

ATHLETE EXPERIENCE PATHWAYS

2019-2023

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OUR VISION:

Ringette is a popular sport through British Columbia that is played and enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities.

OUR MISSION:

To support a lifelong positive sport experience through skills, character and leadership development.

OUR VALUES:

Community Focus, Partnership, Integrity, Respect, Sportsmanship



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1. Executive Summary

This report outlines and describes the changes coming under the Ringette BC 2019-2023 Strategic Plan in the area of Athlete Experience. It provides background on the need to revamp the competition structure of Ringette in BC. This is followed by a description of the Athlete Pathways (Community, Competitive and Instructional) and Appendices that provide a technical backdrop for each pathway.

The changes to our athlete pathways are driven by a need to improve retention of athletes at all divisions while increasing new registrations. Ringette BC wants to build an athlete pathway that is athlete-centric in its design with the primary goal of improving the athlete experience to retain and attract athletes to our sport.

Over the past three seasons, Ringette BC has made incremental changes to the competition structure and athlete experience. While the changes to date have been small, they have been purposeful in identifying and addressing gaps under the current competition structure of ringette in BC. Ringette BC has focused on the attrition of athletes in our sport while taking a pulse of our membership to understand what their needs and wants are.

The next steps for change are to fully address large scale gaps and systemic limits in the sport system and the competition infrastructure which were identified in conjunction with Ringette Canada's Competition Review. Over the next five years, Ringette BC will be implementing further changes to improve the Athlete Experience and close those larger gaps as part of our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

Ringette BC is committed to creating a competition structure that is inclusive for all athletes and follows the Guiding Principles of Competition and Long-Term Athlete Development while building a system that allows for future growth. Ringette BC has identified four pathways of participation for our athletes: Community, Competitive, Instructional and Pursuit of Excellence. These four participation pathways will be the future base of our sport system. As the sport grows, the contexts will allow athletes to optimize their experience in sport.

2. Background

2.1 Understanding and Incorporating Formal LTAD

The Government of Canada funded the development of the Long-Term Athlete Development model to guide Canadian sport organizations in the development of athletes. The model was developed over a period of years by many experts from across the country. The model was created to address Canadian athlete performance on the world stage, which, until the model was put in place and working, has traditionally been underrepresented.

In 2009, Ringette Canada and BC Ringette Association launched the new Ringette-specific LTAD framework. The changes made to the sport system were made with little explanation to members. The changes did not have a proper implementation plan for the provinces to follow and to provide to their members. As an early adopter of the Long-Term Athlete Development model, ringette discovered a number of challenges with the model.

Since 2009, Canadian Sport for Life has reviewed the LTAD model a number of times and made adjustments/revisions; LTAD is now in version 2.1. The majority of sports, including ringette, have created their own Long-Term Athlete Development models that are sport-specific in their design and focus on the skill and growth of their participants. The model is continually being updated. Many funding agencies expect full understanding and implementation of the principles of LTAD.

Ringette BC has recognized that our sport system needs to better align with the LTAD model by providing Sport for Life and Competitive for Life participation pathways and ensuring that participants are able to participate in the developmental stage that not only best suits them, but that the competition is stage-appropriate for those participants.



2.2 The Ringette Canada Competition Review

In 2016, Ringette Canada pre-released their Competition Review to the Ringette Provincial Sport Organizations. This timely and in-depth report contained a detailed analysis of ringette from coast to coast at all levels of competition and across all ages and calibres of play. The report was created by a third-party firm that used surveys, interviews, and player data to find out how to make the sport better.

One of the fundamental findings was that the current competition structure does not meet LTAD criteria and is not optimizing retention of athletes. The report outlined a number of recommendations for improving ringette's competition framework.

Five separate sporting contexts are recognized. These include:

- First Interactions (FUNdamentals);
- Children's Ringette (U10/U12);
- Recreational Ringette (U14+);
- Competitive Ringette (U14+); and
- Pursuit of Excellence (U16+).

The changes proposed in the report are LTAD-stage appropriate for each of these contexts.

The major changes came in the form of a new competition structure which identified three pathways of participation: **Community Stream Ringette**, **Competitive Stream Ringette** and the **Pursuit of Excellence**.

A key recommendation in the report is that *"...the hierarchal model of AAA, AA, A should be **eliminated** and a new system of categorizing teams (which takes into consideration both the stage of development of athletes and the individual motivations of athletes to participate) should be introduced."*

Through the strategic planning process, and in conjunction with the Ringette Canada Competition Review, Ringette BC has identified the need for Athlete Experience Pathways that are athlete-centric in their design, easy for athletes to understand and access and that promote meaningful competition. A new framework must allow athletes to participate at the level of play that they wish to and allow athletes who are seeking the highest levels of competition a path to achieve their goals.

2.3 High Performance

High-Performance is a key pathway of ringette in BC. Many young athletes wish to pursue high-performance to maximize their own ringette experience.

Ringette BC reviewed the past 10 years of AA in BC. The High-Performance report provided information on registration numbers as well as team results before it analyzed the BC AA model in detail compared to two other provincial Ringette models and two other sports in BC. The research showed that the AA model in BC is not optimized across the province, that too many of our athletes are streamed out of the high-performance pathway at the earliest age group, and that our high-performance athletes are not finding success in out of province competitions.

The table below compares how many athletes attended evaluations for AA in the Lower Mainland Ringette Association (LMRL) to the number of athletes that were selected to the League AA teams over the past 3 years:

LMRL Tryout Data 2016-2018						
Division	# registered for tryouts			# selected to team		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
U14AA	-	47	70	-	18	17
U16AA	29	38	50	16	18	17
U19AA	-	18	21	-	15	

The table below shows the number of AA teams by League and their year-end competition participation:

Total AA teams in the Province & Year-End Competition Participation						
Year	U14AA	WCRC	U16AA	CRC	U19AA	CRC
2013-2014	2	2	1	1	2	2
2014-2015	1	1	1	1	2	1
2015-2016	2	2	2	1	1	1
2016-2017	3	2	2	2	1	1
2017-2018	3	1	1	1	2	2

Too many of our athletes are streamed out of the competitive program at the earliest entry level (U14AA) and the likelihood of those athletes returning to high performance is low. As a result, participation numbers and the ability to form teams in the AA programs at the U16 and U19 divisions continue to decrease over time. Further, the streaming out of athletes in the younger divisions impacts all higher-level division participation regardless of calibre of play.

Unfortunately, the athlete pool cannot support the current tiered competition structure that ringette has traditionally employed across Canada because there are simply not enough participants. In fact, only three provinces seem to have the numbers to sustain a four-tiered system (AA, A, B, C), but only in their metropolitan areas, and even those provinces have found it difficult to sustain the tiers. Results in BC show that athletes in the lowest tier leave the sport altogether from U12 and up. The impact of the current competition structure is particularly visible in seasons where Canada Winter Games is being hosted.

