Sport for All
Opening doors to everyone
Sport for All: Something for everyone

The benefits of sport are well documented. Participants enjoy increased physical fitness, better self-esteem and a feeling of belonging. In sum, they enjoy life more and are better able to contribute to the world in which they live.

Kids who are regularly active are less susceptible to stress, perform as well or better academically, exhibit positive attitudes about school and themselves, are less aggressive and play better with other children. (The Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 1992). As well, amateur sport strengthens the economy of Saskatchewan. Active sports account for an estimated $700 million in direct and indirect expenditures in our province every year and sustain a total of 13,000 jobs.

With such convincing evidence it only makes sense: the more people participate in sport, the more all of society wins. That, however, hasn’t always been the case. Traditionally, sport has been a mainstream activity and many groups have been excluded.

First Nations/Aboriginal people, the economically disadvantaged, women and people with disabilities are among those who’ve not always been able to take part in sport.

Sport for All strives to change that by increasing participation by those groups currently underrepresented in sport through its Sport for All program.

But Sport for All is more than a program. It’s an attitude based on the understanding that when the doors to sport are open wide everyone benefits.

This guidebook is designed to help organizations open the doors and put the welcome mat firmly in place. It discusses the barriers that prevent many from participating and shows how to eliminate those barriers when planning programs. Finally, it offers some winning examples of Sport for All programs right from our own backyard.

Why not give it a try...

• Celebrate the traditions of participants by incorporating them into a sport event.
Sport for All: What’s in it for us?

To every human experience we each bring something unique. Our personal history, values and traditions create the fabric of our lives — the diversity that is a part of us all.

Opening the doors to sport can deepen our appreciation of that diversity. As we build teams based on individual strengths, and differences, we come to understand that what we have in common is far more than we might have expected.

For organizations, Sport for All offers the opportunity to demonstrate true leadership. In the world of business, those organizations embracing diversity are fast becoming the most successful. They’ve realized the profits that come from recognizing the wants and needs of customers who for years have been ignored by the marketplace.

The same is true for sport. Our customers might be different: they’re our athletes, coaches, officials and fans. Still, the same emphasis on mutual respect and understanding makes good sense. In fact, our futures may depend on it.

Some might say that planning all-inclusive programs is too difficult or time consuming. True, it’s a different way of approaching programming, but in the long run, the benefits far outweigh the costs.

Here’s some practical reasons why Sport for All makes sense:

• The volunteer base grows.
• Participants reap the benefits of a healthier lifestyle.
• So does the pool of talent from which to draw elite athletes, coaches and officials.
• The sport enjoys a longer “shelf life” as people of all ages participate.
• More fans attend sport events.
• Support for the sport — both moral and financial — increases.
• We provide a valuable service to all citizens of the province. Membership numbers increase.
• We all gain by increasing our appreciation and understanding of different cultures.
Beyond the mainstream

Opening the doors to sport means thinking about the needs of groups that have traditionally been left behind. These are some of the target groups Sport for All aims to include:

- First Nations/Aboriginal people
- People with disabilities
- Youth
- Senior Adults
- Women
- The Economically disadvantaged
- Single-parent families
- Residents of Northern Saskatchewan

Members of each of these groups have a great deal to offer. However their ability to fully participate depends on how well we consider their needs when planning sport programs. By ignoring, or simply not thinking about those needs, we raise barriers that limit participation, and in the end limit the popularity of our sports.

Building bridges

Increasing participation calls for a fresh approach. It’s a simple three-step process:

1. Recognizing the barriers that exist.
2. Understanding the effect of those barriers.
3. Working to eliminate them.

Some groups face barriers that are theirs alone. However, there are also some barriers faced by members of almost all groups. These include:

- Lack of involvement in the decision-making process about sport
- The cost of participating in sport
- Lack of role models
- Lack of transportation to and from sport activities
- Programming that doesn’t address special needs
- An emphasis on competition rather than fun and participation
- Lack of child-care facilities
- Lack of equipment

Have a look at the sections that follow to learn more about the needs of each of the target groups of Sport for All. Each section provides information about specific barriers faced, and how to eliminate them.
Developing a Sport for All program: Checklist for success

Consult with the experts.
Include representatives from target groups in program planning and evaluation and make them part of the decision-making process of your organization. They’re the ones who can make sure your plans are in line with participants’ needs.

