

# Aboriginal Sport Strategy

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The *Game Plan for Sport in Saskatchewan* identified the need to enhance the pursuit of excellence by athletes who have the desire, ability and commitment to achieve at the highest levels of athletic competition. This called for increased support for technical services and programs in order for Saskatchewan's athletes and coaches to achieve optimum performance, including athletes and coaches of First Nations and Métis ancestry.

The commitment to focus on sport development resulted from significant interest expressed by the First Nations and Métis communities as well as from various sectors of the sport community. Within Saskatchewan there exist extensive high performance sport support services through multi-sport agencies such as the Coaches Association of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Sport Medicine Council, and the Saskatchewan Sport Science Program. Additionally, the provincial government, through the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, and the universities support the high performance athlete development process. Finally, Saskatchewan will host the 2005 Canada Summer Games in Regina. As the proud host province, Saskatchewan will be expected to have significant performance results leading up to and during the games. It is important that Saskatchewan lead the way with regard to aboriginal sport development at the local, regional, provincial and national levels.

## **VISION STATEMENT FOR THE ABORIGINAL SPORT STRATEGY**

Though the articulation of the Aboriginal Sports Strategy is primarily a responsibility of Sask Sport Inc., many diverse partners are necessary to ensure the vision is achieved. The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, with the assistance of the provincial government Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, the Northern Recreation Coordinating Committee and Sask Sport Inc., through the support of the Provincial Sport Governing Bodies, will implement the Aboriginal Sport Strategy to create and enhance

"a dynamic and leading edge sport environment that enables Aboriginal Peoples of Saskatchewan to experience and enjoy involvement in sport to the extent of their abilities and interests and, for increasing numbers, to perform consistently and successfully at the highest competitive levels."

## BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Aboriginal peoples in Canada have worked diligently over the past 10 years to bring the major issues concerning Aboriginal sport to the attention of both government and the mainstream sport system. The mobilization of Aboriginal sport leaders to proactively address the concerns facing Aboriginal sport at all levels is responsible for the emergence of a national Aboriginal sport structure consisting of the creation of Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal Sport Bodies, the inception of the national body - the Aboriginal Sport Circle, and the North American Indigenous Games. These entities are intricate, interdependent components of a developing system; a system which is representative of Aboriginal Sport movement, and the priority Aboriginal communities have placed on sport as a positive influence on youth.

Although this movement has made a tremendous impact on the healthy, active lifestyles of Aboriginal youth, realistically, the ultimate vision of broad-based participation of Aboriginal athletes in both the mainstream and Aboriginal sport systems will not be achieved until there is a committed, cooperative effort on behalf of Aboriginal sport, government and Sask Sport Inc.

The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers of Sport and Recreation have long recognized the importance of Aboriginal sport development. Additionally, they also recognize the barriers to participation in sport for Aboriginal people in Canada. At their conference prior to the 1995 Canada Games in Grand Prairie, AB., the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers identified:

*"that particular attention is required to address the physical activity and recreation needs of Canada's Aboriginal Persons."*

At the provincial level, the Saskatchewan sport community acknowledges that First Nations and Métis persons face economic and social barriers that hinder program access and skill development. *A Game Plan for Sport in Saskatchewan* identified Aboriginal Sport Development as a future need. More specifically the identified objective is:

"to broaden the participation base, and increase the quality and diversity of sport opportunities for aboriginal people."

Further, *A Game Plan for Sport in Saskatchewan* suggests a three-pronged approach is necessary to accomplish this particular objective:

- Facilitate the development of effective relationships between aboriginal agencies and communities with the sport system.
- Develop an Aboriginal Coaching Strategy that will significantly increase the number of qualified coaches to provide leadership within aboriginal

communities. (The Aboriginal Sport Circle has called for the development of an Aboriginal Coaching Manual to be utilized in National Coaching Certification Program Theory courses taught to Aboriginal coaches.)

- Increase the number of aboriginal athletes participating in sport.

