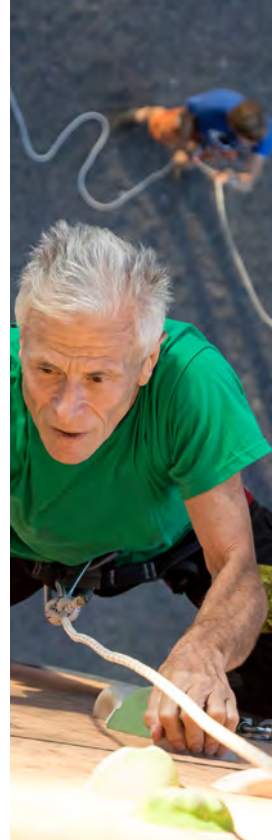


QUALITY SPORT

FOR COMMUNITIES
AND CLUBS





QUALITY SPORT FOR COMMUNITIES AND CLUBS

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Introduction

In this resource, our purpose is to provide a guide to Quality Sport delivery based on Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity¹, and to identify how community sport organizations can work with key partners, such as their national sport organization (NSO), provincial/territorial sport organization (PTSO) and municipal recreation departments, to improve and sustain Quality Sport. The resource will be useful for sport leaders, coaches, municipal recreation leaders, PTSOs, funders and everyone committed to working together to deliver the best possible sport to all Canadians.

THERE ARE FIVE SECTIONS. IN EACH, WE OUTLINE:



THE BIG PICTURE

The relevant Long-Term Development key factors



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

The checklist for Quality Sport



TACKLING THE ISSUES

Challenges a community sport club may experience



GETTING THERE: PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

What you need to Know, Do, and Check to make Quality Sport happen



WHO CAN HELP

Ways NSOs, PTSOs, municipal recreation, and sport councils can work together to make Quality Sport a reality for all Canadians

1. See Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity 3.0 at sportforlife.ca/resources for a comprehensive guide to stage-appropriate development, including references.

QUALITY SPORT

Good programs, that are developmentally appropriate, are:

- participant centered
- progressive and challenging
- well planned
- designed for meaningful competition

Good people, who are caring and knowledgeable, include:

- coaches, officials, instructors, and teachers
- parents and caregivers
- partners and leaders

Good places, that create good feelings, are:

- inclusive and welcoming
- fun and fair
- safe

Community sport in Canada is a big deal. About 75% of children age 5 to 17 years participate in organized sport, while about 5% of adults volunteer as coaches and 7% as administrators². Canada has more than 30,000 sport and recreation organizations, with more than 95% at the community level³. In many ways, community sport is the heartbeat of a community. Yet while sport has a tremendous positive impact, we must work to ensure it is a safe and positive experience for all participants. Sport club dropout rates are high⁴ and sport participation is consistently lowest in lower-income families and other marginalized groups⁵. Together lets provide quality sport to every participants.



FIGURE 1: QUALITY SPORT



2. Canadian Heritage. (2013). *Sport Participation 2010*. Ottawa, Canada: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada.

3. Statistics Canada (2001). *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*.

4. Balish, S. M., McLaren, C., Rainham, D., & Blanchard, C. (2014). Correlates of youth sport attrition: A review and future directions. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 15(4), 429-439.

5. Canadian Heritage, 2013

Individually, a community club may be small, but collectively, community sport is mighty. Working together, we can ensure every Canadian has a Quality Sport experience.

There is a better way. Since 2005, Sport for Life has been a leader in Quality Sport based on Long-Term Development. We define Quality Sport as a focus on athlete growth and development, supporting the athlete's long-term goals and using competition intentionally for development, within an organization committed to sport for all and partnerships that prioritize athlete development needs. For community sport organizations, that means three things: Good Programs, delivered by Good People, in Good Places.

Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity

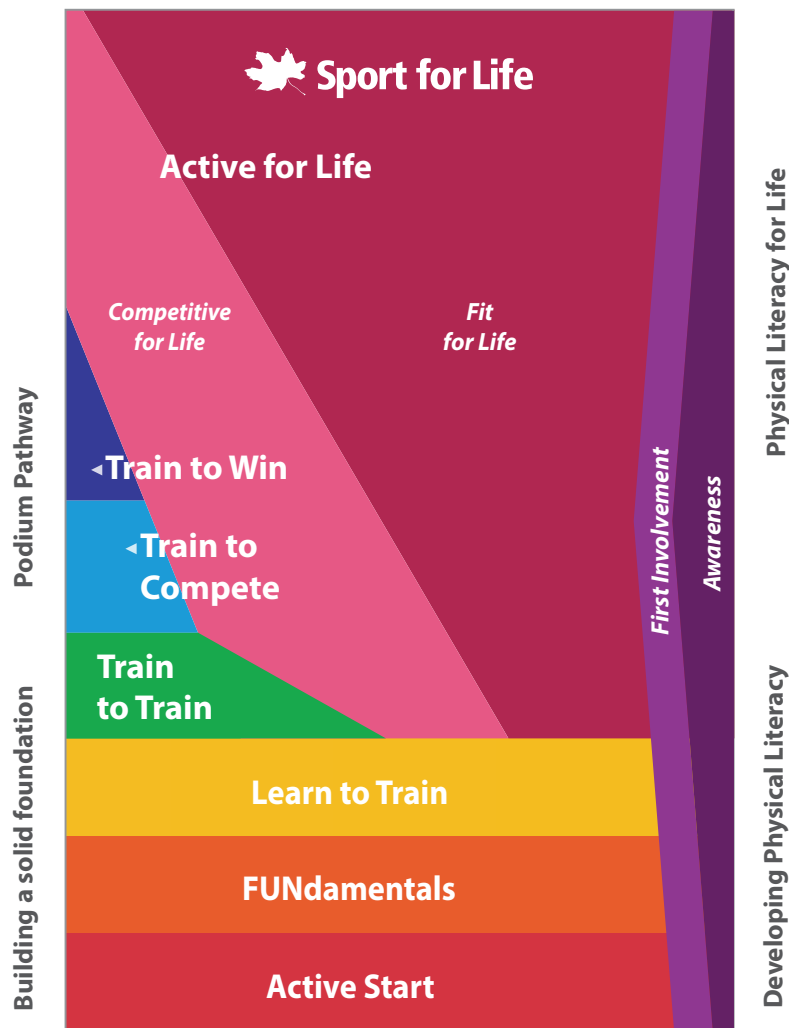


Figure 2: Sport for Life Rectangle



Quality Sport—Guiding Principles

Quality Sport based on Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity is built on four guiding principles:

QUALITY

IS KEY

Every child, youth and adult deserves a quality experience every time they participate in physical activity or sport. Quality means good programs, in good places, delivered by good people.

OPTIMAL

PROGRAMMING IS CRITICAL

This means giving every participant in sport and physical activity **what** they need, **when** they need it, and in the **way** they need it to make the most progress. Optimization is participant centred and developmentally appropriate.

INCLUSION

IS NON-NEGOTIABLE

Inclusion is both the removal of physical, cultural, economic, and attitudinal barriers to participation, and the designing of activities so that individuals are not excluded. Being allowed to take part is not enough. **Every** participant must feel safe, welcomed

and included. Supports need to be in place to address the diverse needs of participants, across all of the dimensions that make up that individual. Every program and service should be set up to welcome all—inclusion is a topic because our system currently excludes. We must reframe to: everyone has the opportunity, inclusion is the norm and exclusion is the exception.

COLLABORATION

MAKES THE SYSTEM BETTER

Individuals and organizations will deliver more quality experiences when they work together. Communities, sport organizations, and the health and education sectors all benefit from alignment of programming and collaboration. For example, one participant may be active in different sports or physical activities, including recreation or club programs, physical education, as well as school sport. If the organizations pull that participant in different directions, good development is less likely to happen. Through system alignment and coordination, participants are the winners.



SECTION 01



Focus On Athlete Growth and Development

Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity puts a priority on matching sport programs and competition for young participants to their stage of growth and maturity. Children and youth should not be expected to perform like small adults. Nor should they be expected to have the sport skills or physical, mental, or emotional development of adults. Coaches, program leaders and parents need to know what children and youth are capable of doing at their age and stage, and ensure sport delivery matches individual athlete needs. To deliver Quality Sport, a focus on athlete growth and development is essential.



THE BIG PICTURE



Creating a focus on athlete growth and development means paying attention to these relevant Long-Term Development key factors:

Physical Literacy means having the movement competence or skill, the confidence, and the motivation to move well in a variety of situations, including different sports. It is a foundation for both sport success and life-long engagement.

Developmental Age is different from chronological age. We often use birthdate as a basis for sport categories or divisions, even though we know youth participants can be up to four years apart in maturity at the same age. Assessing growth and physical and mental ability of individuals helps us determine Developmental Age and the right level of challenge for each participant.

Sensitive Periods are the times in the growth and development of an individual when they are physically and mentally able to make rapid gains in ability. For example, around ages eight to 11 or 12, many children are able to rapidly develop new movement and sport skills. Matching sport program demands to the Sensitive Periods helps ensure optimal development.

Periodization means creating a sport training, competition and recovery program which divides the year into smaller time blocks, or periods. A periodized program builds in time for different kinds of appropriate sport development, regular assessment, and rest and recovery. It helps ensure the program matches the needs of the participant.



THIS LOOKS LIKE



GOOD PROGRAMS

In the Active Start, FUNdamentals and Learn to Train stages, programs develop fundamental movement skills, not just sport-specific skills.

Participants are learning new things and building on their existing skills.

Participants have options to make an activity more or less challenging based on their skills and capabilities.

Ability, age, size, and maturity are all considered when grouping participants.

Programs and practices are well-prepared, considering seasonal and annual plans.

GOOD PEOPLE

Coaches and leaders understand principles of physical literacy and how to apply them in programs.

Coaches and leaders assess the developmental stage, enabling participants to develop appropriate skills.

Coaches and leaders monitor participant growth and design, and adapt programs to support sensitive periods, enabling participants to develop appropriate skills.

GOOD PLACES

Facilities, equipment, and rules are modified for the ability, size, and stage of the participants.

Locations and environment are safe and inclusive through policies and practice allowing for everyone to participate with their whole self.



