



# COMPETITION REVIEW AND RESTRUCTURING REPORT

for Ringette in Canada



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In addition, Ringette Canada would like to acknowledge the specific contributions of the following people:

### Competition Review Working Group

Dave Myers	Jenn Hartley
Lainie Wintrup	Lucie Anne Ingoldsby
Karla Xavier	Lorrie Horne
Shawn Burrows	Nicki Burbank

### Ringette Canada Staff

Nathalie Müller, Technical Director and Project Lead  
Frances Losier, Director of High Performance and Events  
Stephanie Laurin, Sport Development Coordinator  
Natasha Johnson, Executive Director

### External Consultants and Facilitators

Dina Bell-Laroche – Sport Law & Strategy Group  
Charles Cardinal – Sport for Life LTAD Expert  
Vicki Harber – Sport for Life LTAD Expert  
Paul Jurbala – Sport for Life LTAD Expert  
André Lachance – Business and Sport Development Director, Baseball Canada; Sport for Life LTAD Expert  
Kevin Lawrie – Sport Law & Strategy Group

This report was prepared for Ringette Canada by Douglas Duncan on behalf of Ringette Canada's Competition Review Working Group. Douglas is an independent sport consultant, as well as Manager of Activation for the Sport for Life Society, and he has extensive experience with designing and implementing programs which support long-term athlete development and create a quality sport experience in both high performance and sport development contexts.

## Executive Summary

Ringette Canada has been a leader in long-term athlete development (LTAD), aligning coaching and officiating programs to LTAD stages, and creating quality resources to support key leaders. The completion of the Competition Review represents an important next step in ensuring quality sport experiences for ringette participants of all ages and in all stages of development. Ringette Canada's system is not broken, however an analysis of existing competitions and programs across the system is required in order to increase alignment and ensure that they are developmentally appropriate. .

This report represents a starting point for Ringette Canada and its members to re-shape the system of competition for the future. The report lists **61 recommendations** for how the system of competition and other aspects of ringette programs can be adjusted to better structure the sport to support the long-term development of participants. Many of these recommendations are inter-dependant. In some instances, one series of recommendations must be completed in order for the next series of recommendations to be implemented.

Six key recommendations are:

1. Ringette Canada, Provincial Associations, and Local Associations should formally adopt Guiding Principles for competition and events.
2. A system should be implemented to monitor the competitive experience of athletes, centred on meaningful competition, in all stages of development.
3. Ringette Canada should work with Provincial Associations to mandate cross-ice ringette for participants in the FUNdamentals stage of development. This mandate should be supported with the creation of a rulebook for Children's Ringette and specific program resources for Local Associations. Implementation should begin no later than the fall of 2018.
4. Adult participation in ringette is a growing demographic and represents a significant opportunity for growth of the sport. Ringette Canada should identify how it can align program offerings to meet the needs of this demographic.
5. Ringette Canada should begin to recognize programs that provide a high quality daily training environment, that corresponds to the Pursuit of Excellence sporting context and support the development of high performance athletes.
6. Ringette Canada should design a system through which the National Ringette League (NRL) can be tiered – Developmental and Elite. A tiered NRL will provide more opportunities for developmentally-appropriate competition and a higher level of competition for athletes striving to be part of Team Canada, while also regularly showcasing high level ringette.

This report is intended to support staff, volunteers, and working groups in the design of programs and policies. It will be incumbent on the individuals and groups representing Ringette Canada and Provincial and Local Associations to transform the recommendations into action.

## Background

### Why a Competition Review?

A developmentally-appropriate system of competition which reflects the values of Ringette Canada in support of the strategic goals of the organization is core to Ringette Canada achieving its vision of **being a world leader in growing ringette**.

In 2009, Ringette Canada released its long-term athlete development framework and undertook several initiatives to align its programs to the framework, including but not limited to:

- Establishing minimum standards for coach certification coupled with ongoing NCCP development and revisions to align to LTAD Framework (2009)
- Adjusting age eligibility criteria for the Canada Games (2011)
- Creating a new format for the Canadian Ringette Championships (2012)
- Creation of a framework for long-term officials' development (2010) and new Level 1 Officials Training (2013)
- Creation of LTAD program resources including sample lesson plans for U9 through U19 (2013)

With this foundational work already completed and with specific initiatives aimed at enhancing Ringette Canada's athlete development already underway (e.g., development of Athlete Development Matrix Essentials; U12 Summit; High Performance Summit; Revision of Gym Ringette Program), aligning the system of competition to support athlete development at each LTAD stage becomes a critical binding element within the athlete development pathway.

With the premise that the system of competition is one of the primary structuring elements in ringette, this report aims to provide direction for the development of ringette in Canada. This report examines the current system of competition as it relates to the Ringette Canada's LTAD framework and Ringette Canada's Athlete Development Matrix Essentials, and provides examples of current programming being offered by Ringette Canada and Provincial Associations. Taking into consideration future directions necessary to support ongoing growth and development of ringette in Canada, the report also provides guidance in the form of recommendations on how to address specific challenges and opportunities.

This report is structured around the three critical objectives of the competition review as outlined in the review team's mandate:

- Athlete Development
- Competitive/Performance Alignment
- Competition System Operations

A fourth area, Foundations, was added to the competition review in order to address items that must be in place to support programming related to the three critical objectives.

## Competition Review Working Group - Terms of Reference

This section describes the purpose and role of the Ringette Canada Competition Working Group, their scope of authority, and the responsibilities of the participants in this group.

### Initial Mandate

The Competition Review Working Group will provide analysis, oversight, and input to create an improved Long-Term Athlete Development Competition System for ringette in Canada. The competition system will support Ringette Canada's mission to deliver World Champions and support high quality program delivery for athletes in all stages of development. The competition system will be directly aligned with Ringette Canada's coach and athlete development program objectives.

### Critical Project Objectives

- **Athlete Development:** An athlete development framework, with clear parameters to enable and enrich Long-Term Athlete Development of ringette participants, including stage appropriate competitive priorities.
- **Competitive / Performance Alignment:** A more effective domestic ringette competition system that will drive a higher level of performance for athletes, clubs, and coaches at all stages.
- **Competition System Operations:** A competition system that provides clear and direct operation protocols to officials, coaches, and clubs to execute the delivery of safe and high-quality training and events.

### Composition

The members of the Competition Review Working Group were identified and invited by Ringette Canada staff. Members were selected for their expertise and represented the following areas:

- Coaching (2-3)
- Provincial Ringette Association office staff (2-3)
- Developmental/Grassroots/Parent (1)
- Officiating (1)
- Athlete (1)
- League/Tournament convenor (1)
- Sport for Life Society

Some individuals acted as experts in more than one of the above areas. The Competition Review Working Group was additionally supported by consultants, office staff, and other facilitators.

### Initial Responsibilities

1. Evaluate the current system of ringette competitions in Canada to identify gaps and inconsistencies with the LTAD model (e.g., Athlete Development Model/skills matrix/competition principles/coach/athlete programs)
2. Commit to the project until implementation
3. Provide input into the Terms of Reference

4. Become familiar with CS4L's Competition Review Workbook
5. Review domestic best practices and other models
6. Recommend and review initiatives and policy to create the best possible system for ringette in Canada. (e.g., skill stage entry and exit indicators, formats, scoring criteria)
7. Participate in 6-8 discussions and one face-to-face meeting
8. Be a resource in your area of specialty to provide input
9. Be honest, respectful, open-minded, and welcome differing opinions
10. Help develop a communications and strategic implementation plan
11. Be an ambassador for implementation



## Foundations

This competition review rests on the following elements which are foundational to ringette in Canada and apply to participants of all ages and in all stages of development.

- Guiding Principles
- Meaningful Competition
- Long-Term Athlete Development

### Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles represent the ideals of how ringette is intended to be played and experienced. They serve as a guide when difficult decisions regarding the structure of competition need to be made.

The following Guiding Principles inform the Competition Review. They were developed in consultation with the Competition Review Team and Provincial Association Technical Staff.

1. Ringette experiences are **meaningful for all participants and teams** from the beginning to the end of each season.
2. Ringette is always a **fun, positive experience**.
3. Every ringette participant, coach, official, volunteer and administrator has an opportunity to improve.
4. The system of competition (tournaments, leagues and championships) supports each participant in seeking their level of **personal excellence** based on their definition of success. Participants can **choose to enroll** in a program which places them on the **excellence pathway**.
5. Nobody is disadvantaged by playing at a “lower” level. Participants are provided access to appropriate development pathways to progress to a “higher” level if they desire.
6. The system of competition supports and rewards LTAD-based training informed by [Ringette Canada’s Athlete Development Matrix](#).
7. Competition reflects the [True Sport Principles](#) and the values of Ringette Canada.

### Recommendations

1. Ringette Canada, Provincial Associations, and Local Associations should formally adopt these Guiding Principles for competitions into their rules, regulations, and key technical documents related to competition.
2. Ringette Canada should develop a tool to allow all Ringette Associations to publicly pledge their commitment to the Guiding Principles.

## Meaningful Competition

Practicing and training for ringette, as with most sports, is intrinsically connected to the ability to play games and participate in competition. Without an opportunity to play games, participate in tournaments, and engage in other forms of competition it is highly unlikely that many people would participate in ringette. It is therefore reasonable to assume that most participants enjoy competition and that this experience is meaningful to them. Should participants not enjoy playing or find meaning in the competitive experience they are likely to disengage from the sport.

### What is Meaningful Competition?

Meaningful competition is a concept that is being explored by most sports in Canada as they review their systems of competition to more effectively support long-term athlete development and improve the overall quality of the competitive experience for participants.

The Sport for Life Plan 42 initiative identified the following characteristics of meaningful competition:

**Meaningful competition provides experiences that support learning for competitors.** It supports a “we can get better” attitude that encourages athletes to improve during and after the event.

**Meaningful competitions are structured to reinforce the development of LTAD stage-specific skills and abilities.** The expected level of performance matches the skill level of the competitor. Competitors can perform and test the skills they have learned and practiced in the training environment.

**Meaningful competitions lead to results that are relatively close and not predictable.** Competitors and Teams are matched with others of a similar level of ability and are challenged to be the best they can be at that moment in time. **They believe they have a chance for success and remain fully engaged throughout the competition.**

Ringette competition can exist in many forms. Competition can occur between two teams during a single game, during a series of games between two teams, amongst a group of teams within the context of a tournament, over the course of a season in league play, and amongst individual participants on the ice when vying for positions on a team.

Competition also changes as participants progress through the stages of long-term athlete development, evolving with the individual physical, mental, technical/tactical and social development of participants. It is within this dynamic and ever-evolving context that Ringette Canada has sought to define meaningful competition.

When meaningful competition is defined, it can be measured and improved when shortcomings are found to exist. A clear definition will inform the design of the systems and structures which enable competition, such as tournaments, leagues and championships, and will enrich the competitive experience.

