



# Canadian Sport for Life Implementation Plan

June 2009



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## **Introduction**

One can participate in the sport of CanoeKayak at almost any age. Kids start at the age of 8 years, and can continue well into adulthood. While sprint and whitewater paddlers typically peak in their twenties, marathon, surf ski, and outrigger paddlers often peak in later years. Dragon boat, the worlds fastest growing paddle sport, attracts people of all ages from youth to seniors.

This document outlines the actions CanoeKayak BC will undertake to implement Canadian Sport for Life - Long-Term Athlete Development.

We began by looking at our current resources and strengths through a program inventory & audit. In compiling and analyzing those data, we also looked for gaps and weaknesses.

By examining resources and gaps, strengths and weaknesses, we declare specific objectives for LTAD implementation. For each objective, we outline a series of action plans, with priority, scope and timelines.

**We gratefully acknowledge contributions from the following individuals:**

***Jaden Langford***  
***Mary-Jane Abbott***  
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## **LTAD as Sport Policy**

The concepts of Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) have been discussed among CaoneKayak coaches periodically in the past. The national adoption and promotion of the Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) model created a clear mandate for LTAD principles.

Senior coaches and key leaders participated in CS4L presentations by Richard Way et al. in early 2006. As a result, athletes and parents started to become more aware of CS4L. A photo of kayaker Adam van Koverden on the cover of the CS4L document made it even more relevant to paddling families.

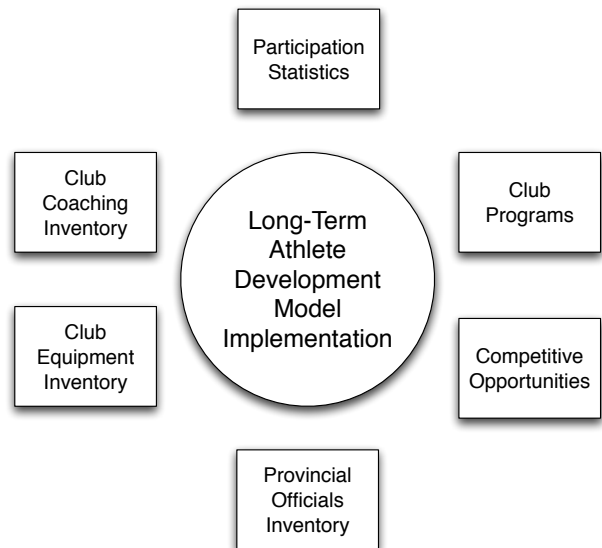


## *Sport-Specific Model*

CanoeKayak Canada (CKC) produced its sport-specific LTAD document in May 2006. It was published on their web site, and presentations were held across the country. At CanoeKayak BC's (CKBC) conference in November 2006 every attendee received a printed copy of the CKC document. There was also a slideshow presentation by CKC High Performance Director, Graham Barton. For many parents and athletes, it was their first formal introduction to LTAD. A short Q&A session revealed that there was significant interest in LTAD and how it would be implemented in BC.

## *Inventory & Audit*

The first step towards implementation in BC was a program inventory and audit. A web-application, built by Jaden Langford's company (New Wavelength), was used to collect and compile data from each club including: participation statistics, club programs, competitive opportunities, officials, coaches, and equipment.



## *Gap Analysis*

Results of the inventory and audit (Appendix 1) were presented at CKBC's conference "Bridging the Gaps" in November 2008. Drew Mitchell from Legacies Now (and former paddler) presented on CS4L and helped facilitate a gap identification & analysis session.

CKBC Executive Director Mary-Jane Abbott, and LTAD committee member Jaden Langford reviewed information compiled from this session in early 2009 (Appendix 2). Together with input from senior coaches and club administrators, the implementation plan took shape.

## *Context*

The introduction of LTAD to CanoeKayak comes at a time when the national coaching education program is being overhauled, and the sport in BC has grown through inclusion of multiple paddling disciplines.

## *Coaching education revamp*

CanoeKayak was part of the first wave of sports to transition to the NCCP competency-based program from 1998-2007. After a fairly smooth transition to the new system, CKBC is now running new courses for community initiation (CanoeKids) and entry-level competitive (ELCC) coaches. While a few opportunities have been offered nationally for

coaches to take the new competition development (CompDev) course, it has been difficult for coaches to obtain advanced training (beyond ELCC) since Level 3 was phased out.

