



Canadian Sport for Life

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL/MULTI-SPORT ORGANIZATION PLANNING GRANT

Ontario Speed Skating Association

CS4L Implementation Planning Report

OSSA CS4L working group

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1- INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES

The intent of the grant made available to P/MSOs by the Ministry of Health Promotion is to assist organizations with the development of an implementation plan to support the integration of the CS4L framework and its inherent participant and athlete development pathways referred to as the LTAD model.

The CS4L framework involves in most cases 7 stages of development (in some cases more dependent on the final model developed and adopted by the NSO) and inherent to each stages are principles and specific objectives that relate to optimal opportunities in terms of the development of the participant.

Importance has been placed on the implementation of this model, its principles and framework by not only the Federal Government through the adoption and implementation of the Canadian Sport Policy but by its provincial partners across the country by the adoption of the Collaborative Priorities and Action plans adopted and supported by the Provincial and Territorial Sport Ministers and their government departments and agencies.

In determining the eligibility for funding for this planning process and as the Ministry had limited annual capacity that could not reach all of the provincial sport organizations simultaneously, P/MSOs were given a “state of readiness” ranking by the national CS4L Expert Group and it was deemed that the Ontario Speed Skating Association (OSSA) met the test of Category 1 readiness and hence was a successful applicant to the program.

In its application to the Ministry, Ontario Speed Skating Association identified that it was motivated to take the initial steps in supporting the CS4L framework and move towards the planning of the implementation of Speed Skating Canada’s LTAD model that was endorsed by the organization’s membership at the 2006 Annual General Meeting and the subsequent competition review report entitled “Racing on Skates” adopted by the membership at the 2009 AGM.

More specifically, OSSA identified four main objectives as the outcomes of this project:

- 1) The Design a guide for clubs to teach and train stage appropriate fundamentals, skating and racing to the various stages; fundamentals, learn to train, etc. Including considerations for when there is more than one stage at the same on-ice or off-ice session;
- 2) Design a racing format for regional and masters competitions that aligns with Speed Skating Canada’s new racing formats as well as the LTAD stages;

- 3) Design a new racing format for provincial competition that includes methods of selection for Speed Skating Canada regional and national meets that invite Ontario athlete's to participate under specific quota restrictions and time standards;
- 4) Develop a communication strategy to ensure that all members and stakeholders understand the above three items and how they might impact those individuals, in particular for athletes, parents and volunteers.

RESOURCES

In order to carry-out this project as successfully and efficiently as possible, a number of valuable planning and written resources were utilized.

One of them was the LTAD Implementation planning guide for Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations which served as a good compass for the organization in terms of visualizing a process and mobilizing the necessary human resources, both professional and volunteer necessary to meet the project's objectives.

Due to the limited professional capacity of the organization in terms of human resources, the activity of this work was mostly carried out by the volunteer members who accepted to participate in the project and the consultant. The activity of the group also involved the support of the National Sport Organization's Director of Leadership and Education. The members feel that this capacity will be a critical factor in the organization's ability to implement LTAD and the rate at which this implementation can take place.

The working group composition ended up being somewhat different than what was originally proposed in the project submission/application and recommended by the Ministry. It was the initial goal of the Association that the working group would also be composed of two members of the Board but unfortunately, none ended up joining the working group. In the end, the working group was constituted of the following individuals:

Joanne Mitchell	Technical Committee/Vice-Chair, Long Track
David Morrison	Technical Committee/member at large
Dave Clements	Eastern region community representative
Mark O'Donnell	Western region community representative
Douglas Duncan	National Sport Organization representative

Each of the CS4L Grant working group members were valuable contributors and assets to the process due to their long term participation in the sport and their familiarity with the organization. In addition, their honest contributions led to frank discussions and brought efficiency to the project's process. Therefore, OSSA did a very good job identifying individuals who would contribute greatly to the process and development of this plan.

PROCESS/CONTEXT

As the CS4L/LTAD implementation working group began its work, the main focus of the first few meetings, which were done via two conference calls, was to provide clarity on the outcomes proposed by OSSA in the grant application. Additionally, it was felt by the consultant that it would be valuable for the working group members to be equally cognizant of the organization's motivation for the submission of the grant application.

It was decided that most of the work for the project would entail a combination of face-to-face meetings supplemented by conference calls. The bulk of the deliberations and output of the activity of the group was accomplished during two face to face meetings.

We believe that it is worth noting here that in the expert opinion of the F-P/TSC – LTAD Working Group and the F-P/TSC – LTAD Management Committee who wrote the implementation guide referred to in this section, it is estimated that carrying out a quality LTAD implementation consultation and plan can take, based on experience, a period of 15-18 months. Considering that the working group started its work in February/2011 and concluded most of its work by the end of July/2011, this phase of the planning constitutes but approximately one quarter of the estimated realistic timeframe for the development of a comprehensive LTAD implementation plan.

During the process of the first meeting (conference call), the main objective was to provide the context aforementioned in this section. The working group was joined by the Executive Director of the Association who provided the following additional context to the objectives identified previously:

- **The intended scope of impact for the project was to touch the broadest area of competition, provincially and geographically;**

The ED also expounded on the organization's motivation for the grant in that it was important that it addressed the objectives identified in its application, as they had been identified previously in the business of the organization (this report will return to this point below in the discussion of the "Long Term Plan").

Finally, the ED expressed that the final objective of a strategy to communicate the outcome of the planning process was critical as it is as one of the major elements for the increase in understanding and acceptance of changes based on the CS4L/LTAD philosophy and model. One such strategy that OSSA had identified was a "club night education" activity communicating on

everything and anything speed skating in Ontario but the comment was made that this was already being done by many clubs.

While it was expressed that the organization has made progress in the area of website communications, the working group members generally feel that effective communication is a challenge for the organization. It cited as an example the new website as contributing to improved communication in the short time that it has been operational. The working group members feel that continued improvement in the area of communication is going to be essential for a monumental paradigm shift such as LTPAD to be implemented efficiently. The apparent communication breakdown from SSC to OSSA to membership led to the hasty introduction of LTPAD formats at year end (2001-11). This unfortunate introduction (to LTPAD) has left some of the membership with a jaded view of the new formats. OSSA needs to consider what resources could be assigned to this important operational process-LTAD implementation. A specific communication plan related to this initiative is critical to the success of the implementation strategy that will be adopted by the organization.

