



# WELLNESS TO WORLD CUP

PRESENTED BY BMO 

## LONG-TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT



Canadian Soccer Association

*Leading Canada to victory and Canadians to a lifelong passion for soccer.*

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## President's Message

With soccer's widespread popularity in Canada, it is timely that we define a rational pathway for player development in this country. In the interests of helping our children grow in the game, and our elite players finding success on the international stage, it is appropriate that players of all ages and abilities be provided with a clear route. This document describes that pathway in Wellness to World Cup, Canada's Long-Term Player Development framework.

We want all players to reach their full potential in soccer. For some, their potential might carry them to a professional career with a marquee team, but for many others it might mean a lifetime of recreational enjoyment in a sport that provides them with good health and connects them with their community. Wellness to World Cup will deliver a range of positive outcomes according to the desires and aims of each player, and all of these outcomes help to carry Canadian soccer forward as a whole.

I encourage you to take time to read this document and consider all of the dimensions it addresses in Canadian soccer. It points to soccer's potential to secure the future health of our children, and it also shows how we can help our players to excel at the highest level in the sport.

Also I want to thank very sincerely the members of the LTPD work group for the tremendous work they have done with support of the Canadian soccer community.

Best regards in soccer,

Dominique Maestracci  
President, Canadian Soccer Association

## A Message From



BMO Bank of Montreal – the Official Bank of Soccer – is pleased to extend its support for the most popular game in the world with Wellness to World Cup. By joining with the Canadian Soccer Association to back this innovative program that defines the pathway for player development in Canada, BMO is helping to build the sport of soccer from start to finish.

At BMO, we believe in inspiring, leading and enabling players at all levels. Whether it's boys and girls teams in communities across Canada, or elite youth soccer with the BMO National Championships, or professional soccer with BMO Field, Toronto FC and Vancouver Whitecaps FC, BMO is proud to share your passion for the Beautiful Game.

To all the soccer enthusiasts who will be taking advantage of this great new program, best of luck from BMO!

Sincerely,

Frank Techar  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
BMO Bank of Montreal

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late 2005, the CSA with Sport Canada established the Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) Work Group to study the system of soccer player development in Canada. During the final months of 2005 through 2006, the Work Group engaged top professional coaches and administrators at the national and provincial levels across Canada as well as outside experts in discussions and research into what types of player development systems would be necessary to develop increased levels of player excellence. The broad soccer community was consulted as the Work Group conducted research and held periodic meetings across the country in cities including Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Edmonton and Vancouver.

The results of these extensive discussions and research are detailed in this document. A principal finding: To qualify our Men's National Team for the FIFA World Cup 2010 and propel our Women's Senior National Team to a medal finish at the FIFA Women's World Cup 2011, Canadian soccer must create a well-defined pathway for player development. Ten years of progressive training and development is the figure consistently cited in sports research for players to reach world-class excellence. To train in this manner, a logical and scientific development pathway must be adopted.

In terms of young players entering the development pathway in Canada, the Work Group has determined that Canadian soccer needs to set a minimum target. To qualify for the World Cup, our system of player development must ensure, after 10 years of quality programming, that at least 6 of 40,000 eight-year-olds who play soccer each year will eventually debut for a professional team in one of the top 10 professional leagues in the world. Meanwhile, through the same soccer system, the other 39,994 children in that same eight-year-old group will acquire the skills, confidence and enthusiasm to remain active in soccer for life. This target is consistent with World Cup players of the national teams which traditionally reach the top rankings of FIFA. To help our players reach this advanced stage of development, professional soccer in Canada must be expanded at a variety of levels through partnership with Provincial and regional associations, as well as the private sector.

The Work Group discussions and research have been based largely on the Sport Canada Long-Term Athlete Development project in which over 50 sports in Canada are already actively engaged. Research has also been

done internationally on various systems of development, data has been compiled and reviewed on items such as where World Cup players play (leagues), how many caps Canadians have versus other nations, etc. Research continues with regards to some details, but a number of essential conclusions and recommendations have been drawn.

### LTPD Work in Progress

1. **Basic overview of long-term player development** for soccer in Canada – brochure and posters distributed June 2008
2. **Wellness to World Cup**, a strategy to advance the playing environment for Canadian soccer, to be completed June 2008
3. Completion of a **guide to the abilities** needed for Canadian soccer players at each LTPD stage based on the ten "S"s of training and performance – 2008
4. A set of **periodized annual plans** for each LTPD stage to guide player development – March 2009



The Work Group has identified systems issues, core principles, basic objectives, challenges for Canadian soccer, where we are now, where we want to be, and how we intend to get there. In addition, we have acknowledged and incorporated the emerging sports science that identifies the windows of opportunity for different aspects of athlete training and development by identifying a Long-Term Player Development pathway for Canadian soccer (LTPD):

This document identifies the 10 key factors behind LTPD that underpin its sports science foundation. In addition, the Work Group has identified five key areas that require attention for the development of Canadian soccer: coaching, player development, leadership, competition, and facilities.

Within these five key areas, the Work Group has identified over 40 strategic initiatives. These include:

- Distribution of information to align soccer organizations across Canada with the content of LTPD
- System alignment through a review of stakeholder roles and responsibilities
- Increase CSA technical leadership of the game through initiatives such as:
  - o an ongoing expert-based CSA Technical Committee to advise the CSA on implementation of LTPD
  - o a defined, comprehensive set of technical abilities required by players at each stage of development
  - o periodized annual plans to assist coaches in developing player abilities
  - o professional development opportunities for paid club head coaches and technical directors
  - o coach education that aligns coaching competencies with the technical abilities required by players at each stage
  - o a restructuring of the competition system to create the optimal training and playing environment
  - o a development strategy for fields and ancillary facilities
  - o tactical plans to implement all strategic initiatives
  - o a National Training Centre system which guarantees sufficient players are participating in high-quality training environments
  - o ongoing collaborative decision-making based on player-centred principles at all levels of the game



This document addresses the entire sport of soccer and its role in Canada – not only in developing the Men’s and Women’s National teams, but also its important contribution to overall wellness for Canadians. In this regard, one point may be understood: elite player development and promoting lifelong wellness do not have to be mutually exclusive.

Children who enjoy playing soccer from a young age will be healthy and more likely to continue in lifelong physical activity. In addition, if they are well-trained and an appropriate development pathway is made available to them, more of them will also reach elite playing levels that enable our National teams to qualify and compete consistently for the World Cup. In summary, LTPD addresses the important role that soccer has in promoting wellness for hundreds of thousands of Canadians, and at the same time, LTPD also provides a player development pathway for World Cup success.

## LTPD STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The following is a summarized list of recommended strategic initiatives to support the LTPD pathway and advance soccer in Canada.

Stage	Player Development	Coaching	Leadership	Competition	Facilities
All stages	Articulate the desired abilities of players for all stages of development	Increase the # of qualified coaches and professionals working with athletes at all levels	Implement a quality club recognition program; increase grassroots participation	Address training and competition ratios and educate all organization on LTPD for soccer	Generate relationships with municipalities to develop indoor and outdoor facilities
Active Start U4 to U6 Female and Male	Partner with MSOs and other sports to ensure soccer supports the development of fundamental movement skills	Produce a resource to teachers and parents to support soccer 'play' (the to do list)	Link soccer to evolving health initiatives	Ensure organized competition does not occur at this stage; no refereeing;	Encourage the playgrounds of the nation are soccer-friendly; produce a guide to achieve best with very little
FUNDAMENTALS U6 to U8 Female U6 to U9 Male	Provide resources to parents, coaches, and clubs (e.g. World of Soccer website)	Provide a Mini Soccer First Kicks play book for parent-coaches; link parent-coaches to mentors	Link soccer to evolving education initiatives	Encourage mini soccer with appropriate ratio of training; also encourage participation in other sports to develop physical literacy	Create partnerships with elementary schools and municipalities to increase numbers and improve quality facilities
Learning to Train U8 to U11 Female U9 to U12 Male	Establish a curriculum to support a series of District centres for excellence	Adjust the current coaching courses and increase the number of coach education courses that specifically address this stage	Establish paid technical directors and administrators for guiding soccer training in all Canadian clubs	Ensure skill development in training and games is more important than winning or losing	Create partnerships with elementary schools and municipalities to increase numbers and improve quality facilities



# LTPD STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Stage	Player Development	Coaching	Leadership	Competition	Facilities
<b>Training to Train</b> U11 to U15 Female U12 to U16 Male	Create more high-quality training environments; introduce a coordinated playing concept for improving Canadian players; provide a clear development structure for emerging talent	Produce a soccer training course for coaches of talented players; coach educators recruit, train and service.	Establish clear roles and responsibilities for technical staff and administrators; integrate player-centred concept into any and all CSA policies	Re-align competition structures, nationally, provincially, and locally to address proper ratio of training	Create partnerships with elementary schools and municipalities to increase numbers and improve quality facilities
<b>Training to Compete</b> U15 to U19 Female U16 to U20 Male	Establish quality periodized annual training, competition, and recovery plans with appropriate high-level competition	Reinvigorate the A and B license courses – increase the number of advanced coaches in Canada	Vibrant national system of national training centres and extensive linkages to professional clubs worldwide	Facilitate talented Canadian athletes getting regular exposure to high competitive environments in Canada or abroad	Create partnerships with colleges and universities for quality facilities
<b>Training to Win</b> U18+ Female / U19+ Male	Establish partnership with Pro Clubs of the top leagues; Establish a European and Central American training centre; Play more international matches	Ensure the broader pool of national coaches is continuously developing professionally	Establish a Technical Control Board for the CSA Technical Director and National Team Staff (Two senior teams)	Promote having more professional teams in Canada	Support the development of quality facilities for new and existing professional teams and international events
<b>Active for Life</b>	Adapt the dimension, game format to suit the participants needs and abilities Ensure the club is linked with the athlete throughout their career	Teach sportmanship and ensure every player has fun and can play. Raise the standard of coaching (investing in players and parents, current and future)	Soccer for All – everyone can play  Encourage all soccer participants to invest in quality Canadian soccer	Encourage fair play in the spirit of 'the game'	Combine parent – children sessions at the same time  Create marketing strategies to offset facility operational costs

# INTRODUCTION

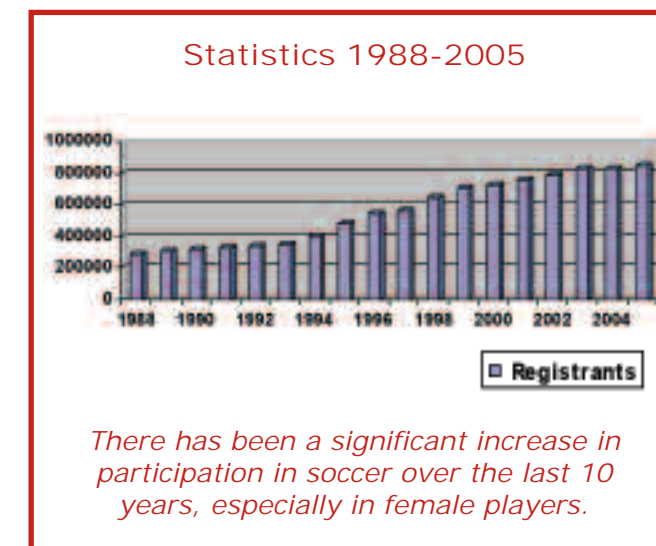
As the world's most popular sport, soccer is played in virtually every country on earth, engaging players and spectators alike with its exciting movement and unpredictable action. In Canada, participation rates in soccer have grown dramatically in the last decade and a half, and there appears to be increasing enthusiasm for the game as a spectator sport. However, Canada faces unique challenges in the development of "The Beautiful Game" as a tool for lifelong wellness and a venue for international sporting excellence.

While the Canadian game has a long history dating back to the close of the nineteenth century, soccer still does not command as much attention for public funding and national achievement as some other sports. Despite large numbers of youth participants nationwide, the Canadian game requires further financial support to encourage even more development. For example, the CSA tripled its operating budget between 1999 and 2006, but there is still need for increased funding throughout the soccer system in Canada. Care must be taken to ensure effective use of funds to support strong national programs, as opposed to redundant program development at the level of clubs, districts and provinces.

From the perspective of Canadian health promotion, soccer is a sport particularly well suited to the promotion of lifelong activity and wellness. The game is easy to understand, requires very little equipment, and involves simple physical movements that promote cardiovascular and musculoskeletal health. However, present participation rates in recreational soccer across the general Canadian population diminish significantly following adolescence, and the health promotion benefits of the sport are being lost. This tendency towards reduced recreational activity is also consistent with other sports in Canada.

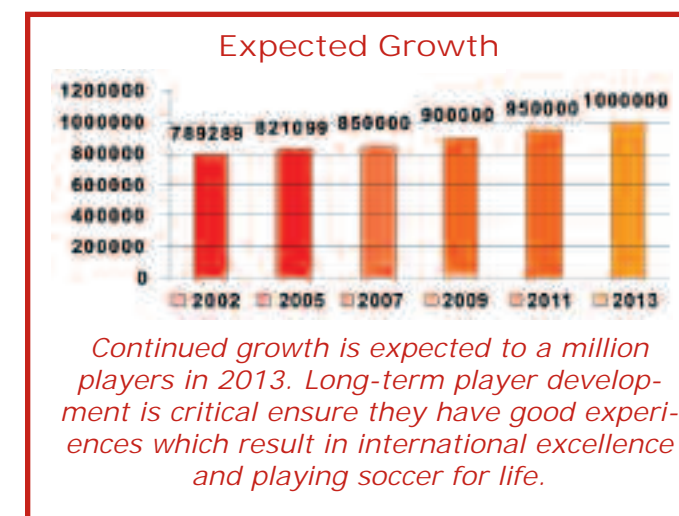
From the perspective of sporting achievement, Canada also has a mixed record for producing excellence at the international and professional levels of the game. Canada's U20

National Men's team has performed very well since 1997 (reaching the quarter-finals of the 2003 FIFA U20 Youth Championship), but the Senior National Men's team has seldom challenged other national soccer powers for major ti-



ties. The National Women's program, although recently started, has gained respectable international status: the Senior National Women's team ranks 9th in the world at the time of this writing, and the U19 National Women's team won Silver at the FIFA U-19 Women's World Championship in 2002.

However, there are still relatively few Canadian players selected to teams in top-level leagues around the world, while countries with much smaller populations often outperform our Canadian teams and send more professional players to these elite international leagues. These countries have fewer overall youth player registrations, but they evidently have other developmental factors that drive their players to higher levels of achievement and support their international success.