In 2012, the competition model at Canadian Ringette Championships changed to the format employed today to give more athletes the opportunity to compete at the National level. Prior to

the change, only one team per province would participate at Nationals. This resulted in very few athletes experiencing the highest level of competition.

BC has experienced the following results from its high-performance teams:

Results at WCRC and CRCs by year and division					
Year	Event	Division	# teams	Result	Teams in division
2018	CRC	U16AA	1	8th	21
		U19AA	2	14th, 16th	17
	WCRC	U14AA	1	6 th	10
2017	CRC	U16AA	2	10th, 17th	21
		U19AA	1	16th	16
	WCRC	U14AA	2	2 nd /9th	10
2016	CRC	U16AA	1	16th	20
		U19AA	1	20th	20
	WCRC	U14AA	2	6 th /10th	10
2015	CRC	U16AA	1	12th	15
		U19AA	1	4th	14
	WCRC	U14AA	1	2 nd	12
2014	CRC	U16AA	1	14th	16
		U19AA	2	12th, 18th	18
	WCRC	U14AA	1	8 th	8

In addition to our results at Canadian Ringette Championships and Western Canadian Ringette Championships BC has placed fifth in 2007, eighth in 2011, sixth in 2015 and fourth in 2019 at the Canada Winter Games. BC has never placed higher than third at the Canada Winter Games; and this was in 2003.

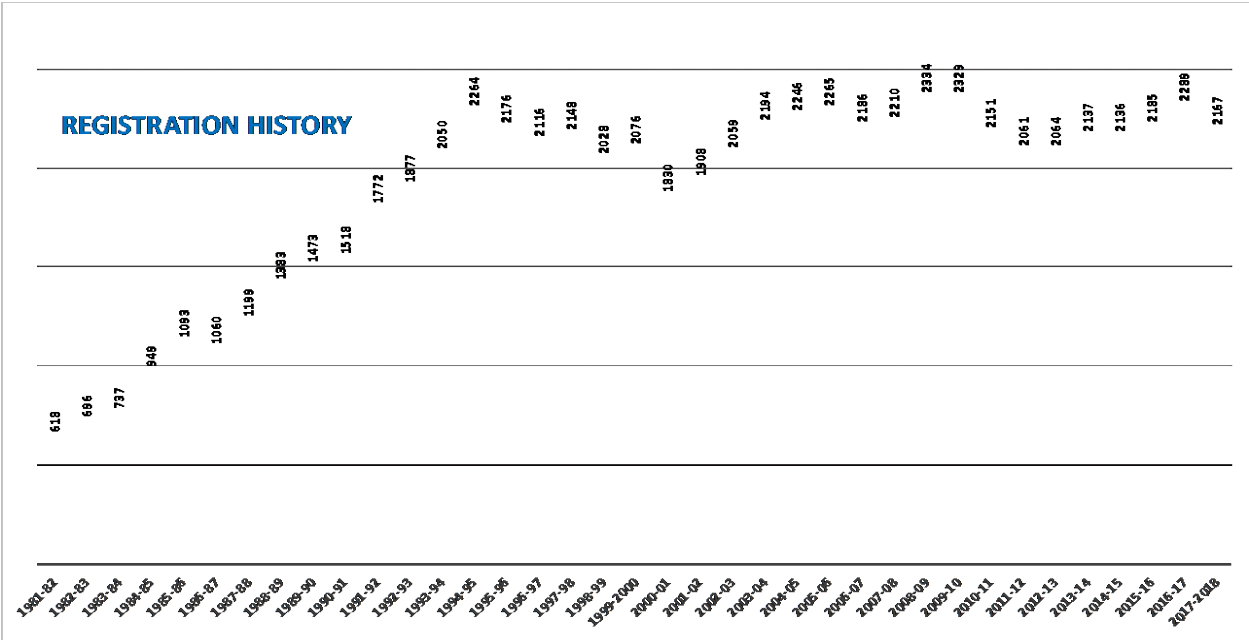
Despite recent out of province success by Kelowna and Richmond Club Association A teams at the Western Canadian Ringette Championships, the model in BC is not supporting a successful High-Performance (AA) program. Streaming athletes out at an early age and against the advice of the LTAD model where Ringette players specialize and peak after age 17 remains a major cause for concern. The retention problem within the high-performance stream is a direct result of streaming so many kids out of the High-Performance program in the Train to Train stage (U14). Success at high performance events for BC teams is unfortunately not by design nor from the help of the sport system supporting growth and development of athletes and coaches.

It is apparent that future changes to the Athlete Pathway need to provide more high-performance opportunities to our athletes. Having more kids participating in the high-performance pathway will enable these teams to have a player base in the older age groups. Creating opportunities for sustained meaningful competition against like teams will further optimize athlete development.

3. What do we know?

3.1 Player Registrations

Ringette BC has experienced static player registration numbers for a number of years. However, 20 to 25 per cent of Ringette BC’s player numbers are in the 18+ and Masters (30+) Divisions. In fact, registration numbers have been on a steady decline in the youth and children divisions by a similar amount. So, while the 2,264 players registered in 1995 likely only included a few adults, if any, the registration numbers today include more over 400. We understand that this pattern of decline in children and youth registrations is, in large part, linked to the competition structure itself.



Each year, the competitive structure of ringette (AA, A, B, C) leads to numerous team formation issues across the province. This, compounded by geographical constraints, incorrect or inappropriate application of the competitive structure to age divisions, and the general inability to create consistency across the province, continues to be a concern. Rather than focusing on an improved athlete experience with meaningful competition and retaining as many players as possible, athletes are forced into an inflexible, complex multi-tiered system with an emphasis on competitive divisions of play.

