

Diving Australia

Greater precision to drive better performance

About Diving Australia

Diving Australia manages a National Squad program based on domestic and international results. The athletes on the Diving Australia National Squad make up the very best Australia has to offer in the pool. The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) leads and enables a united and collaborative high performance sport system that supports Australian athletes to achieve international podium success. Adrian “Ady” Hinchliffe is a national coach with Diving Australia.



Opportunity

As one of the premier national programs in its sport, Diving Australia is always on the lookout for opportunities to improve its coaching and athlete preparation. Working with the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), the national coaching staff decided that gathering certain data points about its elite divers’ training could help improve load management and injury monitoring, facilitate more informed decision-making about each athlete’s daily and weekly programming, and improve the way coaches plan, execute, and review practice sessions. They soon realized that such enhanced athlete data management could also be applied to Diving Australia’s talented junior athletes who are part of a sophisticated development system.



Challenge

With diving centers serving its international-level athletes in four geographically dispersed cities, it was difficult for Diving Australia to collect athlete data. National team coaches discovered that every coach had a different method of recording athlete data, making standardization difficult. The organization was also starting from scratch with its athlete management system project, meaning that gathering the information and getting coach and athlete buy-in was and still is challenging. The coaching staff also needed to find a way to collate data from different dry land and water-based training modalities and present this in a user-friendly way.



Solution

Using Smartabase, data for divers in the national program is at the coaches’ fingertips, allowing them to better organize training sessions, communicate session details to their athletes during practice, and review the outcomes afterward. They’re combining performance data from the pool and dry-land training to manage loads and are sharing detailed yet intuitive summaries with each athlete via visually compelling monthly reports. Smartabase is also helping staff to investigate injuries and create data-informed return-to-play plans.



Impact

Smartabase is helping make Diving Australia’s coaches and medical staff better. Armed with relevant data and meaningful reports, coaches can plan and deliver practices with more precision to help optimize their divers’ performance. Medical staff now has a history of accurate data to help them more proactively mitigate injury risk and speed an athlete’s return to the pool. Divers can see how their training in and out of the pool impacts their performance. Diving Australia is looking to use Smartabase more widely in its youth development program to better support the next generation of talented divers.



The Opportunity



I want to be able to get up in front of everyone and say, 'These are the results we achieved or not. This is where we've been successful and where we weren't. This is why and here's the data to back that up.'

- Adrian Hinchliffe, National Diving Coach, Diving Australia



During his two decades of coaching divers in Great Britain, Adrian Hinchliffe guided the development of many Olympic, world and European championships, and Commonwealth Games medalists, including the gold-winning performances of Jack Laugher and Chris Mears at the 2016 Rio Olympics. He was also named 2016 Diving Coach of the Year. So it was no mystery why Diving Australia hired him as one of its national coaches in 2017. During the COVID pandemic, Hinchliffe and his colleagues recognized the potential of an Athlete Management System (AMS) to take their already successful program to new heights.

Diving Australia not only oversees the training of elite divers, but also manages a comprehensive national program that creates a pathway

for young athletes to progress to the top of their sport. From designing and executing training sessions to managing injuries to athlete education, Hinchliffe saw that collecting and reporting on divers' data could amplify coaches' effectiveness, sharpen their decision-making, and improve their organization and planning.

"Initially we just wanted to collect real athlete data," Hinchliffe said. "Now we're creating this one-stop shop for everything we do so we can pull reports together to make decisions about designing future training plans. What this piece around interpreting data and understanding lessons gives us is quite critical."



The Challenge



It's been a long journey just to get to the place where we've got data we never had before. There's a long way to go in terms of interpreting it, making good decisions about our plans, and changing our methods in the future based on what we're bringing in. But we now have over two years of good data on all our athletes.



An obstacle that Diving Australia faced in effectively capturing, collating, and presenting athlete data is the sheer size of its development system. There are four main facilities that manage elite divers in Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide, in addition to centers across the country where athletes of varying ages and ability levels train. The methods of the coaches at each of these locations also varied considerably, with some logging training data in Excel spreadsheets and others just taking handwritten notes. The technology literacy varied among the coaching staff, and divers didn't have much spare time to be entering or reviewing information.

Then there was the challenge of integrating data from external systems and getting performance directors, physios, doctors, and other domain experts on the same page around divers' data.

