

LEADING A SOCCER NATION

CANADIAN SOCCER ASSOCIATION
STRATEGIC PLAN
2014-2018



WRITING THE NEXT CHAPTER – TOGETHER

There has never been a more exciting time for those of us involved in Canadian soccer.

With 850,000 registered players, soccer is – by far – the most popular team sport in this country. Globally, Canada ranks in the top ten for participation. Canadian Men's and Women's National Teams have captured an Olympic medal and multiple CONCACAF titles. Of the 209 FIFA Member Associations, Canada ranks in the top 5% in qualifying for FIFA World Cup competitions.

Our sport has never been stronger, with a record number of participants, unprecedented corporate support, and dedicated leaders working together at all levels, from community clubs, through the Provincial and Territorial Associations, to the national governing body.

The Canadian Soccer Association's 2014-18 Strategic Plan – titled LEADING a Soccer Nation – reflects that excitement. This is a plan with a difference. In fact, it represents a first for our organization. Traditionally, the Canadian Soccer Association's strategic plans have been internal documents. While it made sense during a previous era, the landscape has now changed, along with our collective outlook on soccer in Canada.

For the first time, we have reached out to the Canadian soccer community, looking for ideas and guidance on where we need to take the beautiful game in our country.

Canadians responded by the thousands – fans, players, parents, coaches, officials, administrators, sponsors, vendors and media. This is what we heard.

The Canadian Soccer Association needs to:

1. **Invest in TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP by supporting our players, coaches and officials at all levels of the sport.**
2. **Ensure CONSISTENT, WORLD-CLASS PERFORMANCES by our National Teams.**
3. **ENCOURAGE and oversee the GROWTH OF THE GAME in our country.**
4. **GOVERN the game in Canada PROFESSIONALLY in collaboration with our partners.**

The 2014-18 Strategic Plan is based on ideas gathered from coast to coast. It will help us build towards becoming a leading soccer nation and provides the road map to help get us there. It is a product of the passion that pervades the Canadian soccer community... the passion that will assure our success moving forward.

While the road ahead is clear, we can expect some bumps along the way. Our diverse community will not always agree on every priority. Ultimately, we all have the same goal:

To be able to stand proud with our fellow Canadians as we build towards becoming a leading soccer nation, one that consistently qualifies for and successfully competes in every single FIFA competition, with the pinnacle event that is the FIFA World Cup.



Victor Montagliani
President
Canadian Soccer Association

FINDING OUR FOCUS

Canadian soccer is growing up.

When we hosted the FIFA U-20 World Cup in 2007, the goal was to prove that Canada could stage a truly world-class soccer event. That competition attracted huge television audiences and a paid attendance of close to 1.2 million — a single-sport record for Canada, and a U-20 attendance record for FIFA. In the grand scheme of things, the quality of the tournament itself out paced Canada's performance on the pitch.

But expectations have changed considerably in just a few short years. When Canada welcomes the top female soccer players from around the globe to the FIFA Women's World Cup Canada 2015™ and FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Canada 2014, our teams will be expected to perform.

This is due, in part, to the breakthrough success of the Canadian Women's National Team at the London 2012 Olympics. But it's also a sign that soccer in Canada is maturing, and an indication of its increasing relevance as the largest participation sport in Canada.

The Canadian Soccer Association has spent the last several years growing the game, establishing our expertise in hosting international events, putting our financial house in order, revamping the governance structure, and building the Canada Soccer brand. With that solid foundation in place, it's now time to focus on technical excellence as we build towards becoming a leading soccer nation.

Our financial decisions should be based on answers to simple questions: Will this program bring us closer to our goal? Will this initiative help Canada become a leading soccer nation? If the answer is "no", then it is time to rethink its relevance, no matter how long it has been around.

Our focus must remain fixed on the key priorities that emerged from our consultations with Canadians and that are outlined in this plan: technical leadership, National Team performance, and growing and governing the game of soccer in Canada.

Canada is poised to advance beyond its reputation as a top host of international events and a leader in women's soccer to achieve consistent, top-tier performances at every level and in every aspect of the beautiful game.



Peter Montopoli
General Secretary
Canadian Soccer Association






1

INVEST

IN
TECHNICAL
LEADERSHIP
BY SUPPORTING
OUR PLAYERS,
COACHES AND
OFFICIALS AT
ALL LEVELS
OF THE SPORT



Increasing the technical ability of our players starts at the grassroots level.