Association registration numbers from December 2018 are as below:

	FUN1	FUN2	U10	U12	U14	U16	U19	18+	MSTRS	TOTAL
Burnaby New West Ringette	7	16	20	38	18	29	19	20	28	195
Chilliwack Ringette	0	12	19	8	6	0	0	8	15	68
Comox Valley Ringette	0	4	12	10	0	0	0	0	24	50
Coquitlam Moody Ringette	11	20	15	17	26	14	0	16	0	119
Delta Ringette	20	14	8	21	12	1	8	18	0	102
Fraser Valley Ringette	23	12	23	32	29	14	19	16	20	188
Greater Vernon Ringette	15	8	32	26	20	14	14	18	0	147
Houston Ringette	0	12	9	3	5	10	10	0	0	49
Kelowna Ringette	19	11	37	26	17	29	26	37	0	202
North West Vancouver Ringette	7	8	16	20	26	2	6	5	1	91
Port Coquitlam Ridge Meadows	13	12	5	17	23	15	9	38	7	139
Prince George Ringette	12	29	34	34	29	16	1	20	0	175
Quesnel Ringette	1	1	9	9	9	18	5	15	0	67
Richmond Ringette	30	22	18	11	13	17	9	20	13	153
Shuswap Ringette	3	16	7	9	17	11	17	19	0	99
Surrey White Rock Ringette	18	16	26	27	19	14	15	18	5	158
Terrace Ringette	37	21	4	10	12	5	2	0	0	91
Vancouver Ringette	18	5	26	27	19	14	15	22	0	146
Westside Ringette	0	34	25	20	29	9	16	0	0	133
Totals	234	273	345	365	329	232	191	290	113	2372

The table above illustrates that the 18+ and Masters Divisions have the highest level of participation with over 400 athletes. In fact, as these are preliminary registration numbers from 2018, adult numbers may actually be higher as these divisions tend to see later registrations. Further, these two divisions will continue to expand as sport for life athletes age out of the youth divisions and continue to play in 18+ and Masters. It is encouraging to see that many athletes who started playing ringette in the 1980's and early 1990's have stayed in the sport and that Ringette is an excellent example of sport for life. However, if we cannot address retention in the youth divisions, ringette may eventually become an adult only sport.

For example, at the U14 age division, only five associations currently have enough players to create two teams of adequate size. However, at this age division *every* association has players that want to play either at a high level of competition or at a recreational level. Having only one team is not athlete-centric. It does not allow athletes to participate in the manner in which they wish to participate.

This fundamental issue is compounded by geographical challenges, perceived gender issues, a general inability to grow ringette-specific goaltenders, release requests, limited access to ice, etc. In addition, there are requirements from our funders to adhere to the fundamental principles of Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) which is not consistent with the current structure.

The result is a diminishing experience for the athlete as they progress through the divisions, whether they are playing on an A team or on a B team. This inevitably leads to a decrease in overall registration, limited access to meaningful competition, and poor out-of-province performance results.

3.2 Is Change Needed?

Ringette BC released an Athlete Experience Survey in the fall of 2018 to find out how parents and players felt about their experience participating in ringette in BC. This survey was distributed to every registered player in the Ringette BC registration database, with an eye towards informing upcoming changes. The survey produced overwhelming results, with almost 700 participants and with very proportionate geographic representation.

The survey respondents were primarily parents (65%) or players (28%). Ringette BC knows from the survey that the most important aspects of Ringette to our families are:

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Fun and Enjoyment	95.22% 538	4.78% 27	0.00% 0	565
Staying Fit & Healthy	88.87% 503	11.31% 64	0.00% 0	566
Building Friendships	84.10% 476	16.43% 93	0.00% 0	566
Playing at the level most appropriate to my skill	80.92% 458	18.37% 104	1.24% 7	566
Additional Training & Elite Experience	33.45% 188	49.47% 278	18.15% 102	562
Playing at the Highest Level Possible	25.13% 142	48.67% 275	27.61% 156	565
Travel & Tournaments	23.31% 131	61.92% 348	15.84% 89	562
Winning Championships	12.08% 68	55.24% 311	34.28% 193	563

Fun and Enjoyment, Staying Fit and Healthy, Building Friendships, and Playing at a Level Most Appropriate to My Skill are most important to the ringette experience, and it is not close. This contrasts with the fact that more than one-third of respondents also believe that the current system of ringette does not meet their needs (a response which was most pronounced from U12 to U19). Ringette BC must therefore ensure that change is meaningful to positively influence the experience of the athlete as they move progress these divisions.

In addition to the Ringette BC survey, and as discussed in previous sections, the Ringette Canada Competition Review identified a number of areas for improving ringette as a sport in Canada.

When applying the Competition Review to our own registration numbers and survey results, some key problems stand out:

- AAA, AA, A, B and C levels do not actually exist in the same manner that they did 20 years ago;

- Participant numbers limit the opportunities for meaningful competition, especially in older age groups;
- Lack of meaningful competition hinders player development *and* player retention;
- All levels of play currently have the same competition framework and the same rules (where the majority of Club Association A and B programs operate similarly to AA programs); and
- The only key difference in the current competition framework between divisions (after FUN2) is the cost of participation in the program, and (potentially) the time that participants and their families dedicate to the program.

Change is therefore necessary to ensure the survival of ringette in BC. Female participation in the youth and children's divisions has dropped by about 30% in the past fifteen to twenty years. The High-Performance program streams athletes *out* instead of *in*, which impacts participation at the higher age divisions and does not produce teams that are successful in inter-provincial play. Parents and athletes have told us what is most important to them and have been clear that we are not meeting their needs. The Ringette Canada Competition Review provides a new lens with which to view the competition structure to ensure changes improve the athlete experience. Ringette BC must now make adjustments.

Research has shown that female athletes quit sport between the ages of 11 to 15. One of the key reasons is that sport focuses only on competitive play. Based on the current competition model, three of the five levels of participation offered are very competitive. Female participants who have not been able to succeed in sport and do not have the option to participate in sport on their own terms are more likely to leave sport.

A new framework is needed that will allow athletes the ability to participate at the level of play that they wish to *and* to guide athletes who are seeking the highest levels of competition to understand how they can achieve their goals.

3.3 What is Ringette BC doing?

As part of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, Ringette BC has developed clearly defined athlete pathways with a goal of improving the experience for athletes in all division which should lead to athlete retention and increased player retention. Specifically:

- the creation of an athlete-centric model with clearly defined athlete experience pathways and access to meaningful competition;
- providing options for participants who do not wish to travel/incur the cost of travel; and
- creating the opportunity to have fun, stay fit, and build relationships in a context of the players' choosing.

The new Athlete Experience Pathway is meant to ensure that, per the Competition Review:

- *Ringette experiences are meaningful for all participants and teams from the beginning to the end of each season.*
- *Ringette is always a fun, positive experience.*
- *Every ringette participant, coach, official, volunteer and administrator has an opportunity to improve.*
- *The system of competition (tournaments, leagues and championships) supports each participant in seeking their level of personal excellence based on their definition of success. Participants can choose to enroll in a program which places them on the excellence pathway.*
- *Nobody is disadvantaged by playing at a “lower” level. Participants are provided access to appropriate development pathways to progress to a higher level if they desire.*
- *The system of competition supports and rewards LTAD-based training informed by Ringette Canada’s Athlete Development Matrix.*
- *Competition reflects the True Sport Principles and the values of Ringette Canada.*

Ringette BC has pledged to the Guiding Principles of Competition established by Ringette Canada as part of the Competition Review process. Ringette BC has created the new athlete experience pathway to ensure Ringette BC is able to achieve its Vision, follow our Mission, and fulfill our core Values. Following the Guiding Principles of Competition as a guide for change will assist with achieving our Vision, Mission and Values.