To expand the provision of contextual landscape, the NSO representative then provided a national update of the “state of implementation” across the country and any particular challenges faced and the sharing of progress reports.

The Director of Leadership and Education at Speed Skating Canada reinforced the issue of education and communication as critical tools in the implementation of the CS4L/LTAD changes in that it had also identified that in order to do this more efficiently, the guidance of domain experts was necessary and that they were currently receiving the assistance of experts and that an expounded communication strategy was being developed. The direction that the NSO was taking in this area focused on three approaches at this stage:

- Finalization of a new LTAD educational video targeted at parents;
- Development of a new web platform targeted at coaches/clubs;
- The development and delivery of LTAD focused educational sessions via web conferencing (as test pilots).

The feedback from the 1st formal year of change implementation was at this stage of the working group activity, still in the data gathering stage and any conclusions regarding “Best Practices” would have been premature at this juncture.

Observations and deliberations were being carried out by the professional staff focusing on LTAD implementation, namely the Director of Leadership and Education himself as well as the two

individuals currently tasked with practical coach education and development in the field, the east and west coach mentors put in place by the NSO for the 2010-11 season.

In addition, the reports of the technical representatives to the national/regional competitions were being compiled and were to be discussed at the upcoming Competition Development Cte meeting of early April.

In terms of general observations/summary of the state of national implementation, the NSO representative shared with the working group the following:

- Alberta and British Columbia provincial sport organizations were moving fairly aggressively with full implementation;
- Saskatchewan and Manitoba were moving with partial/focused implementation, driven mostly by specific individuals.
- Quebec which had been ahead of the competition structure change implementation - due to challenges faced by the participation demand on their competition system several years earlier - is currently establishing an LTAD implementation working group following a membership consultation.

The NSO representative also reiterated that it wanted the PSOs to approach CS4L/LTAD implementation with as blank a canvas as possible allowing for flexibility relative to each organization's reality and programming contexts. Nevertheless, he confirmed that the state of LTAD implementation was now an annual NSO accountability standard that Sport Canada monitored in the annual submission of reports and on which funding was going to be partially based.

2- GROUP DEVELOPMENT > DISCOVERY PHASE > GAP ANALYSIS

NSO LTAD model | current status of implementation | feedback to date

The development of LTAD models by the 64 Sport Canada supported NSOs started in 2005 focusing at the time on the entire athlete development pathway and focusing on the critical periods of development along the high performance stream of the pathway. Speed Skating Canada which had started its reflection on their LTAD model early (2003) officially adopted its model in the summer of 2006. The development of these LTAD models then expanded based on their common structure, to a philosophy/movement called Canadian Sport for Life. Since the LTAD models had looked at the holistic development of the individuals throughout their active life in physical activity and sport, the expansion of the philosophy and model was almost an inevitable evolution of the systemic change.

Sport Canada now also expects all NSO's to be incorporating CS4L/LTAD implementation as part of their strategic plans with concrete action being taken to facilitate its implementation.

Towards this aim, Speed Skating Canada has been incorporating information, educational and development workshops on the topic of LTAD implementation annually at its Annual General Meeting or bi-annually, at its Coaching Development symposia.

Phase 2 funding from Sport Canada consists of having the NSOs conduct a Competition System review which SSC conducted in the 2008-09 season and adopted its report called "Racing on Skates" at the 2009 AGM. Implementation began in earnest during the 2010-11 season with the rationale that the entire system would have the 2009-10 to entertain the necessary changes and start implementation after the winter Olympic cycle.

Nationally, Sport Canada has now also moved to Phase 3 LTAD implementation funding focusing initially on multi-sport/multi-NSO joint projects, e.g. foundational sport like swimming, running and gymnastics; acrobatic sports, e.g. diving, freestyle skiing, gymnastics, etc. and other multi-NSO project proposals.

Based on the observations made and the informal and formal collection of feedback received by the NSO, some of the assessments and recommendations made are as follows (this report does not focus on specific recommendations but general conclusions of the LTAD implementation):

- Generally, the new event/competition formats have been received with a fair amount of receptivity and success; more specifically, the changes have brought a positive increase in levels of participation, at least to the age class championships which have been divided regionally;
- Some of the new event formats will require some modifications based on the feedback received: e.g. 100m race, 10 min. race;
- The feedback received by the Competition Development Cte was being reviewed and some modifications will be proposed especially for jurisdictions where depth of field may make a new format impractical to implement;
- General consensus that additional support is required from most Branches in adapting to a regional/local reality and the CDC is working on providing competition format templates to this end;
- The Regional Development Mentors will be focusing on guidance and templates for the Training to Train stage of development as a first stage of focus;
- There seems to be some suggestion that the 100m track is valuable to develop/assess technical capacities and competencies;

- Racing on the 100m track (for the appropriate stage) may contribute to a reduction in injuries by having increased the speed reduction/reaction zone for skaters but this is entirely anecdotal at this juncture. Actual injury report analysis is required to confirm.

PSO implementation feedback | State of implementation | Long Term Plan

While the general assessment of the implementation situation seemed to indicate a very cautious approach within the PSO, it appears that a fair number of clubs were proactive in incorporating the 100m track within their training activities. These clubs were:

Brampton	Cambridge	Clarington	Gloucester
Hamilton	Kitchener-Waterloo	London	Markham
Newmarket	Oakville	Ottawa	Quinte
			Toronto

During the PSO Annual General Meeting held in May 2011 an open session was held during which feedback was sought regarding LTPAD competition format changes. The following is a summary of salient observations made based on the notes from this meeting. The members did express that this feedback be received with caution as they do not believe that last year is indicative enough due to limited experience and data collection regarding some of the changes:

- the need to concentrate on coach development/education;
- the 100m track is great idea for training; exposure to the 100m track challenged the skaters technically;
- the 100m track was very well received by the younger kids (i.e.: earlier stage of development) and the younger participants also enjoyed racing on it;
- some clubs utilized three different track layouts simultaneously thereby increasing the efficiency/rate of ice usage and the level of activity of the participants;
- General feeling of discomfort with the manner in which the limited application/implementation within Ontario of some of the proposed changes from the Racing on Skates report and when they were introduced.