Eliminate barriers.
Reduce barriers — physical, financial, attitudinal — that limit participation by target groups.

Challenge assumptions.
Forget past problems or stereotypes. Search for new solutions. Expect success.

Respect the culture of participants.
Every culture, every generation has its own unique set of values. Plan programs that honor participants’ traditions, beliefs and heroes.

Highlight role models.
Give high profile to athletes, coaches and officials within target groups as a means of encouraging others to participate.

Work together with community resources.
Cooperate with existing community service organizations, special interest groups and schools. They know how to reach people within a target group, and how to plan programs that work.

Be flexible.
Adapt programs to meet the needs of participants. Adjust administrative practices where necessary to allow for program success. It might mean doing things differently, but imagination sometimes calls for changing the rules.
Get everyone on board.
Lead by example. Make a commitment to Sport for All the responsibility of everyone in your organization.

Provide people with the tools they need.
Train staff, coaches and officials in diversity. Help them understand the needs of others so they too can lead by example.

Offer extra help where needed.
Some participants need extra attention before they’re up to speed with a new activity. Consider the time spent an investment in your sport.

Be patient.
Be realistic in your expectations and measure your success along the way. Building relationships is a long-term process.

"The biggest barrier is attitude.
A positive attitude makes anything possible."

Why not give it a try...

- Invite representatives of target groups to discussions on long-term planning for your sport.
Developing a Sport for All program: How the Wascana Racing Canoe Club made it work

The Saskatchewan Canoe Association delivers programs at the local level through community based clubs. One of the overall goals of the association is to expose more children across the province to the sports of canoeing and kayaking. In Regina, the Wascana Racing Canoe Club (WRCC) has put a special emphasis on involving Aboriginal children.

Dianne Anderson, President of the provincial association and Vice-Commodore of the Regina club explains that the club’s first efforts required some fine-tuning. In 1992 they obtained sponsorships to bring inner city Aboriginal children to summer canoe camps. About 25 children participated — and enjoyed — the camps but they didn’t stay involved with WRCC as ongoing members.

That’s when the club decided a new approach was in order. Let’s look at how they made changes to their plans in the summer of 1993 according to the “Checklist for success”.

Consult with the experts.
WRCC relied on the help of Youth Unlimited and the community coordinator at one of the core-area schools to plan a program around the needs of its participants.

Eliminate barriers.
The Canoe Camp of 1993 specifically eliminated three key barriers:
Transportation: Youth Unlimited provided a bus to transport the children to the pool at the University of Regina and back home.

Financial: WRCC obtained sponsorships to cover the cost of providing the program. Children participated free of charge.

Attitudinal: WRCC recognized that the children would benefit most if they were allowed to develop together, and at their own pace. They were able to develop extra skills and confidence before integrating into the club as a whole.

Challenge assumptions.
The club realized they could not assume that even if the program was sound, the children would come to them to attend; they had to bring the children to the program. That was the reason for enlisting the encouragement of the schools and for providing free transportation.
Respect the culture of participants
Relying on the expertise of community resources helped the WRCC develop extra sensitivity in this area. Dianne Anderson gives credit to the club’s head coach who was especially committed to the project and sensitive to its participants’ culture.

Highlight role models
WRCC plans on bringing aboriginal role models to speak to core-area schools about self esteem, motivation, and other benefits of participating in sport.

Work together with community resources
WRCC worked hand-in-hand with Youth Unlimited who have expertise in working with core-area and Aboriginal youth as well as with the school’s community coordinator. Both were able to give WRCC insight into how to best organize the program. To promote their sport, WRCC set up a display at a weekend lacrosse tournament in which many Aboriginal youth participated.

