

SportSmart4Life · Talent Radar for Schools

Evidence, Ethics & POPIA Pack

What the science supports · what we promise and refuse to promise · how learner data is protected

July 2026 · for school leadership, sports departments and parents

1 · What Talent Radar is — and the promise we will not make

Talent Radar profiles a class against the skill signatures of every sport in the SportSmart4Life toolkit (82 sports and growing), optionally pairs that self-report with a measured field-test battery, and gives the school a cohort map: which skill families the class carries, which sports fit which learners, and where measured ability disagrees with what a learner currently plays. It is a **discovery and matching engine**.

The promise we will not make: no test battery on earth can identify at age 13 who will become an elite athlete — four decades of research is unambiguous about this (Vaeyens et al., 2008; Johnston et al., 2018). Any vendor who guarantees future champions is selling past the science. Talent Radar identifies **sports worth exploring** for every learner — a door, never a verdict.

2 · The international track record

School-age sport-matching programmes are an established, government-run practice:

- **Australia** — the closest precedent: national Talent Search / Sport Search screened school pupils from 1988 and issued computerised sport-matching reports; the programme produced Olympic champions (Megan Still & Kate Slatter, rowing gold, Atlanta 1996) and lives on today as SASI Talent Search and the AIS "Future Green and Gold" campaign (ages 13–23), which still gives each participant a top-five sport-match report.
- **United Kingdom** — UK Sport's searching campaigns: Sporting Giants (2007) found Helen Glover, Olympic rowing gold in 2012 four years after first touching an oar; Girls4Gold found Lizzy Yarnold, Olympic skeleton gold in 2014. Note both recruit at 16+, consistent with the age science in §4.
- **The honest reading of these successes:** the programmes work as wide funnels and matchers — putting more people in front of more sports, especially under-explored ones — not as childhood crystal balls. That is exactly the function Talent Radar performs for a school.

3 · The measurement instruments

The optional field-test battery uses only published, standardised school tests: the Council of Europe's **EUROFIT** battery (1988; standing broad jump, 20 m multistage shuttle, 10×5 m agility shuttle, flamingo balance, plate tapping, handgrip — with published European child norms) plus the Talent Search sprint and jump tests. Every test ships with its published protocol on the capture screen. Scoring is transparent: percentiles **within the tested group** — we never invent "national norms".

4 · Ages, and why breadth beats early picking

Band	Grades (ages)	What Talent Radar does
Foundation	Gr 4–6 (±9–12)	Breadth only: movement exposure and a class "sampling menu". No rankings, no talent labels — these are the sampling years (Côté et al., 2007).
Discovery	Gr 7–9 (±12–15)	Full profiling with field tests, cohort percentiles and discrepancy flags — all framed as "worth exploring". Maturation and relative-age cautions printed on every report (Cobley et al., 2009).
Direction	Gr 10–12 (±15–18)	Full profiling plus specialisation-vs-range guidance for subject and club choices.

The strongest finding in modern talent science (Güllich, Macnamara & Hambrick, 2022 — meta-analysis of 51 studies, 6,096 athletes, 772 world-class): adult world-class athletes practised **MORE** other sports in childhood, started their main sport **LATER**, and progressed more slowly early on than merely national-class athletes. Early sampling breadth, not early specialisation, predicts world-class adult performance — the argument popularised in David Epstein's *Range*. Talent Radar is built as a sampling engine for precisely this reason: every learner report recommends a portfolio, including one wildcard from an unexplored skill family, and our guidance supports keeping a second sport.

5 · What the school gets — and what it must not expect

Delivers: an objective, standardised profile for every learner (not only the early-maturing stars); cohort dashboards for sport-offering decisions; discrepancy flags where measured attributes disagree with current sport choices — the classic hiding place of unnoticed talent; printable per-learner and cohort reports; year-over-year participation and breadth tracking; a positive sporting identity for every child, in line with our get-moving mission.

Does not deliver: predictions of future elite success; a single "sporting ability" score; a replacement for coaches' judgement (it aims it); comparisons against national populations (percentiles are within-group until real norms are licensed); guarantees of any sporting outcome.

Our guarantee is methodological: published protocols, standardised administration, transparent scoring, pseudonymous data handling, and claims that never exceed the evidence. **Product-wide disclaimer, printed on every report:** "Talent Radar identifies sports worth exploring for each learner. It does not and cannot predict future elite performance. Late developers often outperform early stars — treat every profile as a door, not a verdict."

6 · POPIA — how learner data is protected

- **Roles:** the school is the responsible party; SportSmart4Life is the operator, processing only on the school's written instruction under an operator agreement (POPIA ss 20–21).
- **Pseudonymous by design:** the platform stores learner CODES (L01, L02...), answers and test values — no names, no contact details, no birthdates, no photos. The code-to-name register stays at the school, offline. (A display-name option exists only under an explicit agreement clause, and is off by default.)
- **No secondary use:** no marketing to learners, no cross-brand sharing, no social or community exposure of any learner data, ever.
- **Access:** per-school teacher accounts; teachers see only their own school. Learners never log in and have no accounts.
- **Retention & deletion:** agreed retention per school (default: end of school year + 3 months); one-click hard-delete of a cohort or the whole school's data at any time.

7 · References

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