The general feedback from what the working group members heard can be summarized by the following general statements:

- There is a wide degree of opinion regarding the 100m dimension track:
 - o some indicate that it was a good experience especially for training purposes;
 - o racing experiences/feedback on this size of track seem to be negative/mitigated;
 - o general agreement that more substantive data mining/formal data gathering necessary to reach more valid conclusions;
 - o the one lap race was viewed by many as being of questionable use/value;
- The “pts” race was generally successful but attention needs to be given to the correct age groupings;

- Mixed feelings regarding the 10 min. race especially as it pertains to its positioning within a race program/day/weekend;
- A more systematic approach to data collection and a critical evaluation would be valuable in order to assess more objectively.

Generally, it is felt that there is a need for more guidance from the NSO's various resources, be it the professional staff or a number of its relevant sport development committees (Competition, Coaching, Officials) regarding more detailed formats to facilitate implementation experimentation for the officials and volunteers within clubs and provincial sport organizations.

The working group members generally feel that the scope, expertise and experience of the full Technical Committee (TC) membership are not being capitalized upon. They also believe that the absence of a summer or fall meeting of the TC contributed to the organization not being as prepared as it could have been approaching the "new" season and some of its proposed competition format changes and challenges.

In researching the positioning of CS4L/LTAD implementation efforts within the organization's activity over the last few years, the consultant found a Long Term Plan mentioned in an Appendix to an AGM report (2010) which appears to be the equivalent guiding document to a strategic plan. In the absence of a strategic plan per se, the author of this report researched reports submitted to the membership as part of their Annual General Meetings for the past 3 years in order to assess the organizations' planning and progress towards LTAD implementation as national guiding documents and decisions were made towards this objective.

It was remarked in the 2009 VP Technical Programs' report that the organization had just received a draft of the NSO's LTPAD report that was being tabled for adoption at the 2009 AGM and that "the implications of these changes are far-reaching and have the potential to force dramatic change on the branches.". This author believes that the reference being made was not to the LTAD model per se but to the report called "Racing on Skates" which was the resultant of the Competition and Event system review that was conducted and tabled by a working group, endorsed by the NSO's LTAD Implementation working group and eventually adopted by the entire membership of the national sport organization. In the same report under the COMPETITION FORMAT section, it was noted that the Technical Committee had identified that some aspects of the current competition format were experiencing difficulties and that "changes need(ed) to be made to adjust in these areas and to make adjustments moving toward the goals laid out in the draft LTPAD program."

In the 2010 AGM report, it is also mentioned in the President's report that the NSO continues to be a national leader of the LTPAD initiative and that the OSSA has made efforts to implement some of the LTPAD principles in the organization of the provincial competition rules and scheduling. It also highlights the need for the Ontario speed skating community to be proactive in responding to the changes being proposed by the NSO and to develop "made in Ontario" solutions. The working group would like to acknowledge the leadership and openness of OSSA and the Toronto speed skating club in collaborating to organize the first Eastern Regional Championships under the new "LTAD format" and OSSA supporting the

inclusion of special formats/distances at its provincial championship in order to prepare and select its nominations to the Cdn Regional Championship.

Furthermore, in the VP Technical section of the report, it is indicated that some of the changes based on LTPAD principles made to the 2009-10 competition format while of a more minor nature, were well received. Some modifications were eventually made to respond to criticism but nevertheless, we see here effort at affecting change while being responsive to their membership. It is interesting to note here that it is also noted that there was also the demand for more “fun/relaxed” meets from the membership and for competition events that were “less than a day” in duration and with lesser structure. While the experimentation with “mini-meets” was limited in volume, the feedback was that they were a great success and it was hoped that their proliferation would be seen during the upcoming season(s). On the more “competitive” stream of the competition calendar, 2009-10 saw the introduction of a new “trials” format which it claims aligned better with the goals of the LTPAD model.

Finally, this section of the report comments on the reception of a comprehensive presentation from the NSO, on how they see LTPAD being implemented. I believe it is important here to quote directly from the report as it probably reflects, were the organization currently is with its implementation efforts and progress:

“For the last several years, the SSC LTPAD committee (working group) has been refining the model and planning for this implementation, but the recent proposal includes changes of a magnitude that has heretofore not been seen. The Technical Committee has reviewed the proposal and agrees with the underlying fundamentals of the model, but the competition format that has been proposed is so dramatically different – age group changes, distance changes, changes in track layouts and new regional boundaries – that it is felt that it is crucial to understand how other provincial associations are to react before OSSA works to implement.”

In this year’s AGM report (2011), a similar context seems to describe the rate of experimentation of the organization as it pertains to LTPAD implementation. It appears that most of the implementation and experimentation is being done by clubs themselves and it appears that generally, positive feedback is being expressed. It is mentioned here again that the organization is struggling with the effective use of its resources. Interestingly though it appears that the compromises reached produced a positive reaction to the adaptations and changes made to certain events at the end of the season.

Therefore, in order to successfully progress with LTAD change implementation, the working group members strongly believe that additional support be allocated by the Board to this priority. They need to look at the organizational capacity of the Association and identify the additional human resources necessary-professional and volunteer- to be successful in the implementation investments it will make.

3- GAP ANALYSIS>CHALLENGES

Multi-stage ice usage

The working group did not spend significant amounts of time on this objective of the project mostly because it felt that this fell more appropriately to the responsibilities and the domain of the Coaching Committee. Nevertheless, it did express its perspectives on why this was perhaps identified as a priority to address within one of the specific areas of LTAD implementation.

The working group felt that in more recent years, there seems to have been the absence of an appetite for coaching courses in general, perhaps because the coaches are already committing significant amount of their time to their coaching. One should also remark that has the new NCCP coaching certification program as switched to the competency-based model, some re-certification and/or context specific certification has been required or completed (new coaches) by a great number of them.