Sask Sport Inc. has taken many steps recently to increase the participation of Aboriginal athletes and coaches within Aboriginal and mainstream sport settings. As stated in the Tri-Global Aboriginal Action Plan (March 2002), the following initiatives have taken place:

- In 2003 the **Aboriginal Sport Advisory Committee** recommended to Sask Sport Inc. that the Aboriginal Sport Strategy be open to all Provincial Sport Governing Bodies in Saskatchewan. The Provincial Sport Governing Bodies will work in the development of sport with Aboriginal communities. Strategies will focus on dedicated efforts to increase the numbers of certified coaches and officials, and to coordinate and enhance athlete development initiatives.
- The Sask Sport Inc. Board of Directors has appointed an **Aboriginal Sport Advisory Committee**. The terms of reference for this committee is to provide advice and input into the Aboriginal Sport Strategy, such as identifying opportunities to increase participation, education, awareness, communication of issues, and benchmarks to measure success.
- Sask Sport Inc. coordinated and financially supported 10 Aboriginal participants at the "Community Based Strategies to Enhance Physical Activity" conference that was held June 2001 in Saskatoon. These delegates were chosen by various Aboriginal organisations from across the province.
- Sask Sport Inc. sponsored Alwyn Morris as the guest speaker for the Sasktel Aboriginal Youth awards held in October 2001 and sponsored the Youth Leadership Award category. Mr. Morris was also contracted to engage in additional community presentations at Whitecap First Nation and at a Saskatoon inner-city school.
- There have been two Aboriginal sport conferences, one in 2002 and the other in 2004. The **Building Bridges Through Sport** conferences have been successful in attracting over 500 participants from all across the province. The conferences have been an excellent event for Aboriginal sport leaders in Saskatchewan to come together and share their experiences and acquire knowledge in aboriginal sport development. The conference streams are designed along the themes within the Canadian Sport Policy: **enhanced participation, excellence, capacity, and interaction.**

- **Building Future Champions** is comprised of four distinct, yet progressively linked, sport components. The Building Future Champions Program targets kindergarten, elementary and high school aged children and youth, along with Aboriginal sport leaders through the complementary components.

The first component is comprised of the **Canada Games Day** program that will get elementary school children participating in and learning skills associated with the sports of the 2005 Canada Summer Games. The Canada Summer Games will be hosted by the city of Regina in August 2005 affording Saskatchewan with an opportunity to profile the Games among our athletes of tomorrow!

The Second component, **Saskatchewan Sport Match**, gives students from Grades 7-12, opportunities to identify new sports that suit their individual strengths. Once a young person expresses an interest in pursuing a particular sport, a system involving the Canada Sport Centre Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Sport Medicine and Science Council will assist interested participants to pursue their sport of choice.

The objective of the third component, **Aboriginal Excellence**, is to raise the performance level of Aboriginal athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers in all multi-sport games including the Canada Summer and Winter Games, the Western Canada Summer Games and the North American Indigenous Games.

The fourth component, **Aboriginal Games Management Mentoring**, is a partnership between the 2005 Canada Summer Games Host Committee and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations to deal with Aboriginal issues related to the 2005 games and to enhance Aboriginal involvement in all levels of planning and hosting the games. The result will be that more Aboriginal people will be ready and prepared to work in organizing future multi-sport games.

Demographic and statistical data clearly demonstrates the continued need to continue to increase the participation of Aboriginal youth in sport through the enhancement of the Aboriginal Sport Delivery System and the mainstream sport system.

- Aboriginal people comprise nearly 3 percent of the Canadian population, or approximately 800,000 people.
- Aboriginal people comprise over 11 percent of the Saskatchewan population, or approximately 112,000 people with 30,000 (27%) living in Regina or Saskatoon.

- Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan comprise 14 percent of the total Aboriginal Canadian population, whereas Saskatchewan comprises only 3 percent of the total Non-Aboriginal Canadian Population.
- Of persons registered under the Indian Act in Saskatchewan, 50 percent live on reserve and 50 percent live off reserve.
- The Aboriginal population is growing at a rate twice that of the Non-Aboriginal population.
- Over the next 25 years, the Aboriginal population is expected to increase in excess of 75 percent.
- Approximately 28 percent of the total Aboriginal population is between the ages of 10 and 24 years.
  - These youth are generally eligible for North American Indigenous Games and/or Canada Games competition every three or four year cycle
- There are over 700 Aboriginal communities in Canada.
- 58 percent of Aboriginal communities have populations between 100 and 499 people.
- 44 percent of Aboriginal people 15 years and older reported that they had smoked tobacco daily.
- 48 percent of Aboriginal peoples reported problems with drug abuse.
- The suicide rate among First Nations people between the ages of 10 and 19 years is more than 5 times higher than their Non-Aboriginal counterparts. For aboriginal peoples 20 -29 years of age, the rate is almost 4 times higher.

(Source: Indian and Northern Affairs, 1991 Census; 2001 Census)

The statistical data clearly indicates the heightened health risks Aboriginal youth are exposed to in their daily environment. Accordingly, Aboriginal sport leaders from across Canada have identified youth sport and recreation as one of the primary means for community wellness: preventative medicine for the social dilemma that Aboriginal youth face. At the closing ceremony of the 1997 Victoria North American Indigenous games, a prominent Aboriginal sport leader from Saskatchewan reported that for a period of several months prior to and following the 1993 NAIG in Prince Albert, there was not one suicide among Aboriginal youth in the province.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS OF SPORT**

Sport is widely accepted as a powerful contributor to social and personal development. The magnitude of sport's influence is impressive. It is clearly understood that sport's impact and contribution encompasses many facets including social and personal development; health and well-being; culture; education; economic development and prosperity; and tourism and entertainment.

### *Sport and Social Development*

Sport is an essential tool for building strong individuals and vibrant communities and for enhancing our collective pride, identity and sense of belonging. Through sport in their respective communities, all Canadians learn to volunteer and to accept a sense of responsibility for a civil society. Sport contributes to individual physical, social and character development. With the power to be a major influence on marginalized and under-represented groups and individual's at risk, sport develops self-esteem and helps to overcome personal and social challenges.

### *Health and Well-Being*

Participation in sport contributes to the adoption of a healthy lifestyle and prevention of disease and illness. Physical activity is fundamental to positive human development and contributes to healthier, longer, and more productive lives. Participation in sport and physical activity at all ages increases resistance to such diseases as: heart disease, diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis, arthritis, obesity and mental health disorders.

### *Culture*

Canadians express themselves and celebrate their communities through sport. We share stories, myths, and lessons learned through sport. Through sport we learn values and behaviours that we apply to all aspects of our society: hard work, discipline, the value of fun, teamwork, respect for others and fair play. Sport is especially important to the development of youth and often provides their first experience with organized activities. Sport brings young people into contact with each other and communities, teaches leadership skills, provides a constructive outlet, and generally enhances quality of life.

The North American Indigenous Games and The Saskatchewan First Nations Summer and Winter Games, for example, provide a culturally appropriate competition venue for large numbers of Aboriginal athletes to express and enhance their cultural heritage.

### *Education*

Access to quality physical education, physical activity and school sport provides many benefits for children, including better health and quality of life, psychological well-being, improved behaviour and ability to learn, higher scholastic performance, good health habits, and an appreciation of physical activity and sport. Quality physical education programs can reduce the social, structural, and economic barriers typically faced by children and youth, particularly those in low-income families.

### *Economic Development and Prosperity*

Sport makes significant contributions to the economy. Sport and recreation accounted for approximately 1.1% of Canada's Gross Domestic Product and almost 2% of jobs. Sport can generate substantial revenues, whether from professional sport or from hosting national or international events such as the North American Indigenous Games.