Be flexible
The canoe camp program was designed around the special needs of its participants.

Get everyone on board
A key ingredient in the success of the program was the commitment of the coach. But while staff remain with a program over the years, boards change yearly. Therefore, the challenge ahead lies in making sure there’s the same commitment from board members from one year to the next.

Provide people with the tools they need
The coach of the canoe camp has taken diversity training.

Offer extra help where needed
The canoe camp was offered solely for Aboriginal children. That allowed them to develop the skills they needed before moving on to other activities offered by the WRCC.
Offer extra help where needed
In evaluating the canoe camp, Dianne Anderson acknowledges that building a solid relationship takes time. However the happiness of the children who took part is perhaps the biggest measure of the program’s success. For the time being, she says, “It will be truly successful when they (the participants) become permanent members of our club. Our club’s membership should reflect the community we live in — that’s success.”

Note:
WRCC is also developing programs for disabled children. Working with the Cosmopolitan Club of Regina, they have built a special dock at the city’s Rick Hansen park. In the summer of 1994 they will begin offering instruction there.

Sport for All is a lot like a good road system. It serves everyone. Some stretches of road cost more to construct, others cost less, but in the end we have a system that does the job for everyone.

Why not give it a try...
• Organize joint parent/child programs for single-parent families.
Evaluating a Sport for All program

Use the following questions as a guide to measuring the effectiveness of your Sport for All programs.

1. Objectives
   What did your organization set out to accomplish?
   What target group(s) did you hope to include in the activity?
   What were your short-term goals?
   Long-term goals?

2. Research
   Who (or what groups) did you consult with in planning the activity?
   What special needs, sensitivities or traditions did you address?
   What barriers to your sport did you discover?

3. Implementation
   How did you plan to meet the special needs of participants?
   How did you remove barriers to your sport?
   How did you reach participants with your message?
   Did you provide training for coaches and/or officials?
   How did you make participants feel welcome?
   Did you plan to evaluate the program?

4. Evaluation
   How did you measure how participants felt about the program?
   Were your survey methods adequate? Were they independent (without bias)?
   Did your evaluation give you enough information to plan for future programs?

5. Results
   Did you accomplish what you set out to do?
   Did you achieve your short-term goals?
   What progress did you make on long-term goals?
   Who attended the program?
   What did they get out of it?
   What did your organization get out of it?
   What worked well?
   What didn’t work well?
   Was the program fun?
   What would you do differently next time?
   How can you build on this experience for future Sport for All activities?
**Target Groups**

- First Nations/Aboriginal people
- People with disabilities
- Youth
- Senior Adults
- Women
- The Economically disadvantaged
- Single-parent families
- Residents of Northern Saskatchewan

**Why not give it a try...**

- Share resources with another sport group in your effort to reach new participants.
First Nations Aboriginal People:

First Nations people are those who are Treaty or status Indians while Aboriginal people are individuals who may be Metis, non-status Indians or of mixed blood origin.

Sport has long been part of the traditional way of life, and many have developed skills in First Nations/Aboriginal recreation programs. Now with more people settling in larger urban centres and a general increase in population, there’s a growing pool of talent from which sports organizations can draw.

The following barriers, however, have prevented many from fully participating:

- The cost of sport. Many don’t have the money to pay fees, buy equipment or find transportation to sport activities. The cost of participating in out-of-town tournaments is especially prohibitive.

- Fewer opportunities to fully develop skills.

- Previous experiences with racism have left some hesitant to join in organized events.

- There are few First Nations / Aboriginal role models in mainstream sport.

- For some children, lack of experience at simply having fun and enjoying play.

- Lack of support and encouragement for children taking part in sport.

- Lack of understanding of existing sport delivery systems.

Here’s some suggestions for eliminating barriers:

- When looking for assistance from First Nations/Aboriginal people, ensure they are well represented at the decision-making table. Make them part of the system.