The group believes that the recent absence of the annual coaching conference or meeting as was organized in the past by OSSA has meant the loss of an extra opportunity to discuss LTPAD implementation and more practical ideas and best practices for applications such as simultaneous multi-stage training sessions. The aforementioned issue of “re-certification” may have also limited the system’s capacity to address additional systemic change as LTAD due to the volunteer coaching structure of the sport. If for reasons of economics or logistics an activity such as a coaching conference is not feasible then OSSA should consider on-line education sessions, on-line courses, and on-line coaching meetings. For clubs who are always facing challenges to secure more ice time, this competency can greatly impact the amount of ice contact each participant can benefit from.

Ultimately, what this boils down to is how to best design and prescribe “stage appropriate programming” within a training session. Depending on the level of skater, should they be on the 100m track layout or the 111m layout? It was felt that what is needed at this point is a little more direction from Coaching development committee’s and through the potential access to some more specific LTAD mentoring as that made available via the NSO’s coaching mentors in place since 2010-11, though it is believed that the eastern based mentor did not interact with Ontario coaches/clubs. It was mentioned that while the concept of regional mentors is good, it may be too vague and idealistic.

The other issue around this topic was perhaps a clearer understanding of how one would “skate up a category” when categorization is not solely based on age. Again, and this is typically being experienced by every sport, that it is difficult to make the paradigm shift-especially on a practical level- of grouping participants by stage of development based on an assessment of various capacities and competencies vs. simply by chronological age or time/speed.

It was also highlighted how challenging this can be for a new club that is trying to grasp all of the technical structures of a sport while it is dealing with some not insignificant systemic changes.

Provincial development competition calendar

Calendar building process

The working group members felt that this area needed major attention as part of opportunities existing to really make a change through the introduction of CS4L/LTAD implementation steps and focus on the recreational and developmental athletes, which constitute 90-95% of the membership. The need to address the developmental and recreational/Masters skaters was certainly identified as a priority goal for the organization in its Long Term Plan.

The working group members felt that in many ways, the calendar is currently being built with the process focusing on the top end of the membership/participation pyramid profile in that the competitive end gets scheduled first while this represents but a small percentage of the base in needs to serve. Frequently, the competitive end of the provincial calendar (OC Cups/Provincial-OWG) must await confirmation of the national selection events (which frequently in turn is awaiting confirmation of the international calendar which may at times not be confirmed until June at ISU Congress). It is often not until the aforementioned calendar confirmation processes have concluded that the remainder of the provincial recreational and development is then “fit-in”.

The working group felt fairly strongly that a change to this approach would be positive and that the priority had to be placed on the competition/event needs of the majority of the membership to improve the skating experience for all. It was also remarked that in the end, it will develop better skaters for the competitive stream/context, for those who may choose that path.

Competition profile/parameters

One of the topics that is constantly being discussed is the length of the majority of meets, not only on a daily basis but also their total duration frequently being of the 1 day nature. In order to fit the racing program within one day and to still have a significant number of entries, the day is one endless one for skaters, coaches, officials and volunteers alike. In some situations, skaters may only get one race per 2 hours and on some occasions, race one less event than is normally prescribed/expected. One of the reasons believed to contribute to this type of competition system is that host clubs are frequently motivated to host 1 day competitions with large number of participants because of the revenue it generates. The working group members were adamant that “the racing experience must change”.

For the participant at the recreational, entry or development level, this type of commitment is so high that they may never compete during the course of a season. While there is nothing wrong with this on its face value, one must reflect if this is a good characteristic and outcome of a competition system.

Looking at the calendar for the 2011-12 season, it is positive to note that it seems that the organization is already addressing this by shifting to shorter duration meets as there is a much greater number of 1 day meets this year than there has been in the past. The organization/membership should be commended for

this change as it should make this more attractive to its membership and potential attraction to new members (see calendar below)

2011 - 2012 OSSO Competition Calendar Work Sheet (September 2011)

Date (Saturday)	Short Track						Long Track		
	West / Central Silver	East/ Central Silver	Bronze	Gold/Platinum	National	Other	Ontario	National	Other
September	3								
	10								
	17					ST Fall Selections 16- 16 Montreal			
	24								
October	1		S #1 (E) 2 day Ottawa Pacers						Fall Classic Sept 30 - Oct 2 Calgary
	8					Oktoberfest 7-9 Calgary Espoir #1			
	15	S #2 (W) 2 day London	S #3 (E) 1 day 16 Oct Belleville			Elite #1 Levis			
	22								
November	29				OC #1 2 Day Chicoutimi			Fall WC Selections 27 - 30 Calgary	
	5	S #4 (W) 1 day Brampton							Oval Invt (Sr, Jr A-C) 4-6 Calgary
	12		Ladder Meet 1 day Kingston			Elite #2 CODEPS			
	19				OC #2 2 Day Newmarket				Can Am (Sr, Jr A-C) 17 -20 Calgary
December	26							Single Distance Quebec	
	3	S #5 (C) 1 day Markham	S #6 (E) 1 day Gloucester			Junior Trials Calgary 3-4 Dec		OC #1 (Sr, Jr A-C) 2-4 QC	
	10			Barrie Mini meet		ST Qualifier Calgary 8-9 Dec			
	17				OC #3 2 Day Clarington			All Round Quebec	
	24								
January	31								
	7		S #7 (C) 1 day Clarington				LT Camp Pacers	Canadian LT Champ/ CC#2 5-8 Calgary	
	14	S #8 (W) 1 day Oakville(15)					Long Track Meet SSM	Reg./Continenta l Qualifier 14-15 Calgary	Bytowne Marathon
	21					Can. Open Selection 20-22 Montreal	Espoir #3 Drummondville	Long Track Provincials Ottawa Pacers	
February	28				OC #4 2 Day Kitchener				Portland Marathon
	4	S #9 (C) 1 day Toronto(5)					Ontario Master Championships Lakefield	OC #3 / Can. Jr Trials 3-5 Saskatoon	Can. Open Masters 4-5 Fort St. John
	11		S #10 (E) 1 day Brockville				Espoir #4 Matane	Can. Age Class Feb 11-12 Fort St John	NALT / Junior World Cup 10-12 Calgary
	18	S #11 (C) 1 day Barrie					Elite #4 CODEPS		
March	25				Provincials Kingston				Can/NA marathon 25-26 Sylvan Lake
	3	S #12 (W) 1 day Milton	S #13 (E) 1 day Gloucester						
	10				OWG 2 Day Barrie	ST Sel #3 Calgary 9-11 Mar			
	17							Oval Finale/CC#4 13-18 Calgary	
	24					CACST 24-25 Can E - Quebec W- Winnipeg	Nat - or, Jr A&B Mar 23-25 Richmond		
31	Reg Champs Kitchener								