### *Entertainment and Leisure*

Canadians spend a sizeable portion of their disposable income and leisure time on sport either as participants, spectators at live events, or viewers of broadcast events (e.g. the recent broadcasts of the 2002 North American Indigenous Games). Canadians regard sport as a valuable source of entertainment and a worthwhile way to spend their leisure time.

(Source: The Canadian Sport Policy, 2002)

## **THE SPORT DELIVERY SYSTEM**

The current delivery system for sport is a complex network of public, voluntary, and educational organisations, all at various stages of development and each having specific functions. This diverse nature and mix of organisations providing programs and services is one of the system's strengths.

The community is the most important part of the sport delivery system in Saskatchewan, because this is where the greatest majority of programs and services are offered. Municipal councils are the primary providers of public facilities. Sport clubs, leagues, recreation boards, and youth and service clubs provide entry level and recreational sport programs for community residents. The school system also plays an integral role in the program and skill development areas.

A number of other voluntary organisations are in place to support the efforts of communities and to provide more highly specialized opportunities for the development of athletes, coaches, officials, and other sport volunteers. These include Provincial Sport Governing Bodies, Zone Sport Councils, the Sports Medicine and Science Council of Saskatchewan, the Coaches Association of Saskatchewan, and the Saskatchewan Games Council.

The universities and technical institutes provide most of the necessary training for many of the full time coaches, sport administrators and other individuals employed in the sport delivery system. In addition, universities are also actively involved in research initiatives, sport science and athlete development.

At the provincial level, Sask Sport Inc. works to develop amateur sport through its member's programs and services in providing quality sport participation opportunities. Sask Sport Inc. also has a mandated responsibility for marketing lotteries and administering lottery funding in the province of Saskatchewan.

## **THE ABORIGINAL SPORT SYSTEM**

The Aboriginal Sport System in Saskatchewan consists primarily of First Nations, Métis and Urban Aboriginal organisations. There also exists a network of voluntary clubs and committees that seldom incorporate as an organisation. Many of these clubs rely heavily on the administrative and political leadership of the First Nations and Métis locals.

As with mainstream sport, the community is also the most important component of the Aboriginal sport delivery system in Saskatchewan. First Nation's councils are the primary providers of facilities, whereas sport clubs, leagues, recreation boards and youth councils provide entry level and recreational sport programs for community residents. In some instances, the schools play a role in program and skill development. Most recently, First Nations and Métis groups are now beginning to initiate sport development within the urban centres in Saskatchewan.

Beyond the community level, the Aboriginal sport system relies on the Tribal Council Coordinators whose responsibility has been to organise the teams for the First Nations Summer and Winter games. Additionally, the Northern Recreation Coordinating Committee is ensuring sport development in Northern Saskatchewan through a number of initiatives. Further, the recent creation of the Zone 9 Sport Council has enhanced sport development in the north.

## **IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS**

The Aboriginal Sport Strategy must be based on a partnership of organisations committed to the development of Aboriginal athletes, coaches and officials. As

such, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan will play a lead role in the implementation of the Aboriginal Sport Strategy. It is essential that FSIN and MNS work in partnership with Sask Sport Inc., through the Provincial Sport Governing Bodies, the Northern Recreation Coordinating Committee, and the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation to ensure the development of the Aboriginal sport community and to enhance the participation, excellence, capacity and interaction of Aboriginal athletes and requisite support systems including coaches, officials, organisations and delivery systems.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF THE ABORIGINAL SPORT STRATEGY**

It is expected that, for each Provincial Sport Governing Body engaged, the Aboriginal Sport Strategy will differ on the basis of:

- The uniqueness and diversity of each sport's needs and priorities.
- Provincial organisation funding support.
- Cooperation and support of local clubs/teams to contribute to the talent identification of athlete and coach development.
- Each sport's specific athlete and coach clientele.

The priority of the Aboriginal Sport Strategy is to provide, in collaboration with the Provincial Sport Governing Bodies, an optimum environment for persons of First Nations and Métis ancestry to increase participation in sport to the extent of their abilities and interests, and for increasing numbers, to perform consistently and successfully at the highest competitive levels provincially, nationally and internationally.