### Recognizing Meaningful Competition in Ringette

When competition is meaningful, participants are having fun and are continuously challenged. There is a level of uncertainty associated with the result of the competition and flow to the game.

For children, youth and recreational participants, the experience should be all about the participant, their enjoyment, opportunities for personal development, and their active involvement in the game.

A by-product of meaningful competition is an exciting game that keeps spectators engaged and a competitive environment that encourages participants to actively participate to contribute to the team effort. Coaches are challenged to manage their teams, study the opposition, and explore different tactics. Officials must ensure the game stays fair and that the rules are enforced.

In all stages, when competition is meaningful, regardless of the outcome of the game, tournament or season, there is the sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. The participant should be able to learn lessons from one competitive event to the next.

While meaningful competition will look slightly different based on the stage of development and the type of competition (e.g., tournament, league play, etc.), certain characteristics are typically indicative of meaningful competition.

Within a game, characteristics may include:

- A high level of satisfaction/pleasure amongst participants – lots of smiles, sense of accomplishment whether the team has won or lost.
- A close score – where the game remained close throughout much of the game. The lead may have changed hands multiple times throughout the game and teams had comparable shots on goal, opportunities to score, and possession time.
- A team pulled the goalie late in the game to try to catch up.

During a season or within a tournament, characteristics may include:

- Significant depth of field (many teams competing at similar level, participants vying for each position on a team).
- Teams are evenly matched, leading to a high percentage of close games.
- Teams and participants are invested in the result of their team until the very last game.
- It is about more than wins and losses. Participants, teams, coaches and programs are recognized for living the True Sport Principles and demonstrating progress in developing skills identified within the Athlete Development Matrix
- A high likelihood of upsets in playoffs.

Coaches and event organizers have an important role in creating an environment which promotes meaningful competition.

- Coaches need to enter tournaments with specific developmental or performance objectives in mind and share these objectives with their team.
- League and tournament organizers must design leagues and tournaments in a way that meaningful competition will be provided for all participants.
- In the early stages, league and team management may include managing participant distribution amongst teams to facilitate opportunities for meaningful competition within a league or association, with games focusing on providing opportunities to play instead of on winning or individual performance.

## Statement of Purpose

Creating meaningful competition starts with managing expectations. Too often, program administrators, event organizers, coaches and athletes do not have a common understanding of the purpose of an event, which can lead to both confusion and disappointment with the competition experience.

Common understanding of the purpose of a competition event is central to creating an environment which supports meaningful competition. By clearly articulating the purpose of an event, the right teams/athletes can be invited based on the developmental objectives of the event, and experiences can be evaluated in the context of the stated purpose. The entire system can also be evaluated holistically to ensure that the purposes of events are aligned with the LTAD stage objectives so that there are an appropriate number of opportunities.

Meaningful competition should be the dominant criterion for selecting which tournaments to enter, rather than other considerations such as tradition, location, or personal relationships.

## Measuring Meaningful Competition

The working group identified the following criteria (Figure 1) to assist in measuring meaningful competition at each LTAD stage.

**Figure 1 - Game play metrics to identify meaningful competition**

	Learn to Train & Train to Train	Train to Compete	Learn & Train to Win
<b>Score Differential</b>	Less than 4	Less than 3	Less than 3
<b>Shots on Goal</b>		Each team, not less than 1:3	
<b>Time in Attacking Zone</b>	Min 30% Max 70%	Min 35% Max 65%	Min 40% Max 60%
<b>Ring Contact Time</b>	Time for each participant	N/A	N/A

It was not feasible to collect and analyze the data required to fully consider and validate the guidelines for each stage, although a sample of the most readily available game stats is presented in **Appendix 1**. However, given the extensive knowledge and experience of the working group, Ringette Canada's membership should feel confident using these guidelines as a starting point for future study of meaningful competition.

Ideally, future studies would compare game statistics to the feedback of athletes participating in league or tournament play by asking participants questions like – “*Did you enjoy the game/tournament*”; “*Did you improve your skills during the game*”, etc. Responses would be matched to outcomes identified in the Athlete Development Matrix.

## Recommendations

1. Event organisers at all levels should implement participant surveys following events which specifically ask the question “*Was your overall competitive experience meaningful to you?*” The question should

be direct, measured on a 7 or 10-point scale to have clear differentiation within the scale, and allow room for comments to gain insight into what makes an experience meaningful for participants. Ringette Canada can support this initiative by developing the survey and providing a tool to facilitate data collection.

2. Ringette Canada should engage an independent researcher to study the relationship between game play statistics and the perceived experience of participants during games within each stage of development.
3. Ringette Canada and Provincial Associations should work with software providers to ensure consistency in the capturing and reporting capability for meaningful competition. Data capture capacity should extend beyond gameplay statistics to include collecting systematic feedback from participants, coaches, officials and parents. This data could contribute to creating an aggregate meaningful competition score for each event.
4. Ringette Canada and Provincial Associations should publish annual lists of leagues and tournaments which optimally support long-term athlete development. Marketing collateral should be provided to top-ranked events to celebrate their achievement.
5. Provincial Associations, tournament and league organizers should review tournament and league seeding and eligibility criteria to ensure optimal structure for promoting meaningful competition.
6. Tournament and league organizers should review tournament and league playoff criteria to ensure the structure promotes meaningful competition. Provincial or national sanctioning criteria could be developed.
7. In the FUNdamentals, Learn-to-Train, Train-to-Train and Active for Life stages of development, Provincial and Local Associations should favour the creation of balanced teams over elite teams, and promote maximum opportunities for participation, while maintaining an environment which allows for meaningful competition.
8. Ringette Canada, Provincial and Local Associations, and Leagues should clearly articulate the purpose of each competitive event (Championship, League Play, Tournaments, Exhibition Games, etc.)
9. The purpose of championships, leagues, tournaments, and exhibition games should be clearly communicated to participants, coaches and parents when registration information is distributed.

## Long-Term Athlete Development

Fundamentally, developmentally-appropriate programming means **doing the right thing, in the right way at the right time**. However, in practice this can quickly become incredibly complex and challenging to manage. What is developmentally appropriate is informed by both the Sport for Life Society's and Ringette Canada's Long-Term Athlete Development Frameworks. These documents serve as guides to inform program design by outlining stages of development, and by identifying specific considerations for optimal training, competition, and recovery based on participants' growth and development.

The Sport for Life framework aims to produce three outcomes:

- **Physical Literacy:** Canadians are physically literate, and have the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.
- **Active for Life:** Canadians are happy, healthy, active for life, and achieve the recommended levels of daily physical activity through a variety of activities.
- **Excellence:** All participants have developed sufficient physical literacy and had access to quality sport programs to be able to pursue sporting excellence and achieve success at the highest level they choose.

Ringette Canada's framework further articulates what is required in ringette to achieve these outcomes and is supported by an Athlete Development Matrix which details the key building blocks for athlete development at each stage. These building blocks are summarized in Ringette Canada's publication, [The Essentials!](#)

### **The system of competition will make or break an athlete!**

Most systems of competition are based on miniaturized versions of adult games with an adult-centric system of reward and recognition (win-loss records, medals, and rankings), a calendar of competition based on tradition, and selection processes which are exclusive rather than inclusive. Over time, this system has trickled down to younger and younger ages, slowly eroding the opportunity for general athletic development to a point where the system of competition is "breaking" rather than "making" athletes.

The collective challenge is to create a system of competition which enables long-term athlete development and celebrates the coaches, teams and organizations that are effective at developing athletes over the long term. It is incumbent on administrators (particularly at the local and provincial levels) to establish a system of competition which supports and celebrates long-term athlete development and clearly communicates developmental objectives to coaches and parents.

Such a system of competition may involve:

- Creating awards that celebrate improvement of both the individuals and the teams. As an example, since 2011 Speed Skating Canada not only rewards the provincial/territorial association that performs best at its various age class championships, but also issues an award for the most improved association since the previous championships.
- Publicly recognizing all coaches and associations that were part of an athlete's journey when they are selected to provincial and/or national teams. Recognition could be achieved by providing

banners and certificates that allow clubs to locally celebrate these contributions. This type of recognition highlights all contributions to athlete development and describes the often-non-linear progression of athletes.

- Celebrating and recognizing athletes who participated in ringette, and/or continue to play ringette, and who are successful in other areas of life.
- Including a variety of skills competitions and modified games within the context of tournaments, and celebrating those winners in the same manner tournament winners are celebrated.
- Implementing an awards system based on The Essentials!

### Developmental Age and the Relative Age Effect

*Children of the same chronological age can differ by several years in their level of biological maturation. Growth, development, and rate of maturation is the result of a complex interaction of genes, hormones, nutrients and the environments (physical and psychosocial) in which the individual lives. This combination of factors regulates the child's physical growth, neuromuscular development, sexual maturation, mental, cognitive and emotional development, and general metamorphosis during the first two decades of life. (Canadian Sport for Life 2.1, 2016, p. 28)*

One of the most significant challenges in managing the system of competition is the process of selecting athletes and forming teams in a way that does not exclude participants simply because they mature at different rates. Many of the decisions made during early stages of competition can have significant long-term impacts on athlete development. One such impact is the **relative age effect**.

*Relative age effect refers to the specific selection, participation and attainment (dis)advantages which occur as a result of physical and cognitive differences within annual age-grouped cohorts. (Webinar: [Talent and Performance \(Ti5\)](#), sportscoachUK [s](#), accessed April 24, 2017)*

While the relative age effect does not appear to be as present in Ringette as in some other sports, it still exists (**Appendix 2**). In designing its system of competition, Ringette Canada has a responsibility to minimize the potential negative effects that can result from athlete selection processes as teams are formed.

Sports have used different strategies to mitigate the impact of the relative age effect. In individual sports, traditional age groupings are replaced with a variety of ability formats which group athletes together based on a similar performance level, using personal or seasonal best times as a guideline. Other sports have experimented with using participants' ages on the date of competition versus calendar-based age categories.

One approach being adopted in some team sports, particularly in the UK, is **bio banding**. Bio banding is a system whereby athletes are classified based on their progress towards their predicted adult stature using validated predictive tools.

There are different tools for predicting adult stature. One of the easiest tools to use was developed at the University of Saskatchewan (Sherar, L.B. et al, 2005.) and which is supported by a web-based predictive calculator available at [this University of Saskatchewan web-page](#).