With the relative wealth and good health of Canadians, and comparatively high rates of participation in soccer at the youth level, questions naturally arise as to why Canada does not produce a greater number of professional players or consistently compete with greater success on the international stage. This incongruity would seem to indicate a failure to make the most of our resources as a soccer nation.

This document presents solutions to the problems we experience in developing soccer for lifetime wellness and excellence in Canadian soccer. In these pages, the Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) Work Group proposes the adoption of a scientific and practical "made in Canada" model for player development that not only promotes lifelong wellness for Canadians of all playing abilities, but also promotes excellence within the arena of elite competition.



# SOCCER EXCELLENCE AND LIFE LONG PARTICIPATION

*"The health and well-being of the nation and the medals won at major Games are simple by-products of an effective sport system."*

*- Istvan Balyi, athlete scientist*

Scientific research in athlete performance has demonstrated that it takes eight to twelve years of training for players to reach elite levels. This translates into slightly more than three hours of daily practice for ten years (Balyi & Hamilton, 2003), and it indicates the importance of long-term training for obtaining athletic excellence and competitive results. It has also been suggested that athlete training that follows logical, progressive development pathways is linked to higher rates of lifelong recreational participation for participants of all abilities.

What is the current developmental pathway for soccer in Canada, and how effective has it been in promoting lifelong activity for athletes of all abilities, including those with disabilities? How effective has it been in producing elite players and soccer excellence?

In Canadian soccer at present, many coaches and administrators involved in the development of young soccer players continue to approach

training in a manner that places too much emphasis on short-term competitive results. Short-term aims of "winning" a weekend youth match are given more importance than long-term gains in player performance and satisfaction that will translate into greater levels of excellence and lifelong wellness. The approach is largely coach- or parent-centred, and it is frequently neglectful of the long-term needs of players. Inconsistent access to appropriate training and playing facilities is also problematic.

To produce both lifelong wellness and international excellence, an integrated model of player development is needed that is

player-centred. As this paper will demonstrate, the model must respect the physical, mental, and emotional maturation of players. This is the science and the motivating spirit behind the design of the Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) model for Canadian soccer.

*Worldwide training of soccer players is becoming more sophisticated while we stubbornly cling to outdated traditions.*

## LONG-TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) is a CSA soccer-specific adaptation of the Long-Term Athlete Development model (LTAD) developed by Canadian Sport Centres. LTAD is a scientific model for periodized athlete training and development that respects and utilizes the natural stages of physical, mental, and emotional growth in athletes, and it has already been adopted by major sports organizations in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Canada. Like the LTAD program, LTPD is designed to:

1. Promote lifelong enjoyment of physical activity.
2. Provide a structured player development pathway.
3. Describe best practices for elite player development.
4. Create long-term excellence.

# LONG-TERM EXCELLENCE

LTPD is based on general findings that the greater the quality of player preparation, the greater the likelihood that players of all abilities will remain active throughout their lifetimes, and the greater the likelihood that the performance peaks of those who pursue excellence will be higher and maintained over a longer period.

Sport research shows that rushing into competition frequently results in technical, physical, tactical, psychological, and emotional shortcomings that hinder performance. While premature competition actually detracts from performance and achievement, progressive player development that follows a balanced formula of training, competition, and recovery tends to produce longer involvement in sport and higher achievement.

LTPD is designed to promote lifelong wellness for all soccer participants and optimal performances for elite players, particularly in the growth and development years when performances can become unstable and lead to dropout.

LTPD encourages players to enjoy the game and improve their performances through:

- Logical and integrated training and practice programs.
- Application of scientific principles in growth, development, and maturation.
- Provision of an optimal structure for competition at all stages of LTPD.



# SYSTEM ISSUES

## Health of the Nation

The health of the nation is at risk and soccer can help. *The Public Health Agency of Canada has stated that a serious threat to the health of Canada's children and youth exists as a result of dramatic increases in overweight and obesity and alarmingly low levels of physical activity.* In fact, research has shown that over half of Canadians aged five to 17 are not active enough for optimal growth and development. This is concerning as paediatricians are seeing a rise in the incidence of childhood hyperlipidemia, hypertension and diabetes in their young patients (Tremblay & Williams, 2000). Even more concerning is the knowledge that these obese children tend to grow up to become obese adults with an increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, orthopaedic problems and many other chronic diseases.

According to an Ipsos-Reid telephone survey, the benefits described by Canadian youths participating in sport included improved health, the formation of new friendships, and an improved feeling about themselves. Of those that didn't participate in organized sport, the most common reasons were that they either didn't have time (34%) or they weren't interested (30%). As the fastest growing and most popular team sport in Canada (more than 840,000 players registered in 2005), soccer is perfectly placed to address this lack of physical activity. However, we must ensure that it is accessible, enjoyable, and woven into the fabric of the school and sport systems.

Soccer provides a form of physical activity that is physically, economically, and socially accessible to all. It can be played with a minimal amount of equipment and without specialized facilities. Soccer provides an enjoyable and social means of providing the necessary cardiovascular and multidirectional movement necessary for the optimal growth and development of Canada's children and youth. It may also help prevent the morbidity and related health care costs of a nation that is heading down an undesirable path.

## Competing for the Nation

Soccer clearly has an important role to play in the larger sporting culture of our country. There is an intrinsic, if perhaps intangible, value in having our elite athletes representing Canada on the international stage. When Canadians watch the Olympic Games or any major world sporting event, we cheer our athletes and urge them forward. We are proud to see our nation competing among the best in the world, and we secretly believe that the achievement of our athletes says something about us as individuals and as a nation.

Soccer is no exception in this regard. As the largest youth participation sport in Canada, there are literally hundreds of thousands of soccer players and others associated with the game: they represent the source of our national hopes, dreams, and expectations. Child players want to have Canadian soccer heroes whom they can admire and emulate, and Canadians of all ages want to see their national teams compete and succeed at the international level.

Public expectation makes the success of our National teams extremely important. It also gives the CSA and other soccer stakeholders both the mandate and the responsibility to take the steps necessary to ensure Canadian teams and players attain levels of international excellence. The LTPD pathway is designed to achieve this aim.

*As the fastest growing and most popular team sport in Canada (more than 850,000 players registered in 2005), soccer is perfectly placed to address this lack of physical activity.*

## Development of the Game

Currently, Canada does not have a cohesive, coherent model for promoting lifelong wellness and elite achievement through soccer. In this regard, there are several issues of concern that soccer shares with other sports in Canada:

- Young players over-compete and under-train.
- Young players often follow adult training and competition schedules.
- Young female players often follow programs designed for males.
- Training/practice in the developmental years often focuses on winning and not on development (short-term result versus long-term process).
- Chronological age influences coaching and selection rather than biological age (physical maturation).
- The so-called critical periods of accelerated adaptation are under-utilized.
- Poor programs between the ages of 6-16 result in athletes never reaching their genetic potential.
- The "best" coaches are encouraged to work at elite levels – they are not recognized as essential to the success of developmental programs in novice groups.
- Coach education tends to provide only a superficial understanding of the growth, maturation, and development stages of young players.
- There is no integration between physical education programs in the school system, community recreational programs, and elite competitive programs.

Most Canadians are not instructed in fundamental movement skills at an early age. Instead, young athletes find that much of their training comes in the form of competitive games in a "win at all costs" environment. This omission in basic ath-

letic preparation is the first key failure that prevents Canadian athletes in all sports from developing their full genetic potential.

Due to shortcomings in coach education, many coaches are not aware that this approach fails to utilize the natural windows of "trainability" for developing certain playing qualities and skills. Sadly, the deficits that players develop can never be fully remedied.

As these young players progress through their playing careers, their lack of basic skill mastery

*LTPD offers to remedy this situation by providing a logical training, competition, and recovery program that follows the natural windows of opportunity in each player's physical, mental, and emotional development.*

means that they are unable to play and enjoy soccer to their full capacity. Consequently, they fail to develop the deeper satisfaction and appreciation of the game that would motivate them to remain lifelong participants or inspire them towards long-term elite development.

LTPD offers to remedy this situation by providing a logical training, competition, and recovery program that follows the natural windows of opportunity in each player's physical, mental, and emotional development. To date, the implementation of LTAD-based programs in Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom indicates that the LTAD framework upon which LTPD is based addresses these sports system shortcomings and significantly enhances the long-term development of players and athletes.



# CHALLENGES FOR CANADIAN SOCCER

To appreciate how LTPD can support the development of Canadian soccer players and lifelong wellness, we first need to understand the challenges that currently face soccer in this country. Canadian soccer faces a spectrum of difficulties in the long-term development of players for lifelong wellness and elite excellence. These challenges can be broadly categorized under *player development, coaching, leadership, competition, and facilities*.

## Player Development

As revealed by current research, correct player development requires the application of a consistent training and competition model that is based on sport science and proven experience. At present, the Canadian approach to developing soccer players is not consistent between organizations across the country, and at times it even contravenes the mental, emotional, and physical needs of players.

- Toddlers are being accepted as players.
- No training and competition guidelines exist for child players (e.g. home & daycare).
- Basic movement and sports skills are not emphasized during childhood.
- FUN is not always included in the training environment.
- Recreational programs are inconsistent in quality.
- Not all jurisdictions provide playing opportunities for recreational and elite play (e.g. house and select).
- Programs for players with disabilities and all ages are not consistently offered.
- Contact time between player and coach is often too brief (short playing seasons).
- Decision-making training is not emphasized.
- Clubs and provincial associations do not coordinate programs, consequently athletes can be on one program 10 months a year.
- Knowledge of training is inconsistent (windows of trainability are not understood).
- Process and criteria for identifying elite players is not nationally defined.
- Defining development programs by Provincial jurisdiction is not always effective.
- Limited age groups and regions have access to Provincial and regional camps.
- Male training programs are superimposed on females.
- Differences between male and female athlete development are not addressed.
- Training is delivered according to chronological age, not biological age (maturation level).
- Physical mismatches are created when programs are defined by chronological age.
- Enterprising coaches sometimes bias their player selection.

- Player access to high-level training facilities is limited (travel and accommodation costs).
- No Canadian professional league exists, which is often seen as an impediment to excellence in Canada. However, the challenge appears to be the need for more Canadian players with professional contracts in Canada and internationally rather than an “exclusively Canadian” league.
- High priority to have our own league.
- Connections with elite leagues are not adequately developed or promoted (e.g. NCAA, USL A-League, MLS, foreign professional leagues).
- Elite players have few elite playing options (e.g. pro and semi-pro leagues).
- Elite players are not assisted in pursuing professional opportunities.
- Disproportionately few Canadian players reach top-level professional leagues, compared to other soccer countries that have populations similar and smaller than Canada.

## Coaching

To develop players who pursue elite competition or lifelong wellness, there must be coaches qualified to train them. At present, the Canadian system for identifying and training coaches is inadequate, and the quality of coaching is very inconsistent.

- Quality of coaching across Canada is highly variable.
- Coach training requirements are not defined for different stages of player development.
- Impact of current coach training programs is not known.
- Parent coaches are not generally supported with training, mentoring and resources.
- Coach education and certification lacks experiential component.
- Coaches are not registered on CAC data base.
- Many clubs lack a professional coaching structure, including a Head Coach.
- No standard training program exists for Club Head Coach or Technical Director.
- Inappropriate coaching creates undue emphasis on strategy rather than skill (technique).
- Many coaches promote over-specialization prematurely by limiting players to specific positions to win.
- Training is often not linked to the reality of game (many regions play the ‘gym’ version of soccer).
- Performance feedback to players is not given consistently.
- Coaching plans are not reviewed annually.
- Coaches do not utilize critical periods of accelerated player “trainability.”
- Coaches do not understand the importance of periodization in program design.



- Coaching education covers issues of growth, development, and maturation only marginally.
- Sport science, sport medicine and sport-specific technical-tactical activities are not integrated.
- Women are a coaching minority, and female programs need more women coaches.
- Few specialist coaches exist for advanced stages of player development.
- The best coaches are with the best athletes.
- Coaches require more professional development opportunities, not simply certification.

## Leadership

The development of Canadian soccer is also hampered by inconsistent leadership and ineffective organization. Players and coaches need the support of solid administrative frameworks to deliver programs that maximize player participation, development, and success.

- Club organization is haphazard between different jurisdictions.
- Clubs are not always well-staffed for efficient administration.
- Administrative culture is not accountable: soccer leaders don't respond to email or phone calls.
- Coaches and officials are not involved in strategic decision making.
- Common terminology does not exist for soccer development.
- Many clubs do not have a Technical Director or Head Coach.
- Role and qualifications of the Club Technical Director are not defined.
- Grassroots approach to soccer development is not defined.
- Coaches and officials are not involved enough in grassroots development.
- Club system is not consistently defined – what is a soccer club?
- Clubs are not logically structured for accountability and efficiency.
- Soccer is not marketed and cross-promoted.
- Community programs are often mediocre and focus on numbers for money.
- Communication between different stakeholders is inconsistent.
- Rules are inconsistently applied between clubs and between programs within clubs (when to introduce offside, number of substitutes, size of field, etc.).
- Parents and coaches are not educated about long-term athlete development (nutrition, regeneration, maturation and psycho-social development, etc.).
- Volunteerism is not promoted or recognized sufficiently.
- Enhanced player programs (academies) are not subjected to quality control and official recognition.

- Resources are often focused on a small segment of players and programs.
- Opportunities for coach certification and education are not consistently available.
- Re-investment in clubs is weak (e.g. facilities and other costs).
- CSA advocacy to promote the development of the game in Canada requires a defined plan.
- Leadership selection lacks consistent process at all levels.
- Organizations lack commitment to development (e.g. many still play indoor soccer with boards/walls).
- Canadian players have inadequate support for transition to professional play, resulting in difficulties turning pro.
- Key organizational roles in clubs are staffed by persons lacking soccer experience.
- Lifelong playing opportunities are not consistently available.
- More volunteers are needed to staff and run programs.
- Clubs lack “cradle to grave” culture where members remain involved for life.

## Competition

If a Canadian player is fortunate enough to receive good coaching and train with an appropriate development model in a well managed environment, their next challenge is playing within a suitable competition format. The current game formats, leagues, and tournaments in Canada are often unsuitable for the players and regions they serve.

