

Feature Organization: LegaciesNow/BC Government

Changing sport in Canada one step at a time

Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) is alive and kicking in British Columbia – and jumping, throwing and skipping! Through 2010 LegaciesNow, the BC agency tasked with promoting CS4L in the buildup to the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, the BC government is helping Provincial Sports Organizations (PSOs), Disability Sport Provincial Sport Organizations (DS PSOs) and Multi Sport Organizations (MSOs) evaluate how they can effectively adopt the seven LTAD stages at all levels in their sport, from schools and community recreation all the way to high performance.

“We’ve taken on the task of assisting with implementation of Canadian Sport for Life in BC,” says Drew Mitchell, Project Manager for BC-CS4L at 2010 LegaciesNow. “Funding has been put in place for us to work with seventeen PSOs in the first wave of implementation.”

Funding and assistance is being provided through grants to PSOs, DS PSOs and MSOs to review their own ‘sport systems’ to see what implementation work needs to happen where, ranging from schools to clubs to national training centres. This includes assistance with management tools to perform system audits of each organization’s programs.

“We’re helping them move from a glossy CS4L document sitting on a bookshelf to implementing it down through member sports clubs to the community level,” says Drew. “We help them plan their implementation using the LTAD framework developed by their NSO, starting with an audit of their current programs and a gap analysis.”

LegaciesNow has also focused on three additional areas: partnerships, geography, and disabilities.

“The first issue we’ve asked them to look at is how well are you working with other sports?” says Drew. “That is, how can your sport make a horizontal grab from other sports to enhance the development of your own?” Drew gives the example of 6 year olds going directly into a single formal sport, when maybe a general run-jump-throw program might better enhance their all-round development at that young age. Another example might be soccer teams at older ages working with track & field coaches to develop complementary traits in fitness and agility.

The geography issue concerns the sheer size of BC, and the limited access that many smaller and remote communities have to sport programs. Sport organizations need to look at the effectiveness of their distribution and delivery of programs around the province. Meanwhile, the disability emphasis focuses on providing suitable programs for athletes with disabilities and partnering with existing sport disability groups to maximize the potential and delivery for all the sport organizations involved.

Drew says the ‘horizontal grab’ between sports is a marvelous opportunity given the deficit of physical education specialists in most elementary schools across BC and the rest of Canada, as this is the optimal age range for developing general physical literacy in youth. “The FUNdamentals stage is probably the most vulnerable of the

seven stages because of the lack of PE specialists," says Drew. "It's not going to be fixed further down the chain, so the physical literacy component is going to be very important and we're going to put some emphasis on that. The schools have a significant role in the developmental stage of sport, but one of the greatest difficulties is that almost all of the provinces have taken the PE specialists out of the elementary school."

Among BC-CS4L's various implementation tools, they are also looking to create a matrix that recreation centres can use to see where their programs fit within the seven stages of LTAD. But some elementary challenges always remain.

"Our challenges are taking the time to do it," says Drew. "Organizations getting their people together, doing the planning, and moving forward. And we understand that this is going to be a 4-5 year process – this is not going to happen overnight."

If you would like to learn more about 2010 LegaciesNow and initiatives to promote CS4L in BC, you can contact Drew Mitchell at dmitchell@2010legaciesnow.com.
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