



Speed Skate Nova Scotia

Strategic Plan 2013-2015



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Speed Skate Nova Scotia

Strategic Plan 2013-2015

Introduction

Speed Skate Nova Scotia has been presented with unique opportunities following the 2011 Halifax Canada Winter Games, with its legacies of equipment, athlete and volunteer development, and the outstanding Emera Oval on the Halifax Common. Speed Skating Canada sees the Emera Oval as a world class facility that could host international events up to the World Junior level. This facility presents the type of training opportunities that can enable Nova Scotia to develop elite speed skating athletes, at the same time as it enables the re-establishment of skating as a leading winter sport for the general public in the province.

Prior to the 2011 Games, the sport of speed skating in Nova Scotia had limited numbers of participants and no long track component at all. The challenge for the planning period is to focus the limited existing infrastructure on the development activities that will result in the most sustainable growth for the sport.

Mission, Vision, and Values

This plan is developed to assist us in fulfilling our mission in accordance with our values, in order to achieve our vision.

Our Mission

The mission of Speed Skate Nova Scotia is to promote, develop and govern the sport of speed skating in Nova Scotia.

Our Core Values

We will act in accordance with the following core values in fulfilling our mission.

Accessibility and inclusiveness

We believe that skating is an iconic Canadian experience that should be accessible to all Nova Scotia residents regardless of their personal circumstances.

Excellence

We will strive for excellence of athletic activity, coaching, officiating and administration in order to provide our members with the opportunity to fulfil their personal potential in the sport.

Respect

We will act with respect in all of our dealings, and will seek to instil in our membership respect for themselves, for others, for rules and regulations, for equipment and facilities, and for the privileges and opportunities they are offered.

Fairness and integrity

We will provide fair and equitable training and competitive experiences, and will act with integrity in all of our dealings.

Health and safety

Training and competition practices must protect skaters from injury, and be designed to ensure their long term health and well-being.

Fun

Participants in speed skating should experience the joy of sport.

Giving back

As we are supported by our communities, so will we also give back in ways that strengthen and support the well-being of those communities.

Our Vision

Speed skating will become an accessible winter sport for all Nova Scotians, and a full and rewarding option for Nova Scotians with aspirations to an athletic career.

Strategic Priorities

In order to achieve our mission and vision, we have established the following strategic priorities for the planning period:

1. Strengthen the core infrastructure supporting the sport
2. Develop strong grassroots organizations and increase overall participation in the sport
3. Develop elite athletes achieving success at the national level
4. Host high level competitions to develop hosting expertise

The strategic priorities are outlined below, with detailed plans in Appendices 1 to 4.

Strategy 1:

Strengthen the core infrastructure supporting the sport

Because of the small number of participants in the sport prior to the 2011 Games, the supporting infrastructure was minimal. This level of infrastructure would have been sufficient to respond to the normal level of increased interest in the sport following an event like the Games. However, the unanticipated response of the HRM community, resulting in the establishment of the permanent Emera Oval, presented opportunities far beyond anything anticipated prior to the Games. To be able to respond to these opportunities, the core infrastructure supporting the sport needs to be strengthened in the following areas:

- Governance
- Funding
- Coaching

- Officials
- Communication and promotion

Strategy 2:

Develop strong grassroots organizations and increase overall participation in the sport

The speed skating club is the fundamental grassroots component of the sport of speed skating. These organizations recruit and develop entry level to elite athletes, and deliver recreational speed skating programs. Clubs organize competitions, and develop coaches and officials for the sport.

Of the current six clubs in Nova Scotia, only two existed prior to the 2011 Games. The four new clubs are still in the process of initial development, and need support to ensure that they have the skill and resources to ensure their continuing success, and that they are able to contribute to the overall development of the sport in the province.

There are several areas of the province with good potential for the development of speed skating clubs, but outreach efforts will be needed to assess and respond to the interest in speed skating in these areas.

In addition, more effort is needed to ensure that we respond to the interest in speed skating on the Emera Oval.

Strategy 3:

Develop elite athletes achieving success at the national level

Following the Vancouver Olympics in 2010, and the 2011 Halifax Canada Winter Games, interest in speed skating reached an all-time high in the province. At the provincial level, it is important that the sport develop and support its own high-performance component, one that captures the hearts and minds of the public, inspiring new skaters and helping to ensure the sport's ongoing development and success.

Speed Skating Canada and the Canadian Sport Centre Atlantic demonstrated their belief in the potential of the athletes in the Atlantic Region to reach the elite level by hiring a Long Track Coach and Regional Development Mentor, based in Halifax and operating out of the Canada Games Centre and the Emera Oval. Nova Scotia athletes have already achieved strong results at the national level as a result of this Atlantic Long Track Program initiative.

To maintain this program, a concerted effort to recruit and develop additional high performance athletes is required.

