

# 2010 NSCAA Convention Clinic Outline Book

## Dr. Ralph Tarter, University of Pittsburgh

Development of Female Soccer Players: Integrating Physical,  
Psychological, Physiological and Social Sciences

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**Learning Objective:** The coach attending this session will come away with a more complete understanding of the holistic development of female soccer players.

Many factors contribute to adjustment and success in complex tasks such as school, work and sport. These factors, spanning biological, psychological, and social processes, pose especially challenging concerns for athletically talented girls. Social pressures, interacting with profound maturational changes between childhood and adulthood, may thwart the motivation and commitment of talented female athletes to realize their potential.

This presentation begins with a description of the biological processes pertaining to brain maturation, sexual maturation, physical maturation and psychosocial development. Next, the discussion focuses on the complex demands placed on female soccer players in relation to these dynamic developmentally fluid biological, psychological and social processes. Barriers to success and commitment to soccer will be identified and discussed. Strategies for promoting success will be extensively described, emphasizing the critical importance of longitudinal tracking of the athlete in a framework involving a collaboration between the athlete, parents and soccer club. Specific recommendations will be provided to coaches to improve retention of female athletes. Results will be presented from the *Competitive Athlete Psychological Inventory* describing the motivational, social and behavioral characteristics of collegiate female soccer players that inform coaches of target areas required to maximize the athlete's commitment to soccer and general personal effectiveness outside of sports.