Provincial competitive/selection calendar

Again, the working group did not spend significant amount of time discussing the “competitive/selection” competition calendar as it felt that this should not be the main focus of group’s activity. It felt that the main focus of discussion and attention should be on the participation/developmental competition calendar as this is what touches the majority of the Association’s membership. In addition, most of the members felt that this part of the provincial competition structure is not experiencing major challenges other than what is identified in the next paragraph, which nevertheless, should stay on the radar of the organization’s body that will look at the calendar from a broader perspective (to be found in LTAD implementation plan section of this report).

It did nevertheless expressed that in some years, the competitive (Gold/Platinum event -OC Cups/Prov. Champs + OWG/CWG) could lead to a participatory profile that is more of a “competing on demand” (which should be distinguished from performance on demand) vs. the progressive building of a “sequence of competitive experiences” as part of an annual plan of development for skaters involved in this stream of participation. In addition, one needs to add/juxtapose, in some cases, that some of these athletes may be participating in National selection events depending on their rankings/competency.

A significant number of the athletes involved in this stream of participation will typically be going through their respective PHV changes and that this should be considered in terms of training and competition loads. As it pertains to the more competitive stream of provincial participation, the type of competition system profiled in the previous section frequently leads to athletes over competing and chasing a competition every or every other weekend, which obviously reduce the amount of time spent in a training context. It was identified that significant education was needed regarding what constitutes an appropriate competition load within a season and that the initial education should be targeted at the coaches. In addition, it was felt that the “system” needs to empower the coaches to make recommendations to the decision-makers as to a participant/athletes competitive program within a given season. This should be the result of fully accessing the expertise of the Technical Committee and of the professional staff available to the Association.

The working group felt that the calendar building focus is too removed from the broader picture of what are competitions for and how do we use them to the benefit and enjoyment of all participants. The calendar should reflect the vision that the Association has for its membership. It also is of the opinion that the process should be driven/carried by a body of the Association. The working group would like to commend the person that has shouldered this enormous responsibility for a number of years but it feels that it is too large a task for the membership to expect one individual to undertake. In an effort to unload such a monumental task from one volunteer, the workload should be shared broadly by the organization. Accessing the expertise and resources of its various committees could improve this process.

2011 - 2012 OSSO Competition Calendar Work Sheet (September 2011)

Date (Saturday)	Short Track						Long Track		
	West / Central Silver	East/ Central Silver	Bronze	Gold/Platium	National	Other	Ontario	National	Other
September	3								
	10								
	17					ST Fall Selections 16-18 Montreal			
	24								
October	1		S #1 (E) 2 day Ottawa Pacers						Fall Classic Sept 30 - Oct 2 Calgary
	8					Oktobefest 7-9 Calgary Espoir #1			
	15	S #2 (W) 2 day London	S #3 (E) 1 day 16 Oct Bellville			Elite #1 Levis			
	22								
November	29				OC #1 2 Day Cambridge			Fall WC Selections 27 - 30 Calgary	
	5	S #4 (W) 1 day Brampton							Oval Invtia (Sr, Jr A-C) 4-6 Calgary
	12			Ladder Meet 1 day Kingston		Elite #2 CODEPS			
	19				OC #2 2 Day Newmarket				Can Am (Sr, Jr A-C) 17 -20 Calgary
December	26							Single Distance Quebec	
	3	S #5 (C) 1 day Markham	S #6 (E) 1 day Gloucester			Junior Trails Calgary 3-4 Dec		OC #1 (Sr, Jr A-C) 2-4 QC	
	10			Barnie Mini meet		ST Qualifier Calgary 8-9 Dec			
	17				OC #3 2 Day Clarington			All Round Quebec	
	24								
January	31								
	7		S #7 (C) 1 day Clarington				LT Camp Pacers	Canadian LT Champ/ CC#2 5-8 Calgary	
	14	S #8 (W) 1 day Oakville(15)					Long Track Meet SSM	Reg./Continenta Qualifier 14-15 Calgary	Bytowne Marathon
	21					Can. Open Selection 20-22 Montreal	Espoir #3 Drummondville	Long Track Provincials Ottawa Pacers	
February	28				OC #4 2 Day Kitchener		Elite #3 CEPVRQ		Portland Marathon
	4	S #9 (C) 1 day Toronto(5)					Ontario Master Championships Lakefield	OC #3 / Can. Jr Trails 3-5 Saskatoon	Can. Open Masters 4-5 Fort St. John
	11		S #10 (E) 1 day Brockville					Can. Age Class Feb 11-12 Fort St. John	NALT / Junior World Cup 10-12 Calgary
	18	S #11 (C) 1 day Barnie					Espoir #4 Matane		
March	25				Provincials Kingston				Can/NA marathon 25-26 Sylvan Lake
	3	S #12 (W) 1 day Milton	S #13 (E) 1 day Gloucester						
	10				OWG 2 Day Barrie	CT Set #3 Calgary 9-11 Mar			
	17							Oval Finale/CC#4 13-18 Calgary	
	24					CACST 24-25 Can E - Quebec W. Winnipeg	Nat - or, Jr A&B Mar 23-25 Richmond		
31	Reg Champz Kitchener								

Communication

The working group is of the perspective that communication as a whole is a major challenge for the Association. It also feels that the flow of important information from NSO to PSOs (Branches as they are called in the national structure) is often late and then there is further delays in relaying the information deeper into the system, namely to the clubs, which is where most of the activity programming truly takes place.

There was the expression that the flow/distribution of information that is sometimes originating at the national level/NSOs AGM does not always flow completely throughout the organization seemingly encountering reduction in dissemination from those who attend the NSOs AGM and being transferred completely to OSSA’s committees and then membership.