One of the most important elements for optimizing the performance potential of athletes at all levels is qualified committed coaches.

Each Provincial Sport Governing Body, in conjunction with Sask Sport Inc., and their athlete and coach clientele, shall define the menu of services.

The strategy will promote and facilitate interaction and cooperation amongst service providers within the thirteen core sports.

Partnerships are encouraged with local clubs/teams, Provincial Sport Governing Bodies, National Sport Organisations, and First Nations, Métis and Urban Aboriginal Organisations to enhance support services for athletes and coaches at all levels of performance and ability.

Provincial Sport Governing Bodies must assess their talent identification, athlete development initiatives, and coaching development strategies to strive to enhance their role in aboriginal sport.

## **FOUNDATION PILLARS AND PROGRAM STANDARDS**

The Aboriginal Sport Strategy is based on the four pillars of the Canadian Sport Policy as it presents a powerful vision for sport in Canada. As with the Canadian Sport Policy, the Aboriginal Sport Strategy draws on the broadest definition of sport, reflecting the collective determination of governments and the sport community to ensure that this policy covers a wide array of activities and an array of levels of ability, interest and participation. This strategy welcomes and seeks to involve persons of First Nations or Métis ancestry who may not consider themselves part of either the sport community or the sport system, but have the potential and desire to contribute.

The Aboriginal Sport Strategy reflects an approach to shared leadership and collaboration amongst all stakeholders to achieve the goals of *enhanced participation, excellence, capacity and interaction* in sport. Its purpose is to assist stakeholders to create and support an integrated athlete/participant-centred sport model that ensures the seamless progress of aboriginal athletes/participants to the best of their abilities. It must be recognized that efforts to promote participation in sport activities – whether entry level, recreational, or competitive – affect all other levels.

The National Summit on Sport (Ottawa, 2001) with the federal discussion paper, *Towards A Canadian Sport Policy*, identified a number of realities, trends, and challenges facing the sport system in Canada. These include:

- *Declining Participation.* The Canadian Sport Policy calls for an increase in the number of persons participating in sport and physical activity.
- *Barriers to Access.* The Canadian Sport Policy calls for barriers to participation in sport be identified and eliminated making sport accessible to all.
- *Improving School Sport and Physical Activity.* The Canadian Sport Policy encourages governments to undertake the necessary steps within their respective jurisdictions to ensure more physical activity and sport programs in schools across Canada.
- *Closing the Gaps in Athlete Development.* The Canadian Sport Policy calls for a systematic, analytical, and collaborative approach to the development of high performance athletes.

- *Upgrade Coaching Development.* The Canadian Sport Policy calls upon governments and the sport community to hasten the implementation of the Competency Based and Education Training Program, recognizing that coaches and organisations and institutions involved with coaching are a critical component of the sport system.
- *Bolstering International Competitive Success.* The Canadian Sport Policy calls for the collaborative setting of performance targets to guide the design, monitoring, and evaluation of an effective athlete development system.
- *Making Ethical Issues Central to Sport.* The Canadian Sport Policy calls for the adoption of the Policy Framework and an action plan of the “Canadian Strategy on Ethical Conduct in Sport”, to enhance ethical conduct at all levels and in all forms of sport in Canada.
- *Resolving Disputes in Sport.* The Canadian Sport Policy calls for alternative avenues that ensure the orderly, effective, fair, and efficient resolution of sport disputes.
- *Enhancing the Canada Games.* The Canadian Sport Policy calls for enhancing the contribution of the Canada Games to Canada’s athlete development system.
- *Hosting National Championships and International Sport Events.* The Canadian Sport Policy calls for a coordinated approach to maximizing the benefits of hosting events.
- *Developing Canada’s Sport Research and Knowledge Base.* The Canadian Sport Policy, recognizing the importance of sport research and knowledge to the advancement of athlete preparation and other technical aspects of sport, calls for a strengthening of these essential components.
- *Optimizing the Impact of Professional Sport.* The Canadian Sport Policy, recognizing the powerful influence that professional sport can have on the values of young people and Canadian society at large, calls for action through the “Canadian Strategy on Ethical Conduct in Sport,” to build upon this potentially positive influence.
- *Seeking Innovative Sources of Funding.* The Canadian Sport Policy calls for the exploration of alternative approaches to the funding of sport.
- *Enhancing Collaboration.* The Canadian Sport Policy challenges governments and their respective sport communities to continue their collaboration on a formal, frequent and ongoing basis in order to optimize the sport system.

