



Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Competition Review

CONTENTS:

- A. Introduction
- B. Process
- C. Recommendations
- D. Appendix I – Competition Formats for LTAD Stages, according to LTAD Principles
- E. Appendix II – Competition Schedules for LTAD Stages

A. Introduction

Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) tries to get everyone in the 'physical activity' system on the same page: one country, one vision, one system. Because many different institutions, agencies, and groups are involved in delivering sports and physical activity programs, CS4L recommends that parents, teachers, schools, coaches, clubs, recreation centres, and governments coordinate their efforts for the greatest welfare of the children in their programs. In this regard, CS4L has implications for the entire Canadian sport system.

Traditionally, physical education in the schools, recreational sports, and elite sport has been developed separately. This approach is ineffective and expensive. It fails to ensure that all children, including those who may choose to become elite athletes, are given a solid foundation and knowledge base — physical, technical, tactical, and mental — upon which to build their athletic abilities.

Canadian Sport for Life documented the Long-term Athlete Development (LTAD) model adopted by Sport Canada and the Canadian Sport System. Each National Sport Organization (NSO) responsible for a specific sport is developing its unique LTAD model based on Canadian Sport for Life and through its Provincial and Territorial counterparts is implementing the model across the country.

LTAD is a training, competition, and recovery program based on developmental age — the maturation level of an individual — rather than chronological age. It is athlete centered, coach driven, and administration, sport science, and sponsor supported.

LTAD supports the four goals of the *Canadian Sport Policy*:

- Enhanced participation
- Enhanced excellence
- Enhanced capacity
- Enhanced interaction

LTAD reflects a commitment to contribute to the achievement of these goals. LTAD was adopted by Racquetball Canada on May 16, 2009.

Long Term Athlete Development:

- Is based on the physical, mental, emotional and cognitive development of children and adolescent: each of the stages of LTAD reflects a different point in athlete development including a “sport for life” component.
- Ensures physical literacy upon which excellence can be built.
- Builds literacy in all children, from early childhood to late adolescence by promoting quality daily physical activity in the schools and a common approach to developing physical abilities through community recreation and elite sport programs.
- Recognizes the need to involve all Canadians in LTAD, including athletes with a disability.
- Promotes a healthy, physically literate nation whose citizens participate in lifelong physical activity.
- Ensures that optimal training, competition and recovery programs are provided throughout an athlete’s career.
- Provides an optimal competition structure for the various stages of an athlete’s development.
- Has an impact on the entire sport continuum, including participants, parents, coaches, schools, clubs, community recreation programs, provincial sport organizations (PSOs), national sport organizations (NSOs), sport science specialists, municipalities and several government ministries and departments (including health and education) at the provincial/territorial and federal levels.
- Integrates elite sport, community sport and recreation, scholastic sport and physical education in schools.
- Is ‘Made in Canada’, recognizing international best practices, research and normative data

The focus of this document is Long Term Athlete Development for participants in Racquetball as it relates to competitions. By respecting the principles of LTAD, we will ensure that our programs and structure meet the developmental needs of participants in each stage of LTAD.

B. Process

In accordance with the Racquetball Canada LTAD Implementation Plan, the Review Committee met in September 2010.

Committee Consultant: Dr. Colin Higgs

Committee Members: Ron Brown, Cheryl McKeeman, Geri Powell, Jennifer Saunders, Sebastien Boissonneault, Sue Swaine, Evan Pritchard, Cheryl Adlard

Mandate: Based on Canadian Sport for Life - LTAD principles, the Committee was tasked with a complete review of the Racquetball Canada Competition model.

When a competition review is implemented, there are certain restrictions that must be acknowledged. A number of competitions have governing structures that are not controlled by Racquetball Canada, and therefore limit the ability to change the timing or structure of the competition directly. But, this does not mean that Racquetball Canada does not have input in future directions that we believe should be considered.

The Review Committee accepted the premise that the structure and timing of the following events are not under the direct authority of Racquetball Canada, but that the organization would begin working cooperatively with all stakeholders to make changes that would enhance LTAD compliance.

1. Pan Am Games
2. World Games
3. Senior World Championships
4. Junior World Championships
5. Pan Am Championship
6. Pro Tours
7. Tournaments
8. Provincials

The Review Committee also inventoried the competitions that Racquetball Canada did have complete authority over and could review/ augment/change the timing and structure of the competitions.

1. Senior Nationals
2. Junior Nationals
3. Selection Events

The committee applied LTAD principles to summarize the competition format for each LTAD stage (see Appendix I). The committee then summarized the competition schedule for each LTAD stage (Appendix II). Keeping in mind the LTAD and CS4L philosophy and principles, the committee has made recommendations for the competition format.

C. Recommendations

Multi Bounce Competition

Recommendations:

1. Only to be played at youngest age groups.
2. No elimination, the focus is on FUN.
3. The game will be a timed event with a maximum duration of 30 minutes. The competition should be Round Robin (subject to numbers)
4. All players are rewarded for participating.
5. A player can't enter Multi Bounce if they are participating in a single bounce competition.
6. There will be a neutral overseer to call down balls and side out and to ensure that proper rules are being followed. In some cases when a neutral overseer is not possible coaches may be allowed if their presence is a positive influence. A coaching protocol document will be developed in order that coaches can be aware of the guidelines.

Rationale: Multi Bounce provides experience in competition and using overseer ensures that the proper rules are being followed.

