

**Helping Canada Win Medals and More**  
**Submission to the “2010 and Beyond” Panel**

**Prepared by the Summer Sport Caucus: September 2009**

## **Introduction**

Canadian sport is well positioned to develop a leading edge system that will accelerate the achievement of our national sport goals over the coming decade. The past 10 years have seen the beginnings of a better way for sport in Canada, including the introduction of the long term athlete development initiative (LTAD) and the strategic development of a high performance initiative, Own the Podium (OTP), that supports Canadian athletes and coaches in their pursuit of excellence. Our opportunity as a country is to build on this success and to create the world's best sport leadership strategy and system for our athletes.

In the short term, Canadian sport is on track for 2010 and preparing for what's to follow, a path from the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Delhi to the 2011 Pan Am Games in Guadalajara and on to the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics in London with many world championship events in between. Staying on track and meeting our short terms goals is critical. This is why the “2010 and Beyond” Panel is such a timely and commendable initiative. The summer sport caucus, a collective of Canada's national summer sport organizations, has identified several recommendations that we believe will seize the opportunity and assist the panel in its mandate. Some of the recommendations address improvements and changes in how the federal government executes its sport policy and plans. Other recommendations identify changes that we are now working on in the sport sector and with our partners. Taken together, we believe these contributions will help Canada win medals and more.

## **Building on Success**

Over the past decade, Canadian sport has built momentum by strengthening many of the key parts of the sport enterprise.

- Results at the Torino Games and Beijing Games attest to our improvements in converting athletic potential in to podium performances.
- Recent data from Statistics Canada indicates that sport is turning the corner on sport participation trends and is bucking the declining trend in volunteering rates by creating more and more volunteer opportunities and volunteer led organizations every year.
- Canadian Sport Centres now provide a host of performance enhancing services for our athletes.
- Canada leads the world in anti-doping efforts and promotes ethical sport at all levels.
- LTAD is changing how we think about sport, establishing a pathway to promote physical literacy, athletic development, and physical activity for life.

What has yet to be achieved is the strengthening of a national high performance sport leadership structure that provides cohesion and harmonization of the overall system. The Olympic and Paralympic focus of late, brought on by the hosting of the 2010 Games and the vision for an independent leadership and governance process, has greatly benefitted from the informal partnership at OTP. The sustainability of continued success of Canada's high performance athletes requires a stronger leadership model that can mobilize all partners in the achievement of our national vision of sustained podium success and sport for life.

This is the basis for the core strategy that is recommended by the Summer Sport Caucus:

***To establish a new independent arms length high performance sport agency (the Agency), in the form of Alternate Service Delivery (ASD), that amalgamates appropriate Sport Canada programs, funding and personnel with Own the Podium and other multi sport service providers.***

## **Question One: What strategies need to be implemented to improve the performance of Canadian athletes?**

Given the core strategy we have recommended is the creation of a new independent high performance sport agency, we wish to highlight a set of principles that should underpin its creation. These could be the criteria the panel may use to assess the variety of alternate service delivery models it wishes to consider.

### ***Principles***

#### **1. Independence in governance and from political factors**

This principle ensures conditions where the Agency can make difficult decisions, without undue influence from funding partners and free from representations (from sport or from political factors) in a way that ensures accountability for the system's results. The Agency shall have the autonomy to take independent decisions and to engage in partnership and agreements with third parties.

#### **2. Comprehensive leadership and service delivery**

Canadian athletes don't distinguish between the different competitive experiences in the way that the organizational system in sport does. Athletes move from provincial events to Canada Games to national championships to national team events to World Cup to Commonwealth to Pan Am to World Championship to Paralympic/Olympic Games. They live the whole life of being an athlete; the leadership and service delivery system should be comprehensive in turn, not the patchwork which currently exists. Goals, strategies, plans, and services should support excellence throughout this chain of training and competition so that athletes benefit from a seamless and integrated system, not a fragmented supply chain that depends on the various capabilities of the parts. The OTP partnership has taken significant steps to strengthen this chain and the results are evident. Continued rationalization and prioritization of resources within a comprehensive leadership and service delivery system will build on the results achieved to date.

#### **3. One window approach**

A streamlined approach should be adopted to provide a "one window" view for the national sport organization into the Agency. The current "many window" scenario is not sustainable and inhibits organizational efficiency and performance in support of the athlete and coach unit. This principle will benefit from amalgamation of similar functions and will promote greater integration and coordination between service organizations and the Agency.