It was also expressed that a President’s (clubs) meeting (held around the OSSA AGM) that was held to discuss LTPAD implementation was not productive in gathering productive feedback.

This challenge of communication within the Association was felt to have contributed to the lateness of internal communication regarding LTPAD change implementation on competitions and hence the struggle experienced with the finalization of the competitive programs for the provincial championships and the Canada East Regional Championship that was being hosted in Ontario.

Again, referring back to the AGM reports of the past few years, it appears that the level of activity within certain of the Association’s committees may have contributed greatly to this sparse dissemination of critical information as these larger systemic changes are taking place nationally.

4- LTAD implementation recommendations /strategies

Multi-stage ice usage.....

Supplementary to the observation made in the previous section under Gap Analysis, the working group upon further reflection seem to believe that this is a greater issue than initially felt. They are of the opinion that more guidance in the areas of “multi-stage ice distribution” and “multi-track usage” advice and direction is required. It also suggested that it might be a good exercise to poll their coaching population to identify shared coaching issues in the application of LTAD principles and practices. This could then guide the Coaching Development Committee in identifying clinic topics.

Operationally and professionally, it also is of the clear opinion that LTAD implementation must be a major responsibility and priority of the new position of technical director/coordinator. The focus of their work must be to take care of the base of the membership by focusing on the initiation level of competition and its LTAD recommended applications as appropriate. The working group expressed concerned that this person may focus too much on either administration or competitive context of the organization.

Technical guidance with a sport development/LTAD focus should constitute 80% of the work activity of this new technical staffing person.

It was also suggested that two types of workshops be developed to assist the clubs with this area:

- ❖ “Best Practices in securing more ice time”
- ❖ “Best Practices in optimizing the utilization of your ice-time”

The working group is also recommending that the Coaching Development Committee re-activate the annual Coaching Conference. In order to minimize organizational and participation costs, it recommends that it be held at a University when University residences are available. It may be possible to also access University facilities for free or at a “not-for-profit” rate. Timeline targeted should be end of season/early spring.

The NSO is planning to identify alternative delivery channels (e.g. Webinars) and formats to deliver educational content on the topic of LTPAD implementation. It is planning to deliver one on multi-stage ice usage and planning.

The working group also feels that OSSA should propose to SSC and its Coaching Development Committee that specific educational requirements be identified in order to maintain certification. Suggestions as to which type of educational content would be beneficial were: an LTAD module. It also suggested that it propose the identification of professional development standards as well as professional maintenance standards.

In order to facilitate the aforementioned objective, the working group members believe that the OSSA staff seek and maximize any grant opportunities to support the attendance of coaches at coaching conferences. Another recommendation that it made was to not schedule any provincial competitions in conflict with the Coaches Association of Ontario coaching conference.

In order for this to occur, the working group members felt that it was important for the VP of Coaches & Officials and the OSSA Coaching Development Committee recognize their implication and involvement in LTAD implementation, LTAD related coaching challenges, LTAD related coaching courses/webinars.

In addition, SSC is about to start piloting the Competition Development context of the new NCCP and webinars may be some of the partial delivery methods. They hope to be certified to move to Competition Development context delivery during the 2012-13 season and initiate at that time, a review of the other NCCP contexts.

AREA	ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Multi-stage ice utilization	Assignment of key responsibility within the Board for ensuring accountability for CS4L/LTAD implementation-suggesting VP of Technical Programs, VP of Development and VP of Coaching	Board
	Assumption of Accountability by the identified VPs and their incorporation of LTAD strategies and tactics in the annual activity priorities of its Committees	VPs to be identified
	Assumption of accountability and incorporation of LTAD strategies and tactics within its annual priorities-suggestion: Coaching Development Committee and Club & Membership Development Committee	Cte(s) To be assigned
	Discussion with NSO in the availability of practical LTAD application resources focused on – multi-stage ice utilization - multi-track usage	Technical Director/Coord. Coaching Development Cte
	Activation of an annual provincial speed skating Coaching conference	OSSA/Coaching Development Cte
	To propose to the NSO the identification of professional certification and maintenance standards	Coaching Development Cte
	To propose to the NSO that LTAD specific modules be made available and part of certification requirements	Coaching Development Cte
	To identify LTAD coaching specific challenges and educational needs	Coaching Development Cte
	OSSA professional staff to seek and secure coaching conference and education grants for utilization by its coaching community	OSSA staff
	OSSA to avoid scheduling any provincial event in conflict with the Coaches Association of Ontario coaching conference	OSSA

Provincial development competition calendar

As identified in section 3 of this report, the working group was strongly of the opinion that the provincial calendar was being determined and built each season by starting at the top end of the participation/performance pyramid and with a focus on competitive vs. recreational, with the majority of the membership falling in the –recreational category. Basically, that the schedule making was being driven too excessively by the “O Cup” series of competitions.

It believed that the organization should come up with some type of “competition hosting principles” upon which the provincial calendar would be built. For example:

Mini-meets/change in focus	Focus: Enjoyment
	Meet entry fees: \$20 instead of \$60)
	Mini-meets constituting 60-70% of calendar

It also identified that it would be beneficial if a competition pathway could be portrayed for both the development “stream” and the more “competitive” stream. As part of the process, a wish list from each group could be provided in terms of travelling parameters. The pathway should provide visual representation of the progression along the event pathway for each of the streams:

Mini-meets>inter-club meets>regional competitions>provincial competitions>national competitions

In reviewing competition profiles some of the other guiding principles suggested were more of an activity/technical nature such as:

- a participant should get approximately 1 race / 30-45 min.
- the total duration of the event should be approximately 3-4 hours
- an event menu should be available based on each stage of development/participant

The working group then spent additional time and energy further expanding the concept of competition profiles and parameters/guidelines and is suggesting that the organization work towards something similar to what is found below. A general principle is that a participant that is deemed at being below the T2T stage of development should only participate in meets of 1 day duration or less. It was felt that if this was thought out carefully, further refined as necessary and that it was communicated effectively to their membership, that it would constitute an important step towards affecting change.

