

2015-2019

Ontario Speed Skating Association Summary Document  
Overview of the Short Track High Performance Plan

Ontario Speed Skating Association  
Written by High Performance  
Management Group, May 2015

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2015-2019 High Performance Plan provides a pathway for OSSA to develop high performing short track athletes based in Ontario. The HP plan has been developed out of necessity to address the lack of coordinated training programs across the province, to provide Ontario-based athletes and coaches the resources necessary to effectively compete on the national stage, and to position OSSA for future funding opportunities provided by the Ontario Government.

The HP Plan is the result of OSSA's participation in the Canadian Sport Institute – Ontario High Performance Management Program.

In Ontario, there is insufficient critical mass of similarly skilled athletes at all clubs to provide quality training groups at all clubs. There is currently no Development Coordinator to provide consistent direction, programming, and athlete identification or assessment.

The majority of Ontario clubs are not able to secure sufficient ice time and coaching services for the progressive development stages. The HP Plan will address these issues.

The Long Term Goals of the HP Plan are:

- To clearly establish athlete development pathways and opportunities for top-performers ages 14+ within the province that will lead to national level opportunities.
- To ensure all clubs meet the minimum SSC crash mat requirements for practice and competition.
- Successful application for OHPSI (Ontario High Performance Sport Initiative) funding.

The Short Term Goals of the HP Plan are:

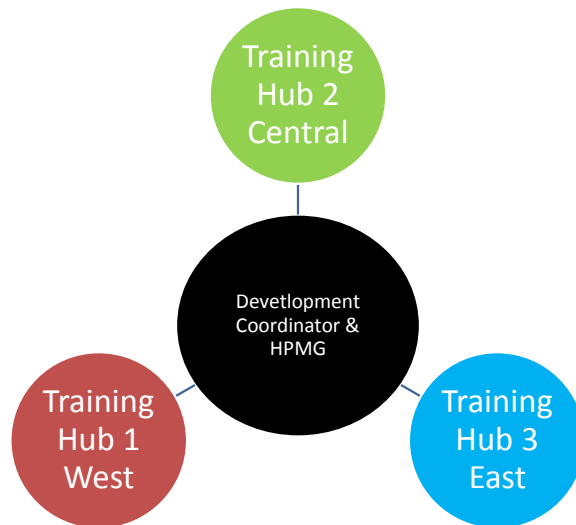
- To establish a network of training hubs, coaches, and development opportunities for targeted athletes.
- To establish an annual calendar for coaches and officials listing certification courses and PDC opportunities.
- Ensure electronic timing is provided at all Provincial Series meets and Provincial A Championships.
- To provide communications with the membership about changes and opportunities within the province.

These Goals are summarized in the 4 Pillars of the HP Plan along with the programs necessary to achieve these goals:

1. Athlete Development
  - 1.1 Hire a Development Coordinator
  - 1.2 Develop a network of training hubs
  - 1.3 Establish athlete identification criteria, development pathways, and performance reviews
  - 1.4 Competition alignment
  - 1.5 Support for athletes attending national meets
  - 1.6 Support for identified Provincial Training and Development Team athletes
  
2. Coaching and Official Development
  - 2.1 Coach and officials certification course calendar
  - 2.2 Regular opportunities for professional development credits
  - 2.3 Target select coaches and officials for upgrades and development guidance
  
3. Communications
  - 3.1 Club Presidents' meetings
  - 3.2 Information sessions for parents, skaters, and coaches
  
4. High quality training and competition environment
  - 4.1 Identify club gaps for crash mats
  - 4.2 EAP and concussion management plans for clubs

The Ontario Speed Skating Association is fortunate to have the majority of its membership participating in clubs based along the East-West corridor of the province. OSSA also has a pool of experienced and knowledgeable coaches and clubs that strive to provide a positive skating experience for their members. These strengths are the basis for the development of the HP Plan which will see the establishment of 3 (min) training hubs under the direction of the Development Coordinator. Year-round coordinated programming will be provided for identified athletes ages 14 and older with the support of identified coaches.

It should be emphasized that implementation of all of the programs is dependent on budget and key partnerships. In the best case scenario the Ontario Speed Skating Association will implement all of the above programs over the next 4 years. In the event of budget and/or other limitations we will strategically prioritize the Programs.



## 1.0 PREAMBLE

The Ontario Speed Skating Association maintains a leadership position in Canada by continued service to members, athletes and new skater development through its training, coaching, officiating programs and competitions in the province of Ontario. OSSA is currently the second largest provincial speed skating association with 2313 registered members in 2012-2013 and is committed to the development of speed skating at a recreational and competitive level promoting the sport as a lifetime activity.