- Competition structure is not integrated or rationalized at all levels across Canada.
- No periodization guidelines exist for player training, competition, and recovery.
- Varying climates and extreme weather hamper training.
- Length of season is inappropriate (e.g. BC is too long, rest of Canada is too short).
- Organizations are not clear that soccer can have formats other than 11v11.
- Adult game structure is imposed on children (e.g. 11v11 on a full field).
- Many programs do not distinguish between recreational and elite players.
- Seasons overlap between club, school, and select teams, resulting in over-competition and inconsistent coaching.
- Competition structures that regularly place Ontario with its 350,000 players against and P.E.I.'s 5,000 on the same playing field at all stages.
- Seasons overlap with other sports, resulting in over-competition.
- Few semi-professional and professional Canadian teams exist to provide playing opportunities for elite players after adolescence (e.g. U19 players have nowhere to go).
- National team program exposes a relative few players to international competition.

# WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- Canadian players freeze when they first experience international competition; they are unaccustomed to the intensity and pace of the international game.
- Clubs and Provincial associations do not harmonize their training programs.
- Canadian players encounter timing conflicts when playing university soccer (e.g. NCAA).
- Player movement is restricted and impedes development (e.g. playing up).
- No off-season training programs are currently defined.
- Few formal partnerships currently exist with professional teams in the United States, Europe, and Latin America.
- Succession planning is needed for the experienced event organizers in Canada.

## Facilities

The backdrop for every playing experience is the playing surface itself, and at elite levels, available ancillary training facilities for peak fitness and performance training. The status of soccer facilities in Canada has been improving steadily over the last 5 years, but facilities development needs to be continued.

- Access to programs at all ages is sometimes limited by availability of facilities.
- Facility scheduling does not always share time adequately.
- Best facilities are often offered to elite teams and older teams.
- Poor facilities are offered to child and youth programs and "B" teams.
- Inappropriate facilities create incorrect game experience (many regions play the "gym" version of soccer).
- There is an increasing supply of artificial field turf facilities across Canada, but access to high-quality facilities remains limited for many small and remote communities (e.g. field turf, indoor, regular fields).
- Long-term strategy for infrastructure development does not exist and facility needs are not prioritized.
- Sponsorship and funding is significantly less per capita than other soccer countries.

LTPD can provide solutions to many of the challenges that face Canadian soccer, but before we ask what solutions we desire, we need to have a clear vision of where we want to go, and before determining where we want to go, we need to ask – where are we now?

Canada has very high rates of amateur youth participation in soccer, but participation quickly diminishes in late adolescence. At the elite level, our representation in professional clubs is sparse and our achievements in international competitions are relatively few.

In 2005, there were 851,442 players registered in Canadian youth and adult soccer programs. Youth represented 715,837 of this figure while adult players numbered only 129,707. The figures suggest that we are both losing an opportunity to promote lifelong wellness through soccer, and we likely have less than optimal numbers of players continuing on a development pathway towards excellence.

## Player Development

- Programs are fragmented and often produce conflicts.
- Programs place multiple demands on players.
- Major differences in talent identification process at all levels across the country (e.g. what age do we start?).

### Player Excellence: Some Facts & Figures

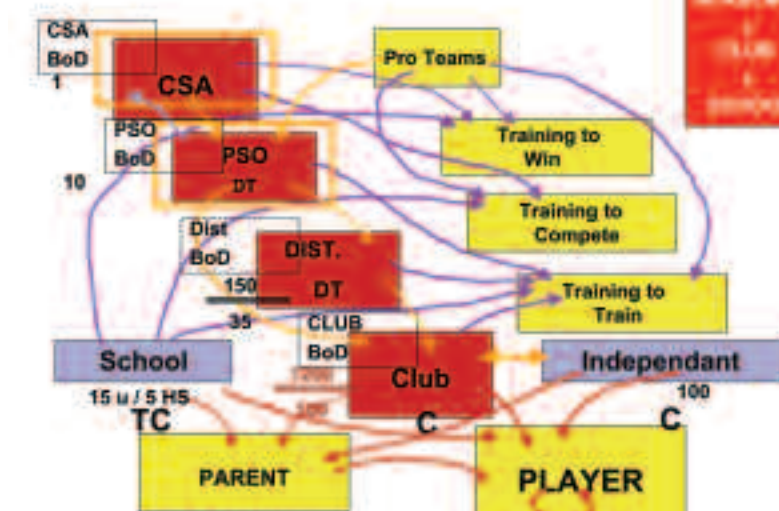
Members of Canada's Men's World Cup Team in 2006 were represented in first-tier professional leagues as follows:

- English Premier League – 2 players
- Spanish Liga Primera – 1 player
- German Bundesliga – 1 player
- French Championnat – no players
- Italian Serie A – no players

Members of Canada's Men's World Cup Team in 2006 were represented in second-tier professional leagues as follows:

- English League Championship – 5 players
- Dutch Eriedivisie – 2 players
- Norwegian first division – 5 players
- Danish first division – 1 player
- Belgian first division – 1 player
- German Bundesliga 2 – 1 player
- Major League Soccer – 2 players
- USL First Division – 3 players

The structure of soccer in Canada





## Coaching

- Coaches are inadequately educated.
- Not enough Club Head Coaches.
- Coaching courses are offered sporadically.
- Many coaches who wish to pursue training cannot access training.
- Coaches cannot do coaching theory components online.

## Leadership

- Roles & responsibilities of leaders and officials are frequently not defined.
- Accountability is very weak or non-existent.
- Roles often overlap and conflicts result between different levels of organization.
- Soccer terminology is not consistent.

## Competition

- National youth club championships for U14, U15 and U16.
- Provincial youth club championships for U14, U15 and U16.
- CONCACAF championships for men's and women's U17, U20 and senior national teams.

- 2 professional men's teams compete in the United Soccer League (USL).
- 1 professional men's team will begin competing in Major League Soccer (MLS) in 2007.
- FIFA championships at U17, U20, Olympic U23 and senior women, World Cup.

## Facilities

- New soccer-specific stadium in Toronto with artificial turf surface.
- Rapid increase in the number of artificial turf fields across Canada (mostly municipal or institutional-owned), including indoor and outdoor fields, but access remains limited by cost and location.
- Still limited access to quality training facilities within many soccer communities.
- Cost prevents many youth programs from accessing quality facilities.
- Private sector partnerships for facilities development are under-developed.

First Cap and Club Play Internationally

	Current Age	# Caps	1st Cap Age	Club Debut Age
England	25.9	33.3	20.9	18.0
France	29.2	39.4	23.6	18.4
Brazil	28.7	44.3	22.0	23.4
Spain	26.3	26.0	22.7	18.2
Italy	28.8	33.4	23.7	17.9
Germany	27.0	33.4	22.7	19.0
Australia	28.7	28.2	22.0	17.8
Canada	26.6	14.8	22.8	21.1
Average w/o CAN	27.8	34.0	22.5	19.0
Average	27.6	36.1	25.8	22.0
Canada difference from AVG w/o CAN	-1.2	-19.2	0.3	2.1

## Competitive Achievement:

### Some Facts & Figures (May 2007)

In international competition, Canadian National teams have qualified for 8 of the 17 recent FIFA Championships. Their results have been as follows:

#### Men's National teams

- Men's U20 team qualified for 2005 World Youth Championship.
- Men's World Cup team 3rd place 2003 Gold Cup.
- Men's U20 team was a quarter-finalist at 2003 World Youth Championship.
- Men's World Cup team qualified for 2001 Confederations Cup.
- Men's U20 team qualified for 2001 World Youth Championship.
- Men's World Cup team won the 2000 Gold Cup.

#### Women's National teams

- Women's World Cup team qualified for the 2008 Olympic Games.
- Women's U19 team was a quarter-finalist at 2004 U-19 Women's Championship.
- Women's World Cup team was a semi-finalist at 2003 Women's World Cup.
- Women's U19 team was a finalist at 2002 U-19 Women's World Championship.

## CONCACAF COMPARISONS (2007)

We can gain additional perspective on the state of Canadian soccer by comparing our player development with our CONCACAF neighbours. Within our CONCACAF regional soccer federation, Canada's National Men's teams have a relatively weak record competing against neighbours with much smaller populations and less financial resources, while our National Women's teams are very competitive.

Looking at international results, Canada's Men's World Cup team has had sporadic and mostly modest success in CONCACAF's Gold Cup tournaments:

#### CONCACAF Men's Results

1991 champion USA, runner up Honduras, 3<sup>rd</sup> place Mexico  
 1993 champion Mexico, runner up USA, 3<sup>rd</sup> place Costa Rica  
 1996 champion Mexico, runner up Brazil, 3<sup>rd</sup> place USA  
 1998 champion Mexico, runner up USA, 3<sup>rd</sup> place Brazil  
 2000 champion Canada, runner up Colombia, no 3<sup>rd</sup> place match (T&T)  
 2002 champion USA, runner up Costa Rica, 3<sup>rd</sup> place Canada  
 2003 champion Mexico, runner up Brazil, 3<sup>rd</sup> place USA  
 2005 champion USA, runner up Panama, no 3<sup>rd</sup> place match (Honduras)

Summarizing these results, we find that in the last 8 Gold Cups:

- Mexico has placed first on 4 occasions and placed third on another (5 medal finishes).
- The USA has won 3 times, placed second twice, and taken third twice (7 medals).
- Canada has won once and placed third once (2 medals).
- Costa Rica has placed second on one occasion and third on another (2 medals).
- On the two occasions when the third place match was not played, tiny CONCACAF neighbours Honduras and Trinidad and Tobago were at the threshold of taking third place, based on tournament points and goals for and against.

Looking at these results, Canada has performed more or less on par with Costa Rica – a country with only four million people and a per capita GDP of approximately \$13,000 (compared to about \$38,000 for 33 million Canadians). However, when we consider our Men's FIFA World Cup qualifying record in the same pool of teams, the picture looks even less encouraging: Costa Rica has qualified for three FIFA World Cups in the past 17 years, whereas Canada's one successful qualification happened 21 years ago.

In light of our Men's National Team record, it is valuable to consider what these small CONCACAF member nations are doing to develop their players and programs, from the grassroots level to the World Cup qualifying stage.

The following information was gathered during 2006 from the websites of CONCACAF national soccer federations, websites of professional clubs, and telephone interviews with relevant officials and technical staff.

A couple of common patterns quickly emerge among the small Central American countries which compete relatively well at the Gold Cup and frequently cause upset to Canada's Men's World Cup qualifying hopes. First, despite having much smaller populations compared to Canada, all of these countries have vibrant professional and semi-professional soccer leagues with 8-12 teams playing in a National first division. Second, the players with their U17 and U20 National teams are all affiliated with these professional first division clubs as either first-team starters or junior reserve players.

<p><b>Canada</b> Population 33 million 2005 GDP per capita US \$33,900 Area 9,984,670 sq. km</p> <p>Canada's National Men's Team has qualified for one FIFA World Cup (1986).</p> <p><i>Soccer Facts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 professional team in 13-team MLS</li> <li>• 2 semi-professional teams in 11-team USL First Division.</li> <li>• 43 National Men's Team pool players in November 2006: 5 play in top five European leagues (2 EPL, 2 Germany, 1 Spain), 4 play in MLS, approximately 10 play in second-tier European leagues, 7 play in USL Division 1, and approximately 17 play in third-tier leagues (eg. Norway, Sweden, other).</li> </ul> <p><b>Costa Rica</b> Population 4 million 2005 GDP per capita US \$11,400 Area 51,100 sq. km</p> <p>Costa Rica's National Men's Team has qualified for three FIFA World Cups (1990, 2002, 2006).</p> <p><i>Soccer Facts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 professional teams in National first division.</li> <li>• 28 National team pool players – one in Italy Serie</li> </ul>	<p>B (Brescia), one in U.S. MLS (Real Salt Lake), one in Guatemalan first division, 25 in Costa Rican first division teams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players with the U17 and U20 National teams are all affiliated with Costa Rican professional first division clubs as first-team starters or junior reserve players.</li> <li>• Players with Costa Rica top first division teams earn between US \$6,000-10,000 per month.</li> <li>• Players with Costa Rica lower rank first division teams earn between US \$600-1,000 per month.</li> </ul> <p><b>Honduras</b> Population 7.3 million 2005 GDP per capita US \$2,900 Area 112,090 sq. km</p> <p>Honduras's National Men's Team has qualified for one FIFA World Cup (1982).</p> <p><i>Soccer Facts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 professional and semi-professional teams in National first division.</li> <li>• 18 National Men's Team players in 2006: two in Italy Serie A, one in MLS, and 15 in Honduran National first division.</li> <li>• Players with the U17 and U20 National teams are all affiliated with Honduran professional first division clubs as first-team starters or junior reserve players.</li> </ul>
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- Players with Honduras top first division teams earn between US \$1,000-4,500 per month.

**Guatemala**

Population 12.3 million  
2005 GDP per capita US \$4,700  
Area 109,000 sq. km

*Soccer Facts*

- 10 professional and semi-professional teams in National League.
- 21 National Men's Team players in 2006: one in Spain 2nd division (Numancia), one in MLS, one USL First Division, 18 Guatemala National League.
- Below the National League, they have a First Division, Second Division, Third Division and a Women's Division.
- Players with Guatemala top first division teams earn between US \$6,000-10,000 per month.
- Players with Guatemala lower rank first division teams earn about US \$2,000 per month.

**Panama**

Population 3.2 million  
2005 GDP per capita US \$7,400  
Area 78,200 sq. km

*Soccer Facts*

- 10 semi-professional teams in National league.
- 12 National Men's Team players playing in foreign professional leagues in 2006: one in Spain (Osasuna), one in Saudi Arabia (Al Nassr), one in Mexico (Monterrey), one in Honduras, one in El Salvador, 2 in Uruguay, 3 in Colombia, 2 in Costa Rica.
- Player Gabriel Torres had a tryout with Manchester United in October, 2006.
- Players with Panama top first division teams earn between US \$200-500 per month, plus US \$50 bonus per game win. (Most players must work outside of soccer to maintain their living.)

**Trinidad & Tobago**

Population 1 million  
2005 GDP US \$16,800  
Area 5,128 sq. km  
Trinidad and Tobago's National Men's Team has qualified for one FIFA World Cup (2006).

*Soccer Facts*

- 10 semi-professional teams in National Professional League (NPL).
- 23 players in the National Men's Team in 2006: 18 players playing in European leagues (mostly second and third tier, England and Scotland), 4 players in T&T professional league.

## GLOBAL COMPARISONS (2007)

While the review of CONCACAF countries provides a close-up glimpse of differences in player development in our region, a review of the team lists for men's FIFA World Cup 2006 finalists provides a larger indication where Canada may be falling short in its elite player development.

When the team lists of the 32 qualifying teams for FIFA World Cup 2006 are examined, a clear pattern emerges as to which national professional leagues produced the most World Cup players (see Appendix C). Out of 50 national leagues represented among the 32 finalists, 46% of the players came from the top leagues of five countries – England, Germany, Italy, Spain and France. In the Round of 16, the top divisions of these five countries accounted for 61% of the players, and among the final 8 teams, they produced a staggering 78% of the players.