#### **4. Transparent and accountable to Canadians**

The Agency should be accountable to Canadians through an annual report to Parliament, tabled by the Minister on behalf of the chair. As with numerous, independent Alternate Service Delivery institutions which act as a public authority, the statute by which it is formed shall provide it with the necessary autonomy and independence in concert with the required transparency and accountability provisions for the use of public funds.

#### **5. Public interest and public involvement**

Sport in Canada is a citizen's movement in our communities – the enterprise is built upon their voluntary contributions and their interest in sport as an expression of democracy and Canadian excellence. The Agency must meet the public interest test established by Treasury Board and must include the involvement of the public in its governance, not unlike that provided to the Canada Council for the Arts by such esteemed Canadians as past chair, Ms. Karen Kain and current chair, Mr. Joseph L. Rotman. Meeting this principle will also ensure that the Agency is able to secure Statutory Funding over time.

## 6. Values driven, evidence based and expert led

This trio of principles has been identified as the critical, sustaining, operating principles for the Agency. Sport Canada has recently taken steps to enhance the evidence basis for its policy and program decisions. OTP and LTAD are both excellent examples of the expert based principle. Values that align with Canadian expectations for excellence must underpin the Agency in its mission.

This kind of change process will require summer sport organizations to significantly adapt the way they do business and how they align their own strategies – their parts – with that of the whole.

This is more than aligning with the current parameters established by the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework and OTP review processes. This is a principled and philosophic shift by national sport organizations to value the central leadership role and to look for opportunities to strengthen the Agency while also pursuing the individual mandates for excellence in each sport. NSO independence within the overall structure will be embraced through a collaborative and synergistic model with alignment of services where appropriate.

### **Question Two: Would changes to the design, structure, accountability, governance and/or leadership of high performance sport in Canada help to deliver on these strategies?**

**YES!** We have noted the accountability and governance requirements in the principles above. In respect of the design and structure, it is our view that the amalgamation of the primary high performance functions of Sport Canada, OTP, and willing multi-sport organizations would assist the Agency in meeting its mandate and build on the positive momentum of the past several years.

Bringing together the talented sport experts within Sport Canada and OTP along with the amalgamation of appropriate programs will leverage the value of each part and will reduce unnecessary duplication. It will also ensure that a lean, responsive, timely, value added and specialized approach becomes the operating norm for the Agency. The design of the Agency could include the Sport Excellence and international hosting units of Sport Canada, with its associated programs like Athlete Assistance, OTP, and the leadership requirements desired by the range of multi-sport and multi-service providers, national sport organizations and end users.

For our part, national summer sport organizations also recognize the need for modernization if we are to achieve a better way for sport in Canada. This better way strategy consists of five inter-related strategies that are already impacting on the design and structure of sport leadership within Canada's summer sports.

1. **Shared services.** There are significant structural efficiencies to be gained by sharing common, operating services (i.e. translation, administration, information technology).
2. **Alliance and mergers.** This is a growing trend amongst sport organizations that identify, recruit, and develop athletes with common characteristics. We are aware and supportive of the merger process currently being considered amongst a number of organizations, such as the University and College associations (CIS and CCAA).
3. **NSO-PSO alignment or service agreements.** Creating this common pathway, made easier by the LTAD framework, is now being formalized through service agreements between different levels of the sport delivery system.
4. **Co-location strategies.** Seeking synergies through co-location, an initiative is now under review by Infrastructure Canada to invest in an Ottawa based Sport Community Development Centre. Similar ownership and lease-hold strategies exist in Halifax, Montreal, Winnipeg, Calgary-Edmonton, Fredericton, Charlottetown, and Vancouver.
5. **Wind-down strategies.** In the absence of a central leadership organization, the effective and strategic wind-down of programs, services, and organizations is difficult yet continues to be an essential in streamlining and harmonizing the whole system.

### **Question Three: What approaches to governance and leadership would improve the high-performance system?**

Our recent progress in sport has helped us identify the strategic characteristics needed to in the design, structure, accountability, governance, and leadership changes associated with Alternate Service Delivery – both within the Agency and as characteristics that are valued by sport organizations.

Some of these characteristics are ones that should be carried over from the OTP experience while others are new characteristics that will strengthen the leadership capability of the Agency.