In addition, in anticipation of the new 2019-2023 Strategic Plan and in conjunction with the Ringette Canada Competition Review, Ringette BC has already implemented a few smaller initiatives over the past three years to improve the athlete experience and the competition structure within BC.

These smaller initiatives include:

FUNDamentals Program

A stage-appropriate program designed to improve skill acquisition, engagement and retention of our youngest athletes was implemented in the fall of 2018. While the results have been overwhelmingly positive, the true impact will not be known until these players reach the competitive stage of their development in 2029. It is true that 4 Associations have struggled with implementation, and Ringette BC is working with these groups to ensure success in 2019/20.

Player Evaluations/Ordinals

Mandatory Player evaluations and ordinals are an indispensable rubric for learning and provide standardized criteria for assessments of players from the U12 to U19 divisions across the province. In addition, evaluations assist with team formation.

Participants in the FUNDamentals and U10 programs are being assessed using stage-appropriate standardized criteria that assists coaches with tracking improvement in participants and team/squad formations.

U12 Year-End Event

This event was introduced by Ringette BC to provide a positive and meaningful conclusion to the year for U12-aged teams from across the province. Under the *Train to Train* stage of Long-Term Athlete Development, this event is an opportunity for athletes to wrap-up a year of hard work and dedication and leave the athletes with a positive experience to keep them coming back. In addition, the event gives athletes and coaches an experience of participating in a competition similar to the Provincial Championships prior to U14.

With the implementation of a formalized U12 development program, this event will incorporate a championship format and medals in 2020.

Expanded Provincials Format

The Expanded Provincials format follows the competition systems used in other provinces across Canada, as well as matches the changes that were made to Canadian Ringette Championships in 2012. The expanded format allows for more teams to participate and be exposed to the Provincial Championships. The expanded format was introduced for U14 during the 2018/19 season and will be introduced for U16 and U19 in the 2019/20 season.

4. Athlete Experience Pathways and the New Strategic Plan

4.1 Strategic Planning Pillar: Athlete Experience

The Athlete Experience is one of the key pillars of the Ringette BC 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. The experience that each and every athlete has when they participate in ringette must be considered. If participants are no longer having a positive sport experience, it is time for change. Ringette BC's mission is to support a lifelong positive sport experience. Ringette BC's strategy is to create Athlete Experience Pathways that are athlete-centric in their design.

Simply put, Ringette BC is seeking to develop more athletes. The new model, very similar to the models used in ringette in Saskatchewan and New Brunswick (and in softball, baseball and field hockey in BC), has been reviewed with various internal stakeholders throughout the province as well as external partners such as Own the Podium, Via Sport, Ringette Canada, other institutions and independent experts.

The 2019-2023 Ringette BC Strategic Plan has two key performance indicators to achieve in the next five years:

1. Increase player registration to 3,000 on-ice participants;
2. Have all Members of Ringette BC pledge to the *Guiding Principles of Meaningful Competition*.

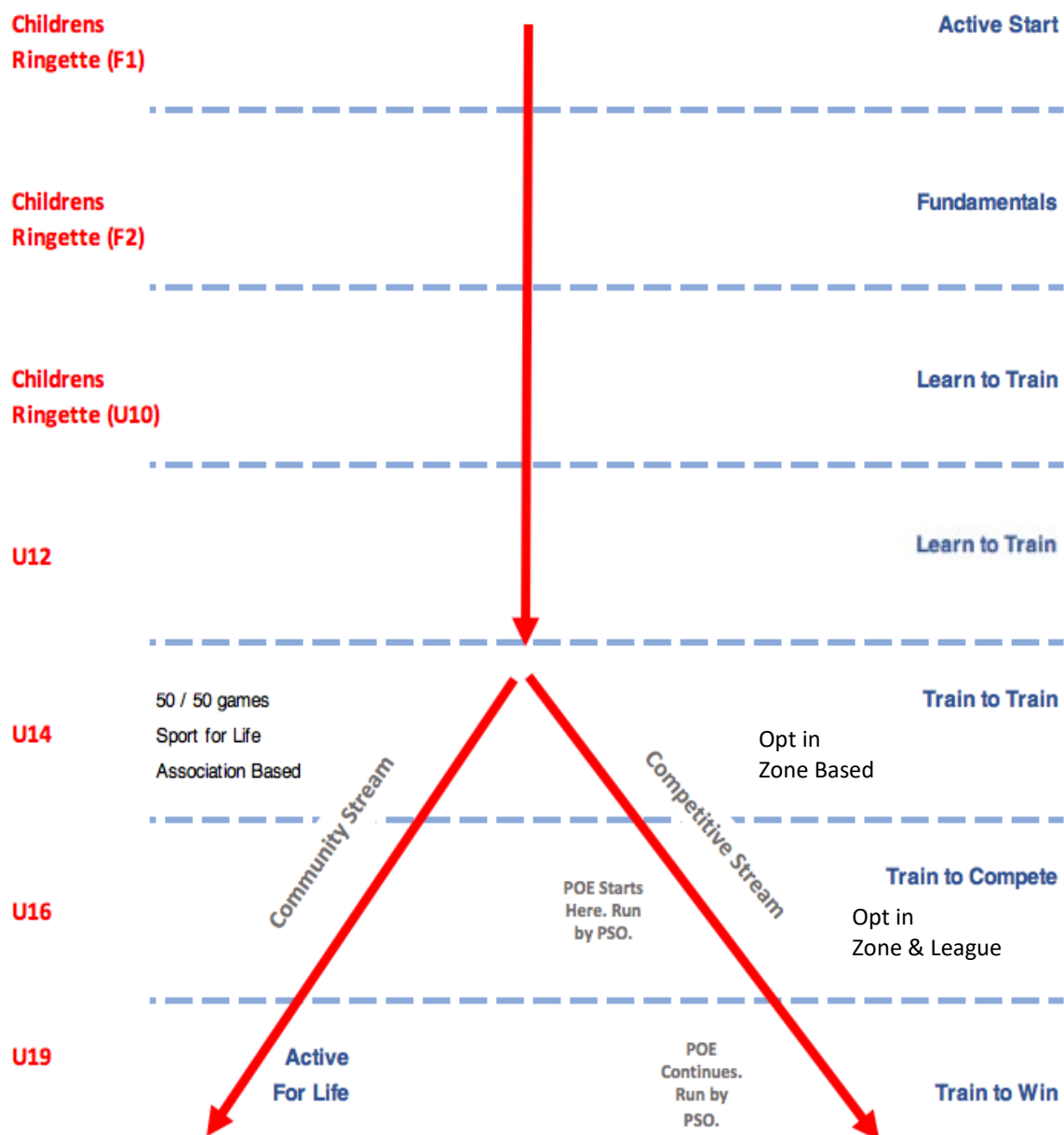
The new athlete experience pathways are integral to achieving these two goals. They are the foundation for supporting the athlete experience and will provide a competition structure that is built on guiding principles. The new athlete experience pathways are clear and defined. This will allow Ringette BC to integrate all players, male and female, into the competition system in a manner that will allow all participants to grow and develop.