Even if you subtract the players from each national league who play for the same national team, the same five leagues stand out as producers of the most World Cup players in the opening round of 32 teams: English Premier League (67), German Bundesliga (53), French Championnat (47), Italian Serie A (38), and the Spanish Liga Primera (34). By contrast, the top professional divisions of the "next best" leagues in the Netherlands and Portugal provide only 11 players each.

Where does Canada fit into this pattern? Out of the entire pool of 43 senior National Men's Team players at the time of this writing, only five play in the top five European leagues: two in the Eng-





lish Premier League, two in the German Bundesliga, and one in the Spanish Liga Primera.

In this light, it is also interesting to compare Canada to Australia, another soccer country with similar socioeconomics that has historically struggled to qualify for the World Cup. Both countries have almost identical per capita GDP and similar population densities. However, Australia has only two-thirds the population of Canada and has now managed to qualify for the World Cup twice. Australia qualified for World Cup 2006, and it is remarkable to note that 13 of their 23 World Cup team players play in the top five European leagues. Seen another way, Australia is essentially able to field an entire starting lineup comprised of players from the top five leagues in the world.

The pattern has clear implications for Canadian player development. Despite the vast numbers of youth who play soccer in Canada, we somehow fail to develop them (at least our male players) to a level where they can compete with the best professional players in the world. Many countries with smaller populations and lesser economies are outperforming us.

*“Those of us who are involved in youth development or in soccer academies, must bear in mind that, of the 16-year-olds who sign a professional contract, 85% are out of the professional game by the age of 21.”*

*Higgins, T. Laying the foundations.  
The Technician - UEFA (Jan. 2007), Vol. 35, P. 12-13.*



# WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

It's clear that Canadian soccer faces many challenges to creating both lifelong wellness and international recognition in soccer. If we look into the near future, what do we want to see for soccer in Canada?

## Player Development

- Player development programs, practices, and decision making are guided by a clear organizational philosophy and pathway.
- Comprehensive player development manual encompasses CSA player development philosophy.
- Guidelines clearly define the balance between training and competition at the different stages of development.
- Appropriate training-to-competition ratios are practiced at all stages in all programs (schools, clubs, Provincial, and National teams).
- Recommended game formats are stipulated for all age groups.
- Talent Development Program in place at all stages in partnership with relevant affiliates.
- Competition structures are fully aligned with the Talent Development Program.
- Policy exists for the movement of underage players.
- Regulations exist for the movement of youth players to semi-professional and professional clubs.
- Compensation mechanism exists for the movement of youth club players to semi-professional and professional teams.
- Structured links exist between underage soccer, CSA Talent Development Program, and the semi-professional and professional game.
  
- Grassroots participation are increased through quality programs that involve children, schools, clubs, leagues, and players with disabilities.
- Models of best practice are understood by organizations involved in grassroots development.
- Child players practice fundamental movement skills in mini soccer programs.
- Parents, coaches, and players are educated on birth date effect.
- Target skills are defined for each age and stage of development.
- Programs are player-centred, not coach- or parent-centred.
- Measures for injury prevention are understood by coaches and players.
- Injuries to players are significantly reduced.
- Government bursaries are established for talented players (e.g. Provincial players, disadvantaged players & families).
- National training centre structure provides training, education, competition, and advice to Developing High Performance players prior to and during the early stages of their semi-professional and professional careers.
- Player choices are optimized so they can pursue the most appropriate playing opportunities for themselves in National and International play.
- Models of best practice are established for the identification and representation of talented players, and they are implemented in partnership with relevant organizations.



- Regional teams play in a National/regional league with youth players (U20 to U23).
- “Second chance” player identification process is established (tracking system).
- Players are advised and monitored in career development and education.
- Planned and progressive approach is adopted for international training and competition schedules.
- Competitiveness and standing in world rankings is improved (e.g. men in Top 30).
- Capacities of players (technical, tactical, mental, physical, personal, lifestyle) at underage international level are continually developed to maximize the possibility of the international teams qualifying and competing in major tournaments.
- Canadian, European, and World trends are constantly monitored within soccer in particular and within sport in general.
- Player recruitment policies are extended on a global basis, promoting a desire to play for Canada.
- Universities and Colleges are active partners in athlete research and facility access.
- Universities and colleges recognize their role in “Active for Life” stage.
- Players are retained from adolescence through to the adult game.
- Retired players remain involved in soccer as players, coaches, administrators, and referees.
- Partnerships are established with international professional teams.
- Approximately 40 men’s players playing in the world’s top ten leagues.
- Partnerships are established with semi-professional teams in North America.
- Approximately 40 women players playing in top NCAA teams and W-league teams.

## Coaching

- More accredited and qualified coaches exist at all levels.
- Coaching competencies are defined for each player developmental stage.
- Parent coaches and P.E. teachers are applying LTPD principles.
- Coaching education courses are reviewed and re-designed where necessary.
- Coaching curriculum is appropriate to the context being coached.
- CSA coaching programs and standards are integrated with NCCP.
- Clear goals are stated for coach education process.
- Coach training system promotes a flow between progressions.
- Redundancies are eliminated between coach training levels.
- The number and distribution of coach educational opportunities around the country are increased, with a strong emphasis on local needs and delivery.
- The status of coaching qualifications is raised and opportunities for continuous professional development are provided.
- Coaches are advised and monitored in career development and education.
- Trainers of coaches are accredited and experienced as coach trainers, soccer players, and soccer coaches.
- Clubs with over 1000 members would have a professional Club Head Coach/Technical Director.
- Qualifications are established for club Head Coach and Technical Director.

- Finances are available for clubs to pay Head Coach and Technical Director.
- All coach education and resources are offered regularly in both official languages.
- Coach education opportunities are linked with the volume of demand.
- Coaches have opportunities to improve formally and be recognized at all levels.
- Coach training is administered by the appropriate organization (i.e. depending on the certification level, either the CSA or the PSO).
- Coaches have the opportunity to earn a university coaching degree that is soccer specific.
- Coaches have access to coaching resources.
- Coaches are given opportunities for additional experiential education, such as seminars and elite guest coach demonstrations.
- Sport-Études prepare and mentor athletes to become coaches, reinforcing best practices.
- Formal mentoring programs exist at national, provincial, and regional levels.
- Mentoring tools and resources are available to coaches.
- Symposiums train Technical Directors at all levels to become mentors at the symposiums, coaching courses etc.
- All mentors receive compensation/recognition for work spent with coaches in training.
- Current and retired players are formally recruited as coaches and mentors.
- Experienced and qualified coaches are assigned at every level of play to deliver LTPD.
- Parent coaches receive orientation by Technical Directors in every club at the beginning of season.
- Volunteer coaches can access expertise within the club throughout the season.
- Novice club coaches have opportunities to gain soccer competition experience.
- Mini Soccer coaches are identified who know how to organize kids.
- Club Head Coach have regular (annual or biannual) opportunities for training.
- Club Head Coach have coaching competencies, administrative competencies (management, computer, technologies, and communication), leadership competencies and training competencies.
- Each Provincial team has an accredited and compensated coach.
- Association of coach trainers is established.
- Every province has at least one National Trainer for coaches; trainer is CSA accredited and managed by the CSA.
- Every province has at least one Provincial Trainer for coaches who is managed by the PSO, accredited by the CSA, and led by the National Trainers.
- Every region has at least one Regional Trainer for coaches who is managed by the Region, accredited by the PSO, and led by the Provincial Trainers.
- Coaching entrepreneurs are incorporated into the LTPD framework.
- Coaching entrepreneurs are recognized for meeting system goals.
- Community Coach Certificate and A and B licenses are integrated with NCCP.
- National convention of Soccer Coaches Associations is established.
- Teachers and coaches delivering soccer programs in schools are trained to introduce and train soccer skills, both in P.E. and during extra-curricular programs.
- Student soccer players are trained to be community coaches for mini and youth soccer.



- Non-P.E. specialists understand LTPD and deliver a curriculum that teaches soccer skills accurately and appropriately.
- Soccer academies are established within schools.
- Coaching reports and resources are available to coaches online.
- Coaching events schedule is online and updated regularly.
- Coaching symposiums provide regular opportunities for coaches to update their skills and learn on a continuous basis (French and English).
- Coaches attend symposiums on an annual basis.
- Symposiums are presented in western Canada, central Canada and the Maritimes.
- Trainers are funded by the provinces, regions, and CSA to attend symposiums.
- Regional, Provincial, and Territorial symposiums are coordinated so that coaches have more than one opportunity to attend.
- Opportunities are available for coach re-certification, professional development, re-licensing, etc.

## Leadership

- Finances are available for clubs to pay for a chief Administrator (e.g. registration, scheduling).
- Soccer programs are part of a National structure that has a National scope.
- National structure supports technical representation.
- Funding structures are accountable.
- Governance structure ensures technical decisions are given priority.
- Elected board positions have clear criteria.
- Board positions have clearly defined terms (i.e. maximum number of years).
- Structure and policies are built on player-centred principles.
- Best practices for organizations exist at all levels.
- Organizations have positive relationships with communities, service organizations, funding organizations, and school boards.
- Technical experts are not absorbed in administrative duties.
- PSO executives support and recognize the expertise of their technical staff.
- CSA Board has technical representation with voting power.
- CSA Director of Technical Programming is supported by a Technical Advisory Committee made up of 2 National coaches and the Technical Director.
- PSO Boards have technical representation with voting power.
- Advocates and lobbyists for soccer are active at federal and provincial levels.
- Federal government recognizes soccer's contribution to sport and wellness in Canada.
- CSA Technical Directors have developed a Canadian soccer identity.
- CSA Technical Directors have listened to the needs of the soccer community at all levels.
- CSA Technical Directors have developed ideal conditions and programs for the education and development of players, coaches, and referees.
- Provincial Technical Directors demonstrate leadership and promote the National vision.

- Provincial Technical Directors provide a plan to the province that fits the National vision.
- Provincial Technical Directors contribute to development of the National vision.
- District and club Boards of Directors embrace the National vision.
- District and club Boards of Directors put the needs of athletes and sport development ahead of personal agendas.
- Organized fan groups are more active and numerous.
- Canadian star players are promoted in media and given a public profile.
- Canadian soccer successes are celebrated and promoted in media.
- More games are televised at all levels, including U17, U20, and semi-professional teams.
- Soccer is reported regularly in all Canadian media – newspaper, TV, radio and Internet.
- Media has a strong positive relationship with soccer organizations and the game.
- Technical staff and administrators at all levels have clear roles and responsibilities for which they are accountable.
- National soccer day is established and celebrated.
- Recognition is awarded to clubs which meet positive standards for player development, coaching and administration.
- Player fees are increased to provide additional funding for programs.
- Player jurisdictions are reviewed across Canada.
- CSA services are increased to grassroots through PSOs.
- Revenues from independents and education system are addressed.
- Corporate groups support funding for grassroots soccer, coach education, LTAD, and player excellence.
- Finances are available to create and hire expertise.

## Competition

- All age groups have recommended game formats.
- Existing competition model is reviewed and the recommendations implemented.
- Competition structure is defined at each stage, including training-competition ratios, periodization, season length, standings, playoffs, cup championships, and player statistics.
- Guidelines are established for the incidence of competition (e.g. tournaments).
- Appropriate levels of competition are defined for each stage.
- International normative data is collected.
- CSA guidelines prevent overplaying at each stage.
- Appropriate age groupings are defined for group training.
- Access to competition is improved, minimizing travel and costs.
- Overlap between soccer programs is reduced (i.e. schools, clubs, districts, Provincial and National teams).
- Competition guidelines address unique geographical demands of different regions.
- Ongoing campaign promotes positive and supportive soccer culture among parents and players.

- Year-round facilities are available for U14 programs and above.
- Quality referees work at all levels, communicating standards of conduct to players, coaches, and parents.
- More players participating in regional, provincial, and international competitions at the Training to Train and Training to Compete stages.
- Larger player pool exists for National teams.
- National scheduling plan is established to accommodate competitions.
- Consistent competition structure is established for different age groups across Canada, based on a CSA model.
- Men's U-17 team consistently qualifies for the U-17 World Cup.
- Women's U-17 team consistently finishes top 4 at U-17 World Cup.
- Men's U-20 consistently finishes top 8 at FIFA U-20 World Cup.
- Women's U-20 consistently finishes top 3 at FIFA Women's U-20 World Cup.
- Men's World Cup team is ranked in top 3 of CONCACAF teams.
- Women's World Cup team is ranked in top 5 of world teams.

## Facilities

- More municipal playing facilities are available for community soccer programs.
- Existing municipal facilities are upgraded.
- More facilities are owned by soccer entities.
- More soccer-specific stadiums exist.
- More artificial turf fields and facilities developed (indoor and outdoor), as these are well-suited to the challenges of the Canadian climate.
- More public-private partnerships exist to support investment in soccer-owned facilities.
- More partnerships between CSA and universities & colleges exist for development and use of facilities.
- World-class sports science, medical, and technological systems are in place to support success of Canadian teams at major international tournaments.

	Males		Females		
Top 10 pro leagues inc. MLS	40	T2W 2	40	Top 10 leagues plus top NCAA	
Professional	150	T2W 1	150	Professional plus top colleges	
Pro Team Academies (PTA) or national training centres (NTC)	150	T2C	150	Pro team academies (PTA) or national training centres (NTC)	
PTA or NTC with Sport School (SS)	320	16	320	PTA or NTC with Sport School (SS)	
Pro. TC (PTC) or NTC w/SS	480	15	480	Pro. TC (PTC) or NTC w/SS	
PTC w/SS	1,160	14	1,160	PTC w/SS	
PTC w/SS	2,320	13	2,320	PTC w/SS	
Quality Club Teams	14,880	12	14,880	Quality Club Teams	
Quality Club Teams	14,880	11	14,880	Quality Club Teams	
Quality Club Programs	30,240	10	30,240	Quality Club Programs	
Quality Club Programs	30,240	9	30,240	Quality Club Programs	
Quality Club Programs	40,320	8	40,320	Quality Club Programs	
Quality Club Programs	40,320	7	40,320	Quality Club Programs	

This means on an annual basis 27 Can. players need to make professional club debuts, of which 6 are in top pro leagues

# HOW DO WE GET THERE?

We want to have more Canadians of all ages playing soccer for recreational activity. We want to see more Canadian players and teams competing at the highest professional and international levels. The formula for achieving these aims is complex and it requires intelligent application of resources, leadership, and sport science.

