



HIGH PERFORMANCE REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 2024

Getting a GRIP for L.A. 2028

OVERVIEW

The review was conducted from the perspective that CEC wishes to develop a world-class High-Performance Program (HPP) with the intention that CEC athletes would be podium contenders at the Olympics in L.A. and beyond. While the focus of the review and report is focused on the High-Performance Program (HPP), it does not go without the need to consider the other supporting elements of the entire domestic system. Many earlier completed projects were considered for a more accurate understanding such as the completed Competition Review, current Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD), Podium Pathway and the most recent Association Review with a new strategic plan from 2022.

The objective of the review was to identify the key areas for improving the effectiveness of the entire high performance athlete development system, not solely focus on the current senior team athletes. Feedback was received from all areas of the community and although some presented conflicting opinions, CEC will need to remain true to its decided objectives to reach the mandate. Understandably, it will take time to implement and create change, a change in the culture, given the limited amount of funding to the association currently has.

This Executive Summary is a high-level report on the overall findings and the suggested recommendations. Complete details are in the full report including support materials which offer solutions for most of the constructive feedback, all of which aim to build a better sport system for the long term.

FEEDBACK & RECOMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO CEC

HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

WHAT WE HEARD

There is strong feedback that there is no clear vision, mandate, or accountability for the overall HP program. While it is more prevalent in the current staffing transition, it has been felt before as well. There is lack of leadership, lack of accountability, there is confusion of how the HPP operations work and not enough communication between the National Team program with athletes, coaches, service staff and the association.

While the CNR is being managed with intelligent effort and most of the feedback stated that the concept and mechanics of the CNR work and can continue to work, the values of events and placings need to be more accurate to the caliber of the event and quality of event. Also, it is felt there is not enough competitive opportunities to compare all the National Team athletes in one place to get an accurate understanding of who the best Canadian climbers are. It was also voiced that the published rankings could have more clarity to them.

Finally, human resource support, operational clarity and empathy is almost non-existent which is creating low job satisfaction and staff burnout

BRIEF RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, the BOD needs to decide if the high-performance program is the main priority of the National Association now that it is included in the Olympic and PanAm Games, underpinning the need for the NSO to set a high-performance mandate and direction, for the PTSOs and program partners to align and support the

domestic system as they are the “boots on the ground”. It will make sense to create a new HPP vision and mandate, CHAMPION it and COMMUNICATE it.

- Create a HPP action plan to implement changes.
- Define a new structure for HPP Operations. With oversight of the BOD, the HPP Leadership should be making all decisions related to high performance and separating any conflicts of interest giving accountability to the leadership staff. Components of the structure can include:
 - HPP Leadership positions, accountable staff
 - Performance Advisory Group, professionals in sport performance to advise on programming.
 - High Performance Selection Committee
 - Ranking System Working Group; manage the rankings and ranking criteria with oversight from the leadership, advise on criteria and not included in decision making.
 - Athlete Commission Advisory.
 - Create terms of reference for all the above, setting expectations and good communication
 - Update Roles and Responsibilities
- Determine a creative but productive budget to support identified athletes and program weaknesses.
- Hire a High-Performance lead to manage HPP operations, manage a clear direction and political matters.
- Update the CNR ASAP for the 2025 season. There are many recommendations and feedback provided in the report materials.
- Simplify all criteria and add more clarity, some drafts are in the report materials.
- Human Resources working group for a better strategy for a healthy work environment and staff well-being.
- Marketing Committee for a new marketing and partner strategy.

NATIONAL TEAM PROGRAM & DOMESTIC TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP

WHAT WE HEARD

National Team Operations: There was a lot of constructive input on the National Team operations including the staff/coach structure. Strong input to establish a high-performance team culture with a positive and inspiring environment and spend more time training together. People are unsure of the operations of the team, which is creating frustration and a feeling of lack of support. There is mixed input on having team coaches support the team on a full-time basis, many feel their personal coaches are an important aspect of their development and success. It is understood that CEC needs to create more leadership and accountability, through a combined approach to make sure all athletes are supported, work as one unit, and a mandate that is manageable for a CEC leader.

The team would like more communication on a regular basis, especially heading into major events. The yearly training plan (YTP) and individual performance plans (IPP) have not been a priority nor has there been much collaboration on what the performance gaps are.

Performance Science and Research & Technology: The current High Performance Committee members are overwhelmed with the actual responsibility they have, and it would be more effective for the members to focus on their areas of professionalism. There has not been specific fitness and functional assessments, and it is strongly voiced that there should be more focus on athlete well-being, mental, emotional, and overall function.

BRIEF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a Performance Advisory Group to support the YTP and IPP. Collaborate with the athletes and their coaches for a more in-depth approach to design IPP which are targeted at mitigating weaknesses for international success.
- Conduct “baseline testing” ASAP to be clear on the athlete development priorities. Include a climbing skill analysis.
- Marketing Committee, to work on a strategy for team sponsors and partners, also for the association.
- Monthly performance meetings to review progress, identify challenges or gaps and create a mitigation plan.
- Coaches could be analyzing global performance and results more to determine the best training strategies.

DAILY TRAINING AND COMPETITION ENVIRONMENT

WHAT WE HEARD

It was said repeatedly that national training venues are a huge challenge for CEC given the financial support and the independently owned facilities. Private gyms find it hard to support the CEC competitions because they need to service the public and they need to do what they can to keep revenue healthy. The PTSO group was eager to work together to start to figure this out. In general, the community felt that it would be possible to engage partners to enhance more high-performance training and event venues that will support international success.

BRIEF RECOMMENDATIONS

National Team:

- Athlete financial support should be prioritized on targeted training camps first, then events.
- Plan training at World Cup venues more frequently, as a team, either out of country or in Canada wherever the best training venue is.
- Create partnerships for better training venues in Canada.
- Determine incentives for the local gyms to be partners of the HP program.

National Event Series:

- Revisit the Domestic National Series to align with Olympic athlete development.
- Hire world class routesetters when possible, for National events and tie in national training camps.
- Competition venue partners to support National event series and National program training camps.
- The Marketing committee should strategize on partnerships that can leverage national competitions and training venues.

ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT, PODIUM PATHWAY & GOLD MEDAL PROFILE

WHAT WE HEARD

It is unclear what the framework is to develop and prepare athletes for the 2028 games and beyond. How are we tracking, assessing, and developing athletes to ensure they are on a strategic high-performance track compared to the leading countries? While there is a Podium Pathway and National Team Selection criteria, most of the experts felt there is a need for a deeper analysis of technical, physiological, and mental/emotional skills that you cannot get from competition results.

BRIEF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Determine the process to identify talent other than just results.
- Develop a high-performance athlete development framework with assessments and training guidelines, and align the athlete development system effectively for a long-term successful athlete pool targeted at the Olympics and other major event success.
- Expand on the work started on skill assessments.
- Continue developing the Gold Medal Profile for athlete development guidelines at the Train to Train up to Train to Win stages.
- Define skill and performance benchmarks for coaches and athletes to strive for.
- Bring back the national talent camps for assessment.

CLOSING

It is extremely difficult for small National Sport Organizations who do not have capacity to implement all the recommendations included in this review. It will be crucial for CEC to utilize the whole domestic sport structure with the engaged clubs / hubs to the Provincial and Territorial Organizations, the working groups, the Board of Directors, and government partners wherever they can help.

CEC must continue to focus on the things that will make a difference within their financial means. By putting the right people in roles where they can shine, and by completing one step at a time, change will come on a bigger scale. There is a lot of influential intelligence within CEC, keep the positive and productive people on task to move things forward.