TACKLING THE CHALLENGE

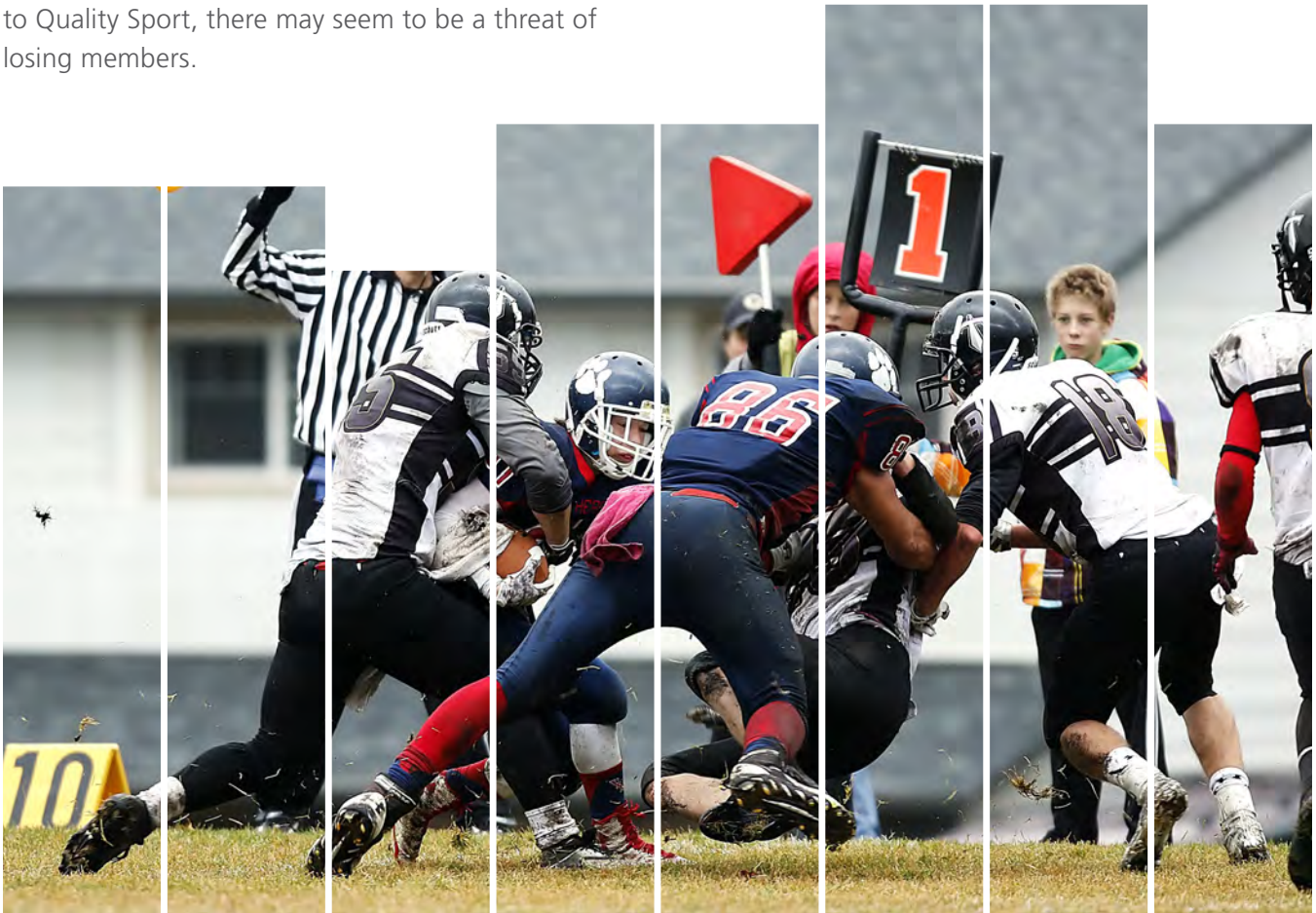


Here are some issues community sport organizations may encounter as they improve the quality of sport based on Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity.

Parent education: Parents and caregivers, especially those with a background in the sport, may wonder why programs are not being delivered in “the traditional way”. “Why is my six-year-old soccer player not playing soccer all the time in your program?” is a question we hear often.

Member retention: Community sport clubs and organizations exist to serve their members. If parents don’t understand why a program is delivered in a new way, or fear their child is “losing out” compared to another, or if rival clubs pander to some parents by offering “the good old way” as an alternative to Quality Sport, there may seem to be a threat of losing members.

Facility and equipment modifications: Delivering Quality Sport means taking different approaches to make sure participants develop properly. That may mean use of appropriate-sized equipment or playing surfaces, or modified small-sided games, or other rule changes to encourage skill development. This in turn may lead to extra costs, a need for coach and officials’ education, and possibly negotiation with the facility owners (recreation department, school board) to access different facilities and equipment, or modify them.



GETTING THERE:

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION



*How do we tackle the issues and deliver sport the Long-Term Development way?
Here are recommendations for advancing Quality Sport in your community.*

KNOW *To share knowledge about Quality Sport, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure coaches are trained, ideally National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) trained, and understand the sport's Long-Term Development framework.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide coach, official and parent education on the sport's Long-Term Development approach.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide a checklist of the skills and abilities young participants will be developing, and how these will be developed, based on your sport's long-term athlete development framework. (Google it!).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Share readily available resources within your organization, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport for Life resources at sportforlife.ca/resources • Sport-specific Long-Term Development resources at NSO, PTSO websites.

DO *To deliver Quality Sport, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer NSO-approved development programs – see sportforlife.ca/resources/quality-sport-programs .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group participants based on a combination of ability, age, size, and maturity, not just chronological age.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use a program like Movement Preparation physicalliteracy.ca/move-prep for a warm-up routine that develops strength and physical literacy, and has been demonstrated to reduce injuries in some sports.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create or use mini-skill competitions, not just “traditional” competitions, to encourage focus on skill development in early Long-Term Development stages.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify barriers to participation and provide solutions to ensure access for all. Read at sportforlife.ca/resources ; indigenous, women & girls, disabilities, and newcomers.

CHECK *To assess your progress, you can:*

□	Use development checklists for all participants, and measure and track pre- and post-program progress. Consider recognizing “most improved” participants based on this progress.
□	Survey parents/caregivers on their knowledge of the aims of your Quality Sport program, not just “satisfaction”. A survey can also be a learning opportunity.
□	Track member retention and development, not just member registration. Registration growth and loss is often a result of shifting community demographics, not necessarily an expression of member satisfaction. It may be more useful to know which participants advanced to other teams, clubs or sports. Is your program building positive sport futures? If so, say so!



WHO CAN HELP



Community sport's main partners – facility providers such as municipalities and/or school districts, and the PTSO, which controls competition schedules and access to facilities – can support Quality Sport in community organizations.

MUNICIPAL RECREATION, FACILITY PARTNERS AND LOCAL SPORT COUNCILS CAN HELP BY:

- Supporting volunteer training and development opportunities for sport coaches, managers and Board members.
- Supporting partnerships for youth mentorship or training, to prepare youth to become sport coaches, officials, or volunteers.
- Linking facility use to Long-Term Development recommendations. Sport-specific Long-Term Development Frameworks identify the field or facility size, equipment type, and amount of practice time needed for each age and/or stage. This can help make efficient use of facilities.
- Collaborating and planning with community sport to understand evolving facility needs and seek solutions.
- Coordination of sport facility usage and seasons to encourage multi-sport development. Establish incentives to the clubs who are doing Quality Sport delivery.
- Promoting Quality Sport, including NCCP certification, Long-Term Development, and HIGH FIVE® to parents using the municipal recreation guide, resources in community centres, and other communications media.



PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL SPORT ORGANIZATION PARTNERS CAN HELP BY:

- Integrating quality standards that advance Long-Term Development into their club affiliation (membership) policies, for example, by requiring local sport groups to have NCCP trained or certified coaches in order to affiliate with the PTSO, or participate in specified programs.
- Competition restructuring, to create modified competitions, structures (e.g. leagues) and/or rules that focus on skill development in early stages of Long-Term Development.
- Aligning competitions with club programs, so Provincial/Territorial high performance programs build upon and don't conflict with club development programs.
- Sharing innovative and proven practices for working with community sport with other PTSOs and other clubs, and providing a consistent message about Quality Sport to both community sport and municipal recreation partners.
- Working with provincial recreation associations to identify ways in which municipal recreation departments can support Quality Sport. For example, communicating revised playing surface and equipment standards for various age/stage groups to help municipalities plan for changing facility use demands.

QUALITY SPORT PROMISING PRACTICES:

FOCUS ON ATHLETE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Quality Sport programming is catching on across Canada, with organizations committing to foster the development of their participants on multiple fronts long-term. Many of these programs offer stage-by-stage skill progressions and report cards. Some of the organizations embracing promising practices are listed at sportforlife.ca/qsc.



SECTION 02



Supporting Long-Term Goals

Quality Sport is never “just for today”. We know recreational sport programs can build future activity habits, health, and social connections. Competitive or performance programs can be carefully planned to advance athletes along pathways in their sport careers. A Quality Sport approach means taking time to ask, “How will this help the participant today, next year, and for a lifetime?”

THE BIG PICTURE



To support the long-term goals of participants, pay attention to these relevant Long-Term Development key factors:

Athlete Predisposition simply means that some people have an aptitude for certain sports—but how do you know which is my sport, unless I try a lot of sports? A Quality Sport club supports sampling and diversification, helping participants try a variety of sports, positions and disciplines within sports.

Different Activities such as acrobatic, kinesthetic, standard, late specialization, and transfer sports have different demands and development pathways.

Excellence Takes Time. Success cannot be rushed. Athletes can take eight to 12 years to master a sport. Long-term development must be prioritized over short-term performance.

Transitions are inevitable – Into, between, and from sports. Talent is lost when transitions are unplanned and unsupported.

For Life. When planning programs, consider the effects on participant personal development over a lifetime.

THIS LOOKS LIKE



GOOD PROGRAMS

In the Active Start, FUNdamentals, and Learn to Train stages, all participants get to play and practice equally.

The program connects participants to other programs and opportunities, either to different levels, types of play, competition, or activities.

