

# CASE STUDY: TOPSPORTSLAB / BELGIAN MENS FIELD HOCKEY TEAM: A PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY TOWARDS 2016 OLYMPIC SUCCESS



## SITUATION

Prior to 2008 Belgian field hockey was not played at world-class level. In 2008 the Belgium's National men's hockey team (BNT) qualified for the first time in history for the Olympics in Beijing. It ended 9th but missed the Olympic ticket. In 2010 BNT did not qualify for CT, EC or WC, but coach Colin Batch introduced TopSportsLab to support them using the latest Performance Management techniques.

## THE CHALLENGE

It is BNT's objective to win a medal at the 2016 Olympics. In order to achieve this they set up both a short and a long term performance plan. For the 2012 Olympics they require the development of a structured, consistent and physical development plan. The plan needs to be sustainable and personalised per athlete and include a player's tracking mechanism to prepare the athlete for the future, capable of winning a medal at the 2016 Olympics. The rest is history.

## THE VISION

- Achieve excellence through professional asset management.
- Implement top-down players tracking and monitoring system throughout top clubs in Belgium and The Netherlands.
- Apply cutting edge performance management techniques to hockey.
- Full TopSportsLab implementation and increased professionalism to national youth teams.
- Create long term sustainable success plan which can operate regardless of the coach in charge.

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

In 2010, TopSportsLab was selected as their preferred long term operational excellence partner. Monthly meetings with technical and medical staff were held to tighten the collaboration. Whereas 3 head coaches have been in charge since 2010, the collaboration between KBHB staff and TopSportsLab remains intact. TopSportsLab keeps track of scientific breakthroughs on the market ensuring KBHB to be the first mover on innovation. The following implementation plan is in place:

### 7-stage Implementation Plan

- **Step 1:** Undertaking of a baseline screening to assess the current physical status of all players.
- **Step 2:** Install periodical, in-season screenings
- **Step 3:** Inclusion of injury prevention screenings. Upon the results of these screenings, TopSportsLab provided the staff with both physical and injury risk profiles for all players. The medical and technical staff use this to adjust and / or individualise the different physical and injury prevention programs (strength training, aerobic endurance training etc.).
- **Step 4:** Injury prevention screening, developed with KBHB medical staff, rolled out as a "consensus statement" throughout the federation.
- **Step 5:** Scientific knowledge about workload monitoring (HR&GPS) was implemented during tournaments and competitions.
- **Step 6:** Approach was also implemented in both youth selections and women's teams.
- **Step 7:** KBHB hires a TopSportsLab performance analyst.

## ACHIEVEMENTS 2010-16

### Hockey

- 2011: 5th EC
- 2012: 5th CT, 5th Olympic Games
- 2013: 2nd EC, 2014: 5th WC
- Numerous youth talent were selected for the first national team. Workload management was implemented throughout the youth selections.
- World ranking in 2010: 25th. In 2015: 4th
- A significant improvement of the physical status in general, and the different motor abilities in particular over the years after the implementation of TopSportsLab (see attachment).
- The national team got physically fitter overall with less variation between individual players (reporting up to 40% team improvements in Yo Yo intermittent recovery and Agility T tests).
- Muscle injuries have been virtually eliminated.
- Olympics 2016: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: Belgium's men Hockey Team wins SILVER medal in Rio.

### Other significant notes

- A vision document was developed to lay down the physical roadmap towards the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro #pushtothepodium
- Players are convinced of the effectiveness of the selected approach, they take ownership of their own progress: see video [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czxy\\_Fp9cgs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czxy_Fp9cgs).
- The women's team qualified for the London Olympics unexpectedly. This was the start of a development journey similar to the men, and a 4th place at EC for the women's team.
- CONGRATULATIONS RED LIONS!