## Player Development

- Establish quality soccer programs where players are matched to their age and stage of development.
- Stipulate no game competition before the age of 6.
- Establish 1 toddler with 1 adult curriculum for Active Start.
- Encourage parents to play with their children at home.
- Educate parents, coaches, and administrators in LTPD principles.
- Establish an accepted plan between all stakeholders (i.e. clubs, high schools, provincial and national association).
- Establish a structured player identification system and a follow-up tracking system at all levels (i.e. clubs, regions, provinces, national).
- Restructure Provincial programs according to demographics.
- Define terminology and standards to the provinces.
- Create an emerging talent program that links with all levels of the game – in particular with youth clubs, semi-professional teams, and professional teams.
- Establish a committee to help elite players pursue professional opportunities.
- Adapt to the present competition structures, and create new ones where necessary.
- Increase the number of international players playing in A, B and C stream players (Define A, B and C stream).
- Led by CSA, establish partnerships with professional teams in Europe and Latin America.
- Identify and promote potential MLS players.
- Establish a system where USL teams and players feeds into the MLS.
- Establish more regional W-League teams (one in every region).
- Create guidelines to assess player training volume and modify appropriately.
- Establish CSA Professional preparation / orientation support program.
- Establish CSA committee to encourage professional participation (expert / package outlining procedures).
- Establish periodized training, competition, and recovery for national team players.
- Ensure a good liaison with the “significant others” in the players environment (Parents, club, coach)
- Increase feedback to players or parents/guardians
- Adoption of a National Playing Philosophy
- Adoption of a National Technical Teaching Curriculum for the different ages including:
  - o Health, dietary, life-style, psychological factors
  - o Technical and tactical theory sessions
  - o Introduction of log books for players
  - o Codes of conduct



- Increase the number and the quality of players in the NTCs.
  - Ethical and attractive entry and exit strategy for players
- Develop a satisfactory playing and development programme for elite players.
- Extend the duration of NTC season & annual development programmes.

## Coaching

- Make more coaches available and better educate them to deal with the age and stage related needs of their players.
- Establish a baseline for coach's training at all levels.
- Increase the quality and quantity of coaches, referees, and administrators through an extensive program of education, training, and resources at local, regional and national levels.
- Establish more comprehensive and wider-reaching education programs, including Club Head Coaches
- Establish formal coach mentoring programs at National, Provincial, and regional levels (can be face to face, e-mentoring, telephone, COP web-based).
- Develop more professional opportunities for coaches.
- Administer mentoring programs by the appropriate level of organization.
- Expose coaches to professional environments.
- Provide novice club coaches with opportunities for soccer competition experience.
- In mini soccer, encourage clubs and organizations to utilize expertise that is available (e.g. parents who can organize kids).
- Provide training for parent coaches in mini soccer programs.
- Develop coaching resources for mini soccer (e.g. First steps, First kicks booklet).
- Raise the standards of expertise in the NTC's.
- Enhance Development / Education program in NTC's.
- A-license qualifications for the NTC Staff.
- NTC Directors appointed by CSA.
- Enhance holistic teaching program.
- Expand NTC weekend events for player and coach development opportunities.
- Enhance interaction and communication between NTC and CSA National Staff.

## Leadership

- Create a unified structure that links school, club, district, provincial and national programs, supported by full time personnel at district, provincial and national levels.
- Encourage non registered soccer groups to become part of their district/provincial/Canadian associations by selling them the benefits of membership.
- Establish clear pathways for all players, coaches, referees and administrators within the game.
- Establish high quality regional and national training centres.
- Establish a fully reorganized, resourced and professionally run CSA Technical Department.
- Encourage clubs to increase their financing to pay for a chief Administrator (e.g. registration, scheduling).
- Identify technical representation for National structure.
- Establish accountability measures for funding structures.
- Give priority to technical considerations within the governing structures.

- Establish clear criteria for elected board positions and define terms.
- Identify player-centred principles to define structure and policy.
- Identify and implement best practices for organizations at all levels.
- Promote positive relationships between soccer organizations and communities, service organizations, funding organizations, and school boards.
- Develop dedicated administrative staff so technical experts are not absorbed in administrative duties.
- Support and recognize the expertise of technical staff at all levels (club, regional, provincial, national).
- Establish technical representation with voting powers on CSA and Provincial Boards.
- Establish a Advisory Committee for the CSA Technical Director.
- Promote soccer advocacy and political lobbying at federal and provincial levels.
- Establish a Canadian soccer identity.
- Establish Provincial development plans that fit the National vision.
- Promote the National vision to districts and clubs.
- Promote organized fan groups.
- Promote Canadian star players to media.
- Promote Canadian soccer successes with media.
- Lobby media to televise more games at all levels, including U17, U20, and semi-professional teams.
- Lobby media to report on soccer regularly – newspaper, TV, radio and Internet.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for technical staff and administrators.
- Establish a National Soccer Day.
- Establish CSA and PSO awards to recognize clubs which meet positive standards for player development, coaching, and administration.
- Increase player fees to provide additional funding for programs.
- Review player jurisdictions across Canada.
- Increase CSA services to grassroots through PSOs.
- Solicit funding from corporate groups for grassroots soccer, coach education, LTAD, and player excellence.
- CSA operates NTCs across the country.
- Need to fund centres to operate for 10 months annually.
- Set standards for staff to players ratio.
- Increase sources of funding to increase number of qualified staff.
- Appropriate program, facility and staffing for elite players.

## Competition

- Revise the competition structure to match the needs of players at each developmental stage.
- Technical experts design and lead Canadian competition system.
- Eliminate adult game formats in children's programs.
- Provide recommendations for training and competition formats # v # across Canada.
- Established recommended game formats for all development stages (i.e. # v #).
- Create a Canadian professional league for elite players.
- Create a cross-country "Canada Cup."
- Define plans for periodized training, competition, and recovery at all levels.

- Rationalize and integrate the competition structure across Canada.
- Differentiate between recreation players and performance players in programming.
- Establish programs based on biological age (physical maturation) rather than chronological age.
- Eliminate overlapping seasons between schools, clubs, and district select teams.
- Work with other sports to reduce overlapping seasons.
- Define and implement periodization of training, competition, and recovery phases for all development stages.
- Enhance inter-NTC tournaments.
- Enhance playing program for NTC's.
- Clearly define the role of the different competition structures (University, etc...).
- Develop a guide for player development during games for every stages of development.
- Create sustained success for National teams in international competition.

## Facilities

- Develop agreements between CSA, provinces, clubs, and governments at national, provincial, and municipal levels for facility development, including indoor considerations.
- Use facilities appropriately to create correct game experience (e.g. gym training).
- Create marketing strategies to offset operational costs.
- Generate relationships with municipalities to develop indoor and outdoor facilities.
- Create partnerships with communities, universities, with other sports, etc.
- Lobby government and corporate groups to create more soccer-specific stadiums.



« To qualify for the World Cup, our system of player development must ensure, after 10 years of quality programming, that at least 6 of 40,000 eight-year-olds who play soccer each year will eventually debut for a professional team in one of the top 10 professional leagues in the world. »

# NOW WHAT?

## CORE BELIEFS

To provide organizational direction in developing Canadian soccer, the CSA needs to adopt core beliefs for guiding technical decision-making in the long-term. The LTPD Work Group proposes the following set of principles which will guide the development of the game in Canada. These core beliefs will need to be refined through consultation with the CSA Board of Directors and partners.

**Participation:** The number of Canadians involved in the game of soccer will be maximized, a principal and ongoing objective of the CSA.

**Health and wellness:** Soccer has a significant role to play in the health and wellness of Canadians.

**Equality:** Adequate support and services should be provided to underdeveloped areas of the game (e.g. players with disabilities).

**Social responsibility:** The CSA has the opportunity to promote a healthy lifestyle for young people in disadvantaged areas.

**Customer service:** People involved in the game at local, regional and national levels should be provided quality services, along with access to knowledge and experience.

**Consultation:** All stakeholders should be consulted to ensure that all views are considered and, where possible, represented in the plan.

**Sustainability:** The responsibility to sustain the development of the game for future generations should be recognized.

**Excellence:** Canadian players and teams will be supported in reaching their full potential in national and international competition, through the support of quality coaching and technical expertise.

**Quality:** Soccer stakeholders should be united in their desire to improve and develop the game at all levels in Canada.

**Recognition:** The dedicated and extensive work of volunteers and professionals within the game should be recognized.

**Partnership:** All soccer stakeholders should recognize that development depends on a partnership approach from all sectors of the game and society.

**Accountability:** Available human and capital resources should be utilized and managed efficiently to achieve optimum benefits.

**A people-centred focus:** The needs of all people involved in the game should be respected and honoured within the larger focus of developing better players. This people-centred focus should be based on a fair and ethical approach at all levels of the soccer system: It should include a friendly and cooperative approach from CSA staff, and a willingness on the part of all stakeholders to share ideas, work hard, practice humility and listen.



## KEY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

LTPD identifies eleven key objectives to advance the technical development of Canadian soccer. These should be seen as “touchstones” to guide decision making at all levels. Again, these objectives should be refined and confirmed by the CSA’s key partners.

1. Increase grassroots participation.
2. Achieve and sustain international success.
3. Define a clear philosophy and realistic pathways for the development of Canadian players from first kicks through emerging talent to top-level professionals.
4. Increase the quality and quantity of coaches, referees, and administrators through an extensive program of education, support, and resources at community, provincial, and national levels.
5. Re-align competition structures at community, provincial, and national levels to address proper ratio of training to competition, allowing for increased sophistication of annual periodized planning.
6. Provide guidelines and a framework for the development of quality training facilities nationwide for all levels of the game.
7. Recognize soccer’s important role in the health of our nation through partnerships and programs with communities and schools as well as health sectors, resulting in new partners and initiatives for the game and wellness of Canadians.
8. Support enhanced standards for Canadian professional teams against global benchmarks.
9. Create and enhance structured links between the youth game, provincial programs, national training centres, and the semi-professional / professional game in Canada, North America, and Europe.
10. Develop capacity to implement the links and supports for the LTPD plan with club/school/community, regional, provincial, national, and international aspects of the game.
11. Provide strong leadership for the game in Canada through the CSA.



## THE 10 KEY FACTORS BEHIND LTPD

The LTPD model is built on the following research, principles and tools. The following 10 factors are based on Canadian Sport for Life, the long-term athlete development model approved by the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Sport in 2005.

### 1. The 10-year Rule

Scientific research has determined that it takes at least 10 years and 10,000 hours of training for athletes in any sport to reach elite performance levels. While the LTPD model promotes basic physical wellness for a broad range of soccer participants regardless of ability or disability, it has also been designed to address the long-term needs of players who pursue excellence for “World Cup” performance according to the 10-year rule.

### 2. The FUNdamentals

All sports are based on fundamental movement skills and sports skills. Basic movement skills include agility, balance, and coordination, while basic sports skills include running, jumping, throwing, kicking, catching, and dribbling. Research has demonstrated that children will achieve excellence in a broad variety of sports if they are trained to be physically “literate” in these basic skills prior to their adolescent growth spurt, and they will also be more likely to find satisfaction in lifelong physical activity.

### 3. Specialization

Some sports require “early specialization” to obtain elite performance levels, such as gymnastics and figure skating, while other sports demonstrate better athlete performance through “late specialization,” such as basketball and soccer. As a late specialization sport, soccer relies on a variety of components in the overall sport system (schools, recreation centres, other sports) to develop physical literacy during the FUNdamental stage, as well as speed and suppleness training into adolescence. LTPD actively discourages early specialization in soccer (e.g.

prior to the age of 10 years) since premature specialization contributes to imbalanced physical development, overuse injuries, early burnout, and inadequate development of movement and sports skills.

### 4. Developmental Age

Everyone passes through the same stages of development from early childhood through adolescence, but the timing, rate, and amount of their development varies. This is described as the difference between chronological age and developmental age. Two children may be the same chronological age (e.g. 11 years old), but at the same time they may be four to five years apart in developmental age. LTPD asks soccer coaches and administrators to take developmental age into account when they design programs and select players.

### 5. Trainability

The physiological systems of every player can be trained at any age, but there are critical periods in the player’s development when the body is especially responsive to specific types of movement and skills training. To reach their genetic potential, players need to receive the right type of training at the correct stage of development. If these critical periods are missed, players may grow to be fast, jump high, and kick well, but they will never be as fast, jump as high, or kick as well as they might have done with timely specialized training.

### 6. Physical, Mental, Cognitive, and Emotional Development

As players grow from childhood through adolescence, they experience significant changes in physical, mental, cognitive, and emotional development. Coaches and administrators need to consider these changes carefully when they plan training programs and design competition formats. Failure to address these changes may result in mental or emotional burnout, undue mental stress, anxiety, diminished confidence, and early exit from the sport.



## 7. Periodization

Periodization refers to the time frames that are used to schedule player training, competition, and recovery. Soccer programs at every stage of player development need to follow a logical and scientific schedule to ensure that players remain healthy and achieve optimum performance at the required time. Periodization plans are adjusted at each stage of development to account for player growth, maturation, and trainability.

## 8. Calendar Planning for Competition

The calendar for game competition has a critical impact on the development of each player. Different stages of development have different requirements for the type, frequency, and level of competition. At certain stages, training physical capacities in players is more beneficial to their long-term performance and wellness than formal match competition. Put simply, short-term competitive success should not be emphasized for children and youth players at the expense of their long-term development. If players are to reach levels of excellence and remain active for life, training-to-competition ratios at each stage of development must be sensitive to their long-term needs.

## 9. System Alignment and Integration

LTPD recognizes that long-term player development is influenced by a number of different elements and groups in the overall soccer and sports system, such as school teams, physical education programs, recreational activities, soccer clubs, and regional associations. To optimize player development, LTPD asks that these different groups and institutions become integrated and aligned with each other, ensuring that they are mutually supportive, clear in their roles and responsibilities, and aware of how they contribute to player learning and development. Players will best develop in a coordinated soccer system that is clearly defined, logically structured, and based upon consistent principles. Through LTPD, players are able to identify the opportunities available to them and to understand the pathway they need to follow, whether their aim is long-term excellence or simply remaining active for life.

## 10. Continuous Improvement

LTPD is based on the best available research in sports science and the best practices in player development around the world, but knowledge and research continue to grow. LTPD should respond to new scientific research and soccer-specific innovations to ensure that the development system continually optimizes the systematic and logical delivery of programs, and LTPD may even initiate new research. As well, LTPD should drive ongoing education, promotion, and advocacy regarding player development with government, media, educators, parents, coaches, administrators, and sports scientists.



