



October 2026

Strengthening Canadian Soccer to Help Build Canada

Engaging our community in the development of Canada Soccer's next strategic plan

FIFA World Cup 2026 offered Canadians a powerful demonstration of what soccer can mean to a country. Across communities, cultures, and generations, people came together through a shared national experience. Canadians saw themselves reflected in our sport, connected with one another through it, and participated in a movement that extended well beyond the matches. At the same time, hundreds of millions of people around the world who watched our Men's National Team encountered compelling expressions of Canadian character, diversity, and values. The World Cup created an extraordinary moment for Canada. It also invites us, as a soccer community, to consider a broader and more enduring question:

What broad and lasting role should soccer play in Canada's future?

This question is especially timely. Canada is in a defining period, marked by renewed reflection on our national identity and our place in the world. At such moments, the institutions and shared experiences that foster belonging, develop citizens, and strengthen collective confidence take on added importance. We believe soccer is well positioned to make a meaningful contribution to Canadian society, now and in the years ahead – particularly if we work together to continue strengthening our game.

Soccer is the most widely played youth sport in Canada. It connects local clubs and neighbourhood fields with the world's largest sporting stages, and it is increasingly played by people who reflect the modern, diverse country Canada has become. From Canada Soccer's perspective, our sport should therefore be viewed not only as an activity to be administered, but also as an important contributor to nation-building in today's Canada.

Viewing soccer through this broader lens expands the ambition of the strategic planning process in which we are inviting you to play an important role. Our collective task is not simply to identify how the soccer system can function more effectively, but to consider how a stronger soccer system can better serve Canada.

To support an informed discussion and invite your feedback, we have set out our initial perspectives on how a strengthened soccer system can make its greatest contribution to Canada. These perspectives are intended as a starting point for consultation and refinement.

1. Participation: Expanding opportunities for more Canadians to play

We believe soccer's contribution to Canada begins with broad and meaningful participation. The benefits of playing extend well beyond learning the game and include physical and mental well-being, teamwork, friendship, leadership, community-building, and volunteerism. A recent [Canadian Tire Jumpstart Survey](#) found that approximately half of school-age youth reported

playing soccer in some form, while soccer has more registered players than any other organized sport. Soccer already has significant reach; by working together to expand participation, we can contribute to a healthier and more socially connected Canada.

As we develop the next strategic plan, we are seeking your perspectives on the factors that influence participation. These include infrastructure, accessibility and affordability, youth soccer delivery models, sport culture, coaching education, and soccer's visibility in the media and popular culture. We welcome your views on these issues, the priorities that should guide our work, and the roles that different partners across the system can play.

2. Performance Pathways: Building a Canadian model for breadth and excellence

Nation-building also involves creating credible opportunities for Canadians to pursue excellence. Every healthy society must consider how it identifies potential, develops talent, establishes standards, recognizes merit, and celebrates achievement. Participation and excellence are sometimes presented as competing objectives – as though broader access necessarily lowers standards, or a focus on competitive success requires early exclusion, excessive demands, or insufficient attention to participants' long-term well-being.

We believe Canadian soccer can move beyond this false choice. As we consider the next phase of the player-development pathway, the strategic plan should aim to establish a grassroots to high-performance system in which access is broad, standards are progressive, and talented and committed people have a genuine opportunity – free from unnecessary barriers – to discover how far they can progress.

Our Sporting Director, Kenneth Heiner-Møller, and colleagues have prepared a discussion paper outlining a preliminary vision for Canada's player-development system and other important high-performance considerations. Included with these strategic planning materials, the paper is intended to guide discussion, test assumptions, and invite your feedback on the choices and priorities that should shape the system's future.

3. Competing on the World Stage: Ambition and Investment

Soccer's third nation-building role is to represent Canada on the world stage. As the world's most widely played and watched sport, soccer offers countries a level of global visibility and recognition that few other forms of national expression can match. When Canada competes successfully internationally, people around the world gain insight into who we are and what we are capable of achieving.

Our national teams are uniquely powerful representatives of modern Canada. Players from different communities, cultures, and personal histories come together in pursuit of a shared purpose. At their best, our teams reflect a country that is diverse, ambitious, resilient, outward-looking, and strongest when working collectively.

Competitive success matters in this context. Sustained achievement creates shared experiences for Canadians, inspires young people to participate and pursue their potential, and strengthens



Canada's recognition and influence in the global game. It provides a platform through which our country can express itself to the world. Our ambition should therefore extend beyond qualification and participation to competing with confidence and achieving consistent success on the sport's biggest stages and all levels of our game.

Realizing this ambition will require a resource base that reflects its scale. Although Canada Soccer's financial capacity has improved significantly, it remains well below that of many federations whose men's teams reached the last 16 of FIFA World Cup 2026 or whose women's teams regularly rank among FIFA's top 10. We must therefore consider how commercial growth and philanthropic support can be pursued with the same focus we bring to competitive performance, converting the expanding reach, relevance, and national importance of our teams into sustainable investment in the people, programs, and environments required for consistent success.

We welcome a comprehensive discussion about the role of our national teams in the next strategic plan, including the ambitions we should pursue, the investments required, and the partnerships needed to achieve them.

The Process of Shaping Our Future Together

The strategic choices before Canadian soccer should be considered within the broader national context. Decisions concerning grassroots participation, player development, professional soccer, national teams, infrastructure, regulation, commercial growth, media, and organizational alignment will shape not only the future of the game, but also its contribution to Canadian life and its place in our culture and society for decades to come.

The accompanying materials are intended to support a focused and constructive dialogue about these choices. Three items accompany this letter. The first is a discussion packet designed to invite structured feedback on several key topics, including organizational purpose, mission, vision and values, the cost of participation, professional soccer, and association governance. The second is a discussion paper that explores in greater depth the opportunities to strengthen Canada's player-development pathway. The third is an exercise intended to support consideration of priorities and the trade-offs among potential initiatives.

These documents are not intended to present a final answer. Rather, they offer informed propositions to make the consultation more tangible: to test assumptions, surface trade-offs, identify gaps, and invite stronger ideas. The opportunity before us belongs to the entire Canadian soccer community, and so too does the responsibility to shape it. We invite stakeholders to engage openly and ambitiously, not only by responding to the ideas in these materials, but also by helping to define what Canada should aspire to build through soccer.

By approaching this work with imagination, candour, and a shared commitment to action, we can build a soccer system that serves even more Canadians, develops excellence in a distinctly Canadian way, succeeds on the world stage, and contributes meaningfully to the country we are becoming.



Stakeholders participating in the first phase of consultation have received these materials in advance of their feedback sessions, and we look forward to hearing your perspectives, questions, and feedback through those discussions. We also welcome input from the broader Canadian soccer community. Anyone wishing to contribute is encouraged to review these materials and share their perspectives, ideas, and feedback by email at **StrategicPlan@canadasoccer.com** by the end of December. During the winter, we will consolidate the input received and use it to inform Canada Soccer's next strategic plan, which is scheduled for publication in 2027.

Thank you in advance for contributing to this strategic planning process and for your continued stewardship of Canadian soccer.

Peter Augurso

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Augurso".

President & Board Chair

Kevin Blue

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Blue".

CEO & General Secretary