- Recruit and train First Nations/Aboriginal volunteers.

- Consult with First Nations/Aboriginal groups to learn more about their special needs. The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Friendship Centres, Tribal Councils and the Saskatchewan Native Recreation Association are all excellent resources.

- Talk to members of First Nations/Aboriginal communities at large for an understanding of needs at the grassroots level.

- Honor the First Nations/Aboriginal culture. Respect the wisdom of elders and other authority figures.

- Tailor your sport to the special needs of participants.
• Offer extra help and encouragement to build participants’ self-esteem.

• Go the extra mile when including First Nations/Aboriginal children.

• Involve them right from the start, and use parent aides when necessary to assist with transportation and coaching.

• Seek local role models in mainstream sports.

• Use respected sources and networks to get your message out.

• Provide cross-cultural training for staff, coaches and officials.

To help eliminate barriers when planning programs for First Nations/Aboriginal people on reserves and in Northern Saskatchewan, keep the following in mind:

• Contact the local chief and other local respected leaders before launching any programs and ensure they assist in the decision making for these programs.

• When organizing programs, copy correspondence to the chief and band council member responsible for sport.

• Seek ideas and feedback from community members. They know what works best, but may be reluctant to give advice without being asked.

• Be willing to be flexible.

• Don’t criticize programs already in place.

• Invest time and effort in building a relationship based on trust.

• Use the Aboriginal Radio Network of the Missinippi Broadcasting Corporation to distribute free public service announcements. Broadcasting in Cree, Dene and English, it is a respected source of information in Northern Saskatchewan. As well, First Nations/Aboriginal newspapers such as Saskatchewan Indian and New Breed are respected publications.

"How do you find out what target groups want? It’s easy: listen."
People with disabilities

For years physical fitness was equated with a narrow range of activities. Many of those activities excluded people with a disability.

That thinking is changing. We now know that physical fitness and participation in sport have a place in everyone’s life. In Saskatchewan, where almost one-fifth of our citizens have a disability of some kind, the benefits of making sport available for all speak for themselves.

The barriers facing people with a disability:
- **Attitude.** Above all else, this is the most troublesome of barriers. Pity, fear, rejection and ridicule of others can stand in the way of achieving true potential.
- **Financial resources.** Half of Canadians with a disability have an annual income of less than $10,000.
- **Transportation.** Even when special needs transportation is available, booking times are often limited.
- **Lack of awareness of ability levels.**
- **Limited physical access to sport facilities which prevents people with disabilities from attending as participants or fans.**
- **Promotion of opportunities in sport usually through traditional media such as newspaper or radio.**
- **Segregation of people with disabilities in special sport programs.**

To reduce those barriers:
- **Consult.** Talk to people with disabilities, and special interest groups such as the Saskatchewan Voice of the Handicapped and in Northern Saskatchewan, the Gary Tinker Federation for the Disabled. Find out how your sport can accommodate their interests and needs.
- **Recruit and train people with disabilities as volunteers.** Make them part of the decision-making process.
- **Take time to understand how a disability can affect a person’s behavior, socialization and learning needs.**
- **Focus on the person, not the disability.**
- **Plan programs that capitalize on abilities.**
- **Take advantage of sensitivity training courses offered by such organizations as the Saskatchewan Voice of the Handicapped.**
• Be aware of how “hidden” disabilities such as learning disabilities affect how people learn. This is especially critical for coaches who are teaching new skills.

• Develop partnerships with other organizations and facilities to keep costs down.

• Obtain a copy of Accessibility Standards Guidelines from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. The guidelines can help you assess whether facilities will accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. Or if you are involved in the construction of a new facility, they can ensure it is barrier-free.

• Use a multi-media approach in promoting your sport.

• Give participants as much opportunity as possible to fully integrate with other participants. Use “buddy” systems or helpers only where necessary.

• If need be, establish separate programs for people with disabilities on a pilot project basis. Once you’ve had a chance to adapt the sport to special needs, integrate participants into regular programs.