The tool's process and application are further explained in the following videos and webinars:

[AFC Bournemouth Academy implementation of bio-banding](#)

[Bio banding explained by Bath Rugby Academy Strength & Conditioning Coach](#)

[Sport for Life: the bio-banding experience](#) by Vicki Harber and Sylvie Béliveau

## Multi-Sport Participation

In June 2017, Paul Jurbala, Sport for Life's Director of Knowledge, prepared a summary paper titled *Research supporting the development and benefits of Physical Literacy* which highlighted that multisport participation correlated with sport success:

*Participation in multiple sports in youth correlates with sport success: Studies have found that early specialization in a single sport can have negative implications for athletic development and retention (Baker, Cobley, & Fraser-Thomas, 2009). In several studies, athletes who participated in multiple sports early and specialized later were less likely to drop out and were more successful than others in their cohort (Bridge & Toms, 2013; Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2008; Soberlak & Cote, 2003). Others have demonstrated it is early engagement with a higher focus on skill acquisition that is important for later success (Ford, Ward, Hodges, & Williams, 2009).*

To support optimal long-term athlete development, all organisations responsible for coordinating ringette in Canada should consider if their current programming offerings limit or enable participants' ability to engage in multiple sports.

Some questions to be considered include:

- **Opportunities to engage:** Within the calendar year how many opportunities are there to engage in a ringette program? Do programs only start during a single month or are there multiple starting points?
- **Season length:** How long is the season? Is it realistic for participants in the FUNdamentals and Learn-to-Train stages to participate in 3-4 other sports over the course of a season?
- **Offseason messaging:** Do organisations promote only ringette-specific activities or encourage participants to try a variety of sports during the off-season?
- **Program frequency and consistency:** How many sessions a week must a participant commit to? Are the sessions scheduled in a consistent manner to facilitate the scheduling of other activities? Are there opportunities to progress from one program to another over the course of a season?
- **Non-participation penalties:** Are athletes penalized for missing team practices, games or tournaments because of scheduling conflict with other sports?
- **Calendar of Competition and Periodization:** Are there breaks in the competition schedule that allow for general and specific preparation, development of fundamental skills, and appropriate recovery? How do selection camps influence the periodization of individualized training



programs? Does the peak required for selection events facilitate or limit the ability of teams to peak at primary competitions?

- **Cross Sport Promotion:** Are there opportunities for Ringette Canada, Provincial Associations, or Local Associations to partner with other sport organisations to promote each other's programs?

## Existing Programming and Proposed Sporting Contexts

A fundamental challenge with structuring competition to support athlete development is ensuring access to the appropriate training and competition environment that supports the individual developmental needs and motivations of each athlete.

Most ringette competitions in Canada have been organized around chronological ages, with some distinction between recreational and competitive levels of play. While administratively convenient, the current system fails to consider developmental differences in athletes which occur because of maturation and/or because of variations of access to quality training and competition.

The current structure, listed below, for the categorization of teams and participants is described in the Ringette Canada [Athlete Registration, Eligibility and Transfer Policy](#) and is a traditional system of participant categorization based on age and competitive level.

Sections 8, 9 and 10 of the Policy outline a similar structure for female, male and co-ed teams. There are some small differences in the age group ranges. Section 8 describes how female teams are categorized:

- 8.1 **Seniors** – 50 years of age and over as of December 31st of the playing season;
- 8.2 **Masters** – 30 years of age and over as of December 31st of the playing season;
- 8.3 **Open** – 18 years of age and over as of December 31st of the playing season;
- 8.4 **U19** – Under 19 years of age as of December 31st of the playing season;
- 8.5 **U16** - Under 16 years of age as of December 31st of the playing season;
- 8.6 **U14** - Under 14 years of age as of December 31st of the playing season;
- 8.7 **U12** - Under 12 years of age as of December 31st of the playing season;
- 8.8 **U10** - Under 10 years of age as of December 31st of the playing season; and
- 8.9 **U9** - Under 9 years of age as of December 31st of the playing season.

Section 11 of the Policy describes how teams are categorized in terms of competitive level:

- 11.1 **AAA** – Teams participating in international play;
- 11.2 **AA** – Teams participating in national, inter-provincial/inter-territorial, provincial or territorial play and provincial or territorial all-star teams;
- 11.3 **A** – Teams participating in regional, district or county level play;
- 11.4 **B** – Teams participating in recreation, house league or school play; and
- 11.5 **C** – Teams participating in recreation, house league or school play.

Section 13 of the Policy describes which group or organization determines the competitive level categorization:

- 13.1 **AAA** as determined by the Board;

13.2 **AA** as determined by the associated local, provincial/territorial association;

13.3 **A** as determined by the local regional, district or county association; and

13.4 **B** and **C** as determined by the recreational, house league or school association.

A series of chronological age categories determines which athletes are grouped together to form teams. Level of play is defined by political boundaries and each jurisdiction (Provincial Association and Local Association) sets their own definitions within this framework. While over time there has come to be a general understanding of what these classifications mean, there is no objective criteria or underpinning athlete development principles to guide this classification.

The result of this system is that it is generally assumed that the closer the letter of the division of play (ex: A, B, C) is to the start of the alphabet, as well as additional multiples of the letter (with AAA being the strongest), the better the program. Currently, the governing sport organisation devotes most of its energy invested in the highest level of competition. This assumption leads to a continuous push to increase in level rather than focusing on development and providing developmentally-appropriate, meaningful competition for athletes in each context. It also results in a system of competition and sporting structure which is not consistent from one region of the country to the next. The system further provides minimal choice to athletes when selecting the sporting context that best suits them and makes it very difficult to enter an excellence pathway in a later stage of development.

To address these issues, it is recommended that the hierarchal model of AAA, AA, A should be eliminated and a new system of categorizing teams (which takes into consideration both the stage of development of athletes and the individual motivations of athletes to participate) should be introduced.

Five sporting contexts are proposed:

- First Interactions
- Children's Ringette
- Recreational Ringette
- Competitive Ringette
- Pursuit of Excellence

Members of the Competition Review Working Group and staff from Provincial Associations consistently identified an overemphasis being placed on competition in the Learn-to-Train and Train-to-Train stages of development. This overemphasis has led to the creation of select teams and has harmed long-term athlete development. Some instances of this overemphasis on competition were also reported during the FUNdamentals stage of development. The proposed separation of contexts aims to at least partially address these issues by formally delaying the start of competitive ringette and providing a clearer pathway for athlete development.

## Sporting Context - First Interactions (Learn to Play Ringette)

### Purpose

This proposed sporting context is intended to provide participants with positive first experiences in sport and introduce participants to ringette. This context is the gateway to participation in ringette and, importantly, new participants can enter the context at any stage of their lives. The premise of this context is that to meaningfully participate in ringette, participants must have an opportunity to develop the fundamental skills in a fun and safe environment before entering mainstream ringette.

### Stages of Development and Type of Participant

Participants enter this context at any age and could be in any stage of development with or without athletic experience. However, it is not recommended that participants begin ringette until late in the Active Start stage of development. See the “Special Consideration: Active Start – Watch me Start” section of the Children’s Ringette Section for more details.

To effectively enter this context, it is recommended that participants have developed fundamental skating skills. These skills may be acquired through learn-to-skate programs offered by a variety of organisations or in ringette programs that place a specific emphasis on learning to skate.

### Existing Programming

[Let’s Play Gym Ringette](#) is a Ringette Canada program that partially meets the objective for this sporting context. Elementary school students are introduced to the fundamental skills and rules of the game in a gym setting. The program helps to build confidence, competence in technical skills not directly linked to skating, and participant awareness and knowledge of ringette and the associated rules. Participating in ringette in a gym setting can help develop many technical and tactical skills without the barriers posed by access to ice time. The program has the added potential of evolving into its own recreational and competitive sport and could provide additional opportunities for participation. A new curriculum for the program is currently in development and will further advance its objectives.

Although Let’s Play Gym Ringette is an excellent introductory program, a recruitment gap currently exists between Gym Ringette and the on-ice programs. Consideration should be given to how this program may be connected with the ABC’s of Ringette program and how it could serve as a tool to introduce adolescent and adult participants (not just elementary school students) to ringette.

[Come Try Ringette](#) is a promotional and recruitment program that provides one-time opportunities to try ringette. Provincial Associations report that these events attract a significant number of individuals who cannot skate and who are then streamed into learn-to-skate programs offered by Ringette Canada. Events are organised locally and supported by Ringette Canada through the provision of promotional resources. Since 2013-14, the program has averaged more than 170 events and 3100 participants per year with an average retention rate of 45%. See **Appendix 3** for a full list of Come Try Ringette participation statistics.

Come Try Ringette will need to be revised once the system of ringette competition changes. Current promotional materials for the program are focused on explaining the adult game - which creates an expectation for those being introduced to the sport for the first time. As more modified games are introduced for participants in the FUNdamentals and Learn-to-Train stages of development, the program’s curriculum and promotional material must clearly communicate the nature and purpose of these games.

The [Ringette ABC Program](#) was launched in 2011 and is based on basic LTAD principles. The program offers guidelines for skill development recognition and support to instructors/coaches to be able to implement developmentally-appropriate programming. The program design was based on Baseball Canada's highly successful [Rally Cap program](#).

The Ringette ABC program includes a skills progression checklist (which is completed during Ringette ABC evaluation days), the provision of bandanas to recognize athlete achievement, and an extensive library of activities and sample lesson plans.

Local Associations offer a variety of learn-to programs that introduce participants to ringette using a variety of formats and approaches. Technical leaders from Provincial Associations report that many of their programs include a learn-to-skate component which is used as a vehicle for recruitment.

### What should a program in this context look like?

Short introductory programs (4 – 12 weeks in duration, 1-2 sessions/week or 1-2 week camps with daily sessions) should be consistently offered throughout Canada for different target demographics. There are three primary target groups:

- Children
- Adolescent
- Adult

The same basic curriculum can be used for each target group. The curriculum can be modified based on participants' level of athletic experience and their reasons for trying ringette.

Programs should have a low instructor-to-participant ratio with an emphasis on the development of fundamental movement skills and basic sport skills required for ringette.

- **Skating** – ready position, basic athletic stance for skating, comfort balancing on one leg, skating forward, backwards, turning and changing directions, falling and getting back up
- **Ring Control** – Control the ring with a stick, skate with the ring
- **Passing** – Send the ring to a teammate and receive the ring from a teammate
- **Shoot** – Direct the ring towards designated targets, including the net
- **Rules & Ethics** – Develop a basic understanding of fair play and playing within the rules
- **Positions** – Exposure to all positions including goaltender, basic understanding of positioning on the ice

Skill lessons are blended with fun scrimmages amongst program participants. A concluding event or festival takes place at the end of the session, bringing participants together from a variety of different programs in the community. When scrimmaging, small-sided, cross-ice games are played exclusively with children. Programs for teenagers and adults start with small-sided cross ice and progress to full-ice scrimmages.

By the end of a program, participants should be excited about ringette and should be sufficiently confident and competent to enter a stage-appropriate ringette program of their choosing.

