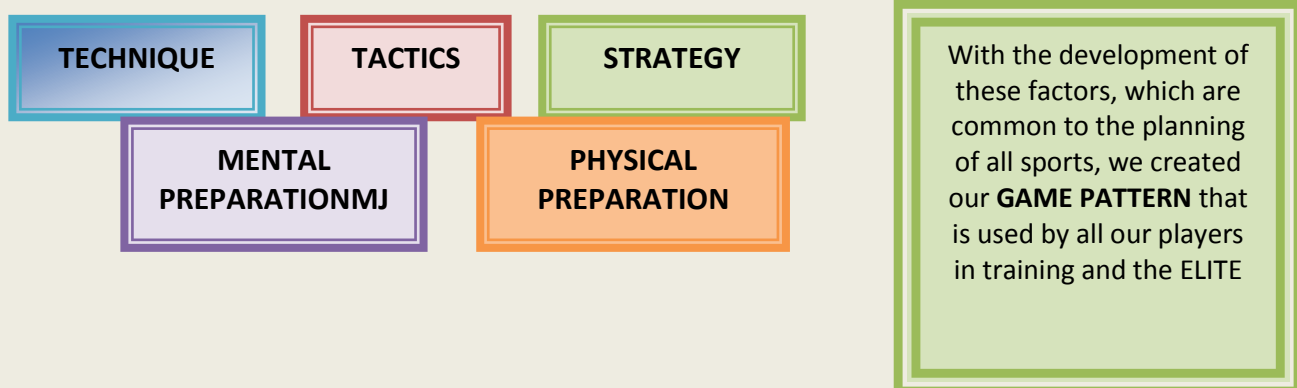
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of contemporary billiards, made the task easier for us as from the start we designed our methodologies influenced by his mastery of the specialities as a result of the advice we received from him personally. This consisted of the analysis of his method of play, training systems, discipline, seriousness, respect, and psychological characteristics, and also of the declaration of several Belgian masters of the period, such as **LAURENT BOULANGER** and **LUDO DIE LIS**, with whom we had the opportunity to work on some stages so as to draw up a clearly winning model for our young elite.

We have divided the contents of the material, which we will be able to examine in detail in the debates and round tables, into five basic functional factors of sports training, which we classify in order of its importance for our sport as follows:



With the development of these factors, which are common to the planning of all sports, we created our **GAME PATTERN** that is used by all our players in training and the ELITE

In parallel with the training of elite players, we have also trained **INSTRUCTORS (initiation phase)**, **BASIC TECHNICIANS (specialisation phase)** and **HIGH PERFORMANCE TRAINERS (perfecting or the elite)**, who have studied various teaching programmes according to their qualifications. Their official calls require a specific profile in order to carry out their work under the guidelines of the Technical Management of the RFEB.

Their task or work is the supervision and training of the players in their charge in their home towns in accordance with instructions received, periodically assessing

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the updated adjustment of the same and planning ordinary or specific groups for a certain test or action.

This model is a very powerful tool for working on billiards in Spain and all over the world. We are currently an average Federation as far as our country is concerned, but are improving our position thanks to the results achieved and the programmes of all kinds that we are carrying out, in particular those of training and technification.

The final conclusions of these actions, which are the **indicators of success** of our programmes for the locating and training of our elite in as short a time as possible, are as follows:

- + BETWEEN THREE AND FIVE SPORTSMEN/SPORTSWOMEN OF THE JUNIOR ELITE CATEGORY, WHO HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED BY THE PROGRAMME, CONTEST THE WORLD CUPS EACH YEAR.**
- + ACQUISITION OF THE NECESSARY EXPERIENCE SO AS TO IMPROVE THEIR SPORTING RESULTS, FACILITATING THE TASK OF THE TRAINERS WHO INTERVENE IN THEIR PERSONAL TRAINING.**
- + INCREASE IN SPORTSMEN/SPORTSWOMEN INCLUDED IN THE SECOND STEP OF THE PYRAMID (DETECTION OF TALENT).**
- + IMPROVEMENT OF THE PERSONAL RECORDS OF SPORTSMEN/SPORTSWOMEN IN THE COMPETITIONS**
- + JUNIOR SPORTSMEN/SPORTSWOMEN WHO JOIN THE NATIONAL TEAM AND HAVE WON ABSOLUTE TITLES FOR SPAIN.**

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- ✦ **VERY EFFECTIVE IN THE CORRECTION OF ERRORS AS A RESULT OF CARRYING OUT SEVERAL TESTS THAT IMPROVE THAT SITUATION.**
- ✦ **VISUALISING THE GAME OF THE BEST PLAYERS**
- ✦ **GREATER WORK CAPACITY AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES OF ELITE PLAYERS.**
- ✦ **EXTENSIVE COMMUNICATION AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN THE PEOPLE WHO INTERRELATE WITH THE PROGRAMMES, THUS FACILITATING THE POSSIBILITY OF BETTER PLANNING, ESPECIALLY IN ACTIONS WITH THE ELITE.**
- ✦ **80% OF OUR JUNIOR SPORTSMEN/SPORTSWOMEN WIN EUROPEAN AND WORLD MEDALS.**

THE FUTURE OF SPORTSMEN: PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT AND

Our sportsmen/sportswomen with **Top Level** profiles are mainly supervised by the Sports Federations. In principle all have in common basic studies at an early age and the daily practice of sport with a view to the highest achievements, and have in both cases considerable support for their training, which are: a study tutor, if they live in a sports technification centre, and a trainer and auxiliary technicians who take care of their training, progress, and perfecting in a totally professional way.