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2

ENSURE

CONSISTENT,
WORLD-CLASS
PERFORMANCES
BY OUR
NATIONAL TEAMS



A reliable stream of high caliber players and qualified coaches is one of the essential building blocks for any soccer nation that wishes to compete successfully at the international level. But we must build an environment in which we can hold these players and coaches to a higher standard of performance.

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GOVERN

THE GAME IN CANADA
PROFESSIONALLY
IN COLLABORATION
WITH OUR PARTNERS




Successfully hosting global competitions will elevate the profile of soccer in our country. This will assist the Canadian Soccer Association in its quest for the development of new commercial partnerships and in furthering our brand both on and off the field. To maximize this impact, we must work more closely with our provincial and territorial partners to provide seamless operations across the country.

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ENCOURAGE

AND OVERSEE THE
GROWTH
OF THE GAME
IN OUR COUNTRY




The success of our National Teams has a direct and tangible impact on the overall popularity of the game, as young players gain inspiration from National Team role models competing in global competitions.

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1

INVEST IN TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP

BY SUPPORTING OUR PLAYERS, COACHES AND OFFICIALS
AT ALL LEVELS OF THE SPORT.

Increasing the technical ability of our players starts at the grassroots level.

PLAYERS

The Canadian Soccer Association will continue to ensure that our well-established Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) model will remain player-centric and focused on small-sided games designed to improve technical ability, maximize enjoyment, and encourage lifelong participation regardless of age, gender, or ability.

1.1 Ensure that grassroots youth programming (e.g., LTPD) is fully embraced and universally adopted by all youth clubs from coast to coast.

Our LTPD program needs to be linked to the creation of a National Player Development Pathway. If the National Player Development Pathway represents the “superhighway” of

Canadian soccer, LTPD is the on-ramp that will get our top players there.

1.2 Fully implement a National Player Development Pathway that coordinates the identification and development of elite players through professional clubs, training centres and a scouting network in order to provide a continual pipeline for all National Teams.

COACHES

In order to develop elite athletes, we need elite coaches. Building towards a leading soccer nation means that players at all ages and levels must be supported with proven technical programs that are implemented by knowledgeable coaches.

1.3 Mandate minimum standards of age-appropriate coaching certification for all levels through a rigorous and high-quality qualification and testing curriculum – one that is both affordable and available across the country.

1.4 Update the coaching curriculum for National A and B licenses to reflect a renewed focus on high performance.

1.5 Increase the enrolment, national representation, diversity, and number of successful graduates of our National A and B licensing program.

All of our coaches from East to West, and from grassroots to elite level must work from the same game plan. A consistent approach to technical development will provide a seamless and standard set of programs, ensuring that our players have a smooth and consistent progression of skill and performance regardless of where they are from.

1.6 Design and publish a national training curriculum with a universal vocabulary and a developmental methodology that streamlines technical progression with an adaptable and consistent style of play.

OFFICIALS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Our sport needs more than just strong players and coaches: we must fully develop our officials and administrators who support the game. It is important to continually invest in the people who make the game happen.

1.7 Recruit and develop more match officials starting at younger levels and mandate minimum continuing education standards in a supportive environment.

1.8 Support competency-based recruitment, selection and development of soccer administrators, technical, volunteer, and support staff.

2

ENSURE CONSISTENT, WORLD-CLASS PERFORMANCES BY OUR NATIONAL TEAMS

A reliable stream of high caliber players and qualified coaches is one of the essential building blocks for any soccer nation that wishes to compete successfully at the international level. But we must build an environment in which we can hold these players and coaches to a higher standard of performance.

Our National Team coaches do not have the benefit of selecting players who regularly compete in an elite-level domestic league. The world's top national teams draw from their domestic leagues. The development of a home-grown system in which our best players can compete is of paramount importance.

2.1 Support the development of elite-level, semi-professional regional leagues that provide a bridge between

high-performance youth players and national/professional team selection.

In order to improve, our National Teams must compete against the best and more often. Increasing the number of playing opportunities for our elite players at home is one way to boost the performance of Canada's National Teams.

2.2 Seek out increased opportunities for National Team games versus high quality opponents.

The majority of amateur soccer leagues in this country do not have minimum requirements related to coaching certification, training curriculum, or player development.

2.3 Mandate that all competitive and high performance leagues in Canada be standards-based at the appropriate level.

In order to play at the highest level possible, facilities must be world-class. This challenge is more pronounced in a country whose climate and geography present both challenges and opportunities.