1. Aligned and collaborating with multi-sport stakeholders and partners (COC, CPC, Commonwealth Games, CAC, Canada Games, CIS, etc.) through value added agreements. These partners have a capacity to engage the corporate marketplace and consideration should be given to an overall corporate strategy amongst those that bring brand and property value to the whole enterprise.
2. Aligned with the provinces and territories and working collaboratively to identify succinct roles and responsibilities in order to meet provincial high performance sport development goals.
3. Targeted resources that are prioritized and rationalized to achieve agreed upon national goals as well as streamlined investments frameworks that are aligned and avoid duplication (i.e. eliminate SFAF and OTP criteria that are at cross purposes)
4. Responsive to the differences in strategy and system supports for team and individual sports
5. Accountable for public national goals and outcomes
6. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities that eliminate duplication
7. Integrated with LTAD frameworks
8. Scalability. While the Agency may initially focus on a limited number of functions, it should be designed to scale up (i.e. to bring in other parts, such as the international hosting program so that it delivers a sport advantage to NSOs and a facility advantage to Canadian Sport Institutes).
9. Responsiveness, flexibility, and timely decision-making. This is one of the biggest challenges of the current system.
10. Leveraging brand value of partners through value-adding agreements with Games organizations and national sport organizations. COC and CPC are the founding partners of OTP and as such have the opportunity to play a critical role in using the Olympic and Paralympic brands to generate public interest and philanthropic investment.
11. Statutory funding to produce financial stability. Many have argued that financial stability is more valuable than financial capacity. The cycles and delays and uncertainties of financial arrangements with the federal government, while improved, are still an inhibitor to the supply chain that supports Canada's athletes.
12. Leverage public funds through strategic initiatives with sport partners. A number of our public programs, such as the Athlete Assistance Program, have more value in the marketplace where they can be leveraged or enhance or aligned with corporate or partner programs. The Agency, through its contractual relations with brand and property holding sport organizations (i.e. COC, CGC, CPC, NSOs), can seek out innovative ways to enhance the level of financial support.
13. Games preparation agreements with franchise holders. Continuity in service levels can be achieved through agreements designed for seamless Games preparation, home field advantage, hosting strategies, and mission services for Olympic, Paralympic, Pan Am, Commonwealth, and FISU games

### **Question Four: How can service delivery of high performance programming to athletes be improved?**

**Canadian Sport Institutes/Centres** – delivery of a consistent menu of IST services; recruitment strategy of IST service providers for like-minded sports (i.e. linear sports, power sports, etc); ensure outreach capabilities for the IST service providers; linked and collaborative in nature through programs and initiatives

such as applied research and enhanced coach education that are responsive in the most timely manner to NSO's, the athletes and coaches.

### **Proliferation of Sport Schools** at high school level

Effective and targeted direct support to athletes through **revisions to the AAP** including the ability to have "super-cards", cross carding, sport-transition cards from one sport to another

**University integration** – enhanced applied research into high performance sport; increased number of coaching degree programs; enhanced integration into the menu of services available at National Centres; applied sport science and other specific areas identified and driven by the NSO. Universities and colleges have the greatest inventory of physical plant and sport medicine and science experts in the country yet are not seen as a conscious collaborating partner to the whole of Canadian high performance sport.

**Coaching education, professionalization and technical leadership** – Many NSO's struggle to design and deliver an effective curriculum and professional career and personal growth path for coaches. Coaching development and coaching education need to be more aligned with an integrated approach within NSOs.

**Improvement in the athlete's training and competitive environment:** - Strategies to enhance the internationally competitive training environment need to be considered in pragmatic ways such as a Team Canada permanent European training base for both summer and winter sport and more exposure on a consistent basis to top competition. The competitive environment also needs to be aligned with high performance objectives and directions.

**LTAD implementation** - needs to continue to be the foundation of athlete and coach learning and development and be aligned domestically on the pathway to international performance

### **Question Five: How should performance targets be set for the 2014 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games and the 2016 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, and beyond?**

Taking into account the core recommendation to strengthen the whole national high performance sport system, the goal setting exercise should be the responsibility of the Agency in collaboration with key stakeholders (e.g. the COC and CPC), through detailed, forward looking technical reviews and international comparators. The NSO will have substantial and consistent input into the formulation of targets both through numerical analysis and the subjective realities of their sport. The performance target process should be extended to the full range of performance opportunities, including the Commonwealth Games, Pan American Games and FISU Games.

### **Question Six: What strategies should be undertaken to develop future HP resources?**

The new agency requires substantial new funding. Incremental funds in the range of \$75 million dollars are required for the Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic sports to sustain and surpass Canada's current position among other countries.

The Agency may ultimately need to be financially self-sustaining with the capacity to access additional resources. The Agency will initially look to the COC and CPC, founding partners of OTP, to generate public interest and the required corporate and philanthropic investment.

Submitted by: Canada's Summer Sport Caucus, September 17, 2009