Many of these realities, trends and challenges highlighted in the Canadian Sport Policy have direct impact on the Aboriginal Sport Community within Saskatchewan. The Aboriginal Sport Strategy needs to address many of these issues if it is to have an impact on Aboriginal sport participation, development and coaching. Further, the Aboriginal Sport Strategy is based on core operating principles as outlined in the Canadian Sport Policy:

- Sport is athlete/participant-centred.
- Sport promotes leadership.
- Sport is based on equity and access.
- Sport is focused on development.
- Sport champions excellence.
- Sport serves the public interest.

All stakeholders in Aboriginal sport development in Saskatchewan – athletes/participants, coaches, officials, communities, organisations, institutions, Zone Sport Councils, governments, NRCC, FSIN, MNS, and Tribal and Band Councils – have roles and responsibilities. The result is a dynamic multi-faceted partnership that guarantees the overall effectiveness of the sport system.

## **Enhanced Capacity**

It is the goal of the Canadian Sport Policy that by 2012 ...

*The essential components of an ethically based, athlete/participant-centred development system are in place and are continually modernized and strengthened as required.*

Subsequently the Aboriginal Sport Strategy recommends:

- Increase/encourage representation by persons of First Nations or Métis descent on each Provincial Sport Governing Bodies Board of Directors.
- Continue to support an expanded role for the provincial **Aboriginal Sport Advisory Committee** in Saskatchewan with the responsibility of addressing First Nations and Métis issues of accessibility, accountability, awareness, capacity, communication, leadership and volunteer development, and specific funding initiatives.
- Assist each Provincial Sport Governing Body to establish and support an Aboriginal Advisory Committee.
- Ensure adequate and appropriate representation by persons of First Nations or Métis descent on each Zone Sport Council

- Ensure adequate and appropriate representation by persons of First Nations or Métis descent on each Zone's Mission Staff for every Saskatchewan Summer and Winter Games.
- Ensure adequate and appropriate representation by persons of First Nations or Métis descent on the Saskatchewan Games Council Board of Directors.
- Ensure adequate and appropriate representation by persons of First Nations or Métis descent on Team Saskatchewan Mission Staff at the Western Canada and Canada Games.
- Support the recruitment, development, and inclusion of First Nations or Métis participants on lottery organization boards, decision-making bodies, and adjudication committees.
- Provide Lottery Orientation Workshops to First Nations and Métis groups so as to increase the potential of these organisations to access lottery dollars.
- Initiate discussions on the development of a comprehensive education program in sport leadership.
  - Fund the development of a proposal to support the education and training of leaders and volunteers. This initiative is fundamental to enhancing the capacity of the communities to support ongoing developments.
  - Support the development of a comprehensive strategy to provide a spectrum of educational and training opportunities for aboriginal leadership development in sport.
- Develop specific incentives (funding) to assist lottery funded organisations in partnering with the NRCC, northern communities, and geographically isolated communities to deliver developmental programs for participants and volunteers such as adjudicators, athletes, committee members, coaches, officials, etc.
- Increase funding, beyond funds for staffing, to meet increasing demand for sport programs by First Nations communities.
- Provide one-time funding immediately to MNS to develop a strategy/plan/vision for sport that links MNS regions and provides structural support for capacity building and program support across the communities.
- Explore signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for shifting responsibility for all designated funding programs to FSIN and MNS.