The structure of the pathways allows for training programs to be implemented effectively to address developmental gaps. Competitions can be adapted to ensure that athletes are competing in a system that matches their LTAD developmental stage while providing access to meaningful competition.

4.2 Guiding Principles of the New Athlete Experience Pathways

1. Pathways are Athlete-centric in their design.
2. Athletes have some choice in how they participate.
3. The Club Division athlete and the Zone Representative Division athlete both have the opportunity to develop.
4. *Guiding Principles of Competition* are foundational and create access to meaningful competition that follows the LTAD model.
5. Athletes who are seeking the highest level of competition understand the pathway to reach their goals and are supported along the way.

6. The model is flexible and is designed to support retention and growth in registration. It is a system for the future.
7. The *True Sport Principles* will be promoted at all levels of the model.
8. The new model supports Ringette BC's vision to have ringette be a popular sport throughout BC that is played and enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities.
9. The model follows LTAD framework and standards.



5. Community Athlete Pathway – Club Division

The Ringette Canada Competition Review document identified that at under the current system of ringette that exists within Canada, all levels are competitive with the exception of adult leagues and children’s ringette. All teams apply the same rules, policies and regulations regardless of the calibre of play or the reasons the athletes participate in ringette.

Ringette BC has taken the recommendations from the Competition Review regarding the need for a community-based level of participation. The Club pathway covers every participant and athlete division from FUNdamentals to Masters (30+). It is the Sport for Life pathway that starts at our youngest age groups and continues through into Learn to Train, Train to Train and Active for Life. Teams in this pathway can be co-ed and participants can leave and return to the Community pathway as they move through the system.

5.1 Characteristics that define the Club Division:

1. Fun, friendships, skill development and learning;
2. Season focus is to remain active and healthy;
3. Create teams that are balanced to increase opportunities for meaningful competition;
4. Season is structured to encourage multi-sport participation;
5. Tournaments are an option but not mandatory; and
6. Flexible player pick-up and team formation policies assist with increasing opportunities for participation.

The Club pathway is focused on sport for life, long-term athlete development and stage-appropriate long-term athlete development. Club Associations around the province are able to support community-based teams. “Club” ringette embodies the characteristics of skill development, friendships, to remain healthy and active, and to have fun. Competition is primarily regional; however, teams can travel to tournaments and will be encouraged to participate in a season wrap up event – U12 Year-End Event or Provincial Championship for U14 to 18+. Teams will have some flexibility with their rosters to encourage more teams to attend tournaments and year-end events.

5.2 Team Formation

The Club teams are formed within a local Club Association. Club Associations will form teams that are balanced to increase opportunities for meaningful competition for participants. The community pathway guidelines provide greater flexibility for increased opportunities for participation and to allow teams the ability to attend events that interest them.

Teams will be co-ed and every athlete wishing to participate is to be accommodated. While competition is likely to be primarily regional, teams will compete in regular league play as well as any additional tournaments they choose to attend. The flexible player pick-up rules will make it easier for Club teams to travel and will provide athletes who are keen on additional playing opportunities an avenue for participation.

6. Competitive Athlete Pathway – Zone Representative Division

The Competitive Athlete Pathway includes athletes and teams from U14 to 18+. Players opt into the competitive pathway and can choose to exit the pathway at any stage. As this is a competitive pathway of participation, if athletes are not successful in making a team in their age division, they will be placed on a team in the Community Division. Teams in this “Zone” Division will be female only and male only, with the hope that male only teams will be a reality by 2020¹.

The pathway is introduced at U12 at the League level through an optional (and additional) *Train to Train* Competition Introduction Program for athletes seeking more competitive play and player development.

The goal for the season under this pathway is to compete at the highest level available. Teams from U14 and up will attend in-province tournaments and play weekends. They can also choose to participate in out of province tournaments.

This pathway is designed for athletes who are seeking competitive play and high-performance ringette opportunities. All teams in this pathway will compete at Provincial Championships with a season goal of attending the Western Canadian Ringette Championships for U14 to 18+ and Canadian Ringette Championships for U16 and U19 Select Division teams.

6.1 Principles of the Competitive Pathway

1. Athletes who are seeking to achieve the highest level of competition possible have a clearly defined pathway to achieving their individual goals;
2. The high-performance program is expanded to create more competition and more opportunities for high performance teams to compete against each other;
3. To build a larger competitive athlete pool;
4. Teams are formed with like-skilled players and, as the athlete pool grows, the model can shift to support the changes in registration;
5. Teams are female only and male only;
6. Teams are formed around skill, ability and competitiveness.

A system that provides a clear pathway to help athletes reach their potential is critical for the success of athletes that are seeking to achieve higher levels of competition such as Canadian Ringette Championships, Canada Winter Games or World Ringette Championships.

¹ Male players must double card to a Club team of the appropriate level at the outset, but it is hoped that multiple male only teams can be formed from players across the province to compete in a male division at Western Canadian Ringette Championships in 2020, and that this will positively influence future registrations to ensure meaningful male participation in Comp divisions in future years

6.2 U14 Zone Representative Division

The U14 Zone Representative Division is the first level that is fully integrated into the Competitive pathway. U14 is part of the late *Train to Train* stage of development. Athletes in this age group develop quickly. Teams are formed within zones to increase the opportunity for athletes to participate and to help decrease travel for families. In order to assist with retention of athletes, the U14 Zone Representative division can form multiple zone teams to ensure that there is meaningful competition throughout the province.

Athletes of similar calibre from around the province will compete against each other over the course of the season at designated tournaments. Additional play weekends will be facilitated by Ringette BC to ensure that teams from all regions of the province have access to meaningful competition.

U14 players that are unsuccessful in making a Zone Representative team may be able to participate in a Zone or Club Association-led development program operated at the discretion of the local Zone or Club Association.

6.3 U16 and U19 Zone Representative Divisions

U16 and U19 will have Zone Representative Divisions guided by the same principles as the U14 division. The U16 and U19 Zone teams are in the *Train to Compete* and *Train to Win* stages of LTAD. In the Zone Division, U16 and U19 teams are training towards a season goal of competing at Provincial Championships to represent as Team BC at the Western Canadian Ringette Championships.

U16 and U19 will have a further “Select” Division that is overseen by Ringette BC. U16 and U19 Select athletes are training towards a season goal of representing Team BC at the Canadian Ringette Championships. There may be up to four teams for each of U16 and U19 in this division over time, however it is expected at the outset that there will be one team in the province.