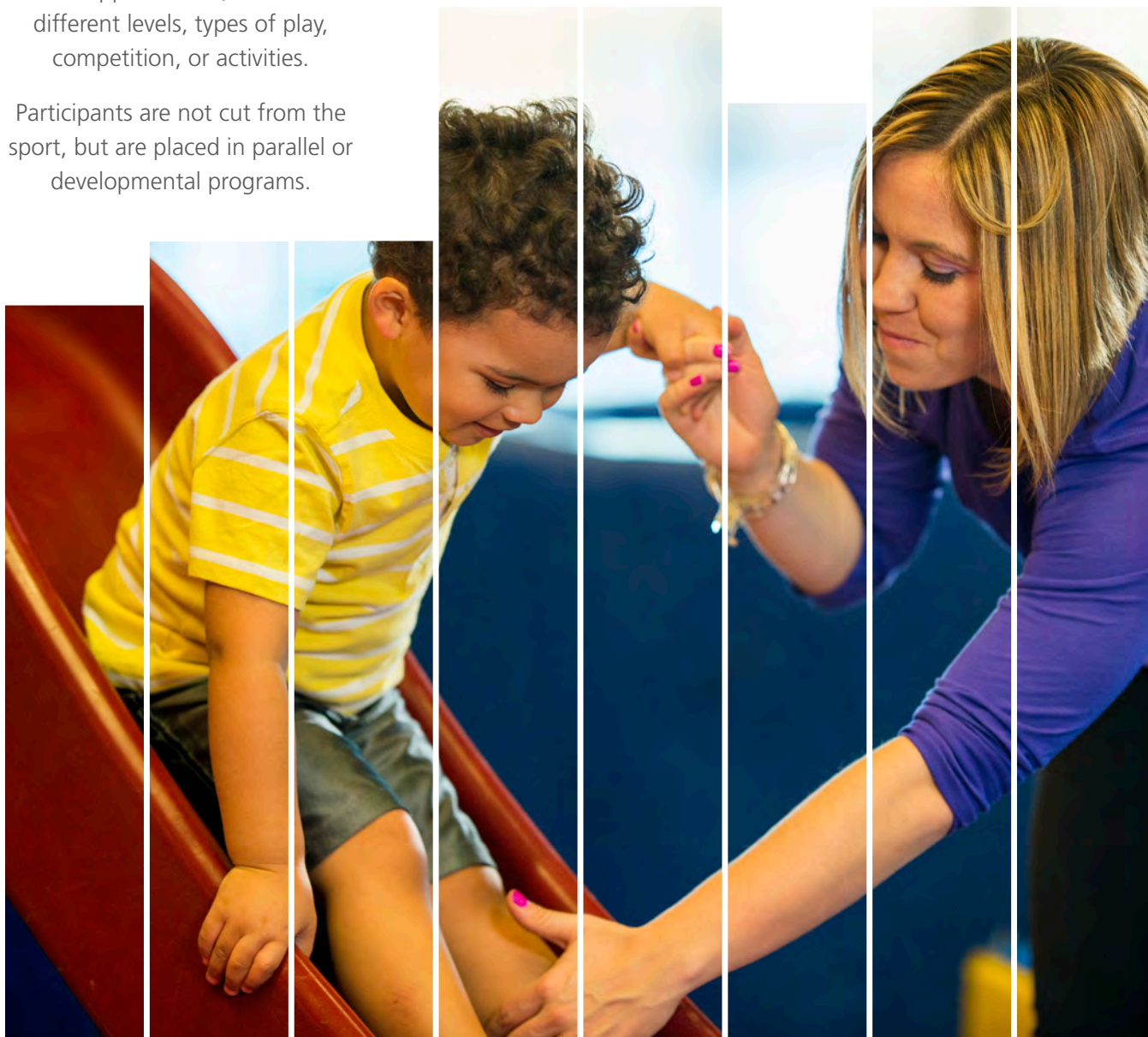
Participants are not cut from the sport, but are placed in parallel or developmental programs.

GOOD PEOPLE

Coaches and leaders assess participant abilities and interests and guide them toward appropriate sports, programs and/or specializations.

GOOD PLACES

Leaders offer support and access for participant opportunities both within the organization and with external partners.



TACKLING THE CHALLENGE



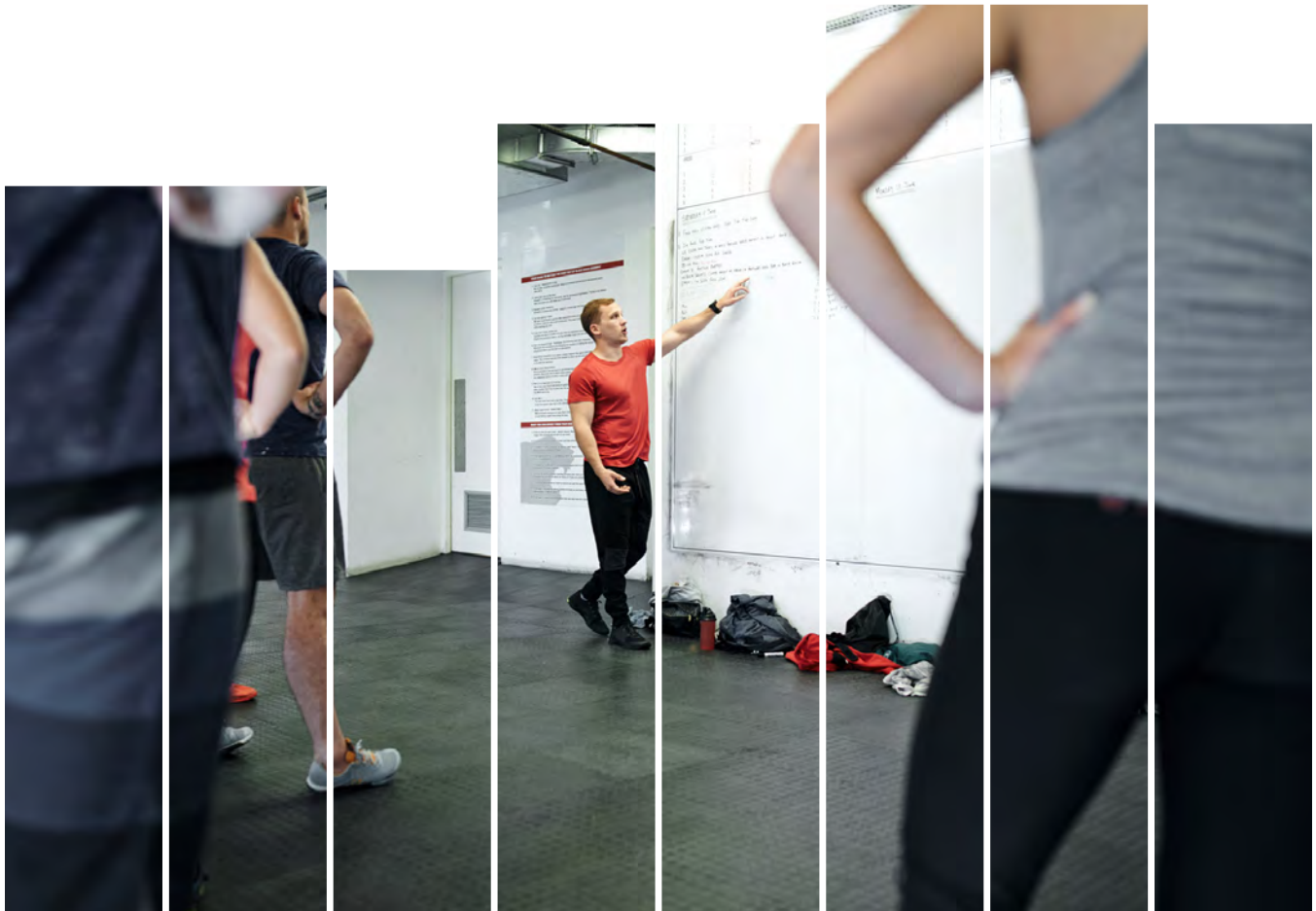
Here are some issues community sport organizations may encounter as they improve the quality of sport based on Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity.

Volunteer Recruitment: Volunteers are the lifeblood of most community sport organizations and recruitment is a constant challenge. Giving potential volunteers a compelling reason for their involvement makes volunteering more attractive and increases retention. Knowing they support Long-Term Development, not just short-term results, is a compelling, positive reason to contribute.

Parent Education: Some parents and caregivers want their child to win and advance to higher levels of performance, some want fun, some want the

development of skills and confidence. Some want all three! Showing parents how a long-term focus can deliver all of these benefits, and be a foundation for healthy lifetime participation, can reduce criticism.

Member Retention: When more parents remain as volunteers, and more participants remain because they are developing and performing optimally and having fun as well, member retention improves and the organization becomes more sustainable.



GETTING THERE:

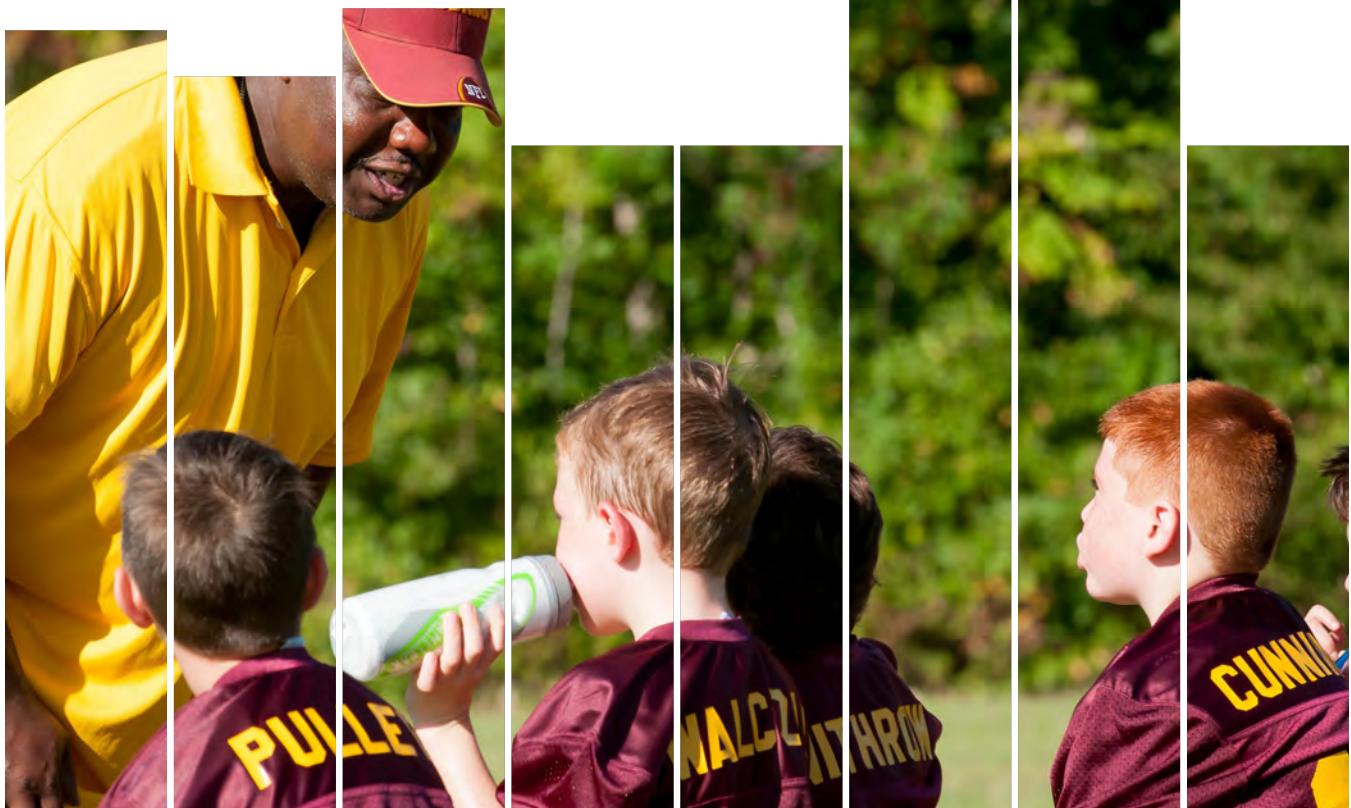
PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION



*How do we tackle the issues and deliver sport the Long-Term Development way?
Here are recommendations for advancing Quality Sport in your community.*

KNOW *To share knowledge about Quality Sport, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Explain your long-term approach in orientation and communication to participants and parents. Give them links to your sport's Long-Term Development resources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Draw on Long-Term Development resources and e-learning at sportforlife.ca and physicalliteracy.ca for your coaches and leaders.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Research has shown that when coaches emphasize attaining personal development goals, as opposed to winning and performance goals, participants are more engaged and less likely to drop out. This is especially important for females, who have a higher sport dropout rate. Learn more about keeping girls in sport at: caaws.ca/cs41 .