## ***Multi-discipline growth***

CKBC has experienced tremendous growth in participation due to a multi-discipline program approach. Prior to 2004, CKBC was exclusively focused on flatwater sprint canoe & kayak. In an effort to increase grassroots programming, CKBC received funding from the BC Sport Participation Program to introduce dragon boat racing to BC schools from 2005-2008. During this time, the whitewater and marathon disciplines, and their clubs, also decided to join CKBC.

### *CanoeKayak Disciplines and Competitions*

Discipline	National Champs	Continental Games	World Champs	Olympic Games
Flatwater Canoe & Kayak				
• Sprint	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Marathon	✓		✓	
Whitewater Canoe & Kayak				
• Slalom	✓		✓	✓
• Wildwater	✓		✓	
• Freestyle	✓		✓	
• Canoe Polo	✓		✓	
Surf Ski Kayak	✓		✓	
Outrigger Canoe	✓		✓	
Dragon Boat	✓		✓	
Aboriginal Canoe Racing		✓		

## ***Current Status***

### ***Staff***

CanoeKayak BC's office in Maple Ridge is staffed by a full-time Executive Director. A full-time Provincial Coach and 5 part-time Regional Coaches are based in clubs. Clubs employ additional coaches on a seasonal basis, usually taking advantage of Canada Summer Jobs funding.

## Clubs & Programs

There are currently 19 member clubs, which, together, offer programs in every major paddling discipline (sprint, whitewater, marathon, dragon boat, and outrigger) and deliver programs for participants of all ages and abilities.

## Competitions

The 2009 competition list, published by CKBC, includes 62 competitions, 25 of which are occurring within BC, and 44 within Canada. These competitions are supported, but not necessarily administered, by CanoeKayak BC.



## Identified Strengths

- There are significant equipment assets in the province. The total value of all equipment reported in the club audit was \$813,237.
- CKBC's sprint high performance program is well documented. A comprehensive Athlete Handbook has been produced annually since 2001 clearly documenting the progression of the program and requirements at each step.
- CKBC clubs enjoy good linkages with parks & recreation departments in many cities. Most clubs operate on parkland, and offer instructional services in partnership with municipal recreation centres.
- Professional coaching is available in most regions. PacificSport's Integrated Performance System (IPS) system has been integral to bringing professional coaches to BC.
- Paddling is a sport for life. The many disciplines (styles) of paddling provide opportunities for participation at any age/level/ability.



## Known Challenges

- There is a repeating pattern of post-secondary athletes leaving BC for “better” training opportunities in other provinces where training groups are larger and more competitive.
- Limited club development in outlying areas (50% of clubs are in the Greater Vancouver area), however the new multi-discipline focus has improved this.
- Poor coaching retention and lack of full-time positions (only one club currently employs a full-time coach).
- No coordinated introduction program or training for instructors. Most clubs don't even use CanoeKids brand, which is a national program for pre-competitive skill development in sprint canoe & kayak.



## Other Gaps Acknowledged

- There is a massive drop-off (58% decrease) in participation after Training to Train stage. Very few athletes continue to the more competitive stages.
- In the sprint discipline, late starters (athletes joining the sport after age 14) face significant barriers to success in our system. Yet there are examples of past Olympians who were late-starters.
- We believe our athletes are “better” than they actually are. There are misconceptions about the training and competitive profile of Training to Compete and Training to Win athletes.
- We're always loading the trailer. CanoeKayak BC has an overloaded competition calendar with no clear categorization or progression of events.



## Overview of Current Programs & Competitions

Stages	Ages	Programs	Competitions
Active Start	0-6	None	None
Fundamentals	F: 6-11 M: 6-12	CanoeKids Summer Camps School Field Trips School Dragon Boat Community Youth Racing	Club Regattas School Dragon Boat
Training to Train	F: 11-15 M: 12-16	Bantam Program	BC Games BC Champs Bantam Champs Transitioning to Nationals Pacific Cup
Learning to Compete	F: 13-15 M: 14-17	High Performance Devt	BC Team Trials BC Champs Western Canada Games Nationals Pacific Cup
Training to Compete	F: 15-23 M: 17-23	BC Elite Junior National Team	National Team Trials BC Team Trials BC Champs Canada Games Nationals International Competitions
Training to Win	23+	Senior National Team	International Competitions
Active for Life	Any	CANMAS Surfski Outrigger Dragon Boat Marathon Voyageur Recreational	Nationals US Surfski Champs IVF World Outrigger Sprints Canadian Outrigger Cup ICF/IDBF Worlds World Masters Games