The U16 and U19 Select team(s) will be competing and training to attend the Canadian Ringette Championships. Selected athletes will train within their region, coming together for events similar to the current Canada Winter Games team model. U16 and U19 Select teams will have the opportunity to affiliate players released to the Competitive Zone Teams to provide development opportunities to more athletes while having a roster of athletes to utilize in the event of absences and injuries. Ringette BC will oversee the formation of this team(s), including Coach selection, evaluations, athlete selection and governance. Most athletes participating on a Select team will also be participating in the Pursuit of Excellence Program (see Section 7).

Zone Teams at both levels in U16 and U19 recognize that their season goal is to win Provincial Championships to qualify to compete at the Western Canadian Ringette Championships. The goal is clear and communicated from the start of the season so that all Coaches and parents are of the same understanding. Competition does not end with League play or Provincials, but rather at the final inter-provincial event. Players who are not named to the Select Team(s) will be placed

on a Zone Division team. Players who are not named to a Zone Team will be placed on a Community (Club) team.

6.4 18+ Competitive Division

The 18+ Competitive Division is for 18+ players who continue to seek a high-quality competitive level of play while working towards a season goal of attending Provincial Championships and Western Canadian Ringette Championships. These athletes are part of the Sport for Life pathway but identify as Competitive for Life under LTAD. 18+ Competitive division teams are formed within individual Club Associations. However, registration boundaries do not apply to this division. Athletes have the ability to play wherever they wish to.

7. Pursuit of Excellence

Athletes who are looking to play with Team BC at the Canada Winter Games and any BC athlete who has been identified to participate with Team Canada are part of the Pursuit of Excellence pathway. This pathway is for the truly elite athlete who is working hard to achieve their individual goals. This pathway is built to support those few elite competitors who will go on to achieve the highest level of competition possible in our sport.

7.1 Characteristics of Pursuit of Excellence

1. Participation in the pathway is characterized as daily training environment;
2. Athletes have committed to an elite level program and acknowledge that training is required on a daily basis;
3. While participants train together as a group, there is also an understanding that independent training is required throughout the program;
4. This is a year-round program with defined periodization for training;
5. Athletes in this pathway are in the *Train to Win* stage of LTAD.

Athletes on the Pursuit of Excellence pathway are seeking to achieve specific goals. Ringette BC will support these athletes in achieving their goals by providing them with the support to balance the integration of quality coaching, performance analysis, recovery, time management, fitness training, sport-specific training, nutrition, peer support and other important factors that attribute to an athlete's success.

7.2 Selection of Athletes

Athletes in this pathway have been identified by Ringette BC or have applied through an application program to participate. The primary focus ages for the program are U19 and U30; however, athletes are eligible at U16.

Participants are initially identified for Pursuit of Excellence through the U17 Challenge Cup program; an open event for all athletes in the U17 age group. The Challenge Cup is an avenue to assist with athlete identification and to introduce U17 aged athletes to a quality high performance event and training program experience.

7.3 Team vs. Training Program

The Pursuit of Excellence program is structured to facilitate training for elite level athletes. Athletes in the pathway participate on teams such as the National Ringette League (NRL) team, the Canada Winter Games team or on a Select team training to compete at the Canadian Ringette Championships. Athletes come together to train under the leadership of a Coaching team. The group does not enter competitions; however, they can organize exhibition play with teams of equal or similar calibre.

8. Instructional Stream

An integral part of the Athlete Experience Pathway is the creation of an instructional stream of participation and development. This pathway is for U12 to 18+ aged participants who are new to the sport of ringette and need additional skill development on the fundamentals of ringette prior to or during their enrolment into the Community pathway. This pathway also includes introductory level programming such as Come Try Ringette.

8.1 Characteristics of the Instructional Stream

1. Basic Instruction for new participants who need training on basic or fundamental ringette and/or skating skills;
2. Focus is on skating, passing and shooting and basic ringette rules;
3. Participants are part of a Community Division team and attend the instructional sessions in addition to their assigned team.

8.2 Program Basics

Instructors in the instructional stream are trained in teaching fundamental skills and skill development. Training is provided by Ringette BC, and the sessions are facilitated by Associations or Leagues. This program is designed to help build the confidence and skills of newer players to enable them to better participate and fully engage in the sport. By having skill sessions that target new players, Community Division teams have support in training players. It gives Club Associations the opportunity to offer parents an option to help their child improve more effectively with skilled instructors that focus on specific skills.

9. Conclusion

Change can be difficult. However, the declining trend of female participation in the children and youth divisions cannot be ignored. The decrease in the number of players from U12 to U19 is indicative of problems that need to be addressed immediately. Ringette Canada, Ringette BC and all other provincial ringette organizations across the country are making positive change based on the Ringette Canada Competition Review. The time for change is now.

The number of teams registered in BC under the old and new Competitions models are demonstrated below:

Teams in BC 2018/19:

	AA	A	B
U12	0	6	23
U14	3*	10	16
U16	1	8	9
U19	2	6	5

Improved Structure:

	Elite	Comp	Club
U12	0	0	29
U14	0	7	19
U16	1	7	10
U19	1	5	7

The new model will directly influence player registrations as the sport will be more engaging for more players whether they participate in the “Club” Pathway or the “Comp” Pathway. The focus is on meaningful competition with smaller teams and more flexible rosters to increase athlete engagement.

Under the new model, athletes will be more engaged in the following ways:

At U12:

- formalized, skill-based development with competition introduction to better facilitate athlete development;
- greater alignment with the LTAD framework to increase relevance to athletes;
- motivated players can opt in to additional development opportunities; and
- all players have greater access to meaningful competition.

At U14:

- the new structure provides opportunities for more players to commit to play at the highest level of competition (which should increase the competitive pool at U16/U19 in subsequent years);
- Club team participants now have a pathway to participate in the sport, to travel if desired, and to compete at a level that makes sense to them;
- motivated players can opt in to additional development opportunities; and
- all players have greater access to meaningful competition.

At U16/U19:

- Club-team participants have a pathway to stay in the sport, to travel if desired, and to participate at the level that makes sense to them;
- the new structure provides opportunities for more players to make a commitment to play competitively;
- there are heightened expectations in the competitive stream; and
- all players have greater access to meaningful competition.

Together, the changes create a model that increases the overall calibre of play, that is both athlete and association centric, that allows more kids to play competitively overall and that also increases meaningful competition at the club level while allowing families more choice on the cost of participation. Both the Competitive and Club pathways are scalable and can accommodate a growing number of teams while still providing meaningful competition. The result will be stronger retention and an increase in total registrations over time.