DO *To deliver Quality Sport, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Adjust the grouping of participants so they all have a developmentally appropriate environment. Grouping can consider height, weight, tactical awareness, or experience. An example is “bio-banding” (sportforlife.ca/brief-bio-banding-developmental-age) as a way to compare a participant’s chronological age to their developmental age, and then place them in development groups or teams. This will enhance athlete development.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Use development checklists for all participants, and (with consent) measure and track pre- and post-program progress across multiple years.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Offer to make development records portable if and when members move to participation in other sports. Or create shared registration systems with other clubs to allow for participant servicing and support across their multisport journey. Remember, your members own their data.</p>

CHECK *To assess your progress, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Consider a pre-season mini-survey about Quality Sport for all your coaches. Then, compare post-season member retention to coach knowledge and attitudes. What impact does coach knowledge have on member retention?</p>
--------------------------	--



WHO CAN HELP



Municipal recreation program designers. Provincial-Territorial and local organizations plus leagues which control competition schedules.

MUNICIPAL RECREATION, FACILITY PARTNERS AND LOCAL SPORT COUNCILS CAN HELP BY:

- Supporting volunteer training and education opportunities for sport coaches, managers and Board members.
- Policy or incentives that encourage programming that supports Long-Term Development and coordination of sport schedules.
- Promoting multisport participation and transfer between sports based on athlete predisposition by:
 - Listing clubs that offer Quality Sport programs, and providing opportunities to learn about Quality Sport, through your communications.
 - Convening community sport groups to promote alignment of registration and facility use, and reduce scheduling conflicts that force parents and participants to choose between sports, instead of sampling different sports.



PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL SPORT ORGANIZATION PARTNERS CAN HELP BY:

- Integrating quality standards that advance Long-Term Development into their club affiliation (membership) policies, for example, by requiring local sport groups to have NCCP-trained or certified coaches in order to affiliate.
- Developing, or promoting your national sport organizations' "report-card"-based approaches to stage-by-stage skill development.
- Using stage-based or bio-banding-based groupings and divisions in competitions for athletes in Learn to Train and early Train to Train. This sends a powerful message to community clubs about how to develop participants.

QUALITY SPORT PROMISING PRACTICES:

SUPPORTING LONG-TERM GOALS

Quality Sport organizations think beyond the present moment, always looking for ways to refine programming and about ways to develop long-term. This includes looking at ways to disrupt the traditional sport system, embracing multisport initiatives and being as innovative and inclusive as possible. By articulating goals and then working to achieve them, organizations can create new opportunities.

QUALITY SPORT CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNITIES AND CLUBS

Based on Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity

Quality sport and physical activity is achieved when the right people do the right things at the right times, resulting in positive experiences for participants. It is based on a Long-Term Development approach. This checklist defines the elements that lead to Quality Sport experiences in any sport program. It has been designed with everyone in mind, including women and girls, indigenous populations, participants with a physical or cognitive disability, and newcomers to Canada. This checklist can be used as a tool by community and club leaders to assess and improve the quality of their sport programs.

Good programs, that are developmentally appropriate, are:	
Participant Centered	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ability, age, size, and maturity are all considered when grouping participants.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participants are actively engaged in the game or activity and fully included by teammates.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All holistic aspects of participation are considered, including mental (intellectual and emotional), physical, cultural and spiritual.
Progressive and Challenging	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participants are learning and building on their existing skills.
<input type="checkbox"/>	There are options to make an activity more or less challenging based on participant's skills and capabilities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	In the early stages, participants get to play different positions and/or try different events and sports (physicalliteracy.ca).
Well Planned	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Programs and practices are well-prepared and are delivered in context of seasonal and annual plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The program is aligned with the national sport organization's Long-Term Athlete Development framework, or when possible, has been designed by a national sport organization (sportforlife.ca/resources/quality-sport-programs).
<input type="checkbox"/>	The club connects participants to developmentally appropriate programs and opportunities, which may include different levels (tiers), types of play, competition, or activities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	In the early stages, leaders emphasize skill development over winning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	In the early stages, programs develop fundamental movement skills, in addition to sport-specific skills.
Designed for Meaningful Competition	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Based on stage of development, the participants are playing small-sided games with fewer players, competing in shorter distances, or playing for modified lengths of time (sportforlife.ca/qualitysport/long-term-athlete-development).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rules are modified based on the ability and stage of the participants.
<input type="checkbox"/>	In the early stages, teams, groups, lines, or categories are balanced so that participants of similar ability compete against each other, giving everyone a chance to struggle and succeed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	In the early stages, all participants get to play and practice equally. Elimination competition formats are not used.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Competition is timed appropriately for learning, and is affordable and accessible.

Good people, who are caring and knowledgeable, include:**Coaches, Officials, Instructors, and Teachers**

- Who are trained and qualified (e.g. National Coaching Certification Program [coach.ca], Aboriginal Coaching Modules [aboriginalsportcircle.ca], Gender Equity [CAAWS.ca], Physical Literacy Instructor Program [sportforlife.ca], HIGH FIVE® [highfive.org]).
- Who are provided with, and partake in, ongoing learning opportunities.
- Who mentor and build capacity for future coaches, officials, instructors, and teachers.
- Who are screened (coach.ca/responsiblecoaching) and follow policies and procedures on child protection (protectchildren.ca), and injury prevention (parachutecanada.org).
- Who assess participants' developmental stage, and design programs and practices considering Long-Term Development key factors (e.g. sensitive periods).
- Who understand developing physical literacy and how to apply it in programs.
- Who are ethical (truesportpur.ca/true-sport-principles) and demonstrate good social, communication, and leadership skills.
- Who demonstrate the organization's stated principles and integrate values based sport in training and competition
- Who use constructive language, communicate equitably and clearly, and involve participants in discussion and feedback.

Parents and Caregivers

- Who are knowledgeable about and encourage Quality Sport (activeforlife.com).
- Who are respectful (respectinsport.com/parent-program).

Partners and Leaders

- Who ensure the organization operates with clear lines of responsibility and authority (sirc.ca/resources/sport-governance-and-leadership).
- Who are accountable for decisions, policies, risk management, and operational practices as well as utilizing the latest in active and safe tools.
- Who regularly assess, continually improve, and modernize governance (clubexcellence.com).
- Who seek opportunities to engage with programs and organizations in the community, province/territory and nation-wide to advance Quality Sport and increase opportunities for participants.
- Who use sport for social change and community development (communityfoundations.ca/our-work/sport).
- Who provide education opportunities about Quality Sport including meaningful competition and proper sport specialization.

Good places, that create good feelings, are:**Inclusive and Welcoming**

- Everyone feels safe and that they belong regardless of ability and background (cdpp.ca).
- Access is affordable and barrier free.

Fun and Fair

- Facilities and equipment are modified for the ability, size, and stage of the participants.
- Programs and environments are FUN (changingthegameproject.com/can-youth-sports-fun-competitive).
- Program runs on a regular basis and have appropriate attendance.

Safe

- Equipment is in good condition.
- Facilities are safe; the space is suitable, clean, well lit, and well maintained as well as personnel trained in first aid.
- Adheres to Safe Sport, the facility has policies and information readily available addressing bullying, harassment, emotional, physical and sexual misconduct, concussions, etc. (sportaide.ca/en/home).

SECTION 03



Using Competition Intentionally for Development

Competition is at the heart of sport. A competition, however, is more than just seeing “who is best on the day”. The feeling of not being “good enough” based on competition results is a leading cause of drop out from sport. Competition is always about doing one’s best, but when used intentionally, it becomes a learning opportunity – a chance to test the development of skills, try tactics, or model an upcoming competition to gain specific experiences. And yes, some – but not all - competitions should be about winning and reaching performance goals.



THE BIG PICTURE



The key Long-Term Development factors supporting intentional use of competition are “organizational factors”, meaning it is up to NSOs, PTSOs and clubs to design competition rules and structures that optimize long-term development.

Meaningful Competition provides competition experiences that support learning, reinforce the development of stage-specific skills and abilities, and match competitors so results are relatively close and predictable (no blow-outs). Organizations should review and revise competitions as needed to meet these objectives.

Specialization: There is a proper time to specialize in one sport, one sport discipline, or one position based on development and sport-specific demands. Except in high-acrobatic sports (e.g. gymnastics, diving), this is not usually before adolescence. Competition structures should encourage diversification before the time is right for specialization.

Pressure for Immediate Success must be resisted by participants, parents, coaches and clubs. Leagues, series, or other competition structures that reward athletes and teams for consistent performance (winning) may not be compatible with needs for skill development and experimentation and learning through competition.



THIS LOOKS LIKE



GOOD PROGRAMS

Based on stage of development, the participants are playing small-sided games with fewer players, competing in shorter distances, or playing for modified lengths of time.

Rules are modified based on the ability and stage of the participants.