Timeline for Implementation: 2012

Junior Nationals

Recommendations:

1. Junior Nationals will be offered for 12U, 14U, 16 & 18U divisions in singles and doubles. A National crown will be decided.
2. 8U and 10U will participate in a "Friendship" tournament and will not declare a competitive winner.
3. Recommend round robin for National Crown Division. Recommend Round Robin or Olympic formula for Friendship tournament depending on the number of participants
4. Consider round robin format for the semifinal rounds of National crown divisions.
5. Only National crown team divisions will garner team points. The Provincial team points will be based on:
 - Girls' team winner
 - Boys' team winner
 - Overall team points
6. Elimination of Junior Development team in the 8 – 12U age divisions.

Although the National competitive stream is eliminated in the 10 and under divisions, a parallel "friendship" stream will be offered at the same time and location as the Junior National competitive stream. The format recommended for the "friendship" stream at each division is listed below. *These recommendations would also apply to all Provincial tournament formats.*

8U division

- Round Robin or Olympic format (depending on number of participants)
- Players will play 3 games to 11 points, no tie breaker round
- If round robin there will be a maximum of 5 players per round robin group.

10U division

- Round Robin or Olympic format (depending on number of participants)
- Players will play best of 3 games to 11 points.
- If round robin there will be a maximum of 5 players per round robin group.

Rationale:

1. National level competitions are contra-indicated for players in the 12U and lower age groups in LTAD.
2. When eliminating a level of competition for specific divisions it should be replaced with a LTAD compliant alternative. That is why the “parallel” friendship tournament for 8U and 10U will be offered with Junior Nationals.
3. The inclusion of the younger groups will allow them to be on site to observe the upcoming opportunities for Racquetball Development.

Timeline for Implementation: 2012

Junior Worlds:

Recommendations:

1. The committee recommends that 12 athletes (6 males and 6 females) and 3 coaches are funded for the World Cup competition in the 14U, 16U and 18U divisions by Racquetball Canada.
2. Players in other categories could still choose to attend the event, but those athletes would not be part of Team Canada, and would have to be self-funded.
3. When possible, National team coaches assist with players in the Challenger or Esprit categories.
4. Funding should be allocated to support additional development opportunities for junior players.

Rationale:

1. Feedback from stakeholders and the Junior Committee recommended retaining the divisions and athletes currently funded for World Cup.
2. National team coaches have a great deal of expertise that would be very beneficial to athletes in other categories.
3. As participation in Junior Worlds does not predict the progression to the Senior Worlds team it is important that we allocate additional funds to support junior players who may develop into National team athletes. Regional camps would allow the elite level coaches to observe, identify and support potential Team Canada senior athletes.
4. Allocating additional funds will allow subsidizing a greater number of athletes for development.

Timeline for Implementation: 2012

Senior Nationals – Women’s Divisions:

Recommendations:

1. Divisions to be offered are Open, A, B, C, D, 45+
2. Dedicated courts for female competitive divisions where possible.

Rationale:

1. By creating divisions which will provide opportunities for competition at a wide range of abilities, we will be enhancing female participation. It is important to offer divisions that allow women to compete at their appropriate level of ability, and to keep sufficient numbers of players in each division.
 2. Dedicated courts for female athletes will provide a structure that will enhance the opportunity for female athletes to be officiated by female officials plus eliminate/decrease officiating male athletes. This will enhance retention of female athletes and provide greater professional development opportunities for female officials.
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D. Appendix I - Competition formats for LTAD Stages

FUNdamentals

Local Competitions only

- Fun competitions
- Different versions (e.g. short court) in training/learning.
- Non elimination/equal court times
- Participation events (no losers every participant is recognized)
- Use multi bounce as a training tool.
- Timed events
- Support for athletes from adults/parents

Learn to Train

- Standard rules
- Create skill divisions at Junior Provincials.
- Scoring
- Format – Round Robin/Olympic
- Frequency about 3 tournaments a year
- Many short games
- Introduction of doubles play
- Trained coaching introduced

Train to Train

- Standard rules
- Increased matches (round robin/Olympic format)
- Winners could be declared in 14U and higher age groups
- Playing doubles games are encouraged/required/rewarded.
- Regional events

Train to Compete

- Standard rules
- Singles and doubles
- 7 – 9 Tournaments (high level)
- National and International competition

Learn to Win

- Standard rules
- In International Competitions rules differ from Canadian National rules.
- 8 – 12 tournaments
- National, International and Pro events.
- Focus on Singles events

- National Doubles

Train to Win

- Standard rules
- 10 – 16 tournaments
- National/International/Professional competition structure
- Singles

Active for Life

- Multiple events
- Masters/Doubles/Senior Worlds for Singles and doubles
- CPRT/Legends
- League/Ladder
- Play age and/or skills divisions at National Championship and other tournaments.
- Mixed doubles
- Introduce option on self-refereed matches

E. Appendix II - Competition Schedules for each LTAD stage

COMPETITION SCHEDULES

	October	November	February	March	April	May	Summer
Events	US Open	Selection Event	Selection Event	Provincials	Jr. Nationals	Nationals	Worlds
		Junior Worlds			Pan Ams		World Games
							Pan Am Games

Competition within Stages

T2T		Junior Worlds		Provincials	Jr. Nationals		
T2C		Junior Worlds		Provincials	Jr. Nationals	Nationals	
		Selection Event	Selection Event				
L2W	US Open	Selection Event	Selection Event	Provincials		Nationals	
T2W	US Open	Selection Event	Selection Event	Provincials	Pan Ams	Nationals	Worlds
							World Games
	Pro Tours						Pan Am Games



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