10. APPENDIX 1 – Club Division

10.1. Characteristics

- ⦿ Teams are formed within each Club Association
 - if there are enough players for multiple teams, balanced teams will be made to increase opportunities for meaningful competition
 - Balanced teams are to be created by draft
- ⦿ Teams are built around skill, friendships and age groups
- ⦿ Focus of the season is to remain active and healthy and to have fun
- ⦿ Play remains within your region (i.e. league or district) with minimal required travel. However, teams may travel as much as they wish to
- ⦿ Includes introductory streams for children, youth and adults

10.2. Season Structure

- ⦿ September to March
- ⦿ Teams practice a minimum of once per week
- ⦿ League games are normally played once per week
- ⦿ Travel is primarily within the region
- ⦿ Provincial Championships will be held in the U14, U16, U19 and 18+ divisions
- ⦿ There are no Western Canadian or Canadian Ringette Championships
- ⦿ A Competition (Championship) Style Year-End event will be held in the U12 division
- ⦿ A Jamboree style Year-End event will be held for FUNdamentals and U10
- ⦿ Tournaments are available but are not mandatory; teams only attend if they want to

10.3. Divisions and age groups

Encompasses all age groups from FUNdamentals to Masters (30+)

- ⦿ All participants from FUNdamentals 1 to U12
- ⦿ U14, U16, U19 and 18+ players can choose this stream, or they may be placed in the Community Division during Competitive Division team formation and all Masters programs

10.4. Coaching

All Coaches (Children's Ringette, U10, U12, U14, Masters) – Community Sport Initiation Trained:

- Coach Initiation in Sport, eLearning Module
- Community Sport Initiation Coaching Clinic
- Making Ethical Decisions, Training Module
- Making Ethical Decisions Online Evaluation
- Respect in Sport
- Making Head Way or equivalent Concussion Awareness training

All Coaches (U16, U19, 18+) - Competition Introduction Trained:

- Coach Initiation in Sport, eLearning Module
- Competition Introduction Coaching Clinic
- Making Ethical Decisions, Training Module

- Making Ethical Decisions Online Evaluation
- Respect in Sport
- Making Head Way, or equivalent Concussion Awareness training

10.5. Rules of Competition

The number of games can be adjusted to ensure rules are progressive with development of players.

11. APPENDIX 2 – Zone Representative Division

11.1. Characteristics

- ◎ Players opt into the Competitive pathway. Club Associations should try to accommodate as many players as possible that have opted into the competitive pathway especially at the U14 level (LTAD Stage: *Train to Train*)
 - At the U14 level, every effort should be made to form as many teams as possible within the zones (See Appendix 5 - U14 Competitive Zone Program for more details)
 - If there are enough interested participants to form two viable, competitive teams, balanced rosters will be created by draft
 - At 18+, efforts should be made to include as many players as possible, but releases can be made to the Community Division to form competitive teams
- ◎ Team Formation: Teams are built around skill, ability, competitiveness
 - U14 to U19: Zone-based (usually two or more Club Associations)
 - U16 and U19: Select (Ringette BC)
 - 18+: Club Association
- ◎ All zone representative teams will participate in the Provincial Championships for their division and caliber of play
- ◎ Focus of the season is to qualify for high profile tournaments within each age group and division
 - U14 Zone - Provincial Championships, Western Canadian Ringette Championships
 - U16 Zone – Provincial Championships, Western Canadian Ringette Championships
 - U16 Select – Canadian Ringette Championships
 - U19 Zone – Provincial Championships, Western Canadian Ringette Championships
 - U19 Select –Canadian Ringette Championships
 - 18+ Competitive- Provincial Championships, Western Canadian Ringette Championships

11.2. Season Structure

- ◎ September to March (Competitive teams U14, U16, U19, 18+) and September to April (Select level teams)
- ◎ Teams train two to three times per week. Training includes on-ice practice and off-ice training
- ◎ Compete in League or Zone games an average of once a week
- ◎ Tournaments (intra and inter-provincial) are available throughout the season in addition to Provincial, Western and Canadian Ringette Championships

11.3. Divisions and age groups

Entry level is U14, Focus is U16 to U19

11.4. Coaching

Head Coaches (All Divisions), Assistant Coaches (U14, U16, U19 Comp Zone teams, U16 & U19 Selects, and 18+ Comp) – Competition Introduction Certified:

- Coach Initiation in Sport, eLearning Module
- Competition Introduction Coaching Clinic
- Making Ethical Decisions, Training Module
- Making Ethical Decisions Online Evaluation
- Competition Introduction Evaluation

- Respect in Sport
- Making Head Way, or equivalent Concussion Awareness training

11.5. Rules of Competition

Games follow Ringette Canada rules, and roster guidelines for the Western Canadian Ringette Championships and Canadian Ringette Championships.

12. APPENDIX 3 – Pursuit of Excellence Program

12.1. Characteristics

- ⦿ Eligible athletes are U16 age and wishing to participate on BC Winter Games, Canada Winter Games or National Ringette League teams
- ⦿ Participation is characterized as a **Daily Training Environment**
 - A Daily Training Environment provides athletes with the resources and knowledge to reach their full potential
 - It is a commitment to being an elite-level athlete, by acknowledging that every day matters when you are “in training”
 - Provides athletes with the support to balance the integration of coaching, performance analysis, recovery, time management, fitness training, sport specific training, nutrition, peer support, and other important factors that attribute to an athlete’s success
 - Resources made available to the athletes to utilize throughout the season as they participate on their respective Competitive Division teams
 - Deadlines and expectations of participation will be presented
- ⦿ Participants will train together as a group
 - in person or via team tracking app
 - during Training weekends with developmental opportunities such as with sport psychologists, nutritionists, etc.
- ⦿ Program will be run by a Program Director
 - this individual is not a coach
 - this should be a paid position
 - responsible for coordinating weekly communication and development with athletes as well as planning training weekends
- ⦿ Coaches running training sessions will be selected by Ringette BC
- ⦿ Where participation numbers allow, smaller squads will be formed for game play at training weekends
- ⦿ All athletes participating in the Pursuit of Excellence program will be eligible to be registered with and benefit from the enhanced services of the Canadian Sport Institute targeted athletes list
- ⦿ Ringette BC will nominate Pursuit of Excellence athletes for Ringette Canada Training Events
- ⦿ Number of positions in program will depend on amount of funding available

12.2. Identification

- ⦿ Players become eligible at U16
- ⦿ Players are invited by Ringette BC and could be nominated by a Coach, identified from BC Winter Games participation groups or self-identified
- ⦿ All athletes must go through an application process
 - Application Process will include:
 - Application Form
 - Letter from Athlete
 - Two Letters of Reference: one from a Ringette Coach, one from a teacher, community leader etc.
 - Interview

- Selected athletes will need to sign a contract
 - Will include a community service component