INITIATION	DEVELOPMENTAL		INTRO TO COMP
FUNDamentals/L2T	L2T/T2T/A4L	T2T	L2C
Max. duration of meet 4 hrs Race every 30-45min Capacity for approx. 80 skaters Defined groupings Menu of events Club driven OSSA to develop templates	Approx. 8 hrs in duration Race every 30-45min. Defined groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By stage of development ○ Speed ○ Skill 	2 Provincials / year based on single seed time & ranking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 day events ○ 2 X /year (Dec and yr. End) Race every 45-60 min Group adjustments mid-season 100m and 111m tracks Entry fee \$40-75 OWG qualification criteria	“O” Cup Series Race every 45-60 min CWG Selections OWG + Possible participation in national jr. selection events

In order to support the organization and running of this type of meet in great number, the members also recommended that a “meet manager” program be developed to be able to accommodate the competition management of entry level focused mini-meets.

It was also mentioned that it was important to identify a pathway program for everyone. In order to apply and manage the application of these competition scheduling principles and priorities, the working group suggested that a “decision-making process and/or body” be identified ensuring that it is significantly composed of a majority of members with a development perspective.

In identifying a more developmentally focused calendar and focusing the events on shorter duration and enjoyment, the working group believe that they will alleviate the load on volunteer burnout running lengthy and demanding competitions more than it perhaps is necessary.

To facilitate this, the working group felt that the Board needs to evaluate much closer the financial benefit of hosting events and act proactively in ensuring that the participation/development calendar is not overloaded due to financial objectives of running larger/longer meets. By the reduction of the length of meets, the working group members believed that entry fees could therefore be reduced as well. Longer meets should only occur when the level/scope of competition warrants it.

It also believed that such a process/body should be responsible to work with Clubs in identifying what is their individual capacity to hold different types of meets: mini-meet, developmental meet, competitive/selection met, etc. In order to accomplish this and ensure that the calendar is not overloaded with events/competitions, clubs would be required to work together in “regional” schedule building. This would require Clubs to develop trust and cooperation and that this could be accomplished as part of a “regional” open house day.

The working group were also of the strong believe that if they can provide members with an appropriate initiation competition structure, the retention and recruitment numbers will be significantly greater and the Association will have the opportunity to reach perhaps a membership of 3000 skaters in 5-6 years, growth being one of its priorities in its Long Term Plan

AREA	ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Competition Structure -Provincial	Develop and adopt a certain set of competition planning and hosting principles based on CS4L/LTAD principles	TO BE ASSIGNED
	Identification of development and competitive stream pathways and the prescribe number of competitions for each	Coaching Committee
	Identification of a “decision-making” process/body that has as a significant proportion of its composition being of a developmental perspective	Board
	Delegating the responsibility to apply the competition scheduling principles and ensuring that accountability is delivered in its application	Board
	Board to look at evaluating the financials of hosting events and ensure that events are not scheduled simply for financial gain.	Board
	Lobby the NSO who is the “contractor” of the meet manager software and its developments, that the programmer develop a program that focuses on participatory/fun events	Board/staff

Provincial selection calendar.....

The working group did not spend significant amounts of time on this topic as it felt its focus needed to be on the needs of the majority of the membership, the initiation/developmental spectrum. Nevertheless, it did make some recommendations that fall within this stream of the association programming activity.

On the topic of the concept of a “Regional” training group or centre, the working group believes that the concept can clearly and objectively be revisited with the development of a vision; ensuring that it is fully LTAD compliant in its application; driven and operated by the Association. They also felt that it would be useful to seek the input of the CS4L/LTAD working group. In the development and operationalization of this vision , it should be determined where it fits in the developmental pathway of a participant and where is the critical mass of skaters. The educational spectrum that should be considered is post-secondary.

In order to ensure that the provincial selection calendar addresses the issues identified in Section 3 of this report, the working group suggested tasking the OSSA Selection Cte to review and analyze the calendar and consider the issues identified. This is frequently when the participants are transitioning from the T2T stage to L2C (dependent on their rate of maturation and stage/rate of development) and it is important to address the factors that the working group members identified.

In order to control the number of competitions attended, it was suggested that delineation be made between OSSA regional competitions and O Cups. One possible avenue for this was to establish “eligibility” pools for each stream/context and to review it mid-season to allow for individual progress and development.

It was also suggested that the body responsible to draft the competitive stream calendar try to keep the number of O Cups/Championships to a total of 4 events/season. Reason given was that skaters participating in this level of competition will typically also attend between 1-3 national events as well.

AREA	ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Competition structure-selections	OSSA Selection committee to review the selection calendar and process and provide feedback and recommendations to the Technical Committee	OSSA Selection cte
	OSSA consider the identification of eligibility pools that are reviewed mid-season	Board to assign
Competition structure-selections (con’d)	That the OSSA body responsible to build the selection process and calendar looked at the total competitive load of skaters participating in this spectrum of the sport	Technical Committee

Communication.....

Specific to project observations/outcomes/recommendations

As it had been identified by the working group that communication is a challenge in general but more specifically of two areas were of particular note, namely those from the national level to the provincial and its flow through to the clubs and coaches, it will be important that the OSSA capitalize on available resources since it has its own human resource capacity challenges due to the size of its staffing.

AREA	ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Communication	The working group recommends that this report be widely shared with the bodies of the organization as well as its entire membership	Board
	That the resources being developed by the NSO that are targeting parents be widely distributed and utilized by clubs in order to facilitate the education of parents on the CS4L/LTAD philosophy	OSSA Board/staff
	That specific communication strategies be targeted at the Club President's	OSSA Board/staff
	That it be suggested that Club's organize special meetings with Parents to talk about CS4L/LTAD driven changes and general education	VP Club & Membership Development

General to LTAD implementation

NSO development and plans in the area of CS4L/LTAD implementation

During the plan development meeting of the working group (last meeting), the group received an update from the NSO representative regarding upcoming new SSC communication initiatives specifically targeted to address the need for more education on CS4L/LTAD changes.

SSC is undergoing a redesign of its website and part of the renewal is a more significant presence of the area of LTAD with the objective of being more “user-friendly” for the non-internal players in the domain of CS4L/LTAD.