“\n\nWe’re not just promoting Sport for All.
We’re promoting Sport for Life."
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Why not give it a try

• Work with a sponsor to find incentives for participants. Sports gear, discounts at facilities and tickets to events are all popular items.
Youth

Sport can offer young people invaluable opportunities at a pivotal stage in life. Developing skills, self-confidence and friendships through sport can ease the transition from adolescence into adulthood and provide a firm foundation for a healthy, well-balanced life.

Not all young people, however, participate in sport. Here are some of the reasons why:

- Economics. Youth from low-income families can’t afford fees, equipment or transportation costs.
- Programming that doesn’t address the needs of youth: fun, socialization and peer recognition are often not priorities.
- Lack of programs that give youth a chance to be in charge.
- Lack of sport opportunities for troubled youth.
- Lack of awareness of sport role models.
- Lack of parental encouragement.
- Lack of opportunities. For some, the only exposure to sport is in school activities.

To eliminate barriers to sport for youth, consider the following:

- Consult and collaborate with existing youth organizations and agencies.
- Respect different developmental stages. Capabilities and preferences change with maturity.
- Develop programs that provide challenges and opportunities for self-directed learning.
- Make fun a priority.
- Give youth a hand in planning and directing programs.
- Allow youth the opportunity to make changes to established program structures if it means stronger representation.
- Encourage decision-making and responsibility among young participants.
- Involve youth in officiating and coaching.
- Involve families as much as possible in youth activities. Keep them informed.
- Encourage team-building activities that include everyone.
- Plan programs in areas that are safe and comfortable.
- Appoint transportation coordinators when travel to events is a barrier for participants.
- Give high profile to role models from within the youth community.
Senior Adults

For senior adults, sport can enhance their way of life. By providing opportunities for social interaction, new skills and an active lifestyle, sport contributes to mental and physical well-being.

Senior adults are enthusiastic participants and fans, but the following barriers may stand in the way for some:

- Many are not in the habit of participating in sport. Most had fewer opportunities during their younger years to take part in organized sport.
- Few opportunities exist for senior adults to start on the ground floor of a new sport.
- Some seniors themselves fear that money spent on services to senior citizens is at the expense of the younger generation.
- Many are either cautious about spending money they have, or else have little disposable income.
- Activities for seniors are often passive, sedentary or non-challenging.
- Most sport activities emphasize competitive rather than social aspects.
- Getting to and from sport sites can be a problem when seniors rely on public transportation.

To remove barriers:

- Consult with organizations such as the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism and the Saskatchewan Senior Fitness Association or local seniors clubs.
- Involve seniors in the decision-making process of your organization.
- Respect differences in the aging process. Not all individuals have the same levels of strength or endurance.
- Accentuate the social aspects of sport.
- Be flexible in program planning. Adapt the sport to meet the needs of the participants.
- Be prepared to change the rules if it means greater participation and enjoyment of the sport.
- Plan refreshments that allow for dietary restrictions.
- Act as a facilitator, encouraging participants to do their own planning.
- Senior adults are often willing and generous volunteers. Work cooperatively with senior volunteers when planning activities for all ages.
- Be sensitive to the needs of those with hearing loss or visual impairment.
- Offer reasonably priced programs, and stress the value of participating in promotional material.
- Set high expectations and establish an atmosphere that challenges and encourages participants to stretch their limits.
Although more than half of Canada's population is female, many more men than women participate in organized sport. The reasons for this have less to do with inherent ability than with social expectations.

The following barriers keep some women from joining the ranks of sport enthusiasts:

- While growing up, girls often receive less encouragement to develop motor skills than do boys.
- Expectations for young women to participate in sport are lower than for men. Traditional feminine stereotypes of weakness and frailty still persist.
- Body image and physical appearance are important to young women’s self-esteem. Often this predominates over skill development and accomplishments offered by sport.
- Social interaction, an important consideration for women, is often not given the same priority as competition.
- Personal safety is sometimes jeopardized by out-of-the-way sport locations and dimly lit parking lots.
- Traditional expectations of caring for home and children still fall predominantly on women’s shoulders. That means less time for sport and recreation.