## Implementation

### Objectives

The objectives of the CS4L implementation plans in BC are to:

1. Inform the CKBC Community (coaches, parents, club administrators and Board members, teachers, community leaders) of the LTAD, its mandate, purpose and goals
2. Promote paddling to schools as part of physical literacy
3. Improve training for coaches delivering Fundamentals and Training to Train programs
4. Re-design the competition calendar to reflect appropriate frequency and progression for each LTAD stage
5. Better accommodate late-starters (age 14+) in the sprint discipline
6. Increase retention of competitive athletes
7. Continue to improve and strengthen the quality of programs offered by clubs.

In order to meet the objectives, many steps will have to be taken. The following tables further develop each objectives into an action plan, indicating scope and timelines.

### Information & Resources

While LTAD information has been circulated to CanoeKayak BC members for over two years, it is important to reinforce these concepts. We will continue to educate our members about LTAD through presentations, promotional materials, and online resources.

Priority	Action Plan	Scope	Timelines
1	PowerPoint presentation and speaker at CKBC annual conference	Member clubs: athletes, coaches and parents	Nov 08
2	Rebrand web site and promotional materials with the "Sport for Life" message.	Everyone interested in the sport	Jan 09 to Mar 09
3	Add links on the new CKBC web site to LTAD information	All members and supporters of the sport	Mar 09
4	Display LTAD info at World Canoeing Day celebrations across BC	Member clubs and the general public	Jun 09 and continuing annually

## School Program

In 2005, CanoeKayak BC introduced dragon boat to BC schools (Appendix 3). As part of the Fundamentals stage of LTAD, we will expand the school dragon boat program to include more schools. Furthermore, we will provide in-service training for teachers coaching the program.

*“Expanding relationships with schools is key to participation and sustainability” - CanoeKayak BC strategic plan*

Priority	Action Plan	Scope	Timelines
High	Introduce more schools to Dragon Boat paddling and competition	School classrooms	Ongoing
High	Provide in-service training for school teachers to coach dragon boat (link paddling with physical literacy)	School teachers	Ongoing



### Dragon Boat Program Outline

Dragon Boat is the world's fastest growing water sport. It combines tradition with modern day teamwork, enthusiasm, and strategy.

With no experience necessary the following can be achieved: Friendships; Cooperation; Excitement; Etiquette and Fair Play; Confidence; Safety; Inclusiveness and Respect; Sharing, Caring and Support; Opportunity; Fitness

Contact our office to inquire about the 'First Strokes' Introductory Program or jump right in and 'Plan to Race' with the multi week programs. All programs will be tailored to the needs of your group.

This project is part of the BC Sport Participation Program, supported by the Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia and 2010 Legacies Now.

## Coaching Education

Our 2008 club audit revealed that over one-third of Fundamentals and Training to Train coaches are not certified. We will schedule an education weekend each year so all clubs know about it in advance and plan accordingly. This will provide one-stop training for short-term coaches and summer program instructors.

*“Regular/mandatory coaches conferences [are needed] to share knowledge/ideas among different disciplines and promote respect for each other and their sport” -  
CanoeKayak BC Strategic Plan*

We will offer the Entry Level Competitive coach module as part of our Provincial Spring Training Camp in California because many bantam program coaches are also club high performance athletes.

Only one club in BC currently employs a full-time professional coach. We will pursue strategies to help clubs build the revenues needed to support full-time coaches.

Priority	Action Plan	Scope	Timelines
1	Organize, promote and deliver an education weekend for Summer Program Instructors	Fundamentals and Train to Train coaches	Jun 09, continue annually
2	Cross-train Summer Program Instructors in fundamental movement skills through Run, Jump Throw (Athletics) and Acrix (Gymnastics)	Fundamentals and Train to Train coaches	Jun 09, continue annually
3	Explore new revenue sources and/or business models to help clubs employ professional coaches.	Member clubs and competitive program coaches	Fall/Winter 09
4	Offer entry-level competitive coach training as part of Provincial Spring Training Camp.	High performance athletes interested in coaching	Spring 2010



CanoeKayak BC



## Competition Calendar

Our competition calendar is overloaded and there is no clear progression of events. We also realized during our audit that there is a lack of awareness of which LTAD stage(s) each competition targets.