## Recommendations

1. Determine the number of Provincial and Local Associations that are involved in offering Learn-to-Skate programs and the curriculum for each program. Ensure that all associations either have access to appropriate Learn-to-Skate curricula and/or identify curriculum and instructor training being provided by other organisations.
2. Ensure that the program guides, training materials, and proposed activities for Come Try Ringette address the full range of participants engaged in the promotional sessions and include strategies and appropriate activities for individuals who cannot skate.
3. Clearly communicate pre-requisite skating skills to participants before inviting them to participate in on-ice programs. Provide alternative programming for participants who have not acquired fundamental skating skills or direct them to alternative programming.
4. Consider expanding the use of Gym Ringette as an avenue to teach basic sport skills associated with ringette and as a vehicle to introduce new participants to the sport.
5. Encourage Local Associations with insufficient ice to use Gym Ringette as part of their regular training.
6. Provide additional formal structures to support the introduction of ringette to teenagers and adults, in addition to what is currently offered for children.
7. Increase the formal connection between Come Try Ringette and Let's Play Gym Ringette to regular ringette programming. Develop consistent branding across all programs. Be explicit in communicating the pathway from one program to the next.
8. Ensure that children's ringette includes a progression of programs that address the needs of participants up until the onset of puberty (beginning of the Train to Train stage).
9. Develop program resources for specific populations that exist within the three broad categories of children, teenagers, and adults. Resources should provide a focused opportunity to develop fundamental ringette skills and help participants from the specific populations quickly join a team in the recreational or competitive sporting context. Specific populations can include the following, but further market analysis and stakeholder consultation is required:
  - Indigenous communities, New Canadians
  - Teenagers not engaged in sport; Teenagers looking to experience a new sport/seeking recreational sporting opportunities; University Students
  - New Ringette Parents; Older adults

## Sporting Context - Children's Ringette (Developing Physical Literacy through Ringette)

### Purpose

Ringette programming contributes to developing the physical literacy of participants by ensuring that all ringette participants have developed the fundamental sport skills associated with ringette. As participants exit Children's Ringette they should have developed a strong connection to ringette with the *motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding* to be able to:

- enjoy Recreational or Competitive Ringette for Life
- pursue and enjoy other sports and physical activity for life
- pursue excellence in ringette or another sport at a provincial, national and international level should they so choose

### Stages of Development

Participants in the Children's Ringette context are generally in the Fundamentals and Learn-to-Train stages of development and should know how to skate. **Some** children in the latter part of the Active Start stage of development who exhibit the required skills and abilities, may join a ringette program. See the "Special Consideration: Active Start – Watch me Start" section of the Children's Ringette Section for more details.

Children exit this context as they reach puberty and the onset of Peak Height Velocity (PHV). At this time, they may choose to continue participating in either Recreational or Competitive Ringette or potentially pursue other sports or activities.

### Type of Participant

Participants in this context are individuals who can skate, and who wish to learn the sport of ringette. For participants in the FUNdamentals stage of development, the "learn-to" program is imbedded in this context.

During the FUNdamentals and Learn-to-Train stages of development participants are often "*sampling*" several different sports. The end of the Learn-to-Train stage is identified by the biological markers associated with the start of puberty including the onset of the Peak Height Velocity.

### Existing Programming

Ringette in Canada is generally organised around the structure of the adult game, using only chronological age as a guide for athlete grouping, and then placing athletes into teams following evaluation camps. These teams then practice and participate in tournaments together throughout the season. Although Ringette Canada's LTAD Framework provides recommendations for appropriate training and competition for young participants, the competitions continue to be based on an adult rule book.

### Creating Children's Ringette

To optimally support athlete development, a fundamental shift is required to create a system of training and competition in ringette specifically designed for children. This shift includes formally moving away from age categories based exclusively on chronological ages and taking steps to move towards cross-ice

play and small sided games that include modified equipment. This type of system should also become the norm for participants in the FUNdamentals stage of development.

Programs like Ringette ABC, Let's Play Gym Ringette and NCCP coach training provide guidance on how to deliver appropriate lessons and practices. Ringette Alberta's use of a "Steps Program" approach in conjunction with Ringette ABC helps inform progression, while [Ringette Manitoba's Ringette4U](#) program provides a series of progressive levels and modified games that introduce ringette and adapt to the needs of the participants.

### Team Formation

Children should participate in ringette as part of large squads with a shared identity based on their level of skill development. Teams should be balanced and can be reformed from the larger squads to participate in each tournament/jamboree based on who is able to participate. Having more small teams is preferable in order to maximize playing time.

### What should a program in this context look like?

A new umbrella program should include a series of progressive levels that highlight athlete development and are supported by a rulebook specifically designed for Children's Ringette. Participants advance from one level to the next based on a combination of age, maturation, and skill development. They receive formal recognition and feedback for skill development as they graduate from one program to the next. There is a seamless transition between programs.

- Programs run no more than 13 weeks (3 months in duration) and participants can progress from one level to the next at any time, though progression would usually occur at the mid-point or at the end of a program.
- Programs generally have 1 or 2 on-ice sessions per week, with no more than 2 sessions being offered in the FUNdamentals stage of development and 3 sessions in the Learn-to-Train stage of development. See **Appendix 4** for the summary of developmental parameters.
- Programs for each level are hosted in as many locations as a population can support and having more than one program level on the ice at the same time is common. All activities run cross-ice in initial levels and mid-levels, with full ice programs being introduced as part of the final level. Scrimmages and small-sided games are a part of all sessions.

### What should competition in this context look like?

Formal competition is optional for participants. Teams come together to compete against each other to participate in tournaments and/or jamborees 2-3 times over the course of a program, with teams seeded based on their current level.

Teams are formed for each tournament/jamboree based on the participants who wish to participate and are drawn from all participants within a program (generally a single location or a small region) to form a team. Teams coming from areas with low participation may combine participants from multiple levels and enter the category which is most appropriate for them.

Tournaments and jamborees are an opportunity for participants to experience many of the social elements of sport and to measure their skills against participants they might not otherwise see. Participants play different kinds of games (e.g., 3 vs. 3; single net, 1/3 ice etc.) in a tournament with the goal of maximizing skill development.



Consideration should also be given to expanding jamborees to include other ice-based activities and games. Activities could include providing participants with racing opportunities (speed skating), skill challenges (on-ice and off-ice), playing hockey and hand soccer on-ice, and playing Gym Ringette off-ice. These other activities could be organised by the ringette association or in collaboration with other local sport organisations.

### Cross-Ice Ringette, Small-Sided Games and Modified Games

Numerous studies and program innovations in Soccer, Rugby, Basketball and Volleyball have confirmed that small-sided and modified games provide significant benefits for the development of participant skills.

A study by USA Hockey of U8 “cross-ice hockey” confirmed the following:

1. 6x more shots on goal/participant
2. 5x more passes received/participant
3. 2x more puck battles/participant
4. 2x more puck touches/participant
5. 2x more pass attempts/participant
6. 2x more shot attempts/participant
7. 2x more change of direction pivots
8. 1.75 shots/minute vs 0.45 shots/minute playing full ice
9. The actual stats of the U8 game resemble those of an NHL game.

A video summary of this study can be seen [here](#).

Additional benefits of cross-ice play include:

- increased number of participants per hour who can play
- ability to have teams play in stations, with different modified games taking place at each station

Staff from Provincial Associations indicated that despite existing recommendations for cross-ice ringette, full-ice ringette continues to be the norm. Provincial Associations support mandating cross-ice ringette.

Basketball has many similarities to ringette in terms of gameplay flow. The structure of the small-sided games program in Basketball Manitoba allows for participants to experience a very deliberate progression from mini-basketball to the adult game. Details of this article can be seen [here](#).

### Special Consideration: Active Start – Watch Me Start

During the early Active Start stage of development, physical activity should be fun and part of the child’s everyday life. Children are learning fundamental movements and linking them together through play. Competition is not appropriate in this stage and the focus should be on learning to skate. If introducing ringette during the Active Start stage of development, it should only be done as a form of active play in combination with a large variety of on-ice activities that reinforce the development of fundamental skating skills.

## Recommendations

1. Ringette Canada and Provincial Associations should collectively commit to mandating cross-ice ringette for all participants in the FUNdamentals stage of development (currently U9) supported by a specific implementation timeline which addresses additional recommendations below.
2. Umbrella programming should be developed with specific branding that connects all programs in the Children's Ringette context.
3. Full-ice ringette should be progressively introduced through the Learn-to-Train stage of development. Components of cross-ice ringette should be maintained until the end of what is currently U12.
4. Establish a timeline of not more than 5 years to eliminate current U9 and U10 age categories.
  - a. Replace existing age categories with a series of progressive programs linked to modified games focusing on skill development. These programs should start at between 4 and 6 years of age and extend through what is currently U12, with participants placed in programs based on their skill level.
  - b. Each level should build upon the previous level as is done in [Ringette4U](#) and Ringette Alberta's "Steps Program", and be supported by lesson plans and activities similar to the [Ringette ABC Program](#).
  - c. The progression within Children's Ringette should include a series of modified games that support skill development and are played cross-ice.
  - d. Guidelines for progressing from cross-ice ringette to full-ice ringette should be developed for the second half of Children's Ringette (currently U10 and U12).
5. Develop a specific rulebook for Children's Ringette which describes the children's game in detail and addresses the following areas:
  - a. Modified games
  - b. Ice Size
  - c. Number of participants on the ice
  - d. Equipment size (nets, sticks, and protective equipment)
  - e. Use of shot clock and game time
  - f. Coaching and Officiating Standards
  - g. Seeding of teams
6. Establish new sanctioning criteria for tournaments and leagues requiring the use of the children's rulebook for all Children's Ringette programs.
7. Implement an awards program based on the Athlete Development Matrix (ADM) to recognize overall skill development.
8. Limit program length to a maximum 13 consecutive weeks (3 months); providing participants with the opportunity to advance one or more program levels every three months. Programs as short as 6 weeks are also appropriate.

9. Local Associations should limit the offering of Children's Ringette to a maximum of 2 programs per year to provide sufficient time for exposure to other sports.
10. Incorporate specific training for the delivery of Children's Ringette programs into coach education programs.
11. Align coaching standards for Children's Ringette with the NCCP's Community Sport stream .
12. Develop supplementary coach and official training as required to support the delivery of Children's Ringette.
13. Develop a parent education strategy and support resources that explain the benefits of Children's Ringette and how programs in this context will lead to better overall long-term athlete development.
14. Explore the development of Ringette Jamborees that extend beyond ringette to expose participants to other ice-based sports as well as Gym Ringette.
15. Competitions for participants in the Active Start stage of development should not be sanctioned.

## Sporting Context - Recreational and Competitive (Ringette for Life)

The recreational and competitive contexts are complementary. They both extend from the final progression within Children's Ringette through the lifespan of the participant. Both contexts provide opportunities for athletes to regularly participate in organised ringette with a level of training and competition that suits their individual interests and motivations. As participants exit Children's Ringette and wish to continue playing, they choose the context in which they wish to play. Adult participants may choose to play in both contexts.