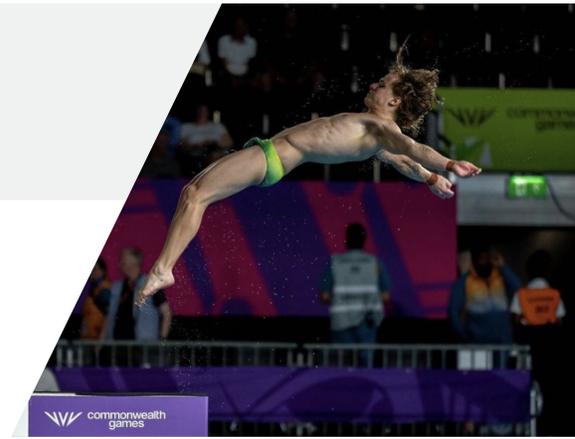
It was also key that the right sport-specific language could be used in an AMS and that such a system had the capability for coaches to record both objective and subjective data.



The Solution



The education piece is important. What I really want young coaches in Diving Australia and young athletes here to understand is that if I do this, it's going to help me with that, which ultimately is going to put me on top. Smartabase can help us connect those dots and tell that story properly.



The first big step in Diving Australia's athlete data management journey was simply ensuring data was being collected, whether it was basic information about the training of young divers or more complex data for the program's elite competitors. Since implementing Smartabase to do this, the performance staff has started applying insights gleaned from the data to load monitoring, practice planning and review, injury return-to-play, monthly and annual reporting, and more.

Training Session Planning, Delivery, and Review

Hinchliffe and his fellow coaches are utilizing Smartabase to plan each training session, whether it's on dry land or in the pool. This includes detailing the skills that each diver will practice and numerical targets. They send the details of each upcoming practice to their divers, who can then see the exercises in advance on their phones and can check the details and watch videos as they go along on iPads. After practice is over, coaches and athletes collaborate by quickly entering subjective and objective data.

"In the evening, the athletes enter their recovery into Smartabase and the RPE for that day's training. I'll then go in, put in my own rating out of 10, leave a note or reflection about the session, and get on with scheduling for the next day. I can move pretty quickly in Smartabase. I've got a lot of templates for each athlete, so I can come in here and set up a training program very easily. They're training hard five hours a day, so it's good that they can spend just a few minutes entering data and then get back to resting."



Dive Tracker Dashboard

Load Management

Whether it's in the water or on dry land, Smartabase enables Hinchliffe and his colleagues to set daily training goals, compare these against divers' actual totals, and keep athletes on track with their performance goals. An integration with the Teambuildr platform enables Diving Australia's coaches to gather information about strength and conditioning programs and combine this with sport-specific preparation data to create overall load totals.

"We wanted to capture time and RPE with some of the work we're doing in our dry land facility, as well as landings and takeoffs," Hinchliffe said. "Some of the specifics of what we're doing in the gym were linked to some injury issues, so in Smartabase, we worked out volumes and intensities of skills that we were performing in there. In the pool, we're looking at all skills, falling, jumping, and degree of difficulty to establish intensity and volume. I've always been interested to see how loads progress over time, are combined, and relate to our periodized plan, and with Smartabase, I can do that going forward."

Injury Monitoring

Before deploying Smartabase, it was difficult for Diving Australia to find factors that contributed to divers' acute or chronic injuries. Now that the platform is in place, coaching staff, members of the medical team, and sports scientists can look back at athletes' load and prior training to try and find patterns that could explain why someone is hurt and how their future programming can be modified.

"I've got a really high-profile athlete who is gutted about a recurring injury, and I need to know why it happened," Hinchliffe said. "I'm sure the answers lie in the data. When I have a real-life situation like this, it's a good case study for me to say to them that we're sitting down on Monday with all your data, and I'm going to find out why this has happened again because we cannot just let it go. Without Smartabase, I couldn't do that or use data to find answers to our questions. That's how I can show that this is the future."



AMS Engagement & Flags Dashboard

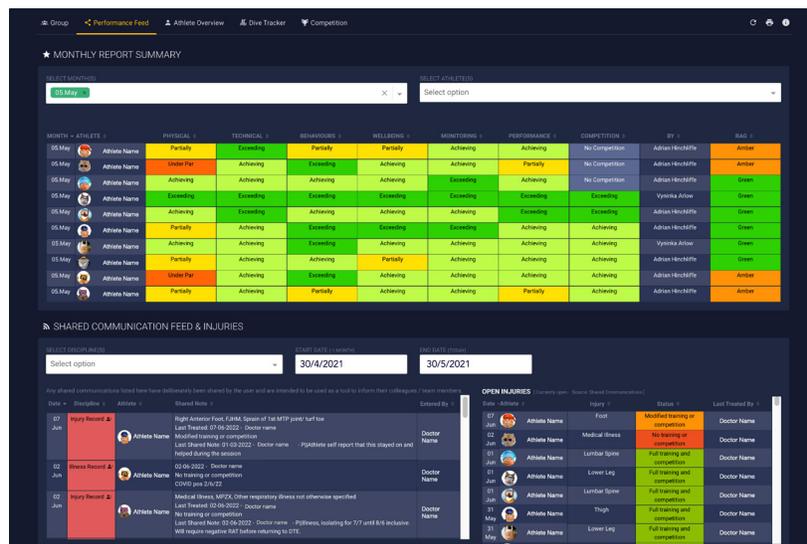
Monthly and Annual Reporting

As part of its commitment to developing and educating its athletes, Diving Australia wants to be as transparent and collaborative as possible when it comes to sharing performance data. As such, Hinchliffe uses Smartabase to generate a customized monthly report for each athlete that provides a high-level overview of their training and the kind of specifics they need to chart their progress over time.

