

The book focuses on sport talent from the viewpoint of various scientific disciplines, in particular kinanthropology, psychology, sociology, genetics and philosophy. Talent is defined as the potential for future performance and predefines the amount of effort spent necessary for achieving of a certain performance level as well as the maximum performance level. Talent comprises both innate skills and capacities that develop therefrom as well as other impacts needed for performance growth of athletes – in particular mental characteristics. Talent should be perceived as a dynamic concept, a developing phenomenon which is subject to processes related to maturing, hazard, environment or practice. Its individual components are not put together by addition, but rather by multiplication of their impact. It is related to a specific sports field. Based on the level of excellence, we can speak about levels of talent; nevertheless, the talent threshold is subject to the perception of the scientist. Only a minority of the population posses a talent. Talent identification and detection is analysed from three angles of view: biological, performance and psychological perspectives. Advantages and disadvantages of individual approaches are identified and accompanied by practical recommendations. Assessment of the sports talent should take into account all the three above mentioned perspectives. Nevertheless, the general prediction validity of these measurements in children is still rather low. The talent diagnostic process should therefore be seen as a starting point for performance development rather than a tool of selection. In the next chapter, focus is placed on the impact of genetics and environment in development of skills. The main environmental factors have been newly systematically classified for the sports context using the traditional ecologic model. The text also explains how sports performance is impacted by selected genes and subsequently deals with mutual interaction of individual influences. Understanding the nature of their interaction helps to decide on when and how the work with the young athlete should be done. The subsequent chapter thus discusses individual options for talent development, including topics such as early specialisation, general development, mental training, deliberate play and deliberate practice. These approaches are reflected in various models of sport talent development, including the comparison thereof. The book further describes in more details the psychological perception of sports development and top-level performance. Various psychological attributes that seem to be decisive for the top-level performance of athletes are defined - the psychological characteristics developing excellence. Towards the end, the book defines ethical principles that should be respected during sport talent identification and development. In particular liberal theories are taken into account – the right of the child to an open society by Joel Feinberg and the theory of justice by John Rawles. Respecting of the set principles is a systematic prevention of psychologic or physical damage of the child and breaching of their fundamental liberal rights. The book is aimed at the scientific community, students of kinanthropology disciplines, coaches, parents and athletes themselves. It contains the stories of selected top athletes and numerous practical recommendations, including interviews carried out with personalities from the Czech sports environment. Selected passages have been thematically included in the text. The general aim of the monography is to influence and move forward the perception of the issues of sports talent by the large public. In the long term, this change in attitude will lead to a better quality of work with young athletes, allowing them to fulfill their potential while being less dangerous for their healthy development.