The difference between the contexts is not based on skill but is instead based on the reason the athlete is participating. Over the course of a few seasons an athlete may choose to engage in one context or the other.

### Type of Participant

Participants in this context are adolescents or adults who have participated in Children's Ringette or who are joining the sport for the first time with the necessary pre-requisite skills (e.g., skating ability, awareness of rules and positioning, etc.).

### Existing Programming

While the ringette community places a high value on the opportunity to play Ringette for Life, the current regulatory structure in many jurisdictions is a barrier to full participation. The rules that exist to manage the movement of participants in Children and Youth programs are imposed on recreational adult participants, which impede their ability to play and form teams. Another identified barrier for adult ringette is coach certification requirements. In this environment adult participants are often content to self-coach/self-direct.

These regulations are relevant at a youth level to ensure balanced teams and support athlete development, but they are viewed by many adult participants to be barriers to participation. For example, limitations are imposed on participant pickups, which can make it difficult for recreational teams to have sufficient participants to engage in regular play or participate in tournaments.

Ringette Alberta has attempted to address these identified issues by:

- Distinguishing between competitive and recreational ringette for adults, and by giving more flexibility for recreational ringette programming
- Not having coaching requirements in the recreational context
- Eliminating "pick up" restrictions in the recreational context

## Recreational Ringette

### Purpose

Recreational Ringette allows for individuals to participate in ringette in a semi-structured manner that benefits overall health and well-being.

### Stages of Development

Recreational Ringette programs are intended for athletes who are entering the Train-to-Train stage as well as those athletes who identify with the characteristics of the Active for Life stage. Recreational

ringette provides an on-ramp for people who come to the sport later in life, who are looking to learn the sport, and who may eventually migrate to the competitive stream. Recreational ringette also provides an off-ramp for individuals who have been participating in the Competitive and Pursuit of Excellence sporting contexts, who still love the game, and who still want to play but can no longer participate at a higher level due to availability, commitment, injury, or several other reasons.

### What should a program in this context look like— For Adults

Team formation is self-directed. Participants come together based on the opportunities that are available locally or their pre-existing friendships or relationships. Teams play games based on a frequency of their choosing and may or may not choose to practice. Teams are generally balanced and self-managed with some logistical support from Local Associations. Teams may also choose to enter tournaments, primarily for fun.

### What should a program in this context look like— For Adolescents

Programs are supervised by a qualified coach. The team comes together to practice periodically and play against other recreational teams in a semi-structured manner. The primary goals of the programs are fitness and fun. Programs may be included as part of school intramurals.

Teams enter tournaments of their choosing based on the advertised level of skill of the event. For younger adolescents, the program is similar to the start of the competitive context, with less emphasis on competition. As participants progress through adolescence, these contexts become more distinct but begin to reconnect in adulthood.

### Recommendations

1. Ringette organisations at all levels should promote opportunities to play ringette for life.
2. Allow for greater participant and team autonomy within Adult Recreational Leagues by eliminating coaching certification requirements and participant eligibility restrictions.
3. Develop a NCCP Community-Sport on-going participation coach training workshop for individuals coaching adolescents in this context. Trained coaches should be required for all teams with participants under the age of 18.
4. Develop resources for self-directed/self-coached teams.

## Competitive Ringette

### Purpose

Competitive Ringette provides athletes with an opportunity to participate within a structured, competitive environment. Competitive programs in the Train-to-Train stage of development also provide a foundation for athletes who wish to pursue competitive excellence in the Pursuit of Excellence context.

### Stages of Development

Competitive Ringette primarily serves athletes in the Train-to-Train, Learn-to-Compete, and Competitive-for-Life stages of development. It serves as both an on-ramp and an off-ramp for athletes in the Pursuit of Excellence context. Athletes enter this context as they begin puberty which means that significant attention must be given to their physical, social, and emotional development when designing competition.

### What should a program in this context look like?

Athletes train regularly under the supervision of a coach and regularly participate in a structured league. These athletes participate in tournaments and may participate in provincial championships, as well as regional and national championships when they are offered.

Programs are supervised by NCCP Certified Coaches following Ringette Canada's guidelines. Ringette Canada's Long-Term Athlete Development documentation (Framework, Athlete Development Matrix, Essentials) provide guidelines for coaches to appropriately structure training and competition. The athlete self-declares interest in being part of a competitive program.

### What should competition in this context look like?

Competition should look much like it does today but with modifications for how teams are classified for league and tournament play. These modifications should promote an increased depth of field and minimize the impact of relative age.

The following suggestions are possible ways in which competition could be restructured. All strategies would require piloting prior to full scale provincial or national implementation.

- **Meaningful Competition:** A measure that indicates the degree to which the event has provided meaningful competition in the past.
- **Bio-banding:** A system whereby athletes are classified based on their progress towards their predicted adult stature.
- **Team Rating:** A system whereby each team is assigned a rating based on an aggregate score based on the results of an athlete skill assessment (such as [Ringette Alberta's Universal Skill Assessment](#)). Athletes within a designated geographic region are evaluated based on the key skills identified in the Athlete Development Matrix, using tools like the Universal Athlete Assessment and bio-banding.

### Recommendations

1. To aid in the formation of balanced teams, Ringette Canada should develop a system of evaluating participants that takes into consideration individual growth, development of athletes, and skill development. In developing the evaluation system, it is imperative that the system be easy to understand and require no more work to administer than existing tryout formats, following the initial training of program leaders.
2. Provincial Associations should link league and tournament sanctioning to the new evaluation tool.
3. Provincial Championship formats should be modified to use the new evaluation tool.

### Special Consideration: Adult Ringette

Over the past seven years, individuals over the age of 18 have represented the fastest-growing demographic of ringette participation in Canada. There are opportunities to continue to increase and maintain participation from this demographic by using some of the suggestions detailed earlier in this document.

## Recommendations

1. Conduct a national survey of Adult participants to understand two questions “*Why do you play?*” and “*How can the ringette community better serve you?*”
2. Form a working group to study the results of the survey and develop initiatives to engage and support adult participants.
3. Review other sports like Road Running and Triathlon (which have seen a large industry develop around adult sporting events) for ideas on how to best serve this demographic.

## Sporting Context - Pursuit of Excellence

### Purpose

This sporting context provides systemic and systematic training and competition environments, based on Ringette Canada's Athlete Development Matrix (ADM), with the intention of helping athletes achieve their highest level of performance, and preparing them to represent their province at Canada Games, play in the NRL, and represent Canada at the World Ringette Championships.

### Stages of Development

Athletes in the Pursuit of Excellence sporting context are in one of the following stages of development.

- **Learn-to-Compete:** Athletes who are participating in structured competitive provincial leagues and participating in the Canadian Ringette Championships.
- **Train-to-Compete:** Athletes who are part of provincial team programs, part of the Team Canada – Junior Program, or who are in their first years of playing in the National Ringette League.
- **Train-to-Win:** Established participants playing in the NRL and participants vying for a position on Team Canada.

### Existing Programming

As part of Ringette Canada's High Performance Summit, a background document, [Current State of High Performance Ringette in Canada](#) was produced. The document's introduction articulates the state of High Performance Ringette in Canada:

*There has been no clear definition of High Performance Ringette in Canada.*

*From one province to the other, from one conversation to the next the agreement as to 'who is part of High Performance Ringette in Canada?' is never reached. Additionally, athletes competing at the same level and part of the same development phase are not being given the same daily training opportunities from one area of the country to the other. How is it that programs built to achieve the same goals have such varying structures and priorities?*

*Through Long-Term Athlete Development, we have determined which programs fit into which phase - we know that Canada Games, National Teams and National Ringette League are part of the phases that fall under the High-Performance umbrella.*

*However, this has not translated into a uniform system that can be implemented in each area of the country for each of these groups of athletes.*

### Team Formation

Teams are formed by geographic cluster based on the number of athletes willing to commit to programs at the entry of the Pursuit of Excellence context. As athletes move into the NRL, they are invited to selection camps and are then retained by programs. For national teams, athletes are invited to participate in selection events and are then selected to teams.

What should a program in this context look like?



Programs in the Pursuit of Excellence context should be characterised by year-round training in a high quality daily training environment with sound technical leadership, quality coaching, and consistent access to sport science and sport medicine services. These programs have minimum standards which clubs must meet to be recognized as pursuit of excellence programs.

Clubs are highly invested in athlete development and are encouraged to support multiple teams playing in different leagues, affiliated with a lead NRL team. Clubs would operate with a flexible roster, allowing them to move participants between teams when attending tournaments and to meet the individual development needs of each participant.

Provincial and National training camps provide additional opportunities for enhanced athlete development and the opportunity to learn appropriate styles of play.

Pursuit of Excellence programming is for a relatively small number of participants interested in making a full-time commitment to pursuing high performance ringette. Not all provinces will necessarily have the number of interested participants needed to support full-time programs and leagues at a local level. It will be important to ensure that programming is available to all individuals willing to make the commitment within each region and that a connection to Canada Games programs be maintained.

### What should competition in this context look like?

Teams are playing in highly structured, standards-based leagues first provincially, and then regionally through NRL Development League(s) and ultimately in the NRL Elite League.

Top athletes are selected to be part of Team Canada and represent Canada internationally. The Canadian Ringette Championships and the Canada Games are the pinnacle of domestic competition for developing participants.

### Recommendations

1. Pursuit of Excellence programming should be created for athletes who are in the Learn-to-Compete stage of development and beyond, loosely associated with what is currently U16AA and older age categories.
2. Ringette Canada should establish formal standards based on the daily training environment for clubs to be recognized as a Pursuit of Excellence club. Standards should be progressively introduced to allow clubs to put the necessary program resources in place and to allow for parallel adjustments to the system of competition.
3. Provincial Associations should assume responsibility for implementing Pursuit of Excellence club standards. Consider the option of the [Club Excellence](#) program developed by the Club Excellence Cooperative.
4. Restructure the NRL to create an “NRL – Elite” league and a series of “NRL – Development” regional leagues. Participating in these leagues should be contingent on clubs meeting Pursuit of Excellence standards.
5. NRL Elite and NRL Development leagues should be restricted to participants 16 years of age and older.
6. When numbers permit, establish provincial development leagues that will serve as a feeder to the NRL Elite. Development leagues are restricted to recognised Pursuit of Excellence clubs.

## NRL, Canadian Ringette Championships, and Canada Games

The National Ringette League (NRL), the Canadian Ringette Championships (CRC), and the Canada Winter Games represent the pinnacle of ringette in Canada.

**National Ringette League:** The mission of the National Ringette League is to be the showcase league for ringette in Canada and strives to be the premiere women's sports league in Canada.

**Canadian Ringette Championships:** The Canadian Ringette Championships (CRC) serve as a dynamic forum of competition for athletes, coaches, and officials from across the country. The event is designed to determine the Canadian champions in the U16, U19 and National Ringette League categories, and runs in an open format.