12.3. Season Structure

- ⦿ Players in this training program should be actively training all year
- ⦿ Season is divided into areas of periodization such as off-season training, pre-season training, in-season training, competition, etc.
- ⦿ Training will change depending on the time of the season
- ⦿ Athletes should be encouraged to participate in off-season sports to assist with cross training

12.4. Divisions and age groups

- ⦿ Entry level U16, Focus is U19 to U30

12.5. Coaching

- ⦿ Minimum standards will require coaches be Competition – Development Trained

12.6. Rules of Competition

- ⦿ No formal competition within program – athletes are participating on their respective Competitive Division teams while committing to the Daily Training Environment of the Pursuit of Excellence Program
- ⦿ If athletes participate in Competition, they will adhere to current Ringette Canada Rules

13. APPENDIX 4 – Instructional Program

13.1. Characteristics

- ⦿ Stand-alone program or in conjunction with registered Community Division teams
 - New players can choose the Instructional Sessions only or register with a Community Division team and participate in the Instructional Program as supplemental ice sessions
- ⦿ Opportunity for newer players to get more basic skill instruction from U12 and up, either during regularly scheduled Club team practices with a dedicated instructor, or at a dedicated ice time
- ⦿ Administrated at the League or Club level (can be done in multiple locations)
- ⦿ One to four ice times per month depending on ice and instructor availability
- ⦿ Basic Skill Instruction
 - Skating, shooting, passing/receiving, basic rules
- ⦿ Sample Structure
 - First 30 minutes – skating instruction
 - Split group into like-skilled groups
 - Remaining 30 to 60 minutes – skills stations
 - Offer stations that work on specific skills
 - Players can rotate to the stations they feel they need to work on and get low ratio instruction time

13.2. Season Structure

- ⦿ September to January

13.3. Divisions and age groups

- ⦿ Encompasses all age groups from U12 to 18+

13.4. Coaching

- ⦿ An instructional stream of Coaching will be developed for this program

14. APPENDIX 5 – U14 Zone Representative Division

The U14 Zone Representative Division is a Ringette BC led initiative that replaces the current U14A and U14AA program at the regional levels.

- ⦿ This Division will begin in September and end in March following Western Canadian Ringette Championships.
- ⦿ Teams will be run and supervised by the leagues and associations, with oversight from Ringette BC
- ⦿ Division guidelines will be distributed ahead of the registration deadline that outline
 - Time commitment
 - Required travel
 - General program expectations
- ⦿ A Coach Selection Committee with representation from the zone Associations, League and Ringette BC will select the Coaches for the U14 Zone Division before July 1st
 - Coaches will represent the zone of the team they are coaching
- ⦿ Athletes will express their interest to participate in the U14 Zone Division
 - All eligible athletes are welcome to attend selection camps
 - Registration completed at the Club-Association level
 - Evaluations conducted by the League, with assistance from the Associations
- ⦿ Teams will be formed by zone (depending on registration numbers)
 - Zones can be adjusted annually when taking into consideration registration numbers, coaching, ice availability, and ability to ensure meaningful competition
 - Players that do not make the Zone team will play in the Community Division with their local Club association
- ⦿ Selection Camps will be held in each zone in September
 - Rosters to be declared to Ringette BC by September 5th
 - Rosters will not exceed 13 players per team
- ⦿ The U14 Zone teams will participate in:
 - League play within their region against other U14 Competitive Zone Teams
 - One designated U14 Competitive Zone Tournament in each of the Leagues hosting teams in this division
 - U14 Zone Representative Division Provincial Championships – February/March
 - Western Canadian Ringette Championships - March
 - Number of teams sent to Westerns will depend on wildcards allocated each year
 - Minimum of 2 teams will attend. Top teams at U14 Competitive Provincial Championships
- ⦿ The U14 Zone teams can opt to participate in out of province tournaments such as the Edmonton Woods or Calgary Golden Ring tournaments
- ⦿ The number of U14 Zone teams formed will be outlined using the table below

Number of athletes at Selection Camp	Minimum Number of Teams	Roster Sizes
11-35	1	11-13
36-50	2	11-13
51-69	3	11-13
70+	4	11-13

15. Appendix 6 - U12 Competition Introduction Program

The U12 *Train to Train* Competition Introduction Program is a regional program run by leagues, under the guidance of Ringette BC.

- ⦿ This program will begin by early November and end in February at the Pacific Ring Tournament or another annual wrap up tournament.
- ⦿ Teams will be formed regionally and run by the leagues following the guidelines set by Ringette BC
- ⦿ Ringette BC will participate in the selection panel for all coaches in the U12 *Train to Train* Competition Introduction Program
- ⦿ Athletes can join the program until December 31st of the current playing year
- ⦿ All interested athletes will be permitted to participate in the program
- ⦿ This program is focused on:
 - Skill Development: Skating and Ringette Skills
 - Introduction to the Competitive Athlete Pathway
- ⦿ Ice times will be primarily focused on skill development, with the option to add exhibition play
- ⦿ Participants will be split into balanced squads, based on player ordinals, within their region to attend the Pacific Ring Tournament
- ⦿ Leagues are encouraged to make as many, small squads as possible to provide optimal playing time for each participant
 - Rosters should be no smaller than 9 and no larger than 14 ***groups of 15, 16 or 17 are permitted if they are the sum of all registrants***
 - For example, the minimum number of teams to form with 30 participants is 2, but leagues could form 3 teams of 10

Number of athletes at in program	Minimum Number of Squads	Roster Sizes
11-17	1	11-17
18-30	2	9-15
31-45	3	9-15
45+	4	9-15

16. Appendix 7 - U17 Challenge Cup

An open participation tournament for U17-aged athletes to bridge the gap between BC Winter Games and Canada Winter Games.

- ⦿ The U17 Challenge Cup will be held each year during the off-season (May/June)
- ⦿ All age-eligible athletes participating in the Zone Division can register
 - Participants who have played in the Community Division, but are intending to evaluate for the Zone Division in the upcoming season are welcome to attend
- ⦿ Ringette BC will coordinate all travel and accommodations
- ⦿ Registration will be the same for all participants (ie. Cost share)
- ⦿ Participants will be drafted to create balanced rosters
 - Rosters will comprise athletes from across the province
- ⦿ The Challenge Cup will take place at a training facility that includes accommodations and training facilities (ie. Fortius Sport and Health in Burnaby)
 - Sessions on Fitness Training, Nutrition, Mental Training etc. will be included
 - Athletes will be required to stay at the facility for the duration of the event
 - Parents are welcome to watch the ice times, but are not permitted in additional sessions
- ⦿ Coaches can be nominated or they can apply to coach at the U17 Challenge Cup
 - Coaches must be Competition Introduction Certified
- ⦿ Referees will be selected to officiate who are training to attend the Western Canadian Ringette Championships and Canadian Ringette Championships