Additionally, the SSC communication strategy is planning Branch specific communications in the area of CS4L/LTAD depending on the individual state of implementation within the Branch. In the feedback received to date, it was identified that more support was required at a branch level to reflect significant regional differences and characteristics.

Year 1 of the communication plan is to focus on the positive feedback received to date while still being receptive to the criticism heard as well. Therefore, the general approach is to bring a slightly more flexible approach to LTAD driven programming implementation. Some variations of formats recommended in the competition and event review report have been tried out in some Branch jurisdictions and the NSO sees this as still positive signs of steps in the right direction while being adaptive to the local/specific reality.

It still sees very positive signs such as in the number of skaters that participated in the national regional championships going from 209 skaters in 2010 to 329 in 2011. One of the key learnings made during year 1 of the implementation is that in some event/areas, too much emphasis may have been placed on fun event/activities and that a better balance needs to be reached with skill testing events, of which a time event can be a part thereof.

Additionally, it is recommending that based on the analysis/feedback received regarding the 100m race, that at least at the National events, it be increased to a 200m race as the shortest distance. It will also be recommending that the 400m race be part of all categories at such events. It will also be recommending a total of 16 entries/ age category.

In order to address the identified need that a formal evaluation is made of the various LTAD implementation changes, the NSO is starting an LTAD evaluation project which will start with a 3 level survey as follows:

- PSO administrative survey inquiring about what has been accomplished in areas of governance, planning, structure and competition changes;
- Club survey
- The cross-referencing of membership with retention/recruitment

Year 2 of the communication plan is to focus on topics by stage of development and by stakeholder group with one of the first groups targeted being the parents through the production of a new DVD that was introduced at the 2011 AGM. It is now available to PSOs and Clubs as a resource to inform/educate their parents on some of the philosophy and rationale behind CS4L/LTAD parameters and some of the changes they are seeing.

In the case of OSSA, it needs to work with the NSO on how to identify the best/most needed/most effective approach for Ontario.

The NSO is also continuing its investments and efforts in assisting with CS4L/LTAD implementation by the support of two regional coach mentors to assist the implementation at the provincial and club level. They are making the domain/field experts available to assist with the development of the coaches with the changes.

AREA	ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Communication-LTAD specific	Ensure that the provincial membership, especially the coaching community and clubs are aware of the resources both physical/technological and human are available to assist with their implementation efforts.	Board/staff

General/systemic recommendation

The working group was fairly adamant that leadership needed to be identified within the organization to drive CS4L/LTAD implementation and that this could be accomplished by the Board being proactive and assuming accountability by assigning specific responsibilities on the area to the VP’s of Coaching and Development as well as the Coaching Committee.

In order to drive CS4L/LTAD implementation, it also feels again that this should be driven by more than one person on the Board. They felt that there should be someone from the Club & Membership Development Committee as well as someone from the Technical Committee to ensure communication. There should also be representation from an “initiation/introduction” level of coaching. The goals of the implementation focus should be on improving the level of entry programming and to keep controlling the length of competitions constantly focusing on the shorter duration.

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTION ITEM SUMMARY

AREA	ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Multi-stage utilization	Assignment of key responsibility within the Board for ensuring accountability for CS4L/LTAD implementation-suggesting VP of Technical Programs, VP of Development and VP of Coaching	Board
	Assumption of Accountability by the identified VPs and their incorporation of LTAD strategies and tactics in the annual activity priorities of its Committees	VPs to be identified
	Assumption of accountability and incorporation of LTAD strategies and tactics within its annual priorities-suggestion: Coaching Development Committee and Club & Membership Development Committee	Cte(s) To be assigned
	Discussion with NSO in the availability of practical LTAD application resources focused on – multi-stage ice utilization - multi-track usage	Technical Director/Coord. Coaching Development Cte
	Activation of an annual Provincial speed skating Coaching conference	OSSA/Coaching Development Cte
	To propose to the NSO the identification of professional certification and maintenance standards	Coaching Development Cte
	To propose to the NSO that LTAD specific modules be made available and part of certification requirements	Coaching Development Cte
	To identify LTAD coaching specific challenges and educational needs	Coaching Development Cte
	OSSA professional staff to seek and secure coaching conference and education grants for utilization by its coaching community	OSSA staff

	OSSA to avoid scheduling any provincial event in conflict with the Coaches Association of Ontario coaching conference	OSSA
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AREA	ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Competition Structure -Provincial	Develop and adopt a certain set of competition scheduling, planning and hosting principles based on CS4L/LTAD principles	TO BE ASSIGNED
	Identification of development and competitive stream pathways and the prescribed number of competitions for each	Coaching Committee
	Identification of a “decision-making” process/body that has as a significant proportion of its composition being of a developmental perspective	Board
	Delegating the responsibility to apply the competition scheduling principles and ensuring that accountability is delivered in its application	Board
	Board to look at evaluating the financials of hosting events and ensure that events are not scheduled simply for financial gain.	Board
	Lobby the NSO who is the “contractor” of the meet manager software and its developments, that the programmer develop a program that focuses on participatory/fun events	Board/staff

AREA	ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Competition structure-selections	OSSA Selection committee to review the selection calendar and process and provide feedback and recommendations to the Technical Committee	OSSA Selection cte
	OSSA consider the identification of eligibility pools that are reviewed mid-season	Board to assign

Competition structure- selections (con'd)	That the OSSA body responsible to build the selection process and calendar looked at the total competitive load of skaters participating in this spectrum of the sport	Technical Committee
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AREA	ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Communication	The working group recommends that this report be widely shared with the bodies of the organization as well as its entire membership	Board
	That the resources being developed by the NSO that are targeting parents be widely distributed and utilized by clubs in order to facilitate the education of parents on the CS4L/LTAD philosophy	OSSA Board/staff
	That specific communication strategies be targeted at the Club President's	OSSA Board/staff
	That it be suggested that Club's organize special meetings with Parents to talk about CS4L/LTAD driven changes and general education	VP Club & Membership Development

AREA	ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Communication-LTAD specific	Ensure that the provincial membership, especially the coaching community and clubs are aware of the resources both physical/technological and human are available to assist with their implementation efforts.	Board/staff