As well as determining champions, the event aims to provide athletes with the opportunity to compete at the elite level, encourages sportsmanship and interprovincial goodwill, and increases the visibility of the sport across the country.

**Canada Winter Games:** The Canada Winter Games is a premium multi-sport event held every four years. The Games are an opportunity to showcase the highest levels of ringette in Canada and allow athletes to represent their home province.

Fundamentally, the Canadian Ringette Championships and the Canada Winter Games are sound in format and require only small adjustments in relation to a new system of competition.

### Recommendations

1. The NRL should be formally split into two tiers. The first tier should be an NRL Elite league and feature between 6 and 10 teams. The second tier would consist of a series of regional Development leagues.
2. The NRL Elite league should be removed from the Canadian Ringette Championships and have its own championship format.
3. The NRL Elite league championship structure should be similar to the world championship format (best of three series) with a semi-final and final.
4. The Eastern and Western Championships should be formally recognized as national championships as part of an aligned athlete pathway leading towards the Canadian Ringette Championships in later stages of development.
5. The Canadian Ringette Championships should be a showcase event for NRL Development teams and allow teams from different NRL Developmental leagues to compete against each other.
6. Team classification system, once developed, should be incorporated into the Canadian Ringette Championships.

## Canadian University Ringette

University Ringette is governed by the Canadian University and College Ringette Association (CUCRA). This association operates outside of the structure of Ringette Canada, although it does have a relationship with at least some Provincial Associations. The CUCRA's website describes University Ringette as:

*"a wonderful option which keeps many participants involved in the sport who would otherwise likely hang up the skates during their years of post-secondary study. An instant community of friends awaits young women when they join a university ringette team, while embarking on the most important educational journey of their lives. This dimension of the sport, and the retention it represents, is of great importance to the long-term viability of ringette."*

While University Ringette was not extensively studied as part of this Competition Review, and is not formally part of Ringette Canada, their activities are important to consider in any future program design. With 17 teams (**Appendix 5**), the CUCRA and its member teams represent a significant number of Canadian participants. These numbers are likely to grow as will the importance of this program in the athlete development pathway.

### Recommendations

1. Ringette Canada should explore a closer relationship with the CUCRA.
2. The role of University Ringette teams should be carefully considered as part of any re-design of the National Ringette League.

## Other Considerations

While this report has examined a significant number of factors related to ringette competition in Canada, some areas were not fully addressed and are noted here for future consideration.

### Officials

Officials are an integral part of ringette and are essential to providing a quality sporting experience. They also have a role in creating an environment for meaningful competition. As changes are made to the system of competition it will be necessary to revise and align Ringette Canada's Long-Term Officials Development Model to reflect the new competitive structure.

Specifically, as Children's Ringette is developed, Ringette Canada and Provincial Associations should anticipate the need to update training materials for officials to support this context. This will require supplementary training as new programs are implemented.

### Growing the Game in Canada

While Ringette Canada is a national organisation, the game is clearly not developed to the same level throughout Canada with only 9 of 10 provinces and no territories having active provincial/territorial associations. As Ringette Canada continues to grow the game, representation from all provinces and territories will be an important part of being a national sport.

### Growing the Game Internationally

International Ringette is dominated by two countries, Canada and Finland. A small number of other countries also participate. To maintain the interest and relevance of Ringette in Canada it is important that Canada's success on the world stage be achieved through a highly competitive environment that meets the same tests of meaningful competition that are being established domestically.

As Ringette Canada continues to grow the game in Canada, all knowledge and information should be shared to aid other countries in developing the game.

### Provincial/Regional Games

Provincial and Regional Games were not specifically considered in the context of this review, however, their role in supporting athlete development is critical. They represent opportunities for meaningful competition and provide athletes with the opportunity to be exposed to a multi-sport games environment. As Provincial Associations adjust their competition structures, it will be critical that the alignment of provincial and regional games is considered.

### Boys and Mixed Teams

While Ringette Canada's rules address the participation of boys and mixed teams, this specific issue was not specifically addressed within this review. Increasing opportunities for these under-represented groups provides opportunity for organisational growth, particularly within the recreational context.

There are also an increasing number of policy issues related to the inclusion of boys in ringette which will soon need to be addressed.

## Transgender Athletes

The inclusion of transgender athletes in competition was not specifically addressed within this review. Future plans for inclusion should be considered that build upon Ringette Canada's inclusion policy.

## Recommendations

1. Ringette Canada should take steps to address the inclusion of boys in Ringette.
2. Each Provincial Association should have an inclusion policy or transgender athlete participation policy.

## Summary of Recommendations

### Guiding Principles

1. Ringette Canada, Provincial Associations, and Local Associations should formally adopt these Guiding Principles for competitions into their rules, regulations, and key technical documents related to competition.
2. Ringette Canada should develop a tool to allow all Ringette Associations to publicly pledge their commitment to the Guiding Principles.

### Meaningful Competition

3. Event organisers at all levels should implement participant surveys following events which specifically ask the question *“Was your overall competitive experience meaningful to you?”* The question should be direct, measured on a 7 or 10-point scale to have clear differentiation within the scale, and allow room for comments to gain insight into what makes an experience meaningful for participants. Ringette Canada can support this initiative by developing the survey and providing a tool to facilitate data collection.
4. Ringette Canada should engage an independent researcher to study the relationship between game play statistics and the perceived experience of participants during games within each stage of development.
5. Ringette Canada and Provincial Associations should work with software providers to ensure consistency in the capturing and reporting capability for meaningful competition. Data capture capacity should extend beyond gameplay statistics to include collecting systematic feedback from participants, coaches, officials and parents. This data could contribute to creating an aggregate meaningful competition score for each event.
6. Ringette Canada and Provincial Associations should publish annual lists of leagues and tournaments which optimally support long-term athlete development. Marketing collateral should be provided to top-ranked events to celebrate their achievement.
7. Provincial Associations, tournament and league organizers should review tournament and league seeding and eligibility criteria to ensure optimal structure for promoting meaningful competition.
8. Tournament and league organizers should review tournament and league playoff criteria to ensure the structure promotes meaningful competition. Provincial or national sanctioning criteria could be developed.
9. In the FUNdamentals, Learn-to-Train, Train-to-Train and Active for Life stages of development, Provincial and Local Associations should favour the creation of balanced teams over elite teams, and promote maximum opportunities for participation, while maintaining an environment which allows for meaningful competition.

10. Ringette Canada, Provincial and Local Associations, and Leagues should clearly articulate the purpose of each competitive event (Championship, League Play, Tournaments, Exhibition Games, etc.).
11. The purpose of championships, leagues, tournaments, and exhibition games should be clearly communicated to participants, coaches and parents when registration information is distributed.

#### Sporting Context - First Interactions (Learn to Play Ringette)

12. Determine the number of Provincial and Local Associations that are involved in offering Learn-to-Skate programs and the curriculum for each program. Ensure that all associations either have access to appropriate Learn-to-Skate curricula and/or identify curriculum and instructor training being provided by other organisations.
13. Ensure that the program guides, training materials, and proposed activities for Come Try Ringette address the full range of participants engaged in the promotional sessions and include strategies and appropriate activities for individuals who cannot skate.
14. Clearly communicate pre-requisite skating skills to participants before inviting them to participate in on-ice programs. Provide alternative programming for participants who have not acquired fundamental skating skills or direct them to alternative programming.
15. Consider expanding the use of Gym Ringette as an avenue to teach basic sport skills associated with ringette and as a vehicle to introduce new participants to the sport.
16. Encourage Local Associations with insufficient ice to use Gym Ringette as part of their regular training.
17. Provide additional formal structures to support the introduction of ringette to teenagers and adults, in addition to what is currently offered for children.
18. Increase the formal connection between Come Try Ringette and Let's Play Gym Ringette to regular ringette programming. Develop consistent branding across all programs. Be explicit in communicating the pathway from one program to the next.
19. Ensure that children's ringette includes a progression of programs that address the needs of participants up until the onset of puberty (beginning of the Train to Train stage).
20. Develop program resources for specific populations that exist within the three broad categories of children, teenagers, and adults. Resources should provide a focused opportunity to develop fundamental ringette skills and help participants from the specific populations quickly join a team in the recreational or competitive sporting context. Specific populations can include the following, but further market analysis and stakeholder consultation is required:
  - Indigenous communities, New Canadians

- Teenagers not engaged in sport; Teenagers looking to experience a new sport/seeking recreational sporting opportunities; University Students
- New Ringette Parents; Older adults

### Sporting Context - Children's Ringette (Developing Physical Literacy through Ringette)

21. Ringette Canada and Provincial Associations should collectively commit to mandating cross-ice ringette for all participants in the FUNdamentals stage of development (currently U9) supported by a specific implementation timeline which addresses additional recommendations below.
22. Umbrella programming should be developed with specific branding that connects all programs in the Children's Ringette context.
23. Full-ice ringette should be progressively introduced through the Learn-to-Train stage of development. Components of cross-ice ringette should be maintained until the end of what is currently U12.
24. Establish a timeline of not more than 5 years to eliminate current U9 and U10 age categories.
  - a. Replace existing age categories with a series of progressive programs linked to modified games focusing on skill development. These programs should start at between 4 and 6 years of age and extend through what is currently U12, with participants placed in programs based on their skill level. Each level should build upon the previous level as in is done in [Ringette4U](#) and Ringette Alberta's "Steps Program", and be supported by lesson plans and activities similar to the [Ringette ABC Program](#).
  - b. The progression within Children's Ringette should include a series of modified games that support skill development and are played cross-ice.
  - c. Guidelines for progressing from cross-ice ringette to full-ice ringette should be developed for the second half of Children's Ringette (currently U10 and U12).
25. Develop a specific rulebook for Children's Ringette which describes the children's game in detail and addresses the following areas:
  - a. Modified games
  - b. Ice Size
  - c. Number of participants on the ice
  - d. Equipment size (nets, sticks, and protective equipment)
  - e. Use of shot clock and game time
  - f. Coaching and Officiating Standards
  - g. Seeding of teams
26. Establish new sanctioning criteria for tournaments and leagues requiring the use of the children's rulebook for all Children's Ringette programs.



27. Implement an awards program based on the Athlete Development Matrix (ADM) to recognize overall skill development.
28. Limit program length to a maximum 13 consecutive weeks (3 months); providing participants with the opportunity to advance one or more program levels every three months. Programs as short as 6 weeks are also appropriate.
29. Local Associations should limit the offering of Children's Ringette to a maximum of 2 programs per year to provide sufficient time for exposure to other sports.
30. Incorporate specific training for the delivery of Children's Ringette programs into coach education programs.
31. Align coaching standards for Children's Ringette with the NCCP's Community Sport stream.
32. Develop supplementary coach and officials training as required to support the delivery of Children's Ringette.
33. Develop a parent education strategy and support resources that explain the benefits of Children's Ringette and how programs in this context will lead to better overall long-term athlete development.
34. Explore the development of Ringette Jamborees that extend beyond ringette to expose participants to other ice-based sports as well as Gym Ringette.
35. Competitions for participants in the Active Start stage of development should not be sanctioned.