To increase representation by women, consider the following in program planning:

- Promote the positive values of sport, not only its role in weight loss or improved appearance.
- Offer special clinics where women can develop skills in a comfortable, non-threatening environment.
- Create opportunities which emphasize fun.
- Assist women to develop as coaches and officials.
- Make women part of the decision-making process of your organization.
- Make sure all facilities are safe.
- Emphasize social rather than competitive aspects. Encourage participation just for the joy of taking part in sport.
- Develop alternative reward systems for achievement.
- Understand the issues behind gender equity.
- Where possible, provide child care for women with small children.
The economically disadvantaged

In tough economic times, sport may be perceived as a luxury. Despite the benefits of participating, for those with limited income the cost of basic necessities alone simply leaves little for spending on sport activities.

Many from the economically disadvantaged group have talent and enthusiasm to offer, but because of the following they do not participate in sport:

- The cost of belonging to a sport group. Membership fees, equipment and transportation costs are all obstacles. Participation in out-of-town tournaments is prohibitive.
- For most who have grown up in an underprivileged environment, sport has not been part of a way of life.
- For children, parental support is sometimes lacking.
- Illiteracy is sometimes a factor. Traditional promotional material such as brochures or newspaper advertisements might not be read.
- Among new Canadians in this group, language and cultural barriers often stand in the way.

To eliminate these barriers:

- Consult with social agencies, associations and schools that understand the needs of the economically disadvantaged.
- Recruit and train volunteers from this group and make them part of your organization’s decision-making process.
- Create partnerships with other groups when developing programs. Pool resources and increase the reach of your efforts.
- Offer programs free of charge.
- Take time to understand the social implications of being underprivileged and how this can affect performance in sport.
- Invest the time necessary to build skill levels.
- Seek sponsorships and/or scholarships for participants.
- Set up an equipment exchange within your own organization. Donate equipment to needy participants.
- Where possible, bring sport activities to participants’ neighbourhoods.
- Assist with transportation arrangements.
- When planning programs for children, involve the parents and families as much as possible.
Single-parent families

Families come in many shapes and sizes. In Saskatchewan, as in most other provinces, the number of single parent families is on the increase.

Members of single parent families constitute a large pool of participants — both adult and child — from which to draw, however, they face the following barriers:

- Sport programs are often organized on the assumption that participants come from two-parent families. This assumption affects the timing, cost and location of many activities.
- Child care is a major barrier — for parents who need care for one child while another participates or who want to participate themselves.
- Many single parents, even though employed, cannot afford the cost of sport program fees, equipment or transportation. Costs for out-of-town tournaments are prohibitive.
- Single working parents have difficulty getting children to after-school sport programs, or ones planned very early in the evening. The same is true of the timing of registration for many sports.
- Transportation is an obstacle, both in terms of cost and timing for parents, particularly when there is more than one child in a family.
- Many single parents cannot afford to participate in sport fundraising activities because to do so requires additional child care costs.
- The effort involved in organizing and coordinating arrangements for children to participate can be extremely stressful.

To eliminate these barriers:

- Recognize that family structures are changing, and with them the needs of family members.
- Seek opportunities to provide child care for single parents wherever possible.
- During registration, find out which parents need assistance in bringing their children to activities. Develop networks among these parents to lessen the burden of transportation.
- Include single parents in the decision-making process of your organization.
- Work with other organizations to provide joint programs wherever possible.
- Let all parents know about support systems. Don’t put needy parents in the position of having to ask for financial or other assistance.
- Provide opportunities for parents to participate at the same time as their children.
• Parents often accompany their children to activities and spend time sitting and waiting while the children take part. Consider joint programs or special programs for the parents.

• Create opportunities for single parents to contribute to your sport without leaving home. Phoning, doing books and letter writing can all be done by single parents without incurring child care costs.