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During this period of time until their junior stage is completed, the necessary financing in order to achieve these objectives with the sportsmen/sportswomen is paid by the institutions, who contribute the economic resources so that the programme can be carried out in the form of subsidies, grants, wages, bonuses, etc.

Subsequently our sportsmen/sportswomen will become part of the segment of **“FUTURE SPANISH TEAMS”**, in which the most outstanding participate in absolute international competitions, and acquire very necessary experience on competing against the best players in the world. They also position themselves strategically on the international individual ranking, which gives them the possibility of being **contracted** to play as professionals, in various showcase tournaments, and also as members of any team of the official leagues of countries such as the Netherlands, France, Germany, or even Spain.

Our players receive this support until the age of **twenty-five**, when if in the sport their career has been guided along the **“ROAD TO TOP SPORT”** they will be able to earn income that will be determined by **their success in international competition, their participation in showcase tournaments, their signing for important teams, commercial sponsors, institutional subsidies, and others originating from their National Federation**, which will allow them to pay all their travel expenses, accommodation, and upkeep and give them enough money to make a decent living.

These sources of income are complemented by the obtaining of grants, in our own case from **the Spanish Federation and the Higher Sports Council** and also from the **Autonomous Regions**, which are awarded at the end of each sporting season in accordance with the international results achieved and with special reference to **Olympic Medals and European and World Championships**. Sportsmen/sportswomen from Olympic categories are supported during their preparation for the Olympic Games by the **ADO** programme **of the Spanish**

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Olympic Committee, with a scale of grants of different amounts that allow them to devote themselves fully to their training and academic studies in the majority of cases.

The ideal model that we have been promoting in Spain for our young players is that of complementing their working day once they have finished their higher studies with the practising of sport professionally, if they have been trained to do so. Some examples could be given from our experiences in Spain, where billiards players of acknowledged prestige owing to their sporting career have achieved recognition from both institutions and society and also excellent jobs. In other words, a sport that generates a small amount of money like ours does not allow the direct earning of large amounts, but it will give us a good image, popularity, and enough prestige to make it possible to integrate perfectly into contemporary society.

The situation that generally occurs when the sportsman/sportswoman ends his/her sporting career, despite the fact that in billiards we can be playing at full capacity for many years, when he/she has to start to work to be able to make decent living and comply with his/her ideas and objectives, is officially contemplated by our Higher Sports Council. This body has drawn up a Sportsman Attention Programme (*PROgrama de Atención al Deportista*, **PROAD**), which issues rules and benefits to protect the future of sportsmen/sportswomen.

This programme improves the employment integration conditions of Top Level sportsmen/sportswomen. Its fundamental objective is to smooth over the difficulties experienced by the sportsmen/sportswomen in following sporting careers and thus managing to complement their successes in competitions with professional successes. It also aims to detect the needs of sportsmen/sportswomen in general, to integrate different resources to cover the service, and to obtain others that do not exist in order to improve their operation.

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It will be very important in the future to achieve collaboration agreements with institutions, entities, bodies, and companies.

It is our hope that these frontiers will open up and that most of our sportsmen/sportswomen who have travelled along that demanding and awkward road full of thorns that is their participation in top level sport will find their compensation. This will consist for most of them of holding a job as a specialist under decent living conditions as payment of the debt that society owes them for having represented their country so honourably at a crucial period of their lives, with intense dedication and preparation that at the time did not allow their entering employment.

The most interesting part of taking advantage of this Congress will no doubt be the opportunity that we will have of debating, analysing, and getting to know many different viewpoints on the development of Elite Sport, which is linked to professionalism from its base. The round tables will be of great importance with a view to establishing future policies or general orientations from within our institutions and the **UMB** (*Union Mondiale de Billard*) itself. This is so that independently of the connotations and affairs of each country we can establish homogeneous and frequent work programmes for all, with the specific characteristics that may exist and the continuous analysis of the subject matter to be taught. The final conclusions will constitute a good work programme for all, and the communication channels that we are going to establish will be definitive for the future progress of our sport.

After this Congress I am hopeful that we can improve in our work, and it will be then that billiards will begin to shine as a sport consolidated among the greats.

Thank you very much

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JOSÉ MARIA QUETGLAS MOMPEAN

**MASTER OF HIGH SPORTING PERFORMANCE
OF THE SPANISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE
AND THE UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID**

**BRONZE MEDAL OF THE ROYAL ORDER OF
SPANISH SPORTING MERIT**

**PRIZE FOR SPORTING MERIT IN SPORTING RESEARCH
OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF MURCIA**

**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL SPANISH
BILLIARDS FEDERATION**

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