#### **Sporting Context - Recreational Ringette**

36. Ringette organisations at all levels should promote opportunities to play ringette for life.
37. Allow for greater participant and team autonomy within Adult Recreational Leagues by eliminating coaching certification requirements and participant eligibility restrictions.
38. Develop a NCCP Community-Sport on-going participation coach training workshop for individuals coaching adolescents in this context. Trained coaches should be required for all teams with participants under the age of 18.
39. Develop resources for self-directed/self-coached teams.

#### **Sporting Context - Competitive Ringette**

40. To aid in the formation of balanced teams, Ringette Canada should develop a system of evaluating participants that takes into consideration individual growth, development of athletes, and skill development. In developing the evaluation system, it is imperative that the system be easy to

understand and require no more work to administer than existing tryout formats, following the initial training of program leaders.

41. Provincial Associations should link league and tournament sanctioning to the new evaluation tool.

42. Provincial Championship formats should be modified to use the new evaluation tool.

#### Special Consideration: Adult Ringette

43. Conduct a national survey of Adult participants to understand two questions “*Why do you play?*” and “*How can the ringette community better serve you?*”

44. Form a working group to study the results of the survey and develop initiatives to engage and support adult participants.

45. Review other sports like Road Running and Triathlon (which have seen a large industry develop around adult sporting events) for ideas on how to best serve this demographic.

#### Sporting Context – Pursuit of Excellence

46. Pursuit of Excellence programming should be created for athletes who are in the Train-to-Train stage of development and beyond, loosely associated with what is currently U16AA and older age categories.

47. Ringette Canada should establish formal standards based on the daily training environment for clubs to be recognized as a Pursuit of Excellence club. Standards should be progressively introduced to allow clubs to put the necessary program resources in place and to allow for parallel adjustments to the system of competition.

48. Provincial Associations should assume responsibility for implementing Pursuit of Excellence club standards. Consider the option of the Club Excellence program developed by the Club Excellence Cooperative.

49. Restructure the NRL to create an “NRL – Elite” league and a series of “NRL – Development” regional leagues. Participating in these leagues should be contingent on clubs meeting Pursuit of Excellence standards.

50. NRL Elite and NRL Development leagues should be restricted to participants 16 years of age and older.

51. When numbers permit, establish provincial development leagues that will serve as a feeder to the NRL Elite. Development leagues are restricted to recognised Pursuit of Excellence clubs.

#### NRL, Canadian Ringette Championships and Canada Games

52. The NRL should be formally split into two tiers. The first tier should be an NRL Elite league and feature between 6 and 10 teams. The second tier would consist of a series of regional Development leagues.
53. The NRL Elite league should be removed from the Canadian Ringette Championships and have its own championship format.
54. The NRL Elite league championship structure should be similar to the world championship format (best of three series) with a semi-final and final.
55. The Eastern and Western Championships should be formally recognized as national championships as part of an aligned athlete pathway leading towards the Canadian Ringette Championships in later stages of development.
56. The Canadian Ringette Championships should be a showcase event for NRL Development teams and allow teams from different NRL Developmental leagues to compete against each other.
57. Team classification system, once developed, should be incorporated into the Canadian Ringette Championships.

### University Ringette

58. Ringette Canada should explore a closer relationship with the CUCRA.
59. The role of University Ringette teams should be carefully considered as part of any re-design of the National Ringette League.

### Other Considerations

60. Ringette Canada should take steps to address the inclusion of boys in Ringette.
61. Each Provincial Association should have an inclusion policy or transgender athlete participation policy.

## Restructuring Competition: From Recommendations to Implementation

This Competition Review provides recommendations for how ringette in Canada should be re-shaped to optimally support long-term athlete development and lead to sporting excellence and lifelong participation in ringette.

Some of the recommendations presented in this document require Ringette Canada, Provincial and Local Associations to retire or significantly revise some existing programs, and also to develop new programs. To translate the recommendations into action it will be necessary for all stakeholders to work together to develop creative solutions. Implementation will require a collective commitment to change, as well as careful planning, and an investment of human and financial resources.

### Ringette Canada

- The Board of Directors formally adopts the Guiding Principles
- Formally states a commitment to a long-term plan intended to reshape the system of competition, starting with the implementation of cross-ice ringette and the creation of a specific rulebook for Children's Ringette.
  - Support Provincial Associations in mandating cross-ice ringette for participants in the FUNdamentals stage of development.
  - Task a working group, supported by Ringette Canada staff, to develop and pilot a Children's Ringette rulebook to support this initiative.
  - Task staff and working groups to set timelines to work on the following initiatives:
    - System to recognize clubs in the Pursuit of Excellence sporting context, including specific criteria for what a program must put in place to achieve this recognition.
    - Examination of how Ringette Canada can increase recreational opportunities for participation, particularly among adults
    - Tiering of the National Ringette League
- Ensure the necessary human and financial resources are available.

### Provincial Associations

- Provide Ringette Canada with clear direction and a mandate to modify the structure of competition, revise and/or retire existing programs, and develop new programs where required (e.g., Children's Ringette)
- Support Ringette Canada in implementing change by contributing to program development and supporting the piloting of new initiatives.
- Commit to implementing/adopting newly-developed programs and work with Local Associations to create appropriate incentives to adopt new programs.
- Align sanctioning criteria for tournaments and leagues
- Inform and educate members with regards to changes being implemented

### Local Associations

- Consistently use Ringette Canada programs in the promotion and delivery of the sport
- Ensure that the coaches, officials and volunteers who are delivering programs have participated in appropriate training and are informed of program changes
- Communicate the value and benefits of the new programs to participants and parents

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Speed Skating Canada (2009) Racing on Skates, Final Report of Speed Skating Canada's LTPAD Competition and Events System Review.

Sport for Life Society (2016). Canadian Sport for Life – Long-term Athlete Development Resource Paper v2.1

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### Ringette Community - Reports and Documents

- High Performance Summit Briefing Document, August 2016
- High Performance Summit Report, November 2016
- Youth Summit Report, February 2015
- Ringette Canada Long-term Athlete Development Model (2008)
- Ringette Canada Athlete Development Matrix and The Essentials
- Ringette Canada Policies
- Ringette4You Program Manual
- Ringette Canada, 2015-2017 Official Rules and Case Book
- Ringette Alberta "Steps Program"
- [Canadian University Ringette Website:](#)

## Video References & Resources

### Relative Age

[AFC Bournemouth Academy implementation of bio-banding](#)

[Bio banding explained by Bath Rugby Academy Strength & Conditioning Coach:](#)

Webinar: [Talent and Performance \(Ti5\)](#), sportscoachUK

### Cross Ice

[USA Hockey U8 Cross Ice Hockey Summary:](#)

### High Performance Summit

[Summary Video:](#)

### Early Specialization

[The Cost of Winning:](#)

[Play:](#)

[WKBT TV – Sport specialization: Looking at the research:](#)

## Appendix 1: Meaningful Competition based on Goal Differential

The figures in this Appendix show goal differentials within the National Ringette League and select tournaments. They are provided to help inform the reader's understanding of Meaningful Competition, rather than as a systematic evaluation of goal differential in relation to Meaningful Competition.

### National Ringette League: Regular Season 2009/10 through 2016/17

Data Source: [National Ringette League Website](#), accessed April 20, 2017

### 2017 Ontario Provincial "AA" Ringette Championships

Data Source: [Score2Stats](#), accessed April 20, 2017

Figure 2- Number of games with specified goal differential

Category	Number of games with specified goal differential								Games Played
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>U14J</b>	2	11	5	8	2	2	1	4	<b>35</b>
<b>U16J</b>	8	7	4	6	5	4	1	3	<b>38</b>
<b>U19J</b>	4	6	5	3	6	2	2	6	<b>34</b>
<b>18+ J</b>	2	3	8	8	3	6	1	3	<b>34</b>
<b>18+ L</b>		7	5	3	5	3			<b>23</b>

Figure 3 - Percentage of games with specified goal differential

Category	Goal Differential			
	Tie	1 – 3 Goals	4 Goals	5+ Goals
<b>U14J</b>	5.7%	68.6%	5.71%	20%
<b>U16J</b>	21%	44.7%	13.16%	21%
<b>U19J</b>	11.8%	41.2%	17.65%	29.4%
<b>18+ M</b>	13.3%	80%	6.67%	
<b>18+ J</b>	5.9%	55.8%	8.82%	29.4%
<b>18+ L</b>		65.2%	21.74%	13%
<b>Average</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>58.3%</b>	<b>11.86%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>

## 2017 Ontario Provincial “A” Ringette Championships

Data Source: [Score2Stats](#), accessed April 20, 2017

Figure 4 - Number of games with specified goal differential

Category	Number of games with specified goal differential								Games Played
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
U14J	4	7	3	3	6	2			25
U14M	7	4	5	3		5		1	25
U16J	8	7	4	6					25
U16M	5	10	3	3	2	1		1	25
U19J	9	9	3	2	4				27
U19M	6	5	9	3		2		2	27

Figure 5 - Percentage of games with specified goal differential

Category	Goal Differential			
	Tie	1 – 3 Goals	4 Goals	5+ Goals
U14J	16.0%	52.0%	24.0%	8.0%
U14M	28.0%	48.0%		24.0%
U16J	32.0%	68.0%		
U16M	20.0%	64.0%	8.0%	8.0%
U19J	33.3%	51.9%	14.8%	
U19M	22.2%	63.0%		14.8%
Average	25.3%	57.8%	7.8%	9.1%



## 2017 Ontario U12 Tournament

The context of this tournament was not specifically listed; however, it was one of the only readily available samplings of U12 participants.