Our initial steps include assigning LTAD stage(s) to events using our online calendar software, and involving clubs in the categorization of their events. Then we will analyze this information and discuss changes through a technical committee consisting of provincial and regional coaches. Finally, the rationale for any changes will be explained to clubs, athletes, and parents.

*"We have too many regattas for our high performance athletes and we force our novice paddlers (first year paddler at any age) to race against the best athletes at each age class" - Joel Hazzan, Ontario Provincial Coach*

Priority	Action Plan	Scope	Timelines
1	Add LTAD stages to online calendar system for tracking purposes	All athletes, coaches and parents	Feb 09
2	Ask clubs to specify which stage(s) their event targets on hosting application	Member clubs and head coaches	Aug 09 & continuing annually
3	Discuss changes to the calendar and race cards at the technical committee meeting. Consider merging events (e.g. BC Trials & BC Champs).	Provincial and regional coaches	Sep 09 and reassess in Sep 2010
4	Participate in the development of new race card templates at the national coaching conference	Provincial and regional coaches with counterparts from across Canada	Nov 09
5	Explain the rationale for changes to athletes and parents. Educate clubs, parents, coaches on appropriate competitions (which, and how many).	Athletes and parents	Nov 09 & Nov 2010

### Topics to be discussed with coaches and parents

Coaches need to be more selective in choosing which events to attend, and avoid pushing athletes before they're ready.

Families with multiple children may go to a regatta suitable for their older child but they expect both kids to race. Maybe the younger athlete just races in teamboats?

## **National competition guidelines for young athletes**

### **ATOMS:**

They should not be racing at Divisional regattas. The emphasis for this group is upon personal skill development and fun. Events are important for this group as a focal point for their 'season' but they can easily be addressed at club-based events or at most an invitational, skills-based event between two clubs.

### **PEEWEEES:**

This group is at the tail end of the FUNdamentals and Foundations stage. The emphasis should be on the development of skills in both canoe and kayaks as well as an emphasis upon team boats. Events should reflect the emphasis of the stage. Divisional regattas are appropriate for this group. Inter-provincial events are not recommended. A heavy emphasis upon participation is important.

### **BANTAMS:**

This group is at the beginning of the Training to Train stage. Divisional regattas and inter-Divisional regattas are appropriate for this age group. Some longer distance events need to be included in order to address the aerobic development needs of this group. Typically, 2 km distances are sufficient. (This does not mean that all events should be 2 km.) Team boats also remain important as a means to foster the positive social environment resulting from the team experience.

## **Ideas for fun skill-based competitions**

We've had success with fun events at our Regional Regatta...relays, triathlons, treasure hunts, skills & drills, etc. are very popular for kids and adults!

For example, just briefly we could follow the LTAD and have the atoms do a treasure hunt in voyageur canoes, paddle the dragon boat, obstacle course in recreational kayaks, do some balance drills and skill in the sprint boats, or a little team relay in recreational boats or sprint. For the peewees, we could have multi-discipline events where they paddle teamboats in both sprint canoe (in a recr. boat if necessary) and kayaks, complete a skills and drills event where they can demonstrate their FUNdamentals, and relay events with a mixture of K/C1, K/C2, & K/C4. Bantams still need to have stimulating, fun activities in addition to the straight 500m course. What about doing a zig zag course where they have to obtain an object from each point in order to finish the race? Why not a K4 2km....we haven't done that in the past!?!?! I would have loved that when I was younger! The point I am getting at is that we can totally make things more interesting, challenging and fun for our athletes and in addition, retain them for future years to come.

## Opportunities for Late Starters

Athletes starting sprint CanoeKayak after age 14 face significant barriers to success in their initial years.

A “novice” class has been included in many regattas over the past season. We will formalize this class with a clear definition and dedicated races at each competition.

*“More teamboat participation is key to sustainability of our clubs” - CanoeKayak BC Strategic Plan*



We will undertake an initiative to encourage more teamboat training so that late starters can be included with more experienced athletes of the same age. Teamboat programs would be a starting point for these athletes with fewer sessions per week than the high performance system. To reinforce the importance of the teamboat program, we will host a new competition specifically for teamboats.

