



In 2016 Football Canada began a review of how football is taught, played and presented as it applied to Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD). The concept of LTAD is to present best practices for ensuring enjoyment of participation in sports for as long as the participant wants. The general concepts of LTAD were adopted by Football Canada in 2010 but then it was charged with taking a big picture look at how the game is presented from grass roots to the national level. The results are enacted below:

**FOOTBALL CANADA'S LTAD ROLL-OUT:** Football Canada's LTAD Competition Review which listed nine points for tackle and non-contact football to adapt to in 2022 has been reviewed by the LTAD 2.0 Committee and the following recommendations have been passed along to the Football Canada Board of directors:

**a) All Strategies slated to take effect in 2022 have been pushed back to 2023 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic causing too many challenges for leagues and teams to properly adapt to these strategies when in survival mode.**

b) **For Strategy 1A** regarding standardization of two year age gaps the wording has been changed to reflect the existence of high school football and PSO's right to adapt to their own situations. It will read as follows:

### **Strategy 1.A: Age Categories and two-year age gap for football below high school**

#### **Recommendation:**

Standardized two-year age categories and designations for all community-based football U16 and below. For football played either at high school, or in the community for high school aged players, a three-year age category would be allowed which would then flow into participation at the Junior level (which would be a four-year gap) and USports (which could be up to a seven year gap). High School would be defined as Grade 10 and higher.

#### **MANDATE: 2022**

The priority regarding this mandate would be to ensure all football played below the Grade 10 level would be portioned off in two-year groupings. PSO's would be free to determine what those age brackets are based on the situations present in their provinces with the goal of allowing players across their Province to compete in the same groupings. It is encouraged for all PSO's to work towards matching up with the Football Canada recommendations for the two-year gaps. At the high school level, a three-year gap recognizing the right of all students to access the program at their school is the next stage. Where numbers warrant a "junior varsity" or secondary team for entry level players in high school is encouraged.

### Exceptions can be made:

- 1) If a player had no participation pathway, he/she can be moved to a different age category pending approval of the PSO.
- 2) If the current age category does not fit the developmental age of the player, he/she can be moved up (only up) an age category pending the approval of the PSO.
- 3) In communities where four grades are included in high schools it would be the expectation that two teams are offered within the four year gap unless numbers do not allow for that in smaller schools. In those situations, four year age gap participation on high school teams would be allowed under the coaches and administrators discretion. In all cases options should be considered for adapted opportunities like 6-a-side or 9-a-side to reduce large age gaps.
- 4) Atom (U11) football has a three year age gap in Alberta allowing 10, 9 and 8 year olds.

c) **Strategy 2.A** Ban to two tackle seasons at the same time is already in place since 2017

d) **Strategy 2.B** Schedule Regulations have been in place since 2017 but are clear that all games should be scheduled at least four days apart but in make-up game situations due to unforeseen circumstances it can be two calendar games in between. In Alberta we have a few situations where teams with large rosters are scheduled to play games less than four days apart but can do so by ensuring that with subbing and rotations their players do not play more than four quarters in those contests.

e) **Strategy 2.C** Out of Season tackle football games. This allows our athlete to participate in as many as five Football Canada sanctioned events outside of the season of play (i.e. Football Canada Cup)

f) **Strategy 2.D** Tackle Football Weeks in a Year. Will be pushed to 2023 as a mandate but will remain at 16 weeks plus 1 week of Safe Contact for high school and bantam level teams. The clarification in the document is that Provincial level playoffs do not count to a teams total – only league schedules in full equipment. It also reiterates that no contact football for anyone under the age of 8 in a calendar year is allowed.

g) **Strategy 2.E** Gradual Progression to 12-a-side football. Will be pushed to 2023 as a mandate. Alberta is doing a pretty good job adapting for tackle football. By 2023 Atom football should be 6-a-side, Pee-Wee should be 6 or 9-a-side with Bantam having the option of 6, 9, or 12-a-side. From a Football Alberta perspective in terms of enforcement, we can still register and insure leagues that do not follow those mandates to the letter but would not allow for a 12-a-side championship at the Pee-Wee Levels of Provincials starting in 2023.

g) **Strategy 2.F** Roster Sizes. Will be pushed to 2023. Committee recommends a reduction in the Minimum to start a season for 12-a-side tackle football from 30 registered players to 28 and the deadline for that to be met as 7 calendar days before a teams first contest. Everything else stays the same. From a Football Alberta perspective in terms of enforcement we could design our registration system to ensure a minimum of 28 names are listed in the registrations for all tackle teams wanting to play 12-a-side, 17 for 9-a-side and 9 for 6-a-side. The minimum to start a 12-a-side game is 24 and this is expected to be enforced by the Canadian Football Officials starting in 2023.