"The athlete's report tells them how many of their competitive dives they trained that month, how their load went up or down from this week to that week, and so on," Hinchliffe said. "Smartabase has allowed me to share more of the kind of information they want to see."

Hinchliffe and his fellow coaches need to balance the day-to-day details of planning and delivering training with the bigger picture of athletes' long-term development and targets for major competitions. The visualization functionality of Smartabase allows them to zoom in or out as needed.

"For us as coaches, I really want to see a whole year and know what we did," Hinchliffe said. "That's the next phase: interpreting as we go along and at the end of the season. How did our divers perform? Where did this data sit alongside my plan? How did we manage injuries? I want to be able to reflect on a year and say, 'Okay, we managed this. This is what it looked like. Now what are the lessons in there either to replicate, or to change something?'"



Monthly Report Summary Dashboard



The Impact



I've been coaching for 35 years and want to keep improving. Smartabase is making me a better coach in each session with every athlete. It's also about projecting forward and creating a useful tool for our young coaches so they can achieve even more.



With the help of Smartabase, Diving Australia's coaches are planning and delivering practice sessions with greater precision. "Smartabase is forcing our coaches up to another level because they now have the ability to plan, structure, organize, and review better," Hinchliffe said. "It's improving the process of planning and reflecting around coaching. That's the number one thing for me now, before we even get into the data. Coaches are thinking harder about what they're doing, and whether we're working with a 10-year-old or an Olympian, Smartabase is making sure we prepare well."

The ability to track athlete load in the water and on dry land enables them to ensure their divers aren't being overtrained. By entering subjective scores for the difficulty of each session, the coaching staff can see if their perceptions are the same or different to those of their athletes and adjust accordingly.

Delivering data in a simple, visual format in monthly reports enables divers to see their progress and understand how certain facets of their preparation are impacting their output in training and competition.

"Smartabase reporting is generating athlete-friendly data," Hinchliffe said. "Every month they get a PDF report with lots of pretty pictures, numbers, and a written report. Our coaches and performance directors can also go into the AMS and see exactly how our divers are doing because it gives them a one-stop place to access their data. We're also using the same sport language in Smartabase now from the top to the bottom of our system within our coaching and athlete group, which has led to greater engagement."

Smartabase is also starting to help Diving Australia investigate injuries and improve communication between coaches, physios, and other medical staff to help guide return-to-play protocols.

"When I speak with a physio or a doctor, they ask me questions like, 'How much jumping has this athlete done?'" Hinchliffe said. "My answers used to be weak because I could barely give them a rough idea. Now with Smartabase, I can tell them what they need to know down to the exact number of jumps a diver has performed, and maybe that helps them do their jobs better. Then the medical team can make a good decision and advise me on how we're going to design the return-to-play plan based on those numbers."

As Diving Australia continues to find new ways to derive value from its athlete data, Hinchliffe believes in the potential of Smartabase to improve results by bringing divers, coaches, and performance staff together. "Diving is a very complex skill sport, and it's not just about the data," he said. "It's quite difficult to help athletes perform at the highest level, and there's a lot more to it. But if we can show that this data is a contributing factor and athletes connect to it, then people will listen."

Even as Diving Australia's national coaches expand their use of Smartabase to skill acquisition and other high-performance elements with their elite group, they're looking toward the future of the program. Hinchliffe is working closely with his fellow coach Edwin Jongejans, who spearheaded the data-driven success of the Netherlands' national diving program, to see how Smartabase can aid in Diving Australia's youth development initiative. Making data understandable, usable, and applicable is setting up the next generation of young Australian divers for continued success.

About

 SMARTABASE

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A global company founded in Brisbane, Australia in 2003 with international headquarters in Colorado and London, Fusion Sport is a global leader in using data to optimize human performance. The company's performance and analytics platform, [Smartabase](https://smartabase.com), is the source of truth for national sporting federations, Olympic committees, many of the world's highest-profile sporting teams, military research and operational wings, and performing arts organizations. To discuss how we can help you realize the full potential of your data and improve human performance, health, and wellness, contact us at sales@fusionsport.com.