- FSIN and MNS may use the funding to leverage matching funding from other sources.
- Host an Aboriginal Sport Conference every two years.

## Enhanced Participation

It is the goal of the Canadian Sport Policy that by 2012 ...

*A significantly higher proportion of Canadians from all segments of society are involved in quality sport activities at all levels and in all forms of participation.*

Subsequently the Aboriginal Sport Strategy recommends:

- Utilize the Aboriginal Athlete Development Model for Saskatchewan (Appendix A) as the framework for the development of Aboriginal athletes to experience and enjoy sport to the extent of their abilities and interests.
- Continue to support and foster meetings between the Tribal Council Coordinators and the Sport Coordinators for the Zones in Saskatchewan.
- The Aboriginal Sport Advisory Committee will continue to review and adjudicate the Aboriginal Sport Development Grant that will assist the Provincial Sport Governing Bodies in partnering with the FSIN, MNS, NRCC, Tribal and Band Councils, northern communities and geographically isolated communities to deliver developmental programs for athletes/participants and volunteers such as coaches, officials, adjudicators, committee members, etc.
- Work with Saskatchewan Learning and use the findings of the Tymchuk report, *The Role of the Schools*, to highlight the benefits of partnerships through sport programming in support of First Nations and Métis youth across the province.
  - Explore the Community Initiatives Fund “Aboriginal Access to Sport, Culture & Recreation” to fund Northern Community School Coordinators.
  - Initiate formal discussions with other provincial sport support systems to help in developing capacity in First Nations and Métis communities (e.g. Saskatchewan High School Athletics Association, Coaches Association of Saskatchewan, SportMatch, In Motion, School Sport Strategy).

- Ensure sport and physical activity opportunities are a valued and respected component of daily life for aboriginal children and youth.
- Work with the Saskatchewan Games Council, FSIN, MNS, PSGBs, Zone Sport Councils and NRCC to ensure Aboriginal participation in the Saskatchewan Games continues to expand.
- Promote the Provincial Sport Governing Bodies and the Zone Sport Councils in the involvement of all Bands and Tribal Councils in the Saskatchewan First Nations Summer and Winter Games Program.
  - Increase total participation of athletes, coaches and officials throughout the province.
- Continue to ensure that increasing and adequate numbers of Aboriginal coaches achieve Levels 1 through 3 certification through the National Coaching Certification Program as recommended in the “Aboriginal Sport Development” document from the Aboriginal Sport Circle.
  - The professional development of coaches has quickly become the cornerstone of the Aboriginal Sport Development System. Ensure a minimum of one Aboriginal Course Conductor program.
  - Assist the Coaches Association of Saskatchewan, the National Coaching Certification Program, and the Aboriginal Sport Circle in developing materials that are culturally sensitive and appropriate and deliverable in a culturally sensitive environment.
  - Utilize the Saskatchewan Coaching Development Model as a template for the development and implementation of an Aboriginal Coaching Development Model for Saskatchewan.
- Ensure a minimum of one Aboriginal Official Course Conductor program is offered per Sport.

## **Enhanced Excellence**

It is the goal of the Canadian Sport Policy that by 2012 ...

*The pool of talented athletes has expanded and Canadian athletes and teams are systematically achieving world-class results at the highest levels of international competition through fair and ethical means.*

Subsequently the Aboriginal Sport Strategy recommends:

- Ensure Saskatchewan is well represented at the North American Indigenous Games on a Tri-Annual basis (Under 13 NAIG Team Saskatchewan and Over 14 NAIG Team Saskatchewan).
  - For Aboriginal athletes who aspire to higher performance levels, the specific focus on NAIG-Canada Games linkages provides a focal point for closing the gap between the Aboriginal and mainstream sport system.
- Ensure coaches for the North American Indigenous Games (Under 13 Team Saskatchewan) have Level I through the National Coaching Certification Program.
- Ensure 75% of officials from Saskatchewan for the North American Indigenous Games (Under 13) are of First Nations or Métis descent.
- Utilize existing clubs and Tribal Council Coordinators for talent identification and selection of athletes for Team Saskatchewan (Under 13) at the North American Indigenous Games.
- Ensure coaches for the North American Indigenous Games (Over 14 Team Saskatchewan) have Level II through the National Coaching Certification Program.
- Ensure 50% of officials from Saskatchewan for the North American Indigenous Games (Over 14) are of First Nations or Métis descent.
- Establish and utilize a provincial talent identification process to select athletes for the North American Indigenous Games (Over 14).
- Ensure athletes of First Nations and Métis ancestry whose performance ranks them in the top percentage within their respective sport are targeted, identified and pooled with other elite amateur athletes for potential Canada Games participation.
- Ensure adequate and appropriate representation, in Saskatchewan's pool of potential coaches for the Canada Games, by persons of First Nations or Métis descent. (minimum of 2 coaches in the pool)
- Ensure adequate and appropriate representation, in Saskatchewan's pool of potential officials for the Canada Games, by persons of First Nations or Métis descent. (minimum of 2 officials in pool)

- Establish standards for a minimum of 2 talent identification meets/tournaments for the Canada Games to be held on a First Nations reserve.

## **Enhanced Interaction**

It is the goal of the Canadian Sport Policy that by 2012 ...

*The components of the sport system are more connected and coordinated as a result of the committed collaboration and communication of the stakeholders.*

At the highest performance levels above the Canada Games, it is envisioned that Aboriginal athletes and sport leaders would be fully integrated and supported appropriately into the mainstream sport setting. Hence, it is imperative to establish partnerships with key stakeholders to collaborate on long term integrative solutions aimed at addressing the unique issues that face Aboriginal sport development.

Subsequently the Aboriginal Sport Strategy recommends:

- Develop a specific strategy to communicate opportunities for funding support available to the First Nations and Métis community through lottery organisation funding programs.
- Build in opportunities for collaboration with other system wide regional staff in sport, such as Zone Sport coordinators, Provincial Sport Governing Bodies, Saskatchewan Sport Science Program, Coaches Association of Saskatchewan, etc.
  - The lottery system in Saskatchewan has developed through the collaboration of a wide range of individuals and organisations that have collectively supported sport for the people of the province. The united strength of these people and organisations will be enhanced by collaboration with First Nations and Métis communities as they develop their capacity for the delivery of sport in their respective communities.
- Request that all lottery-funded organisations in the Saskatchewan Sport community reflect on their relationship with First Nations and Métis communities relative to access and involvement.
- Ensure Provincial Sport Governing Bodies regularly communicate with First Nations and Métis communities through their respective communication means (newsletters, websites, etc.).

## **CONCLUSION**

The Aboriginal Sport Strategy is intended to identify and make recommendations with regard to important issues facing the development of Aboriginal Sport in Saskatchewan. Reaction and feedback from key stakeholders will assist in establishing timelines, as well as any other Aboriginal sport issues that need to be addressed.

It is hoped that the Aboriginal Sport Strategy will instill a call for collective action by Sask Sport Inc., the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, the Northern Recreation Coordinating Committee, Zone Sport Councils, Tribal and Band Councils, the Core Sport Provincial Sport Governing Bodies, the Coaches Association of Saskatchewan, and the Saskatchewan Sport Science and Medicine Program. Ultimately, the success of aboriginal sport in Saskatchewan will be measured by the effectiveness of managing these issues and meeting new priorities.

Sask Sport Inc. will oversee the continuation of discussions with regard to the Aboriginal Sport Strategy, update the plan as necessary, assist lead organisations to understand their roles and responsibilities, and guide the implementation strategy. Concurrently, individual organisations will be encouraged to use the Aboriginal Sport Strategy as an integral part of future planning and budgetary initiatives.

Finally, new and enhanced cooperative partnerships, where appropriate, will collaborate and mobilize resources and find new and exciting ways to deliver programs and services that will continue to establish Saskatchewan as a leader in Aboriginal Sport development within Canada.

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