# TRAINING CAPACITY

There are ten “S”s of training which need to be integrated when developing annual training and competition plans. The ten “S”s include five physical capacities that sport scientists have identified in player development: stamina (endurance), strength, speed, skill, and suppleness (flexibility). Building on these physical capacities, an additional five “S”s create a complete, holistic training program. Each of these capacities is trainable throughout a player’s lifetime, but there are clearly critical periods in the development of each capacity during which training produces the greatest benefit to each player’s long-term development.

These critical periods vary between individuals as each player is unique in their genetic makeup. While the critical periods follow general stages of human growth and maturation, scientific evidence shows that humans vary considerably in the magnitude and rate of their response to different training stimuli at all stages. Some players may show potential for excellence by age 11, whereas others may not indicate their promise until age 15 or 16. Consequently, a long-term approach to player development is needed to ensure that players who respond slowly to training stimuli are not “short-changed” in their development.

The critical periods in trainability are referred to as “critical windows of accelerated adaptation to training.” If players are to reach their genetic potential, correct training must be provided during these critical windows.

### Stamina (Endurance)

The critical window for training stamina occurs at the onset of Peak Height Velocity (PHV), commonly known as the adolescent growth spurt. Players need increased focus on aerobic capacity training as they enter PHV, and they should be progressively introduced to aerobic power as their growth rate decelerates.

### Strength

There are two critical windows of trainability for strength in girls: immediately after PHV and during the onset of menarche. Boys have one strength window, and it begins 12 to 18 months after PHV.

### Speed

In both boys and girls, there are two critical windows of trainability for speed. For girls, the first speed window occurs between the ages of six and eight years, and the second window occurs between 11 and 13 years. For boys, the first speed window occurs between the ages of seven and nine years, and the second window occurs between 13 and 16 years. During the first speed window, training should focus on developing agility and quickness; during the second speed window, training should focus on developing the anaerobic alactic energy system.

### Skill

Girls and boys both have one window for optimal skill training. For girls, the window is between the ages of eight and 11 years, while in boys it is between nine and 12 years. During this window, young players should be developing physical literacy – that is, competence in the fundamental movement and sport skills that are the foundation of all sports. Competence in these skills will make it easier for players to learn and excel later in all late-specialization sports, including soccer.

### Suppleness

The critical window of trainability for suppleness occurs between the ages of six and 10 years in both girls and boys. However, special attention should also be paid to flexibility during PHV.

### Structure / Stature

This component addresses the six stages of growth in the human body linking them to the windows of optimal trainability. It recognizes stature (the height of a human) before during and after maturation guiding a coach or parent to the measurements needed to track growth. The tracking of stature as a guide to developmental age allows planning to address the critical or sensitive periods of physical (endurance, strength, speed and flexibility) and skill development. Diagnostics to identify strength and weaknesses is critical to consider ‘structure’ properly into training plans.





## (p) Psychology

Sport is a physical and mental challenge. The ability to maintain high levels of concentration, yet remain relaxed with the confidence to succeed, is a skill essential to long-term performance in sport. This skill also has the potential to transcend sport and affect our everyday lives. To develop the mental toughness for success at high levels, training programs are required which address the specific gender and LTPD stage of players. The training programs should include key mental components identified by sport psychologists: concentration, confidence, motivation, and handling pressure. As a player progresses through LTPD stages, the mental training aspect will evolve from: having fun and respecting opponents; to visualization and self-awareness; to goal setting, relaxation, and positive self-talk. To master the mental challenge of sport, these basic skills are then tested in increasingly difficult competitive environments. Ultimately, the

planning, implementing, and refining of mental strategies for high-level competition will have a large impact on podium performances. Consequently, the mental training program is critical at all stages of LTPD, as dealing with success and failure will determine continuation in the game and physical activity in general, dramatically affecting both active lifestyle and podium performance.

## Sustenance

Sustenance recognizes a broad range of components with the central theme of replenishing the body. This is to prepare the player for the volume and intensity required to optimize training or living life to the fullest. Areas addressed are: nutrition, hydration, rest, sleep, and regeneration, all of which need to be applied differently to training (life) plans depending on the stage of LTPD. Underlining sustenance is the need for optimal recovery management: the player moves to a 24/7 model which places a high degree of importance on the individ-

ual's activities away from the field of play. For proper sustenance and recovery management, the coach and/or parent must monitor recovery through the identification of fatigue. Fatigue can come in forms that include metabolic, neurological, psychological, environmental, and travel. While overtraining or over-competition can lead to burnout, improperly addressing sustenance can lead to the same result.

## Schooling

In training program design, the demands of school must be considered. This is not only limited to the demands placed by school sports or physical education classes, but it also includes consideration of school academic loads and timing of exams. When possible, training camps and competition tours should compliment, not conflict, with the timing of major academic events at school.

Overstress should be monitored carefully. Overstress refers to the every day stresses of life, such as schooling, exams, peer groups, family, and boyfriend or girlfriend relationships, as well as increased training volume and intensities. A good balance should be established between all factors, and coaches and parents should work together in this regard.

## Sociocultural

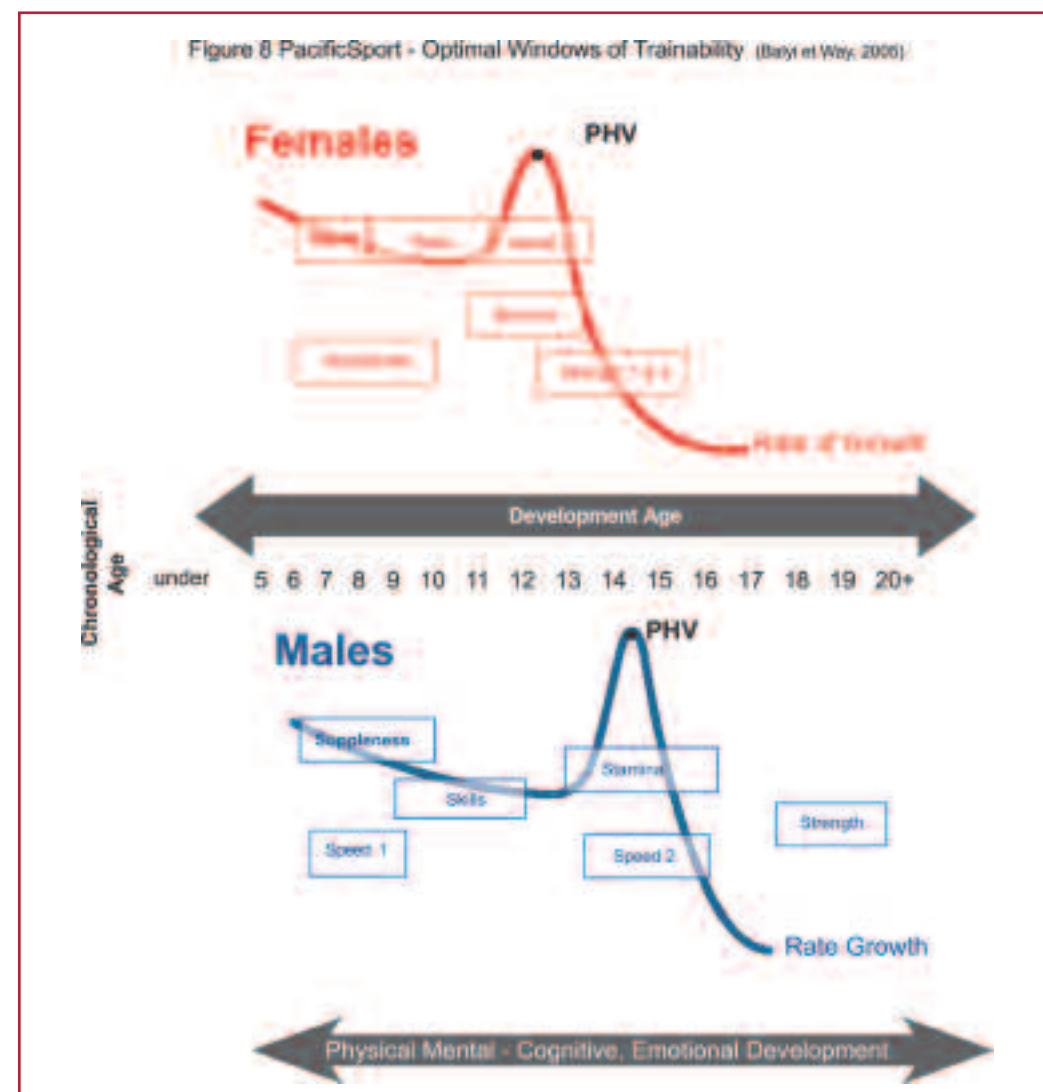
The sociocultural aspects of sport are significant and must be managed through proper planning. Socialization via sport occurs at the community level, and it can lead to International exposure as players progress through the LTPD stages. This socialization can involve broadening of perspective, including ethnicity awareness and national diversity. Within the travel schedule, recovery can include education related to the competition location, including history, geography, architecture, cuisine, literature, music, and visual arts. Proper annual planning can allow sport to offer much more than simply commuting between hotel room and field of play.

Sport socialization also must address sport subculture to ensure general societal values and norms will be internalized via sport participation. As well, coaches and parents must guard against group dynamics which create a culture of abuse or bullying. Ethics training should be integrated into training and competition plans at all stages of LTPD. Overall sociocultural activity is not a negative distraction or an interference with competition activities: It is

a positive contribution to the development of the person and the player.

## Other Considerations in Trainability

Children often begin to play soccer after the critical windows of trainability for speed, skill, and suppleness have past. These children are therefore dependent on schools, recreation programs, and other sports to provide timely training in these capacities. LTPD advocates that soccer groups build relationships with these organizations to promote and support appropriate training. If players miss these training periods entirely, coaches will need to design individualized programs to remedy any shortcomings.



# RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

On the basis of sport science research and comparative study of soccer player development programs in countries such as England and Ireland, the Work Group has identified the LTPD pathway as the desired model for player development in Canada. LTPD answers the need to develop elite players for international competition, and it also promotes soccer as an active lifestyle for players at all ages and levels of ability.

In harmony with the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model developed by Canadian Sports Centres and currently being adopted by over 50 sports organizations in Canada and around the world, LTPD recognizes 7 stages in the development of soccer players:

- Stage 1: Active Start ages U4-U6
- Stage 2: FUNDamentals ages U6-U8 females, U6-U9 males
- Stage 3: Learning to Train ages U8-U11 females, U9-U12 males
- Stage 4: Training to Train ages U11-U15 females, U12-U16 males
- Stage 5: Training to Compete age U15-U19 females, U16-U20 males
- Stage 6: Training to Win ages 18+ females, U19+ males
- Stage 7: Active for Life any ages females and males

In the LTPD guidelines in this document, detailed guidelines are provided for the physical, mental, and emotional development of soccer players, including practical aspects such as recommended skill sets, game formats, and periodized training plans.

LTPD provides a rational and complete approach to reaching the spectrum of goals between player achievement and lifelong wellness, and as previously stated, it is based on the LTAD model that has already gained support internationally. However, it is clear that LTPD has significant implications for every facet of the Canadian sports system relating to soccer.

Implementing LTPD will require changes to the every level of soccer governance in Canada, and it will require a concerted effort to educate parents, coaches, and administrators in its principles. Leagues will need to change game formats in some jurisdictions for some age levels, coaches will need to adjust attitudes and philosophies, administrators will need to demonstrate more accountability in their roles, and more money will be needed to drive all programs. Support for LTPD implementation will need to come from diverse stakeholders who may have to set aside personal interests for the greater success of Canadian soccer as a whole.

For these reasons and many more, the implementation of LTPD must be approached with patience, understanding, resolve, and a firm sight on the end goal of strengthening Canadian soccer.

The Work Group currently envisions six major tasks for the initial implementation of LTPD:

- Game Structure = identification and communication of a basic long-term soccer player development pathway. Materials such as brochures, mini-brochures, and posters will be created to inform the soccer community about LTPD. (June 08)
- Wellness to World Cup = a comprehensive document outlining the challenges for Canadian soccer, where we are now, where we want to be, and strategic initiatives on how we are going to get there. (June 08)

- Technical Matrix = outlines all aspects of player development at each stage in the LTPD pathway. It will provide coaches, players, and parents a comprehensive guide to training, competition, and recovery planning at all stages. (December 08)
- Periodized Annual Plans = detailed guidelines for coaches to implement LTPD according to each player's stage of development. The plan will address the 10 S's of training. (December 09)
- Addressing Strategic Initiatives = with CSA Board approval, the Work Group also recommends a review of the competition structure in Canada, coach education programs aligned with LTPD, and the system of National Training Centres (NTCs). This process will also look at the state of Canadian futsal and beach soccer programs. (Ongoing)
- Implementing Strategic Initiatives = in consultation with all partners, complete the Strategic Tactical Plan which will result in implementing change. (Ongoing)

As work proceeds with the six tasks above, research to support these items and future LTPD initiatives will be ongoing.

## Strategic Initiatives and Tactical Plan

To facilitate implementation, the Work Group has outlined a simple framework of LTPD Strategic Initiatives required to support each of the seven stages of LTPD. These initiatives address the five major target areas of the Canadian soccer system: player development, coaching, leadership, competition, and facilities.

The LTPD Tactical Plan (Appendix B) describes the specific steps that are required to implement each of the initiatives, including identification of the groups behind each implementation and the timeline. The Tactical Plan can be used as a framework for measuring and monitoring progress in LTPD implementation, and it can also serve as a starting point in clarifying the roles of key stakeholders in the soccer system.



# 'TOP 40' RANKING OF LTPD

(Editors note: cost estimates for each initiative will be completed in the future.)