In the late stages of FUNdamentals, through Learn to Train, and into the early stages of Train to Train,

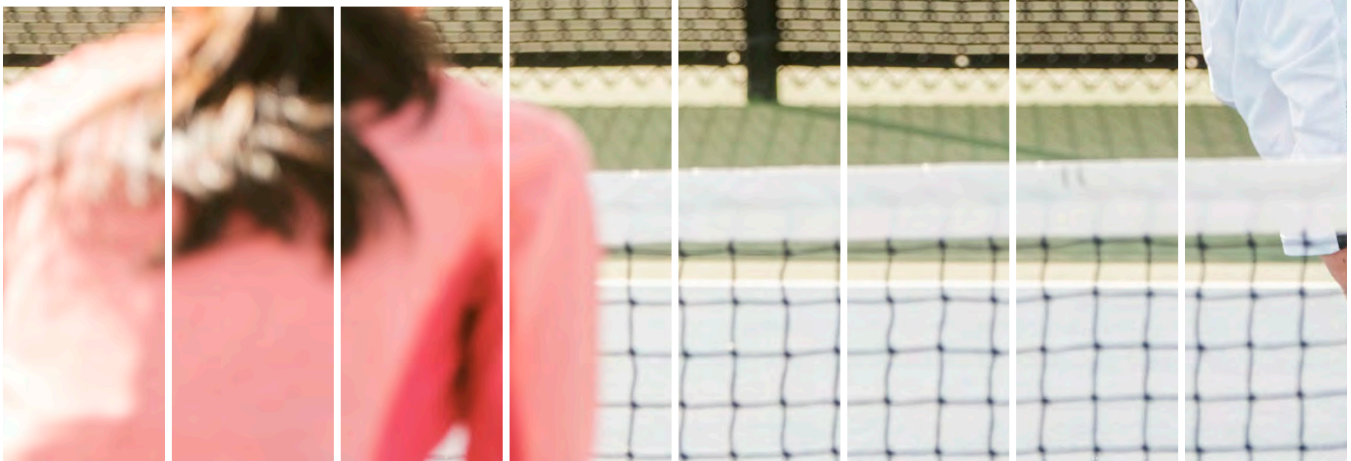
- teams, groups or categories are balanced so participants of similar ability compete against each other, giving all a chance to succeed;
- participants get to play different positions and/or try different events and sports; and
- leaders emphasize skill development over winning.

GOOD PEOPLE

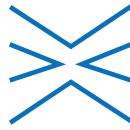
Parents and caregivers are provided education opportunities to learn about Quality Sport including meaningful competition and risks of early over-specialization.

GOOD PLACES

Meaningful competition principles are included in organization promotional and program materials.



TACKLING THE CHALLENGE



Here are some issues community sport organizations may encounter as they improve the quality of sport based on Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity.

Parent Education: Parents and caregivers may not understand the ways competition can be used to enhance development, and may insist that competitions run “the traditional way” or “the way the pros do it”.

Member Retention: Parent satisfaction is a factor in member retention, but so is discouragement, burnout and injury, which can occur when competitions are not matched to the needs and abilities of participants. Fun and engagement is maximized when all participants believe they can succeed, and blow-outs aren’t fun for either side.

GETTING THERE: PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION



*How do we tackle the issues and deliver sport the Long-Term Development way?
Here are recommendations for advancing Quality Sport in your community.*

KNOW *To share knowledge about Quality Sport, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide opportunities for parents/caregivers to understand the benefits of meaningful competition in your sport.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Support your leaders and coaches to learn about the consequences of early over-specialization.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide education resources about managing injury and concussion, e.g. (sirc.ca/concussion).

DO *To deliver Quality Sport, you can:*

□	Adopt competition rules and formats that maximize the opportunity for each participant to develop their skills. That can mean small-sided games to increase the number of “touches” (increased repetition of skills), short-distance events, modified areas of play, and many other adaptations.
□	Adopt policies that ensure everybody gets equitable playing time and has opportunities to try different positions or disciplines.
□	Find ways to give participants extra support to return to play safely and at the right time after illness or injury, especially concussion. Fear of “losing my place” on the part of participants and parents is often responsible for premature return to play, with manageable injuries turning into chronic or career-ending ones.

CHECK *To assess your progress, you can:*

□	Are your athletes suffering from mismatched competition? Analyze competition results and identify blow-outs. Contact your NSO or PTSO for blow-out criteria—often a certain point/goal spread or, in race events, percent of the winner’s time, is used. If there are frequent mismatches, adopt different formats, rules or groupings/divisions as needed.
□	Track injuries and return-to-play time in your programs – your coaches and instructors can use a simple attendance form including an “injured?” and “type of injury?” field. At the start of next season, match injury to re-registration – are you doing everything you can to help injured participants come back?



WHO CAN HELP



Provincial-Territorial and local organizations plus leagues which control competition schedules. Schools sport league conveners.

MUNICIPAL RECREATION, SCHOOL SPORT AND LOCAL SPORT COUNCILS CAN HELP BY:

- Support training and development for sport coaches, leaders and parents in the area of injury and concussion management.
- Make Safesport, injury/concussion and return to play policies mandatory for organizations wanting to rent municipal facilities.
- Work with community sport to understand evolving facility and equipment requirements needed to support meaningful competition, and collaborate to provide these modifications.
- Facility management staff need to work closely with those responsible for sport facility bookings and sport development to understand and meet evolving needs.
- When local sport groups request facilities for special competitions or tournaments, determine if those events will follow the recommendations of competition restructuring in that sport. Are the competitions stage-appropriate?



PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL SPORT ORGANIZATION PARTNERS CAN HELP BY:

- Competition review and restructuring is the process of determining the best role for competition in development, analyzing existing competition structures, and then making changes to optimize competition for development. All NSOs have done this or are doing it – what were the results and recommendations? How can your PTSO adopt these at your level, or do you need to do your own analysis and make changes that will support meaningful competition at the community and provincial/territorial level?
- Coordination of competition schedules with other sports and with Indigenous sport groups.
- Make injury/concussion and return to play policies mandatory for all organizations wanting to affiliate with the PTSO.

QUALITY SPORT PROMISING PRACTICES:

USING COMPETITION INTENTIONALLY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Traditional forms of competition have their place, but many sport organizations have modified their programming to better engage their participants and more effectively support athlete development. If decisions are made based on development outcomes, the focus will no longer be on winning and losing. Instead, the primary intent will be to encourage development in the players on either side.



SECTION 04



A Commitment to Sport for All

There are many marginalized groups—underserved populations of girls and women, individuals with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, newcomers to Canada, the LGBTQI2S community, aging adults, and those living in poverty and isolated communities, and others—who are often left out of sport. Quality Sport is good for all, so we must work collaboratively to make it accessible to all.

THE BIG PICTURE



To support the long-term goals of participants, pay attention to these relevant Long-Term Development key factors:

Awareness and First Involvement: Participants need to be aware of opportunities and have a positive first experience in a quality environment.

Welcoming: Diversity is a reality and participant-centered programs are a necessity. Ensure all participants are provided a welcoming and respectful environment that supports their needs.

Quality Environments offer enhanced learning and training environments from an early age – Good People, Good Programs, Good Places.

Frameworks: Sport-specific Long-Term Development frameworks need to be followed and updated to include the latest knowledge.

Governance: Embed Long-Term Development in the organization's plans, policies, rules, development and education to deliver Quality Sport.

THIS LOOKS LIKE



GOOD PROGRAMS

All participants are actively engaged in the game or activity and fully included by coaches and teammates.

All aspects of participation are considered, including mental (intellectual and emotional), physical, cultural and spiritual.

Facilities, equipment, and rules are modified for the ability, size, and stage of the participants.

GOOD PEOPLE

Leaders ensure environments are FUN for all.

Coaches and officials are trained and qualified (e.g. NCCP, Aboriginal Coaching Modules, Gender Equity, Physical Literacy Instructor Program, HIGH FIVE®).

Coaches and officials are screened and follow policies and procedures on child protection, and injury prevention.

Parents/caregivers are respectful and knowledgeable about Quality Sport.

Good social, communication, and leadership skills are demonstrated by everyone.

Everyone uses constructive language, communicates equitably and clearly, and involves participants in discussion and feedback.

Leaders ensure the organization operates with clear lines of responsibility and authority. Leaders are accountable for decisions, policies, risk management, and operational practices.

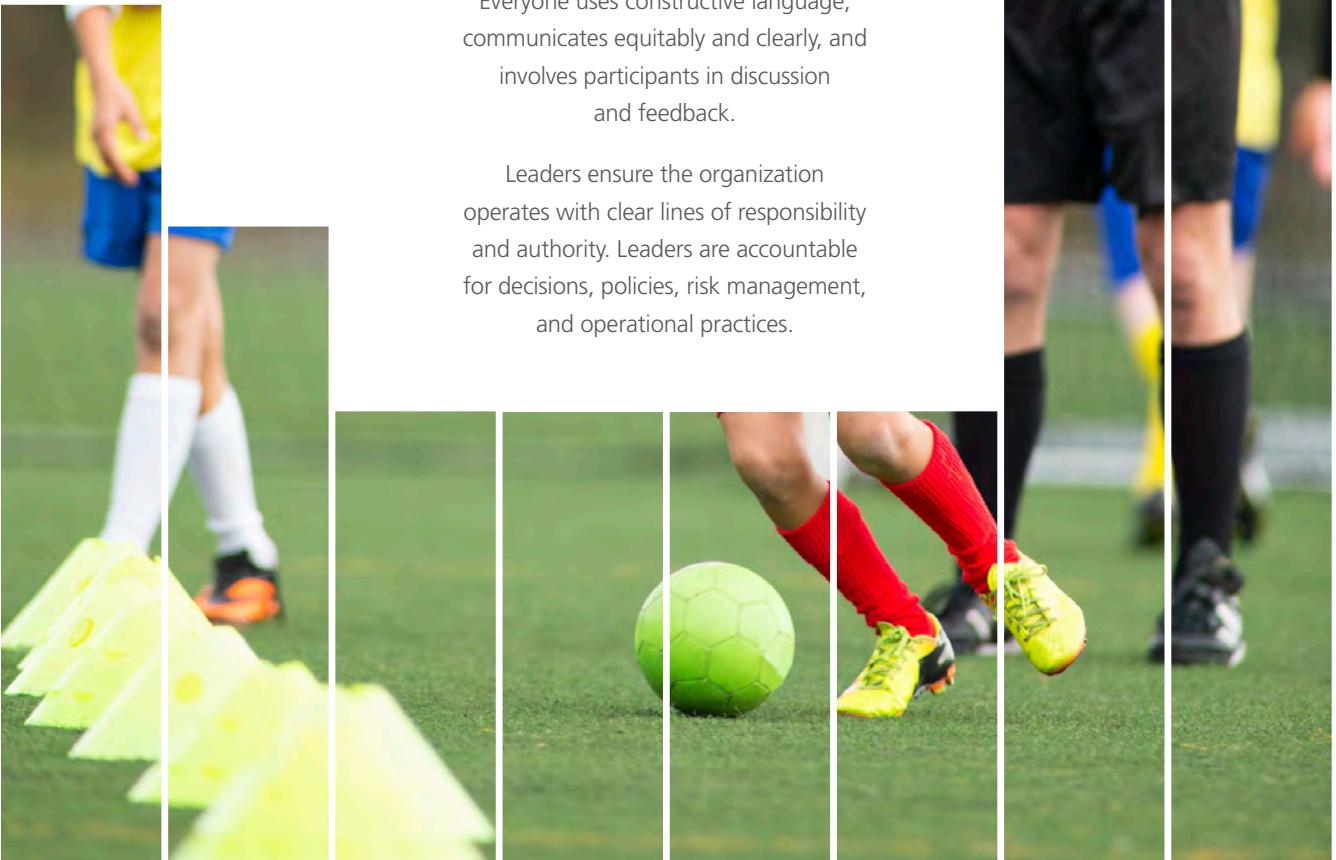
GOOD PLACES

Access is affordable and barrier free. Facilities are accessible to participants of all abilities and provide clear navigation, by both staff and signage.