2.4 Maximize investment in indoor and outdoor facilities from both private and public sources while coordinating with local governments and ensuring meaningful technical input.



3

ENCOURAGE AND OVERSEE THE GROWTH OF THE GAME IN OUR COUNTRY

The success of our National Teams has a direct and tangible impact on the overall popularity of the game, as young players gain inspiration from National Team role models competing in global competitions.

Greater interest in grassroots soccer means increased membership, engaged supporters, celebrated coaches, more skilled players coming through the system for National Team selection, and ultimately, Canada as a true soccer nation.

3.1 Maintain our position as the number one participation sport in Canada while devoting appropriate resources to ensuring a higher participation rate from females, aboriginal people, athletes with a disability and ethnic minorities.

Over the next four years, the Canadian Soccer Association will

work with our partners, including the federal and provincial governments, on a national infrastructure strategy to support the grassroots development of the game. This will also allow us to extend the impact of the FIFA U-20 World Cup Canada 2007 and to sustain the legacy of the FIFA Women's World Cup Canada 2015™ and the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Canada 2014.

3.2 Successfully host two women's competitions in 2014 and 2015, with matches in cities from coast-to-coast with new attendance and TV-viewership records.

Long after the FIFA Women's World Cup 2015™ has concluded, soccer players, coaches, officials and clubs will continue to enjoy the expanded and upgraded training facilities prepared for the competition.

3.3 Secure the legacies in new stadium construction and upgrades invested by each of the official host cities.

While our international prominence in the women's game has made significant inroads in the last several years, our men's program needs further investment and commitment so that we reach new heights in the global game. Hosting one of the most prestigious sporting events in the world will act as a catalyst for the growth of soccer in our country.

3.4 Successfully prepare and submit a bid to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup.



4

GOVERN THE GAME IN CANADA PROFESSIONALLY IN COLLABORATION WITH OUR PARTNERS

Successfully hosting global competitions will elevate the profile of soccer in our country. This will assist the Canadian Soccer Association in its quest for the development of new commercial partnerships and in furthering our brand both on and off the field. To maximize this impact, we must work more closely with our provincial and territorial partners to provide seamless operations across the country.

We will continue with the governance reform that was implemented in 2012. With greater clarity around respective board and staff responsibilities, we will remain true to the core values of purpose, transparency and accountability that are crucial to leading-edge governance.

4.1 Lead a process that mandates the alignment of the governance structures at the national and

provincial/territorial levels of the Association. This will allow us to coordinate our operations more seamlessly across the country and take advantage of opportunities while collaborating on the delivery of programs and services.

4.2 Lead a process that mandates the development of strategic priorities at the provincial/territorial levels of the Association which are in alignment with the Canadian Soccer Association's current strategic plan.

4.3 Continually revisit and refine national policies and by-laws to achieve greater accountability and transparency in our structures and processes.

It is important that the Canadian Soccer Association provides a seamless structure that harmonizes operations between the national and provincial/territorial levels of the Association. We can all benefit

financially from economies of scale when negotiating for nation-wide programs and services.

4.4 Build a national database of registered players, coaches, referees and administrators with a unique ID card that is fully integrated with provincial/territorial organizations, districts and clubs. This will ensure seamless communication, brand-building, and relationship management with sponsors and partners.

The Canadian Soccer Association must also engage in new commercial partnerships while continuing to grow and extend the value of its current brand.

4.5 Strengthen our relationships with and increase our presence within CONCACAF and FIFA.

4.6 Work closely with the federal government as well as other funding organizations to seek out commercial partnering opportunities.

The Canadian Soccer Association will continue to enhance its communications and its use of technological tools to further build relationships.

4.7 Maximize use of social media tools and communication vehicles to help promote programs and

strengthen relationships with all stakeholders.

4.8 Solidify relationships with media (e.g., television, radio, print, online) in order to increase exposure of national and professional teams and their players.

The Canadian Soccer Association will continue to grow the commercial enterprise of soccer in this country responsibly while managing risk effectively.

4.9 Actively engage in business development through marketing partnerships and the procurement of new and existing corporate sponsors and partnership agreements.

4.10 Seek out alternative revenue streams through licensing and CRM (customer relationship management) programs in order to ensure revenue diversification and long-term commercial viability.

4.11 Assess and prioritize items within a risk management framework so that we can commit to service new relationships and build organizational capacity without endangering the long-term viability of the Association.

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