



BOARD POLICY

Policy Section: Board of Directors
Policy Subsection: Sport Development
Policy Title: **Appropriate Athlete Development**

Policy Statement

Swimming Canada is one of a network of agencies and organizations that promote and deliver a step-wise strategy of seamless science-based phases for swimmer development coupled with appropriate evaluation and competition. Appropriate athlete development provides all registered swimmers the best opportunity possible to progress to their highest potential, limited only by factors outside the scope of Swimming Canada and the network of agencies and organizations.

Purpose

Background – At the onset of the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) dialogue in the late 1990's Swimming Canada sought to embrace a renewal of their athlete development system wherein swimmer retention, longitudinal career progression and multi-faceted skill acquisition are central to that system. Research, empirical review and system analysis identified several 'symptoms' or standards of practice that clearly ran contrary to LTAD principles; practices such as traditional competition structures, early specialization, anecdotal coaching development and restricted event development. It is Swimming Canada's intent through the direction outlined in the Appropriate Athlete Development (AAD) Policy to apply the principles and practices of AAD and maximize all registered swimmer opportunities for long term participation.

Statement – Swimming Canada believes that appropriate swimmer development is the key to building the foundation for Canada to progress as a world swimming power. Swimming Canada believes that the most effective evolution in the deployment of the principles of appropriate athlete development strategy is a longitudinal roll-out beginning with the Fundamentals instruction level through to Competitive for Life/Active for Life or Compete to Win. This is in keeping with the concept that the training and competitive structure must be built to address the needs of each development stage of the swimmer.

Application

Swimming Canada recognizes that the delivery of development programs, including appropriate athlete development, occurs at the club, Regional and Provincial levels of Swimming Canada and ultimately the key to success in AAD rests with these organizations.

One of the operational responsibilities in directing the delivery of appropriate athlete development strategy will be through provision of the sanction authority to the Provincial Sections (PSO). In the role of delivery of development programs, each PSO will be responsible to ensure that competition sanctions are granted to appropriate development mechanisms as outlined in the appropriate athlete development strategy. These mechanisms will be the control of appropriate competitive opportunities through specific event selection and competition exposure at the appropriate frequency.

Through research and consultation Swimming Canada has developed and will continue to develop an appropriate athlete development framework and Athlete Development Matrix (ADM) to guide and lead the process. Swimming Canada must also play a change agent role in AAD. Barriers to change at all levels – coach, club, region, provincial and national levels – must be overcome. All Swimming Canada education and certification programs, directed at officiating, coaching, parents and club development, will be consistent with and support the appropriate athlete development strategy. Swimming Canada will ensure that "teaching moments" that address AAD are included in every Swimming Canada driven consultation process and interaction designed to develop coaches, parents, clubs and support of the PSO.



Responsibilities

Body

Board - Sport Development Committee

Action

1. Ensure that all policies of the Board related to Athlete Development are aligned with the appropriate athlete development strategy.
2. Conduct an evaluation of the progress of the milestones/goals/programs of AAD and ADM.

CEO

1. Communicates a strong position concerning the role and effective implementation of appropriate athlete development strategy and swimmer development framework for the future of Canadian swimming.
2. Develops a reporting and evaluation system that regularly monitors the effectiveness of domestic development, programming and competition.
3. Develops and continually evolves the overall communication and consultation strategy to lead change among the coaches, clubs, PSOs and Swimming Canada concerning LTAD;

Limitations

In that the control to grant sanctions is held by Swimming Canada and is provided to the PSO under the by-law of the Swimming Canada, Swimming Canada reserves the right to authorize sanction authority to a PSO contingent on advancing the constructs of Appropriate Athlete Development.

References

Swimming Canada By-Law #1
Swimming Canada Appropriate Athlete Development Strategy
Swimming Canada Athlete Development Matrix

Review and Approval

Approved by the Board: December 11, 2006
Reviewed and approved: March 28, 2009
Reviewed and approved: January 18, 2014
Reviewed and approved: March 23, 2021