Everyone feels safe and that they belong regardless of ability and background.

Facilities are safe; the space is suitable, clean, well lit, and well maintained.

Promotional and program materials include a diversity of images representative of the community.



TACKLING THE CHALLENGE



Here are some issues community sport organizations may encounter as they improve the quality of sport based on Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity.

Volunteer Time: Volunteers only have so much time—expecting them to learn about accessibility, how to welcome different groups and cultures, and how to deliver Quality Sport programs for all may seem like a stretch. However, there are also many resources available to support this education: see sportforlife.ca/resources.

Safe Sport: Without a commitment to the physical and mental safety of participants there can be no Quality Sport. Clubs may hesitate to put necessary policies and procedures in place out of concern that volunteers will be offended, or that they won't have the time or money for key elements such as education and screening. The consequences of not doing so can be tragic. Safe sport is priority one for any Quality Sport club.

Facility Access: In some communities and in some sports, it can be difficult to find barrier-free, easy-to-access facilities. Being aware and asking for such facilities is a first step, but it may take a bigger concerted effort among sport providers to ensure facilities are upgraded and accessible.

Resources: Resources are available to support Quality Sport for all, including educational resources, and grants for programs, equipment and facility retrofits. Working with the municipality and PTSO can help you find and access these resources.



GETTING THERE:

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION



*How do we tackle the issues and deliver sport the Long-Term Development way?
Here are recommendations for advancing Quality Sport in your community.*

KNOW *To share knowledge about Quality Sport, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	National Multi-Sport Service Organizations (MSOs) offer education and training programs specific to their area of expertise. For example women and girls in sport (CAAWS), sport for persons with disabilities (Canadian Paralympic Committee, Special Olympics, Canadian Deaf Sport), Indigenous peoples (Aboriginal Sport Circle). See tabs in this resource to learn more about inclusive organizations.
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DO *To deliver Quality Sport, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Audit your programs and facilities for accessibility. If you're not sure what to improve, invite a representative from a disability sport (Parasport) organization or the Rick Hansen Foundation to do an audit, or send you some tips and suggestions. Develop a phased approach—take a new step toward inclusivity each season.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Talk with your municipal recreation department about social agencies they work with, and the community needs they have identified. Can your club do something? Are grants available that could help? Identify a community partner who can help.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Promote and educate around parent and spectator codes of conduct and encourage them to take Respect in Sport.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with charities and granting agencies, such as KidSport and Canadian Tire JumpStart Charities, to help lower-income families participate in your sport.

CHECK *To assess your progress, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Understand your existing membership demographic including age, number of members from the same family, and family income to help you set goals for greater inclusion. Who is not participating now, and how can you help them?
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WHO CAN HELP



Community sport's main partners – facility providers such as municipalities and/or school districts, and the PTSOs, which control competition schedules and access – can support Quality Sport, Long-Term Development in community organizations.

MUNICIPAL RECREATION, FACILITY PARTNERS AND LOCAL SPORT COUNCILS CAN HELP BY:

- Supporting volunteer training and development opportunities for sport coaches, managers and Board members.
- Advocating for barrier-free access to all municipal sport and recreation facilities, remembering that there are many kinds of barriers—physical, financial, and discriminatory.
- Maintaining safe spaces and opportunities for no- or low-cost unstructured sport and play in the community.
- Showcasing the inclusive programs led by local sport groups to the whole community using municipal communications media.
- Celebrating local sport groups and volunteers to launch and lead inclusive Quality Sport programs.
- Sharing and posting messages about respectful behaviour expectations in facilities.



PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL SPORT ORGANIZATION PARTNERS CAN HELP BY:

- Addressing the need often identified by clubs for better parent education about Quality Sport. Developing or sharing parent engagement and education initiatives that support fun, inclusive Quality Sport will help clubs make the case to members.
- Working with your disability sport counterparts to create partnerships.
- Showcasing the inclusive programs led by local sport groups and celebrating those who launch and lead inclusive Quality Sport programs.
- Providing respectful behaviour messages and supporting policies for clubs to utilize.

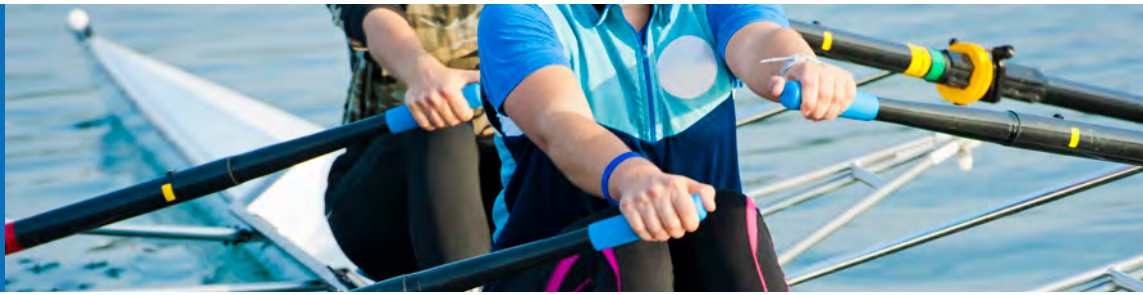
QUALITY SPORT PROMISING PRACTICES:

A COMMITMENT TO SPORT FOR ALL

In the past, sport has had many barriers to a number of different populations, including women and girls, people with a disability, Indigenous peoples and newcomers to Canada. Quality Sport programs must be as inclusive and accessible as possible, which means making modifications to programming to welcome everyone.



SECTION 05



Partnerships that Prioritize Development Needs

Community sport organizations need many kinds of partnership. The PTSO provides access to competition programs and leagues, municipalities often provide access to facilities, and then there are granting agencies, sponsors, the media, and more. Sport organizations can approach these partnerships in ways that intentionally put participant development first.

THE BIG PICTURE



To support the long-term goals of participants, pay attention to these relevant Long-Term Development key factors:

Collaboration means having the determination to seek out and work with other groups, inside and outside sport, to deliver Quality Sport for all.

System Alignment occurs when terminology, plans, programs, and policies are shared by partners (e.g. NSO, PTSO, community) across the entire system to provide seamless delivery.

Pressure to Choose happens when organizations are driven by a desire to monopolize and retain members at all costs. Quality Sport means allowing members to choose, diversify and find their best sport (i.e. athlete predisposition). Collaboration and system alignment to support diversification can prevent conflicts.

Governance: Embed Long-Term Development in the organization's plans, policies, rules, development and education to deliver Quality Sport.

THIS LOOKS LIKE



GOOD PROGRAMS

The program is aligned with the NSO's Long-Term Development framework, or when possible, has been designed by a national sport organization.

Collaboration between sport and recreation to facilitate smooth transitions between programs at different stages of development.

GOOD PEOPLE

Leaders demonstrate the organization's stated principles.

Coaches and officials are provided with ongoing learning opportunities.

Leaders regularly assess, continually improve, and modernize governance.

Coaches and officials mentor and build capacity for future coaches, officials, instructors, and teachers.

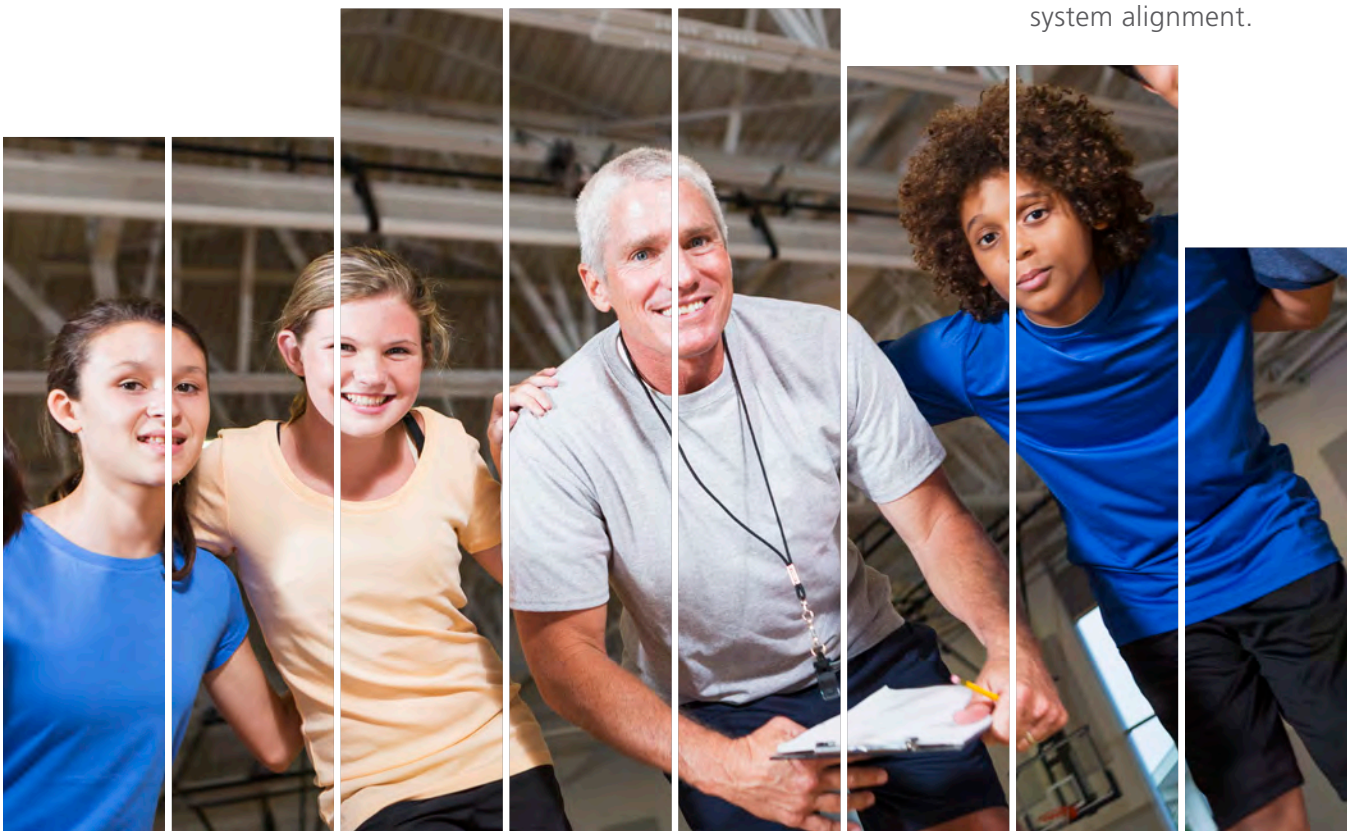
GOOD PLACES

Leaders seek opportunities to engage with community, provincial/territorial and/or national partners to advance Quality Sport.