• As much as possible, make participating a relaxing rather than stressful experience.

"What we’re talking about is having fun. If not, people won’t play."

Why not give it a try...

• Create a mentorship program to develop athletes, coaches and officials in target groups.
Residents of Northern Saskatchewan

Larger urban centres are where most programs are developed. That means residents of Northern communities are left out of the loop in both planning and delivery of many sport activities.

They face the following barriers:

- Geographic isolation which creates problems of time and distance in program delivery.
- A higher per capita cost to deliver programs. In Northern Saskatchewan, nothing is inexpensive.
- A lower general level of education than in the South.
- Fewer role models.
- A limited tax base to support sport and recreation.
- Less disposable income. That means less money to spend on equipment and sport fees.
- Organized sport is not as much a part of the cultural fabric.

To eliminate barriers:

- Consult with local community leaders and organizations.
- Trust local residents to offer the best solutions.
- Maintain an up-to-date list of contacts so you always have a reliable representative in each community.
- Develop relationships and keep in touch. Phone calls are especially appreciated.
- Include northern residents in the decision-making process of your organization.
- Communicate clearly and frequently to ensure program arrangements are understood by all involved.
- Make decisions based on factors other than cost alone. Look at the long-term rewards of delivering new programs.
- Adjust administrative practices such as record keeping and program criteria where necessary to allow for program success.
- Work with Northern Recreation Coordinating Committee (NRCC) to benefit by its experience at successful programming.
- And take advantage of the annual NRCC conference to showcase your sport.
- If a community doesn’t have a recreation director, ask whether the mayor or chief can designate someone to the task.
• Make sure your representatives such as clinic and workshop presenters are sensitive to the way of life in Northern Saskatchewan

• Allow extra time to build the skill level of participants. May will have has little experience with organized sport.

• Set guidelines, but be flexible.

• Teachers are a valuable resource. They have the networks in place for delivery of information. The Saskatchewan High School Athletics Association has a list of addresses of high schools throughout the province.

• Keep programs simple, and offer them at little or no cost.

• Have fun. And make it a priority for participants too.

“Sport is part of a well balanced life. Everyone should enjoy that.”

Why not give it a try...

• Consider reward systems that recognize accomplishments other than just winning competitions.
Swimming - with an emphasis on fun

Swim Saskatchewan is putting out the welcome mat to young swimmers with a drop-in program that puts fun at the top of the list.

Executive director Betty Lou Dean says that emphasizing a good time makes good sense. “If they’re having fun, they are going to have an education. They’ll listen better and learn new techniques better.”

The Swim for All program which operates at three pools in Regina and three in Saskatoon gives kids of all ages the chance to learn the skills of competitive swimming. It’s offered at no cost so fees are not a barrier to anyone.

Now in its second year, the program is evaluated at the end of each season to see what works and what doesn’t. The ultimate measure: the return rate of children.

Dean says that Swim for All plays an important part in the sport’s long-term plan. It helps expose the sport to a greater number of young people, provides experience for new coaches, and develops support for swimming among new families.

But above that she stresses its role in helping young people grow. “We give children a chance to meet new challenges, develop new skills. We’re helping to make better citizens.” That’s a positive step for all concerned.

“Sport can take people to places they’ve never been before.”

Why not give it a try...

• Host a try-it day for your sport. Have coaches, officials and equipment on hand at a facility close to where participants live.
When Candace Liskowich of Regina’s Rainbow Youth Centre plans programs for inner city youth, she calls upon a valuable resource: youth themselves.

Many of the teens who attend the centre are new Canadians; some are refugees from war-torn countries. Most are plagued with the need to assimilate in a new country with limited financial resources. Sport, she realized, could provide a valuable bridge.

Liskowich discovered the teens wanted a chance to learn new skills, and a way to show the skills they already had. Soccer was a favorite of many, so they began a loosely organized program of free drop-in games.