Strategy 4:

Host high level competitions to develop hosting expertise

A further priority in the development of the sport in the region is the pursuit of competition hosting opportunities at the national and international level. Undertaking a bid for an international event will not be possible until the permanent building at the oval has been constructed. However, to be ready to bid on such events once that facility is available, work needs to begin now on the development of hosting expertise and resources.

Development of hosting expertise requires experience in hosting competitions at lower levels.

The resources required to host these competitions include the permanent building on the site, which will be constructed by the Halifax Regional Municipality. A significant additional requirement is safety padding that meets Speed Skating Canada's technical specifications, and which is designed for the rigours of outdoor use.

Summary

The 2013-2015 planning period is a critical one for the development of the sport of speed skating in Nova Scotia. Public interest in the sport has increased, and a sustained effort will be needed to retain the people who have become involved in the sport, and to continue to recruit new participants. Speed Skating Canada and the Canadian Sport Centre Atlantic have invested in a long track coach and regional development mentor based in Halifax, and will be evaluating the success of that investment after the initial three year commitment that has been completed. The Halifax Regional Municipality will be building permanent facilities at the Emera Oval, and when those are completed, the facility will be ready for the hosting of national and international events. Speed Skate Nova Scotia will need to ensure that the sport is prepared to step up to that challenge with the necessary organizations, officials, coaches, volunteers, equipment and funding. At the same time, we need to ensure that our athletes are developing and growing so that they can be a part of that future vision of the sport, and that we continue to provide broad opportunities for Nova Scotians to enjoy speed skating as an accessible winter sport. Without a strong established base of infrastructure already in place, SSNS is faced with continuing rapid growth and a steep learning curve for everyone involved.

These strategic priorities are designed to ensure that our very limited and highly stretched resources are applied to the most critical areas to support that growth and ensure the future success of the sport in the province.

Appendix 1: Detailed plans for the strengthening of core infrastructure

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame
1. Governance		
1.1. Update the Memorandum of Association and By-Laws of the association in line with current practices at the Registry of Joint Stocks.	Board of Directors	Prior to spring 2014 AGM
1.2. Update the Board structure to align Officer and Director responsibilities with the current directions of the organization, and to establish committees for higher workload responsibilities.		
1.3. Recruit new board members to fill vacant positions.		
1.4. Arrange for staff support of Board.		
2. Funding		
2.1. Establish a more robust budgeting process that will match funding allocations to strategic priorities.	Finance Committee	Fall 2013 / Winter 2014
2.2. Establish responsibilities for identifying and pursuing grant funding opportunities.		Prior to spring 2014 AGM
2.3. Develop partnerships with funding sponsors.		2014/2015 fiscal year
3. Coaches		
3.1. Continue recruitment of new coaches from the ranks of former speed skaters who have been attracted back to the sport by the Emera Oval.	Coaches and organizers of activities on the oval	Ongoing
3.2. Schedule regular coaching clinics to formalize the training of the new coaches.	Coaching Committee	2013-2014 season
3.3. Develop a formal training program to bring at least one male and one female coach up to Level 3 in time for the 2015 Canada Winter Games.	2015 Canada Winter Games Committee	Fall 2013
4. Officials		
4.1. Update the current list of officials to identify those who wish to continue to work as officials in the sport.	Officials Committee	2013-2014
4.2. Identify gaps in the current availability of officials to work in different roles, and the future needs for officials at higher levels for hosting national and international events.	Officials Committee	2013-2014

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame
4.3. Look at the example of the paddling community to determine whether rotational assignments of officials will result in the development of stronger and more versatile officials.	Officials Committee	2013-2014
4.4. Recruit additional officials and provide entry-level training clinics.	Clubs	Ongoing
4.5. Develop officials for higher level events.	Clubs	2014-2015
5. Communication and promotion		
5.1. Complete the development of the new Speed Skate Nova Scotia website, including development of sub-sites for the clubs without the resources to develop and maintain their own websites.	Board of Directors	Fall 2013
5.2. Develop promotional materials for distribution at speed skating demonstration events and events with high public participation such as the Skate the Common Marathon, and for distribution through the skate rental trailer at the Emera Oval and at arenas with public skating times.		

Appendix 2: Detailed plans for the development of strong grassroots organizations and increasing overall participation in the sport

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame
1. Club Development		
1.1. Work with Sport Nova Scotia's Community Sport Development Coordinators to initiate the development of new clubs around the province.	Club and Membership Development Committee	Ongoing
1.2. Ensure that new clubs are oriented to the organization of the sport, that they have assistance in identifying and obtaining start up funding, and that their boards, coaches, officials and volunteers are given appropriate development opportunities.		
2. Speed skating demonstration events		
2.1. Schedule regular speed skating demonstration events around the province to extend the reach of the sport.	Club and Membership Development Committee	Ongoing
2.2. Increase the inventory of demonstration skates so that participants in demonstration events can try speed skates at the events.		Fall 2013
3. Inclusiveness		
3.1. Support the Speedy Kids Oval Program's free speed skating programs for underserved groups by providing free SSC/SSNS registration of participants.	Board of Directors	2013
3.2. Expand the partnership with sledge hockey teams and the IWK/Easter Seals learn to sledge program, by continuing to include sledge racing in the marathon events at the oval, and by adding sledge racing to sprint events on the oval and providing shared practice time on the oval.	Nova Scotia Masters Speed Skating Club	2013-2014
4. Community racing		
4.1. Continue to host the Skate the Common Marathon as a major community event, with an 'any type of skate' format that encourages non-speed skaters to try racing on skates.	Nova Scotia Masters Speed Skating Club	Ongoing
4.2. Acquire timing chips and additional software for the chip timing system to ensure that the sport is self-sufficient in hosting marathon-style events.	Nova Scotia Masters Speed Skating Club	2013-2015