Mission Statement of the High Performance Management Group (HPMG):

To provide athletes with resources and pathways to achieve national performance excellence and prepare them for international success. The HPMG, in collaboration with the Development Coordinator and Ontario clubs, will provide consistent year-round training opportunities for Ontario athletes.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE SPORT

Long track speed skating has been part of the modern Olympiad since the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century however short track speed skating only made its Olympic debut in the 1990s. Individual racing distances are 500m, 1000m, 1500m. Team relay distances are 5000m for men and 3000m for women. A Junior and a Senior World Championships are held annually.

Canada was a pioneer and dominant force in the sport from the early years with a depth of national talent (particularly those skaters from Quebec) that is the envy of other

countries. In the past decade, other countries have closed the performance gap and Canada, while still very strong internationally, is being challenged.

Speed Skating Canada is currently restructuring its national racing circuit to provide a more tactical racing experience at national competitions. The 2014-2015 competitive season saw the introduction of a Junior and a Senior racing circuit that culminated in a national Junior and Senior ranking list. These competitions started in early fall and continued until late March. Event duration has expanded to 3 to 4 day meets with repechage rounds. Entry into these racing circuits is based on cumulative times (500m+1500m) and provinces do not have caps on the number of entries. Ontario skaters will need to adhere to year-round training programs to stay competitive with the other provinces that offer similar programming options for their athletes.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND TO THE PLAN**

The OSSA HP Plan was created as a result of participation in the Canadian Sport Institute – Ontario High Performance Management Program 2013-2014. OSSA has discussed for some time the need to: develop an HP plan; align with Speed Skating Canada (SSC); establish an athlete identification program; develop more coaches; hire a Development Coordinator for the province; and build a team of resource professionals.

Ontario speed skaters have been very successful at the national and international level even though they had limited opportunities to develop within the province. Long track speed skaters have had much more international success than their short track counterparts. Regardless of racing discipline, all athletes had to leave the province in order to access high performance programs.

OSSA has the second largest membership in the country and we need to grow the sport in the province and provide better opportunities to help our athletes compete at the national and international levels. The lack of collaboration (between clubs, the province and SSC) and the lack of resources have been barriers to reaching these goals.

The High Performance Plan is a result of several different factors

- Feedback from athletes, parents, coaches, and clubs to access high quality programming within the province
- Consultation with Speed Skating Canada and Canadian Sport Institute - Ontario
- National and International trends
- Low rates of coach and official development over the past 5 years

Meetings were held December 2013 through March 2015 with members of the High Performance Management Group to identify

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats, Program and Performance Gaps and targeted Programs designed to meet the Short and Long Term performance goals of the Organization.

The HP Plan will be reviewed by a select group of coaches during the summer 2015. Additional key stakeholders will be approached to join the HPMG in summer 2015 to prepare for the launch and implementation of the HP Plan.

#### 4.0 KEY PERFORMANCE AND PROGRAM GAPS

The table below identifies the primary Gaps and contributing factors in each of the relevant Critical Success Factors between OSSA and our primary competitors.

Key Gaps	Major (potential) Contributing Factor
<b>Athlete Development</b>	
Insufficient critical mass of similarly skilled athletes at all clubs to provide quality training groups at all clubs.	Geography of the province and training structure within the clubs.
Learn to Train athletes' performance is falling behind.	Increased cost and time commitments become deterrents for families.
Inconsistent training opportunities for bulk of Ontario based athletes.	Absence of Development Coordinator, facility use and costs vary across province.
<b>Coaching (and Officials)</b>	
Currently no Development Coordinator to provide consistent programming, direction, and athlete identification.	Lack of focus towards national competitors and their training / competition requirements.
Attrition of experienced coaches and officials combined with poor development rate beyond introductory levels.	Declining involvement at national meets because of confrontations, lack of respect. Preference to stay at regional level.
<b>Competition</b>	
Competition calendar should be dictated by YTP.	Competition calendar is dictated by facility allocations, ice availability, and location.
<b>Daily Training Environment</b>	
Securing facility ice time and coaching services for progressive development stages.	Most club structures do not provide sufficient development at Train to Train / Learn to Compete stages.

<b>Sport Sciences/Sports Medicine, IST, Technology Management</b>	
No dedicated services exist at this time.	Finances, geography, limited awareness.
Technology management doesn't meet current needs (membership database, ranking lists, online registration).	Insufficient human resources to accomplish the work.
<b>Governance/Management</b>	
Lack of understanding and lack of focus on higher performance athletes or facilities.	National competitors represent a small percentage of OSSA membership. Clubs placing more attention on recreational level skaters and therefore do not engage in the activities involving higher performance.