Priority	Action Plan	Scope	Timelines
1	Develop a clear definition for the “novice” class. Refer to the Tier 2 athlete classification used in Ontario. Consider using seed times to setup races.	Athletes in their first year of racing or using training hulls	Ongoing since 2008
2	Incorporate novice category into every regatta, or consider a novice racing series as in Ontario	Athletes in their first year of racing or using training hulls	Ongoing since 2008
3	Encourage teamboat programs in the clubs (look at the “Wars and Fours” programs in the East)	Regional coaches promote to all clubs	Begin work in Fall 09 for launch in Spring 2010
4	Host a provincial team boat competition	All clubs	Summer 2010 and continuing annually

### Provincial Team Boat Competition Ideas

Could include K4, C4, War Canoe and Dragon Boat  
 Allow blended crews, relays and other unique races  
 Boats to be provided at the regatta (boat transport subsidized by entry fees)  
 Busses/vans for athlete transport  
 Participating clubs to pay damage deposit with entry fees.  
 Dock marshal to inspect boats for any damage after each race.

## Athlete Retention

There is a drop off in both competitive and general participation after the Training to Train stage. We will develop and implement strategies to engage athletes by adding more variety to the training. The teamboat program (see Opportunities for Late Starters) will also be a retention strategy. We also seek to retain more post-secondary athletes.

*"In the younger age groupings we have a tremendous fall-off in membership. The principles of the LTAD are aimed at improving membership retention." John Edwards, Domestic Development Director, CanoeKayak Canada*

Priority	Action Plan	Scope	Timelines
1	Add cross training activities to keep athletes engaged (e.g. cross country ski trips, etc.)	High Performance athletes	Dec 08 and ongoing
2	Design and deliver a sprint - whitewater crossover program	Start in two regions (Vancouver Island and Fraser Valley)	Winter 09
3	Student training camp for university-aged athletes (alternative to the regular camp during high school spring break)	BC Elite athletes and senior coaches	May 09 and ongoing

## Program Quality

It is CanoeKayak BC's clubs that deliver community-based programs. We recognize that clubs are often under-resourced and may need guidance and support to deliver successful, high-quality programs. At our next conference we will consider two potential strategies to give more structure to our club support services.



Priority	Action Plan	Scope	Timelines
1	Assign a mentor (experienced sport admin) to each club	Member clubs	Discuss at conference in Nov 09
2	Develop a "report card" for clubs to help them assess program quality compared to provincial standards	Member clubs	Discuss at conference in Nov 09

## Conclusion

This provincial sport-specific LTAD implementation plan was created based on the CS4L national framework and national CanoeKayak LTAD model. The process used to generate this plan involved a program inventory, audit, and gap analysis.

CanoeKayak is a multi-disciplinary sport consisting of several related paddle sports. Programs are offered in 19 well-equipped clubs across BC. Professional coaching is available in most regions. Participation is concentrated in the Fundamentals, Training to Train and Active for Life stages. There are lots of competitions available, mostly in the sprint and whitewater disciplines. However, competitive participation is relatively low compared to other parts of Canada.

This plan was developed to address specific challenges the sport faces in BC, while aligning programs and services with LTAD principles. We will educate our members about LTAD through presentations/workshops and online resources.

The BC School Dragon Boat Program will be enhanced as our “flagship” Fundamentals program.

Coaching education will be improved by offering an annual education weekend for Summer Program Instructors, and training senior athletes in coaching at our spring training camps. We will also develop strategies to help more clubs employ professional coaches.

The competition calendar and race cards will be completely restructured to align with national guidelines and LTAD principles. We will establish a novice class and promote teamboat competition to help late starter athletes. Changes to the competition program will probably be the most significant changes made in this plan, and may take several years to fully implement.

Finally, we will take steps to improve athlete retention and ensure program quality across all clubs.

Above all we hope that through LTAD implementation CanoeKayak will be a stronger sport at all stages of participation. We expect that full implementation will result in greater participation numbers, as well as better competitive results at the national level in the next 5-10 years.

## ***Acronyms***

CKBC	CanoeKayak BC
CKC	CanoeKayak Canada
CS4L	Canadian Sport for Life
ELCC	Entry-Level Competitive Coach
LTAD	Long-Term Athlete Development

## ***References***

[CanoeKayak Canada Long-Term Athlete Development Plan](#) (May 2006)

- [http://www.canoekayak.ca/files/LTAD\\_English\\_DRAFTfinal.pdf](http://www.canoekayak.ca/files/LTAD_English_DRAFTfinal.pdf)

## ***Appendices***

Appendix 1 – CanoeKayak BC Club Audit Results (November 2008)

Appendix 2 – Implementation Meeting (January 2009)

Appendix 3 – Dragon Boating for BC Schools (Brochure)

Appendix 4 - Summer Program Instructor Course Outline (June 2009)