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame
4.3. Establish an informal racing program on Sunday mornings, open to all comers, on any type of skates.	Clubs in the HRM	2013-2014 season
4.4. Establish varsity racing programs in partnership with the schools, also with an 'any type of skates' format.	Clubs in the HRM	2014-2015 season
5. School programs		
5.1. Contact teachers in school-based physical education programs to incorporate speed skating into their programming.	Club and Membership Development Committee	2014-2015
5.2. Incorporate speed skating components into some of the school skating times on the oval.		
6. Continue to attract and retain new speed skaters on the oval		
6.1. Acquire a small inventory of speed skates to be available through the HRM free skate rental program for people who would like to try speed skates during public speed skating times.	Club and Membership Development Committee	Fall 2013
6.2. Continue to provide free Learn to Speed Skate sessions on the oval.	Halifax Regional Speed Skating Club	Ongoing
6.3. Establish a masters speed skating club for adult speed skaters at the oval, to complement the activities of the Speedy Kids Oval Program; to engage these skaters more fully in the sport, developing them as athletes, coaches, officials, organizers and volunteers; and to build a consistent speed skating presence at the oval during speed skating ice time.	Nova Scotia Masters Speed Skating Club	Fall 2013
6.4. Develop and post promotional materials at the oval so that people who are curious about speed skating get the information they need to begin to get involved in the sport.	Board of Directors	Fall 2013

Appendix 3: Detailed plans for the development of elite athletes achieving success at the national level

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame
1. Recruitment 1.1. Develop a program for the recruitment of athletes with strong skating skills at the Training to Train and Learning to Compete stage.	Board of Directors in collaboration with the Long Track Coach and Regional Development Mentor	2013-2015
2. Training 2.1. Qualify a full complement of male and female athletes for recruitment into the Atlantic Long Track Program.	Clubs in collaboration with the Long Track Coach and Regional Development Mentor	2013-2015
3. Development 3.1. Send a full team of athletes to the Canada East Short Track Championships every year. 3.2. Send a full team of athletes to the Canadian Age-Class Long Track Championships every year. 3.3. Have athletes qualify for short track and long track Canada Cups every year. 3.4. Send full teams of athletes for both short track and long track to the 2015 Canada Winter Games.	Clubs in collaboration with the Long Track Coach and Regional Development Mentor	2013-2015

Appendix 4: Detailed plans for the hosting of high level competitions to develop hosting expertise

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame
1. Facilities		
1.1. Provide input to the Halifax Regional Municipality to ensure that the permanent facilities on the oval will be suited to the hosting of high-level international competitions.	Competitions Committee	2013-2014
1.2. Provide input into the HRM process for the building of new rinks on the Halifax peninsula in order to have one pad constructed with international-sized ice surface, space for spectator viewing of competitions, and storage facilities for safety padding.		
2. Hosting organization		
2.1. Continue to host one regional or one national short track competition per annum in the HRM.	Halifax Regional Speed Skating Club	Ongoing
2.2. Continue to host the annual Atlantic Long Track Championships on the Emera Oval.	Clubs in the HRM	
2.3. Continue to host the annual Skate the Common Marathon on the Emera Oval.	Nova Scotia Masters Speed Skating Club	
2.4. Encourage the smaller clubs outside the HRM to host entry-level competitions to develop organizing and officiating skills.	Clubs outside the HRM	
3. Protective padding		
3.1. Obtain additional short track safety padding in the HRM to reduce the cost of running high level competitions, and the disruption to club programming outside the HRM when pads have to be shipped to the HRM.	Nova Scotia Masters Speed Skating Club	2013-2014
3.2. Work with the Halifax Regional Municipality to identify safety padding needs for the Emera Oval and develop funding solutions.	Competitions Committee	2013-2015
4. Equipment		
4.1. Obtain timing chips and additional software for the MyLaps chip timing system at the Emera Oval, to reduce costs of hosting the marathon, and to enable the use of the timing system on an ongoing basis through the season for training and longer distance	Nova Scotia Masters Speed Skating Club	2013-2015

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame
racing on the oval. 4.2. Obtain additional components for the FinishLynx electronic timing system to allow it to be used for long track racing on the Emera Oval.	Competitions Committee	2014-2015