Rank	Strategic Initiative	Stage	Cat...	Cost \$ ?
1.	Increase the # of qualified coaches and professionals working with athletes at all levels	All	Coach	e.g. High
2.	Adjust the current coaching courses and increase the number of coach education courses that specifically address this stage	L2T	Coach	e.g. Low 2 Medium
3.	Vibrant national system of national training centres and extensive linkages to professional clubs worldwide	T2C	Leader	e.g. Medium
4.	Re-align competition structures nationally, provincially, and locally to address proper ratio of training	T2T	Comp	e.g. Low
5.	Create more high-quality training environments; introduce and implement a coordinated playing concept that is central to improving Canadian players	T2T	Players	
6.	Establish paid technical directors and administrators guiding soccer training in all Canadian clubs	L2T	Leader	
7.	Establish clear roles and responsibilities for technical staff and administrators; integrate "player-centred" concept into CSA policies	T2T	Leader	
8.	Define the player skills desired for each stage of development	All	Players	
9.	Address training and competition ratios and educate all organizations on LTPD for soccer	All	Comp	
10.	Grow the game towards more professional teams in Canada	T2W	Comp	
11.	Establish partnerships with professional clubs in top leagues; establish a European and Central American training centre; Play more internationals	T2W	Players	
12.	Provide a Mini Soccer First Kicks play book for parent-coaches; link parent-coaches to mentors	FUN	Coach	
13.	Create partnerships with elementary schools and municipalities to increase player numbers and improve quality of facilities	FUN	Facility	
14.	Ensure skill development in training and games is more important than winning or losing	L2T	Comp	
15.	Produce a resource for teachers and parents to support soccer 'play' (the to-do list)	AS	Coach	
16.	Generate relationships with municipalities to develop indoor and outdoor facilities	All	Facility	
17.	Facilitate talented Canadian athletes getting regular exposure to highly competitive environments in Canada or abroad	T2C	Comp	
18.	Combine parent-child sessions at the same time. Create marketing strategies to offset facility operational costs	A4L	Facility	
19.	Soccer for All – everyone can play; encourage all soccer participants to invest in quality Canadian soccer	A4L	Leader	
20.	Establish a curriculum to support a series of district centres for excellence	L2T	Players	

# TECHNICAL INITIATIVES

Rank	Rating	Strategic Initiative	Stage	Cat...	Cost \$ ?
21.		Establish quality periodized annual training, competition, and recovery plans with appropriate high-level competition	T2C	Players	
22.		Provide resources to parents, coaches and clubs (e.g. World of Soccer website)	FUN	Players	
23.		Produce a soccer training course for coaches of talented players; coach educators recruit, train and service.	T2T	Coach	
24.		Reinvigorate the A and B license courses; increase the number of advanced coaches in Canada	T2C	Coach	
25.		Ensure organized competition does not occur at this stage; no refereeing	AS	Comp	
26.		Create partnerships with elementary schools and municipalities to increase player numbers and improve quality of facilities	L2T	Facility	
27.		Encourage mini soccer with appropriate ratio of training as well as participation in other sports to develop physical literacy	FUN	Comp	
28.		Encourage soccer-friendly playgrounds in Canada; produce a guide to achieve the best with very little	AS	Facility	
29.		Implement a quality club recognition program	All	Leader	
30.		Create partnerships with elementary schools and municipalities to increase player numbers and improve quality of facilities	T2T	Facility	
31.		Support the development of quality facilities for new and existing professional teams and international events	T2W	Facility	
32.		Adapt the field dimensions and game format to suit the participants' needs and abilities; ensure the club is linked with the player throughout their career	A4L	Players	
33.		Partner with MSOs and other sports to ensure soccer supports the development of fundamental movement skills	AS	Players	
34.		Ensure the broader pool of national coaches is continuously developing professionally	T2W	Coach	
35.		Teach sportsmanship and ensure every player has fun and can play. Raise the standard of coaching (investing in players and parents, current and future)	A4L	Coach	
36.		Link soccer to evolving education initiatives	FUN	Leader	
37.		Link soccer to evolving health initiatives	AS	Leader	
38.		Establish a Technical Control Board for the CSA Technical Director and National Team Staff (Two senior teams)	T2W	Leader	
39.		Create partnerships with colleges and universities for establishing quality facilities and access	T2C	Facility	
40.		Encourage fair play in the spirit of 'the game'	A4L	Comp	

# STAKEHOLDER ROLES

The successful implementation of LTPD requires clear definitions of stakeholder roles and responsibilities. Without clear definitions, there is potential for confusion, conflict and inaction between stakeholders on implementation initiatives. Definition of roles ensures accountability for each of the Strategic Initiatives, and there should be discussion and joint agreement on precisely who is responsible for completing each task.

The following chart outlines leadership/governance (program design) and program delivery by stakeholders on a stage-by-stage basis. As the chart indicates, for program delivery to be most effective, there is a fundamental need for collaboration at all stages; collaboration between program deliverers will ensure best service to the consumer.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Stage	CSA		Pro Teams		PSO		District		Club		Schools & Post-Sec	
	Leadership	Programs	Leadership	Programs	Leadership	Programs	Leadership	Programs	Leadership	Programs	Leadership	Programs
Active for Life	Responsible								Responsible		Responsible	
Training to Win	Responsible		Responsible									
Training to Compete	Responsible		Responsible		Responsible						Responsible	
Training to Train	Responsible				Responsible				Responsible		Responsible	
Learning to Train	Responsible				Responsible		Responsible		Responsible			
FUNDamentals	Responsible				Responsible		Responsible		Responsible			
Active Start	Responsible								Responsible			

 Responsible

The following chart outlines facility owners and competition hosts on a stage-by-stage basis. In this case, only professional teams and educational institutions have fields and host competitions. In all other cases, with a few exceptions, a relationship has to be established to deliver soccer programs and competitions in Canada. It should be noted that FIFA hosts competition primarily at the Training to Win stage.

COMPETITION

Stage	CSA		Pro Teams		PSO District		Municipal		Club		Schools & Post-Sec	
	Facilities	Competition	Facilities	Competition	Facilities	Competition	Facilities	Competition	Facilities	Competition	Facilities	Competition
Active for Life							Responsible				Responsible	
Training to Win		Responsible	Responsible								Responsible	
Training to Compete		Responsible				Responsible	Responsible				Responsible	
Training to Train		Responsible				Responsible	Responsible				Responsible	
Learning to Train						Responsible	Responsible				Responsible	
FUNDamentals							Responsible				Responsible	
Active Start											Responsible	

COACHING PROGRAMS

Stage	CSA		Pro Teams		PSO District		Municipal		Club		Schools & Post-Sec	
	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery
Active for Life	Responsible				Responsible							
Training to Win	Responsible											
Training to Compete	Responsible					Responsible						
Training to Train	Responsible				Responsible							
Learning to Train	Responsible				Responsible							
FUNDamentals	Responsible				Responsible							
Active Start	Responsible				Responsible							

The system of leadership and program delivery is often complex within Canadian soccer. The charts provide a simple outline of the shared leadership in many areas and the collaborative model of programming.





Stage	CSA		Pro Teams		PSO District		Municipal		Club		Schools & Post-Sec	
	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery
Active for Life												
Training to Win												
Training to Compete												
Training to Train												
Learning to Train												
FUNDamentals												
Active Start												

Stage	CSA		Pro Teams		PSO District		Municipal		Club		Schools & Post-Sec	
	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery	Design	Delivery
Active for Life												
Training to Win												
Training to Compete												
Training to Train												
Learning to Train												
FUNDamentals												
Active Start												

# STAGES OF LTPD

Sports can be classified as early or late specialization, and the seven stages of LTPD are based on this concept. Sports such as gymnastics and figure skating qualify as early specialization, while other sports such as basketball and soccer are classified as late specialization.

Because soccer is a late specialization sport, LTPD actively discourages early specialization (i.e. prior to the age of 10 years) since premature specialization contributes to imbalanced physical development, overuse injuries, early burnout, and inadequate development of movement and sports skills.

The first three stages of LTPD encourage physical literacy for all players, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, and correspond to the ages prior to the adolescent growth spurt (PHV). Stages four, five, and six focus on developing excellence and correspond to PHV's onset and aftermath. Stage seven encourages lifelong physical activity, and players may choose to enter this stage at any time in their playing career.

Under the CSA's leadership, LTPD can provide the framework for high quality programs that ensure enjoyable lifelong playing opportunities for players of all levels of ability, as well as development pathways for elite players who pursue excellence.



# STAGE 1: ACTIVE START

U4 to U6 females and males  
"FIRST KICKS"

At this introductory level, the objective is to get children moving and to keep them active. At daycares, schools, clubs, recreation centres and home, small children can be provided with early opportunities to learn basic soccer elements. No competitive games should be played – the objective is for adults and children to play together informally.

The physical curriculum provides for learning basic fundamental movement skills such as running, jumping, twisting, kicking, throwing, and catching. The technical requirements are nothing more than encouraging children to enjoy playing with the ball one-on-one with an adult, practicing dribbling, kicking, and shooting.

Player success is encouraged. While the adult should challenge the child player, they should allow the child to "score" goals and "beat" the adult opponent. Adults are advised to discontinue play when the child has lost interest.

At this stage, players should participate in a variety of additional activities. Swimming and well-structured gymnastics programs are recommended to enhance the full range of basic movement skills and physical literacy.



# STAGE 2: FUNDAMENTALS

U6 to U8 females / U6 to U9 males  
"FUN WITH THE BALL"

At this stage, coaches and teachers should create a stimulating learning environment where the atmosphere is "Freedom and Fun."

The physical curriculum emphasizes the ABCs of movement: agility, balance, co-ordination and speed, as well as running, jumping, twisting, kicking, throwing and catching. Technical instruction is introduced through movement exercises and games that promote a feel for the ball. This includes gaining ball control in receiving passes, dribbling, passing less than 25m, kicking the ball forward, and shooting on goal.

Keeping in mind that small children are naturally egocentric, basic tactical concepts involving basic cooperation between players can be introduced. Playing situations work best for teaching understanding of the game and building basic game intelligence and decision making.

Game formats should progress from 3v3 to 5v5 as the children grow through this stage, and the season should range from 12 to 20 weeks. In order to help de-emphasize competitiveness between coaches and parents, no league standings should be kept. A basic league fixture schedule can be created, but it is basically an extended jamboree format, and the emphasis is clearly on FUN.

All players should play equal time and try all team positions, including goalkeeping, and equal time should be allotted to both practices and games. Children should continue to participate in a variety of additional activities. Swimming and well-structured gymnastics programs are recommended, along with ball sports.



Game format	Squad Size	Game Duration	Ball Size	FIELD SIZES		GOAL SIZES no larger than
				Min/Max width	Min/Max length	
3 v 3 *	Max 6	2 x 15 min.	3/4	18 to 22 m	25 to 30 m	5 f/1.52 m X 8 f/2.44 m
4 v 4 *	Max 8	2 x 15 min.	3/4	20 to 25 m	30 to 36 m	5 f/1.52 m X 8 f/2.44 m
5 v 5 *	Max 10	2 x 15 min.	3/4	25 to 30 m	30 to 36 m	5 f/1.52 m X 8 f/2.44 m

\* with or without goalkeeper - when no goalkeeper, reduce the goal size



# STAGE 3: LEARNING TO TRAIN

U8 to U11 females / U9 to U12 males

“THE GOLDEN AGE OF LEARNING”

The effect of the role-model is very important at this stage. Children begin to identify with famous players and successful teams, and they want to learn imaginative skills.

Skill demonstration is very important, and the players learn best by “doing.” Players move from being self-centred to self-critical, and they have a high arousal level during basic skills training.

This is also an important time to teach basic principles of play and to establish a training ethic and discipline. Repetitions are important to develop technical excellence, but creating a fun and challenging environment is still essential for stimulating learning.

This stage is an optimal window for trainability of speed, flexibility and skills, and physical training should focus on developing these qualities. Technical training focuses on building a greater repertoire of soccer related movements within the context of basic soccer games.

Tactical training is designed to develop field awareness and encourage decision making. Players should be taught simple combinations, marking, and running into space. Mental aspects of training are intended to develop each player’s intrinsic motivation through fun and enjoyment that foster a desire to play.

Game formats should progress from 6v6 to 8v8 as children grow through this stage, and the season should last 16 to 20 weeks. League standings are still not necessary. A simple league fixture schedule can be created, but it is basically an extended jamboree format, as the emphasis is still clearly on FUN. No off-sides in this stage.

All players play equal time and try all team positions, including goalkeeping, and the training to competition ratio should be 2 to 3 training sessions for every game. Other sports continue to play a role, both for variety and cross-training, but the balance now begins to shift firmly in favour of soccer.



Game format	Squad Size	Game Duration	Ball Size	FIELD SIZES		GOAL SIZES no larger than
				Min/Max width	Min/Max length	
6 v 6	Ideal 8/Max 10	2 x 25 min.	3/4	30 to 36 m	40 to 55 m	6 f/1.83 m X 14 f/4.27 m
7 v 7	Ideal 9/Max 12	2 x 25 min.	4	30 to 36 m	40 to 55 m	6 f/1.83 m X 16 f/4.88 m
8 v 8	Ideal 11/Max 14	2 x 30 min.	4	42 to 55 m	60 to 75 m	6 f/1.83 m X 18 f/5.49 m

# STAGE 4: TRAINING TO TRAIN

U11 to U15 females / U12 to U16 males

“IDENTIFYING THE ELITE PLAYER”

At this stage, elite soccer groups may express interest in recruiting talented youth players. Care must be taken to recognize and protect the long-term interests of each player. Risks and issues can be avoided by ensuring that the development model remains “player-centred.”

The optimal window of trainability for stamina begins with the onset of Peak Height Velocity (PHV), more commonly known as the adolescent growth spurt. The demands of skill training as well as training loads should increase, thus provoking improvement in mental toughness, concentration and diligence. Awareness of tactics within the game becomes an important facet of the learning process. Players tend to be self-critical and rebellious, but they have a strong commitment to the team.

Physical training emphasizes flexibility, disciplined warm-up and cool-down, agility, aerobic and anaerobic endurance, strength, balance, and core strength and stability. Players are also introduced to nutrition and proper diet (pre-game, post-game, tournaments), prevention and care of injuries, and the importance of rest and recovery. Coaches may be required to design personalized training programs in order to respect the growth spurt.

Technical instruction introduces advanced techniques to those players who are capable, and the skills are presented within a more complex environment with position-specific emphasis. Tactical training emphasizes team work, including developing tasks per unit (defense, midfield, and forward units) and positional awareness through small-sided games and large-sided competitive matches.

Mental training introduces a pre-competition routine, mental preparation, goal setting, and coping with winning and losing.

Game formats should progress from 8v8 to 11v11 as players grow through this stage (game transitions to 11v11 at U13 age), and the season moves toward year-round play that includes appropriate rest and recovery periods. Offsides are introduced at the beginning of this stage.

There must be an appropriate ratio of training, competition, and rest throughout the year. Periodized planning is critical to ensuring players healthy and performing to their potential. The training to competition ratio should be between 5 to 10 for every game.

National competitions held for regional all-star teams at U14 and U16. Soccer is now the player’s primary sport, but complimentary sports are encouraged which support movement and athleticism suitable to soccer (e.g. basketball, track & field).