The first game, she confesses, was chaos. “The ones who knew the sport yelled at the ones who didn’t.” Getting parents to come in as coaches for skill development was the solution. They gave practical advice and buffered hostile situations. Involving parents also proved critical to family support for the six-month program.

The benefits were many. The players learned new soccer skills and a host of social skills as well. “They learned how to associate with one another, how to eliminate personal aggression in favor of team play and how to act as leaders in a group situation.”

Before designing the program, Liskowich consulted with other agencies that work with immigrants. They gave her valuable insight into how to reach the families of young new Canadians, and what sensitivities to be mindful of. She can’t speak highly enough of that approach. “Use these agencies as facilitators. Working in partnership is a smart way to use limited resources.”

The value of sport isn’t in the sport itself, but in what comes from participating.
Field Hockey brings cultures together

Students of grades five and six from two different parts of town got a chance to learn about one another while trying out the sport of field hockey.

In a program organized by the Saskatchewan Field Hockey Association, students at two schools — one an inner city school, the other in an affluent part of town — took part in clinics on home turf then participated in an afternoon tournament at Regina’s Taylor Field.

Julie Summers, is the provincial coach who organized the tournament. She says the choice of schools was not made by the Field Hockey Association; it was simply the result of which teachers bid first on an open invitation from the association. The fact that the schools were from such different locales became an unexpected bonus.

The core area school has a high percentage of new Canadian students. During their tournament which was held during Multicultural Week, the children participated in six teams drawn from each of the two schools. “We didn’t want it to be one school pitted against the other,” Summers explains. “Arranging them randomly gave the kids a chance to get to know one another.”

The Field Hockey Association also made sure no one left the get-together empty handed. They managed to find water bottles, ball caps, pencils, stickers and other give-away items in abundance.

The tournament was an unqualified success. “The kids were so appreciative — we received many thank you letters.” The key to that success? “Commitment by the teachers was instrumental,” she says. “Their enthusiasm was essential.”

In terms of the association’s goals, it also scored well. They were able to profile their sport to a wider audience and provide an enjoyable experience for all at a low cost. With sponsorships, the total cost of the event was under $500. That’s a good return on investment.

Why not give it a try...

- Develop special awards for coaches or officials who demonstrate exemplary attitudes.
Volleyball finds a home in the North

During a seven-year span beginning in 1979, the number of registered volleyball teams in Saskatchewan grew more than tenfold. Part of the reason for that increase was a concentrated effort by the Saskatchewan Volleyball Association to bring the sport to the North.

According to Provincial Coach John Nielson, it didn’t happen just by transporting a southern program to a northern locale. It happened because there was an existing interest in the area and organizers were committed to adapting the sport to meet the needs of participants.

Nielson says that volleyball has always been popular in the North. “The nature of the game — it’s simple, low cost, can be played indoors or out by all ages, and it can’t be dominated by one player — makes it a favorite.”

The Saskatchewan Volleyball Association capitalized on that existing enthusiasm and used the school system as their network for developing the sport. Their approach was slow, but steady. “You can’t do it all on one visit,” he emphasizes. “Take the time to develop trust and understanding.”

Key to their success has been understanding the culture of the North and adapting accordingly. They make sure that clinic presenters, for example, are empathic and relate to the northern experience. As well, they establish community contacts who pull things together at the local level.

Over the years, the association has developed an enviable record for meeting the needs of Northern participants. “We have always tried to go to any place that’s asked for help,” Nielson says. Their accomplishments speak for themselves. Recently they’ve held player’s camps in Sandy Bay, Deschambault Lake, La Loche and Ile-a-la-Crosse and certification courses for coaches at Stanley Mission, Beauval and Buffalo Narrows.
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The membership of Sask. Sport Inc. aim to increase participation by groups currently underrepresented in sport.

This guidebook is part of the ongoing effort of Sask Sport Inc. to make sport accessible for all citizens of Saskatchewan.

For further information, or to obtain additional copies of this guidebook, please contact:

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