Data Source: [Score2Stats](#), accessed April 20, 2017

Figure 6 - Number of games with specified goal differential

Category	Number of games with specified goal differential								Games Played
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>U12C</b>	3	4	2	4	2	2	2		<b>19</b>
<b>U12G</b>	5	7	5	1	2		1		<b>21</b>
<b>U12J</b>	6	4	5		4	1	1		<b>21</b>
<b>U12L</b>	3	3	4	3		2	1	1	<b>17</b>
<b>U12M</b>	3	9	1	3	3				<b>19</b>
<b>U12C</b>	3	4	2	4	2	2	2		<b>19</b>

Figure 7 - Percentage of games with specified goal differential

Category	Goal Differential			
	Tie	1 – 3 Goals	4 Goals	5+ Goals
<b>U12C</b>	15.8%	52.6%	10.5%	21.1%
<b>U12G</b>	23.8%	61.9%	9.5%	4.8%
<b>U12J</b>	28.6%	42.9%	19.0%	9.5%
<b>U12L</b>	17.6%	58.8%		23.5%
<b>U12M</b>	15.8%	68.4%	15.8%	
<b>Average</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>56.7%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>

## 2017 Manitoba Voyageur Ringette Tournament

Data Source: [Score2Stats](#), accessed April 20, 2017*Figure 8 - Number of games with specified goal differential*

Category	Number of games with specified goal differential								Games Played
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>U12A</b>	2	1	4	3	5	1	2	4	<b>22</b>
<b>U14A</b>	4		2	5	1		1	1	<b>14</b>
<b>U14AA</b>	1	4	3		1	2	2	1	<b>14</b>
<b>U16A</b>	1	4	1		2	3	1		<b>12</b>
<b>U16AA</b>	3	5	2		5	2		1	<b>18</b>
<b>U19AA</b>		3	2	2	2	2		3	<b>14</b>

*Figure 9 - Percentage of games with specified goal differential*

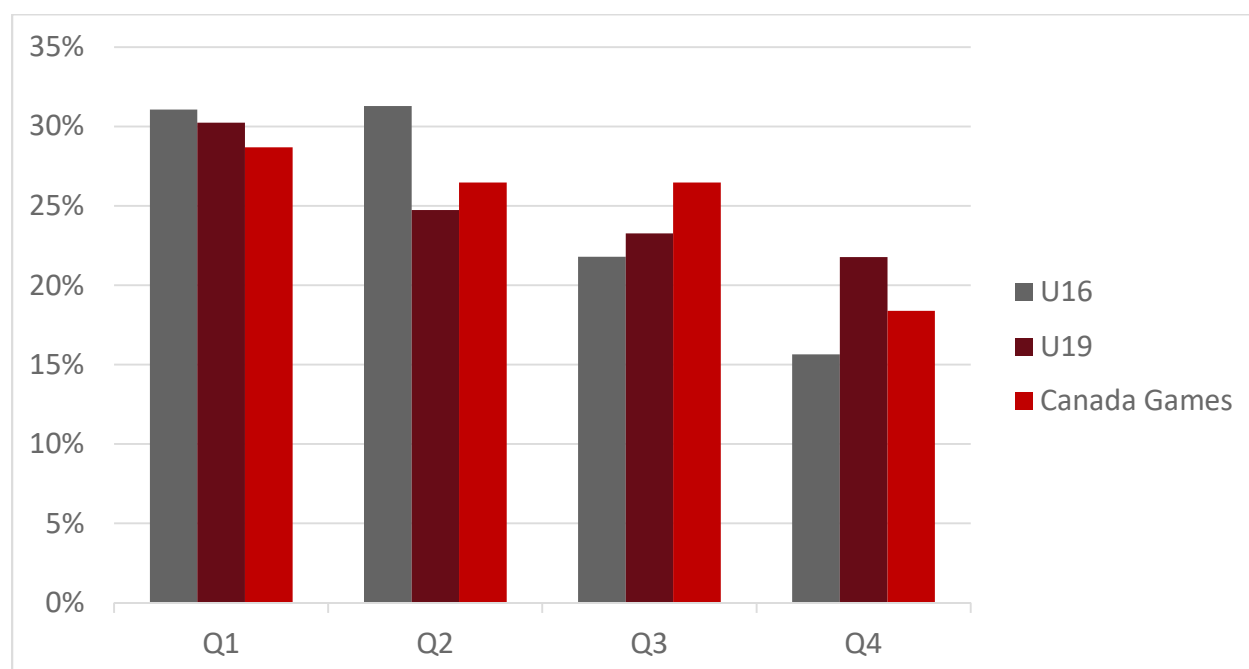
Category	Goal Differential			
	Tie	1 – 3 Goals	4 Goals	5+ Goals
<b>U12A</b>	9.1%	36.4%	22.7%	31.8%
<b>U14A</b>	28.6%	50.0%	7.1%	14.3%
<b>U14AA</b>	7.1%	50.0%	7.1%	35.7%
<b>U16A</b>	8.3%	41.7%	16.7%	33.3%
<b>U16AA</b>	16.7%	38.9%	27.8%	16.7%
<b>U19AA</b>		50.0%	14.3%	35.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>43.6%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>27.7%</b>

## Appendix 2: The Relative Age Effect in Ringette

The following graph shows the percentage of participants born in each quarter on teams in the U16 and U19 categories at the Canadian Ringette Championships from 2013 through 2015, as well as at the 2015 Canada Winter Games.

National data for the U14 age category, where the relative age effect is likely to be the most significant, was not available.

*Figure 10 - Relative Age Effect*



## Appendix 3: Come Try Ringette Participation: 2013-14 through 2016-17

Figure 11 - Number of events and participants

	# of Events Held					# participants				
Province	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	4 yr Avg.	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	4 yr Avg.
BC	8	47	16	34	26	64	404	216	646	333
AB	29	36	34	39	35	649	702	633	848	708
SK	5	9	8	8	8	112	231	227	256	207
MB	21	40	20	19	25	630	1200	519	496	711
ON	40	37	14	55	37	238	423	440	343	361
QC	16	14	17	34	20	320	282	474	552	407
NS	11	13	11	11	12	162	216	191	193	191
NB	3	9	5	5	6	34	132	58	110	84
PEI	6	6	7	4	6	146	106	123	56	108
TOTALS	139	211	132	209	173	2355	3696	2881	3500	3108

## Ringette Canada Competition Review

Figure 12 - Participant Conversion: Come Try Ringette to Regular Ringette Program

	# of registered participants from CTR events					Conversion Rate				
Province	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	4 yr. Avg	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	4 yr. Avg.
BC	35	109	29	206	95	55%	27%	13%	32%	32%
AB	343	344	311	380	345	53%	49%	49%	45%	49%
SK	90	147	138	127	126	80%	64%	61%	50%	64%
MB	306	240	190	245	245	49%	20%	37%	49%	39%
ON	130	188	228	184	183	55%	44%	52%	54%	51%
QC	37	133	259	380	202	12%	47%	55%	69%	46%
NS	83	81	153	42	90	51%	38%	80%	22%	48%
NB	19	25	32	34	28	56%	19%	55%	31%	40%
PEI	57	92	96	46	73	39%	87%	78%	82%	72%
TOTALS	1100	1359	1436	1644	1385	47%	37%	50%	47%	45%

## Appendix 4: Programming Guidelines for FUNdamentals, Learn to Train and Train to Train

To view in detail visit: [Ringette Canada's Guidelines Smartsheet](#)

Figure 13 - Programming Guidelines for LTAD stages

Characteristic	Stage2	Stage3	Stage4	Stage7	Stage5	Stage6
<b>Stage</b>	<b>FUNdamentals</b>	<b>Learn to Train</b>	<b>Train to Train</b>	<b>Active for Life</b>	<b>Train to Compete</b>	<b>Train to Win</b>
<b>Philosophy</b>	FUN	Lay The Foundations	Choosing a path - all athletes enter T2T, choose to pursue Excellence Pathway or remain active for life	Ringette as part of an active lifestyle	HP Athlete: Individual athlete skills are refined as they learn to train and compete in an HP environment.	HP Athlete: Team results supersede individual development
<b>Age</b>	<b>8-8 years</b>	<b>8-11 years</b>	<b>11-15 years</b>	<b>16+</b>	<b>15+</b>	<b>18+</b>
<b>Rules of Game</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Modified → IRF</b>	<b>IRF</b>	<b>IRF</b>	<b>IRF</b>
<b>Game Format</b>	Variety	Full/Spilt Games	Full	Full	Full	Full
<b>3 vs 3</b>	Modified Game #1					
<b>4 vs 4</b>	Yes	Yes				
<b>5 vs 5</b>		Yes	Yes			
<b>5 vs 5</b>			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Positions</b>	Rotating; No Goalie	Rotating; Specialize Goalies (End of Stage)				
<b>Other</b>		Equal distribution of ice				
<b>Game Duration</b>	Max 30min	3 x				
<b>Off-ice warm-up</b>		20 min	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Warm-up</b>		2min on ice; increasing to 4 min			10 min	10 min
<b>Quarter Length</b>		9 min	U12 - 10 min; U14 13 min	15 min	15 min	15 min
<b>Resurface Break(s)</b>		No	Introduced		Flood@Half	Flood@Half
<b>Stopped Time</b>					Yes	Yes
<b>Shot Clock</b>	None	Introduced (late, starting at blue line)	30 seconds			
<b>Net Size</b>	Mini/Smaller Net	Small Net U10	Full	Full	Full	Full
<b>Ice Size</b>		Half U10/Full U12	Full	Full	Full	Full
<b>Program Parameters</b>						
<b>Practice Frequency</b>	1-2/week	Increasing to 2x week (60-90min)	2-3x/week + personal sessions	1-2x/week		
<b>Game Frequency</b>			Train more than compete (1-2x week)			
<b>Start of Games</b>	After 2-3 weeks					
<b>Season Length</b>	2 x 10-12 weeks	Sept-Dec (Exhibition); Jan-March (Regular)				
<b>Squad Size</b>	12-15	Min 10, Max 15 skaters	Min 11; Max 18	Min 7	Min 15; Max 22	Min 15; Max 22
<b>On-ice Warm-up</b>		10 minutes, reduced to 5min through stage				
<b>Off-ice Warm-up</b>		20 min (Required)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Leagues &amp; Tournaments</b>						
<b>Team Formation</b>	NOT Chronological - Many different entry points					
<b>Leagues</b>		20 comp days/year; No standings			Provincial	NRL
<b>Tournaments</b>	2 Jamborees - Mid & End of Season	3 Local/regional; incorporate skill development, gym time			Cdn Chaps; Canada Winter Games; Invitationals	World Champs; Cdn Champs; Invitationals
<b>Travel</b>		Discourage Out of Province				
<b>Officials</b>	None	Level 2	Level 3	Level 1	Level 4	Level 4
<b>Referee</b>	N/A - Instructor Led	1 Mentor; 1 Entry Level	Min Level 2, pursuing level 3			
<b>Instructors/Coaches</b>						
<b>Head Coach</b>	Community Sport - Initiation	Community Sport - Initiation	Competition-Introduction	Competition-Introduction (Trained)	Comp-Dev	Comp-Dev
<b>Assistants</b>	NSO/PSO Trained Instructor (Teaching skills)					
<b>Ratio</b>	1 Adult:5 Participants	1 Coach: 8 Participants				

## Appendix 5: List of University Ringette Teams

Source: [Canadian University Ringette](#)

University of Alberta

Brock University

University of Calgary

Carleton University

Dalhousie University

University of Guelph

Lakehead University

Laurier University

McMaster University

Mount Royal University

Nipissing University

University of Ottawa

Simon Fraser University

University of Sherbrooke

Trent University

University of Waterloo

University of Western Ontario