Game format	Squad Size	Game Duration	Ball Size	FIELD SIZES		GOAL SIZES no larger than
				Min/Max width	Min/Max length	
8 v 8	Ideal 11/Max 14	2 x 30 min.	4	42 to 55 m	60 to 75 m	6 f/1.83 m X 18 f/5.49 m
9 v 9	Ideal 12/Max 16	2 x 35 min.	4/5	42 to 55 m	60 to 75 m	6 f/1.83 m X 18 f/5.49 m
11 v 11	Ideal 16/Max 18	2 x 35 min.	5	FIFA Reg.	FIFA Reg.	8 f/2.44 m X 24 f/7.32 m

## STAGE 5: TRAINING TO COMPETE

U15 to U19 females / U16 to U20 males  
 “DEVELOPING THE INTERNATIONAL PLAYER”

Athletes who are now proficient at performing basic and soccer-specific skills are working to gain more game maturity as they learn to perform these skills under a variety of competitive conditions.

Fulfillment of each player's potential depends on their own efforts, the support of teammates, and the unselfish guidance of the coach. They must be exposed to quality playing and training environments which extend their mental, physical, tactical and technical capabilities to their limit. Players must have a sound understanding of soccer principles and concepts, and they should show emotional stability when confronted with pressure situations.

Physical training further develops flexibility, correct warm-up and cool-down, agility, aerobic and anaerobic endurance, strength, balance, and core strength and stability. Players continue to learn about nutrition and proper diet (pre-game, post-game, tournaments), prevention and care of injuries, and the importance of rest and recovery.

Technical training emphasizes the refinement of core skills and position specific-skills, and advanced techniques and skills are introduced as appropriate. Tactical instruction teaches decision-making tactical awareness, game appreciation, game analysis, productivity, and competitive proficiency.

Mental training works to increase player concentration, responsibility, discipline, accountability, goal setting, self-confidence, self-motivation, will to win, mental toughness, and a competitive mentality in practice and games. Players are taught the importance of being educated in the game, and they are encouraged to watch games on TV and National team games.

The game format is according to strict FIFA rules for 11-aside soccer, and the season is built on year-round play that includes appropriate rest and recovery periods.

There must be an appropriate ratio of training, competition, and rest throughout year. Periodized planning is critical to ensuring players healthy and performing to their potential. The training to competition ratio should be between 5 to 12 for every game, and players should play regularly in highly competitive professional and international matches. Soccer is the player's primary sport.



## STAGE 6: TRAINING TO WIN

U18+ females / U19+ males  
 “BUILDING THE WORLD CUP PLAYER”

The majority, if not all, of the player's physical, technical, tactical, and psychological qualities are now fully established, and the focus of training has shifted to optimization of performance. They may still require additional tactical experience in high-pressure games to develop consistency. The focus is on the maximization of all capacities.

Physical training emphasizes an individual fitness program for maintenance and improvement. However, work and recovery must be well monitored; periodized planning is critical to ensuring players healthy and performing to their potential.

Technical training looks at further development of advanced techniques and skills, refinement of general skills and individual positional skills, and game-related technical repetition under pressure. Tactical training is designed to stimulate a high degree of decision making, leadership, and game analysis skills. Players must be able to adjust game plans and adapt playing strategies to suit changing demands on the field.

Mental training aims to increase concentration, leadership, discipline, accountability, goal setting, responsibility, self confidence, self motivation, will to win, mental toughness, and a competitive mentality. Players develop an established pre-practice and pre-game routine.

The game format is according to strict FIFA rules for 11-aside soccer, and the season is built on year-round play that includes appropriate rest and recovery periods. There must be an appropriate ratio of training, competition, and rest throughout year. The training to competition ratio should be between 5 to 12 for every game, and players should play regularly in highly competitive professional and international matches. Soccer is the player's primary sport.



Game format	Squad Size	Game Duration	Ball Size	FIELD SIZES		GOAL SIZES
				Min/Max width	Min/Max length	
11 v 11	Ideal 16/Max 18	2 x 40 min.	5	FIFA Reg.	FIFA Reg.	8 f/2.44 m X 24 f/7.32 m
11 v 11	Ideal 16/Max 18	2 x 45 min.	5	FIFA Reg.	FIFA Reg.	8 f/2.44 m X 24 f/7.32 m





# STAGE 7: ACTIVE FOR LIFE

Any age females and males

## "SOCCER FOR HEALTH & GRASSROOTS GROWTH"

At any stage in the LTPD model, players may choose to play soccer as a purely recreational activity regardless of their level of ability or disability, and soccer can certainly be enjoyed as part of a life-long wellness plan. Players of all ages and abilities sometimes stop playing due to other interests, lack of success, shortage of playing opportunities, poor leadership, or other reasons. The LTPD model promotes personal success to ensure they remain enthusiastic and choose to stay involved in soccer and sport in general.

LTPD also addresses the needs of latecomers to the game, as soccer attracts new players at all ages. Some start playing past the age of critical development because their son or daughter is involved in soccer, while others simply want to try a new sport. LTPD encourages these latecomers to learn new skills in a fun and safe environment where they can remain healthy and have fun.

Apart from the benefits of lifelong wellness through soccer, adult recreational players can also become active in the coaching and administration of the sport. LTPD encourages the recruitment and retention of players, coaches, referees, and administrators as a means of supporting the ongoing development of both grassroots and elite soccer in Canada.

Elite soccer players are a special target for recruitment in this regard. After they retire from elite competition, elite players should receive support to pursue soccer careers as coaches, sport science specialists, mentors, referees, or administrators. Soccer and its governing bodies will benefit if suitable elite players are formally identified and retained within the fabric of the game.

Physical training in the Active for Life stage follows appropriate guidelines in the areas of endurance, strength, and flexibility training to promote continued activity among participants. Technical training may present new skills, or it may simply focus on maintaining skills already acquired. Basic tactics are sufficient to enjoy the game, and the mental focus is on having fun, stress release, and maintaining a fitness discipline.

The game format can be adapted to suit the level of play, number of players, and available space. The playing season may continue year-round with appropriate rest and recovery periods. There should be access for players of all ages, genders, and abilities, and costs to players should be minimized to ensure maximum participation.



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# APPENDIX A

## Glossary of Terms

**Adaptation** refers to a response to a stimulus or a series of stimuli that induces functional and/or morphological changes in the organism. Naturally, the level or degree of adaptation is dependent upon the genetic endowment of an individual. However, the general trends or patterns of adaptation are identified by physiological research, and guidelines are clearly delineated of the various adaptation processes, such as adaptation to muscular endurance or maximum strength.

**Adolescence** is a difficult period to define in terms of the time of its onset termination. During this period, most bodily systems become adult both structurally and functionally. Structurally, adolescence begins with an acceleration in the rate of growth in stature, which marks the onset of the adolescent growth spurt. The rate of statural growth reaches a peak, begins a slower or decelerative phase, and finally terminates 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 knowledge and experience base of a player and includes warm-up and cool-down procedures, stretching, nutrition, hydration, rest, recovery, restoration, regeneration, mental preparation, and taper and peak.

The more knowledgeable players are about these training and performance factors, the more they can enhance their training and performance levels. When athletes reach their genetic potential physiologically cannot improve anymore, performance can be improved by using the ancillary capacities to full advantage.

**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 neuromuscular or motor development. It is often divided into early childhood, which includes preschool children aged 1 to 5 years, and late childhood, which includes elementary school-age children, aged 6 through to the onset of adolescence.

**Chronological age** refers to “the number of years and days elapsed since birth.” Growth, development, and maturation operate in a time framework; that is, the child’s chronological age. Children of the same chronological age can differ by several years in their level of biological maturation. The integrated nature of growth and maturation is achieved by the interaction of genes, hormones, nutrients, and the physical and psychosocial environments in which the individual lives. This complex interaction regulates the child’s growth, neuromuscular maturation, sexual maturation, and general physical metamorphosis during the first two decades of life.

**Critical period of development** refers to a point in the development of a specific behaviour when experience or training has an optimal effect on development. The same experience, introduced at an earlier or later time, has no effect on or retards later skill acquisition.

**Development** refers to the interrelationship between growth and maturation in relation to the passage of time. The concept of child development also includes the social, emotional, intellectual, and motor aspects.

**Growth** refers to observable, step-by-step, measurable changes in body size such as

height, weight, and percentage of body fat.

**Maturation** refers to qualitative system changes, both structural and functional, in the child’s progress toward maturity. One example would be the change of cartilage to bone in the skeleton.

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

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

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

**Physical literacy** refers to the mastering of fundamental motor skills and fundamental sport skills.

**Post-natal growth** is commonly, although sometimes arbitrarily, divided into 3 or 4 age periods, including infancy, childhood, adolescence, and puberty.

**Puberty** refers to the point at which an individual is sexually mature and able to reproduce.

**Readiness** refers to the child’s level of growth, maturity, and development that enables him/her to perform tasks and meet demands through training and competition. Readiness and critical periods of trainability during growth and development of young athletes are also referred to as the correct time for the programming of certain stimuli to achieve optimum adaptation with regard to motor skills, muscular and/or aerobic power.

**Skeletal age** refers to the maturity of the skeleton determined by the degree of ossification of the bone structure. It is a measure of age that takes into consideration how far given bones have progressed toward maturity, not in size, but with respect to shape and position to one another.

**Trainability** refers to the genetic endowment of athletes as they respond individually to specific stimuli and adapt to it accordingly. Malina and Bouchard (1991) defined trainability as “the responsiveness of developing individuals at different stages of growth and maturation to the training stimulus.”



# APPENDIX B

## LTPD Tactical Plan

The following matrix identifies the actions required to implement LTPD in the five target areas (player development, coaching, leadership, competition, and facilities), including the leaders and implementers for each action, timelines, and basic goals.

*EDITOR: The Tactical Plan is still being finalized by the Work Group. It will be completed for inclusion in the next LTPD document revision following this initial document's CSA Board review and further consultation with stakeholders.*

*A Tactical Plan has to be developed by the Work Group for the different stages of development.*

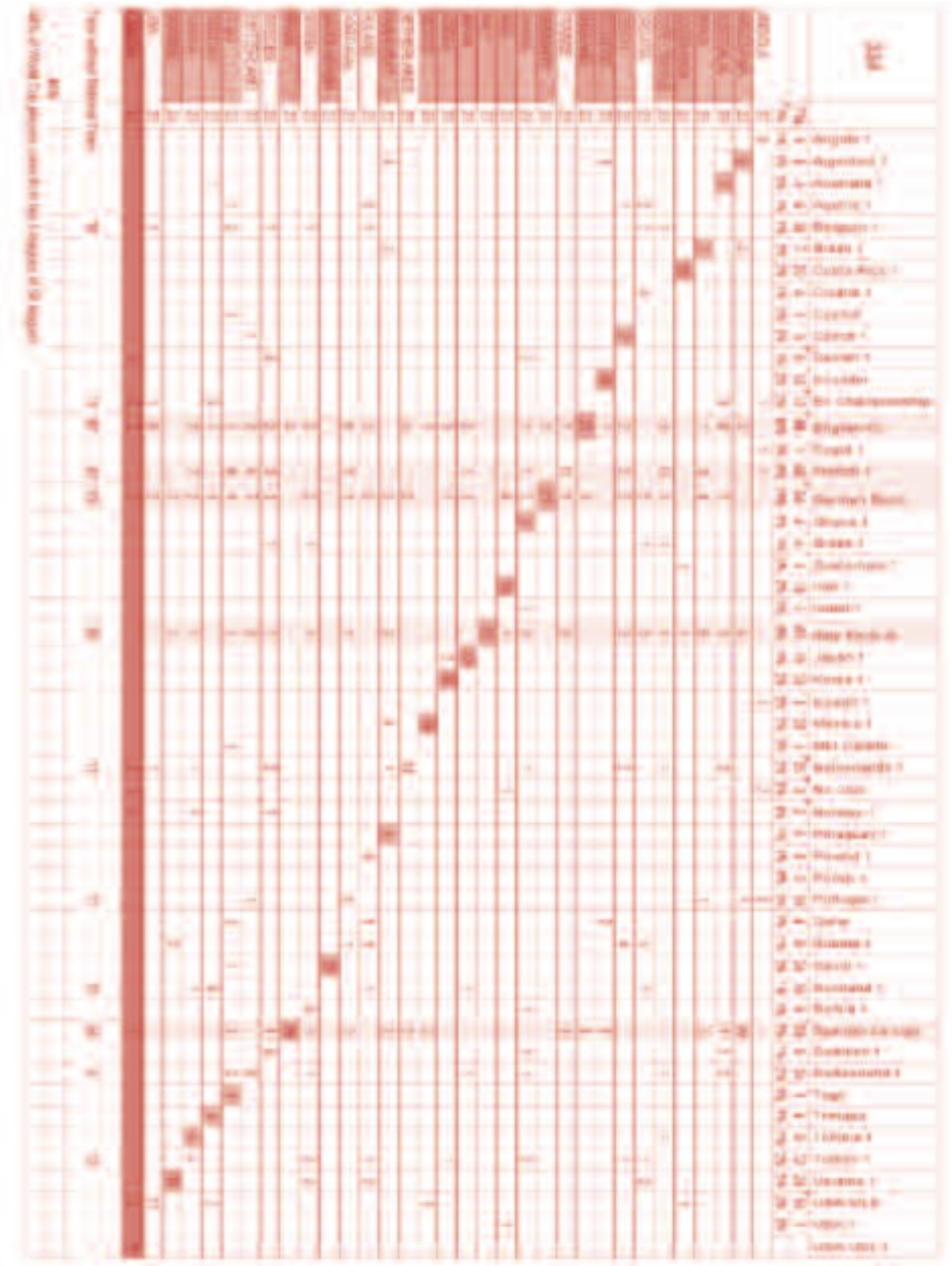
*It will be further developed in consultation with stakeholders for inclusion in the next edition of the Wellness to World Cup implementation plan.*

### All stages

	Player Development	Coaching	Leadership	Competition	Facilities
Strategy	Articulate the desired abilities of players for all stages of development	Increase the # of qualified coaches and professionals working with players at all levels	Implement a quality club recognition program	Address training and competition ratios and educate all organizations on LTPD for soccer	Generate relationships with municipalities to develop indoor and outdoor facilities
Goal	Parents and coaches understand desired abilities of players at each stage				
Lead	CSA				
Action	Develop the information using LTPD expert group and technical staff				
Timeline	2007				
Implementor	PSO				
Action	Disseminate information and utilize in player development				
Timeline	2008 on				
Implementor	Clubs				
Action	Ensure coaches train and assess players based on the desired ability				
Timeline	2008 on				

# APPENDIX C

## World Cup Players by Nation and League





For more information on Wellness to World Cup presented by BMO  
please visit: [www.CanadaSoccer.com](http://www.CanadaSoccer.com)