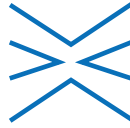
The organization uses sport for social change and community development.

The organization works with other programs and organizations in the community to increase opportunities for all participants.

The organization works with its leagues, PTSO and/or NSO as applicable to advocate for system alignment.



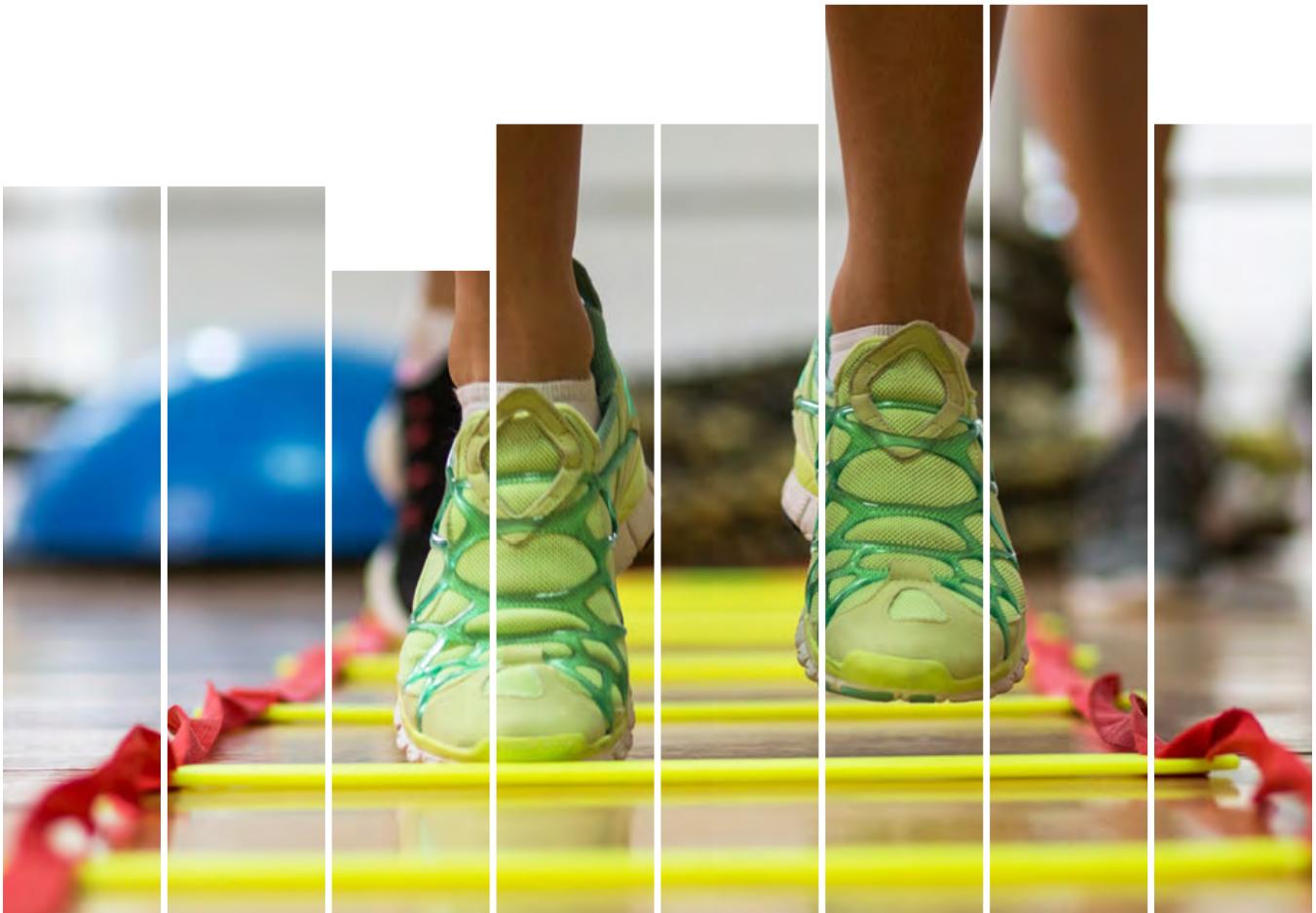
TACKLING THE CHALLENGE



Here are some issues community sport organizations may encounter as they improve the quality of sport based on Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity.

Volunteer time: Partnerships and collaboration always take more time than acting alone. Working together is better, but it takes an investment. “To go fast, go alone. To go far, go together.”

Resources: While it may take longer and be more work, partnership can also open doors to new resources or resources that can only be accessed jointly. In some cases, you may find you need to be incorporated, be a registered charity, or have an established track record to access some of these resources – finding a partner that meets the requirements can help it happen.



GETTING THERE:

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION



*How do we tackle the issues and deliver sport the Long-Term Development way?
Here are recommendations for advancing Quality Sport in your community.*

KNOW *To share knowledge about Quality Sport, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn about your NSO's Long-Term Development for Athletes With Disabilities framework and programs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check out Sport for Life resources, including those for Newcomers to Canada, Indigenous Long-Term Participant Development, and more.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact your provincial coaching association to find coach training to support Quality Sport for all.

DO *To deliver Quality Sport, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in community, provincial and national committees and working groups to advance system alignment and access resources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meet municipal recreation staff to discuss partnership opportunities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explore joint-use agreements with the municipality and/or school board to improve facility access and usage.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Support creation of a community sport council if one does not exist.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Budget to support coach and leader education and development. This may result in member fee increases, but the result is better program quality and coach and volunteer retention.

CHECK *To assess your progress, you can:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Check your organization's strategic plan. If it's not current, update it to include Quality Sport principles and goals for alignment and partnership. If it is current, check that identified goals are being accomplished.
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WHO CAN HELP



You have to help yourself. Sport organizations should seek any community partner that can help improve the quality of sport.

MUNICIPAL RECREATION, SCHOOL SPORT AND LOCAL SPORT COUNCILS CAN HELP BY:

- Developing competency in coaches, instructors, teachers, leaders and parents through a wide range of educational offerings.
- Go beyond “facility user meetings” and convene Quality Sport meetings with local sport groups (or add this to your facility users’ agenda). Discuss how the municipality can support quality improvement in local programs.
- Consider facilitating a community sport plan and/or growth of a community sport council as frameworks for Quality Sport partnership. Include community sport in facility plan and recreation master planning discussions.
- Identify grants and resources you are aware of that could support Quality Sport. Share these opportunities with your sport groups and look for projects to partner on.

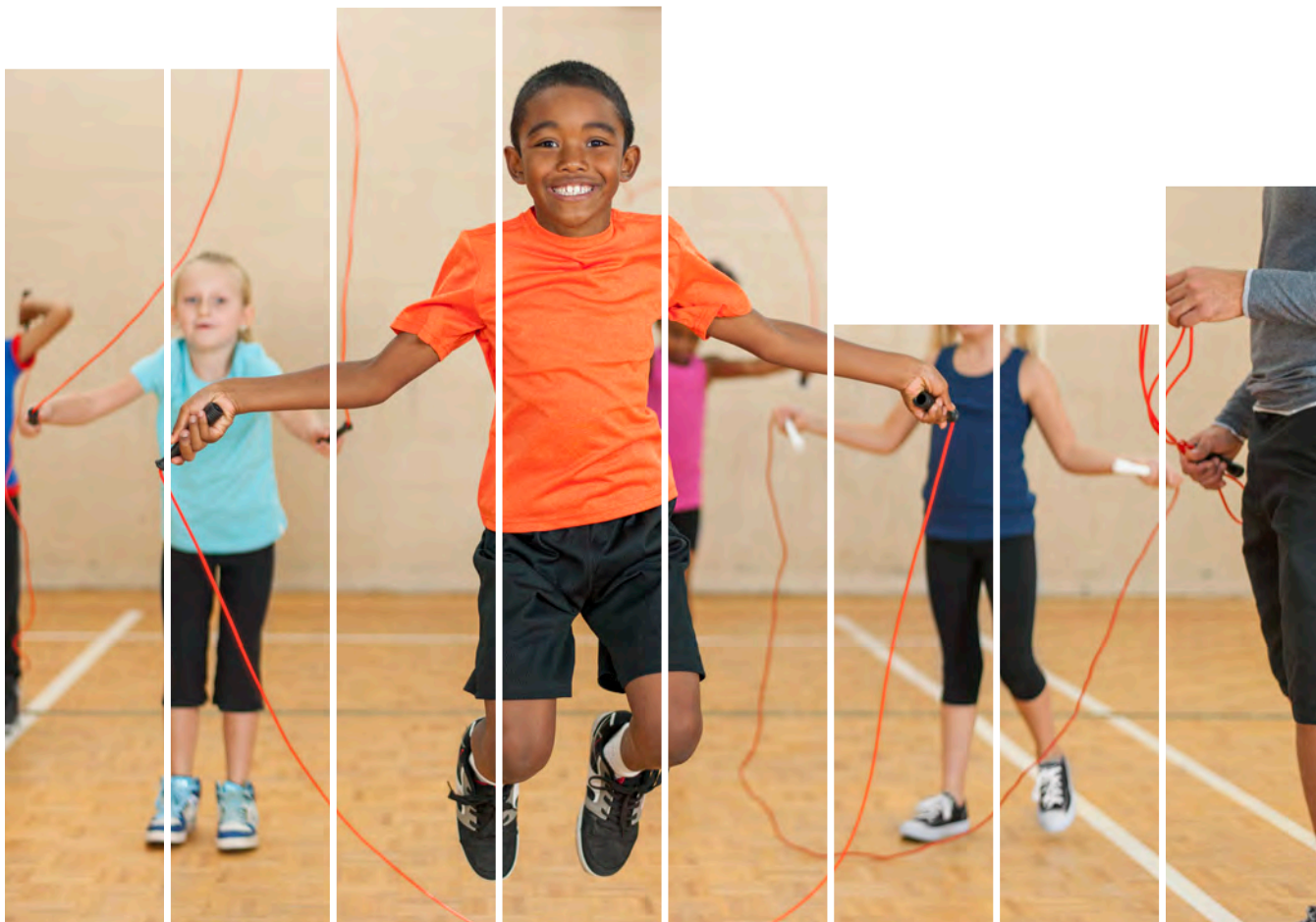
PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL SPORT ORGANIZATION PARTNERS CAN HELP BY:

- Identify grants and resources available that could support Quality Sport. Share these opportunities with your affiliated community sport groups, and look for chances to broker collaborative projects.
- Role model collaborative partnerships at the provincial/territorial level. Which non-traditional partners could you work with to support better athlete development? Could you partner with another PTSO to enhance coaching or program delivery?

QUALITY SPORT PROMISING PRACTICES:

PARTNERSHIPS THAT PRIORITIZE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Without the proper planning and infrastructure in place, it's difficult for participation to grow. Organizations wanting to deliver Quality Sport need to understand the importance of having the proper facilities, programming and resources to attract new participants. They also need to value partnerships to efficiently and effectively delivery Quality Sport experiences.





Glossary

Adaptation is response to a stimulus or a series of stimuli that induces functional and/or morphological changes in an athlete, and the degree of adaptation is dependent on both the genetic endowment of the individual and their history of training—since it becomes more difficult to make gains as individuals approach their genetic limits. Exercise science has provided well-researched and well-understood guidelines for generating optimal adaptations. Adaptations can be either positive or negative.

Adolescence is the period between childhood and adulthood. During this period, most body systems become adult in both structure and function. Structurally, adolescence begins with an increase in the rate of growth in stature, which marks the onset of the adolescent growth spurt. The rate of increase in height reaches a peak, begins to slow, and ends with the attainment of adult stature. Functionally, adolescence is usually viewed in terms of sexual maturation, which begins with changes in the neuroendocrine system prior to overt physical changes and terminates with the attainment of mature reproductive function.

Ancillary Capacities refer to the mental and physical abilities of an athlete other than sport technical skills and physical training. It includes warm-up and cool-down procedures, stretching, nutrition, hydration, rest, recovery, restoration, regeneration, mental preparation, and taper and peak. The more knowledgeable athletes are about these training and performance factors, the more they can enhance their training and performance levels. When athletes reach their genetic potential and physiologically cannot improve anymore, sport performance can be improved by using the ancillary capacities to full advantage.

Athlete Development Matrix (ADM): Within the Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity framework, the ADM describes the skills and attributes of athletes progressing through the stages of the framework.

Childhood ordinarily spans the end of infancy—the first birthday—to the start of adolescence and is characterized by relatively steady progress in growth and maturation and rapid progress in cognitive and motor development. It is often divided into early childhood, which includes preschool children aged one to five years, middle childhood from ages six to eight or nine, and late childhood, from age eight or nine to the onset of adolescence.

Chronological age is “the number of years and days elapsed since birth.” Children of the same chronological age can differ by several years in their level of growth and maturation (see Developmental Age).

Development refers to “the interrelationship between growth and maturation in relation to the passage of time. The concept of development also includes the social, emotional, intellectual, and motor realms of the child.” The terms “growth” and “maturation” are often used together and sometimes synonymously. However, each refers to specific biological activities.

Growth refers to “observable, step-by-step, measurable changes in body size such as height, weight, and percentage of body fat.”

Maturation refers to changes in structure and function in the athlete's progress toward maturity; for example, in the change of cartilage to bone in the skeleton, in changes to teeth (baby to adult teeth) in changes to sex organs, or in changes in body proportions. Maturation takes place at varying rates and at different times in each individual.

Developmental age is the age in years and months of the average youth with the same development as the individual in question. If a 15-year-old has the same development as the average 13-year-old, their developmental age is 13. Developmental age can be based on different body systems, including skeletal maturity or sexual maturity and different systems may give slightly different developmental ages, and therefore should be treated as an approximation unless measured by skilled evaluators with specialized equipment. In sport developmental age should be used as an indicator.

Enhanced training environments refer to NSO-driven identification and development of environments for targeted athletes that include access to state-of-art training facilities, world-leading coaches, and that advance support in technology, research, sport science and sport medicine. Enhanced training environments have the required quality, daily training hours to achieve gold medal profile indicators and required competition results.

Nationally-led refers to deliberate leadership from the national sport organization to drive the concept of a Podium Pathway and to implement the programmatic structures and services to achieve podium success.

Peak height velocity (PHV) is the maximum rate of growth in stature during the adolescent growth spurt. The age of maximum velocity of growth is called the age at PHV.

Peak strength velocity (PSV) is the maximum rate of increase in strength during the adolescent growth spurt. The age of maximum increase in strength is called the age at PSV.

Peak weight velocity (PWW) is the maximum rate of increase in weight during growth spurt. The age of maximum increase in weight is called the age at PWW.

Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life. In more practical terms is the life-long development of fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills in a wide variety of environments.

Puberty refers to the stage of maturation during which an individual becomes sexually mature and able to reproduce.

Quality Sport means good, developmentally appropriate, values-based programs, run in a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment by good people who are adequately qualified and are committed to the True Sport principles.

Readiness refers to the child's level of growth, maturity, and development that enables him or her to perform tasks and meet demands through training and competition. Readiness and sensitive periods of trainability during growth and development of young athletes signal the correct time for using certain stimuli to achieve optimum adaptation in skills, physical capacities, and competition.

Sensitive periods of development refer to a period in the development of a specific behaviour or body adaptation when experience or training has a greater impact than at other times. All systems are always trainable, and a sensitive period is when a system has optimal trainability.

Skeletal age refers to the maturity of the skeleton and is determined by the degree of ossification of bones compared to the average age of that degree of ossification. It can be used as one way of accurately determining Developmental Age, but requires the use of sophisticated instruments (X-ray, MRI, etc.)

Trainability Is the responsiveness of individuals to training stimuli. Trainability can refer to the speed of adaptation to a training stimulus or the degree of adaptation for a given level of training stimulus.

Training Age Is a measure of how long an athlete has been training in a specific sport.



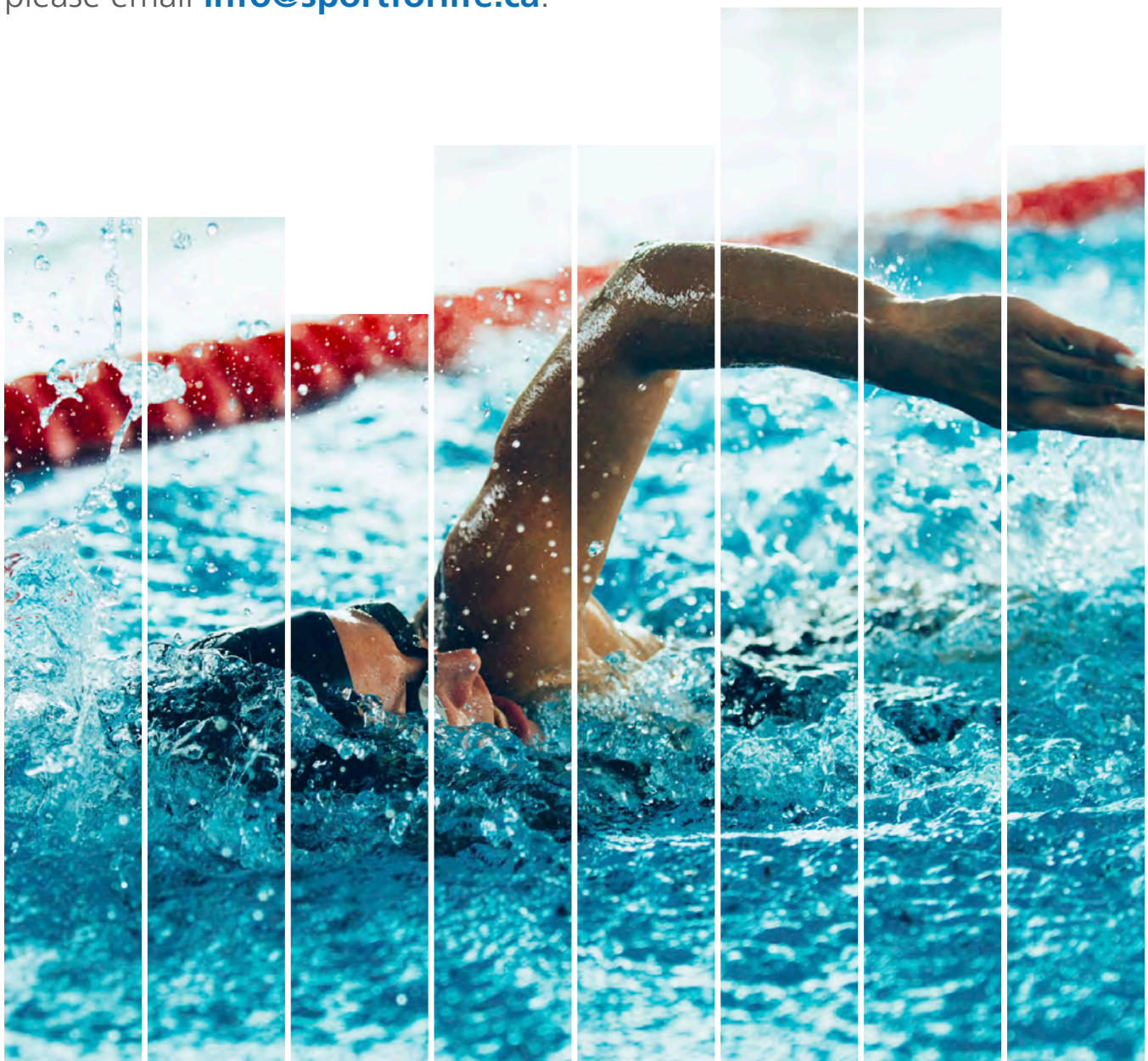
PROMISING PRACTICES

Add promising practices in quality sport that you are aware of...

The **References and Supporting Material**, and the **Promising Practices**, are two supplemental sections to *Quality Sport for Community Clubs*. The content within these sections will continue to change and grow, which is why it wasn't included in the publication itself.

You can access these sections at sportforlife.ca/qsc.

If you have a Promising Practice that you think should be included, please email info@sportforlife.ca.





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