

Gloucester Concordes Reorganize

Using LTPAD as a Guide

The Core Values of Long Term Athlete Development

- *Long-term athlete development is anchored in the belief that each child, player and athlete is different, with individual needs and rates of development.*
- *Long-term athlete development provides a framework for planning and decision-making on athlete development, NOT a rigid template.*
- *Long-term athlete development is concerned with the holistic development of children, players and athletes.*
- *Long-term athlete development stages overlap and are unique to each individual.*
- *Long-term athlete development recognizes the significance of transitions in the development of children, players and athletes.*
- *Long-term athlete development recognizes that the accumulation of deliberate practice and training age is linear and that the development of key capacities is non-linear and individualized.*

The 2011-12 season started with changes for coaches and skaters of the Gloucester Concordes. The club executive took a bold decision to revamp programs using the LTPAD documents produced by SSC. Under the leadership of David Morrison, yearly plans were developed for each of the skating sessions. Coaches will develop weekly plans that fit into David's yearly plans. The coaches met early in the fall to discuss how best to accomplish goals under the new structure.

FUNDamentals (6-9 years)

Participants have one hour of skating a week. The key for this group is that basic sports skills are learned and participation in many sports strongly supported. The emphasis is learning the basic speed skating position, how to start, how to push and how to turn. Skaters should learn how to perform the skills in all directions, skating forwards and backwards, as well as turning clockwise and counter clockwise.

Skaters are encouraged to participate regularly in races held during practice time, and occasionally in local competitions. The practical objective is to get a feel for racing and competition. The main objective is to have FUN. The results of these competitions have absolutely no bearing on the skater's long term potential.

The Gloucester executive has planned a 3-hour mini meet every 6 weeks from Sept-March. The evening involves introduction to basic racing, skill-based events

(both individual and team). The club wishes to foster an understanding and appreciation of the speed skating environment including basic rules and ethical standards and ensure equipment is comfortable and fits properly. These competitions allow experienced club officials, parents and athletes to be on site to help new members “learn the ropes”. The Comp A skaters and experienced parents become team building coaches, officials, etc. The evening ends with food prepared by the parents. A non-perishable food donation to a local food bank constitutes the entry fee thus bringing skater involvement into the community and making a connection with our TRUE SPORT goals.

LEARNING TO TRAIN (8-12 years) / TRAINING TO TRAIN (11-16)

All participants have two sessions a week where they are kept active learning skills that they can use at regional competitions. Practices are meant to be fun and encourage the feeling of being part of a team. The senior skaters in this group have an extra hour of skating with the Training to Compete skaters for technical work only. T2C skaters have a chance to show leadership during this session as well as getting an extra hour of technical ice per week. Some of the participants who started late in speed skating and are not as skilled as other participants should not be concerned for they will rapidly catch up to skaters who have been skating for several years.

During this stage, coaches will focus:

- On having fun while developing general and sport specific skills.
- On developing and refining speed skating technique integrating agility, balance, and coordination. This is the optimal window of trainability for sport specific skills. The focus should be on skill development and not training volumes (eg. laps) and should include both games and skill drills.
- On developing endurance through games and on ice activities such as relays and obstacle courses.
- Begin to set goals when competing. At this stage, the goals should be achievable and should be process versus outcome oriented.
- On improving personal best times and experimenting with different race tactics during competitions.
- On participating in multiple sports throughout the year.
- On trying both short track and long track speed skating

TRAINING TO TRAIN (11-16) / TRAINING TO COMPETE (15-23)

All participants are skating three times a week with the club and have the opportunity to do interclub and dry-land training sessions. The recommendation is that skaters have 5-7 sessions each week (includes off ice sessions). These athletes are training to compete provincially and nationally. They are committed to one sport in most cases. There is a significant period of change for all

participants physically, psychologically and emotionally. Windows of optimal trainability for Strength, Speed and Stamina occur during this stage.

During this stage, coaches will focus:

- On training, as the physical foundation for physical development is laid here. Over competing will result in the windows of optimal trainability being missed.
- Participants will continue to develop and make adjustments to their speed skating technique as their physical strength and speed increases.
- Participants will be increasingly introduced to racing tactics and strategies.
- On the development of physical capacity and racing skills.
- On counting training volume, so that skaters do not over-train. Rest and recovery is an essential part of training. In the "Training to Train" and "Training to Compete" group it is important that there is:
 - Good communication between coaches, parents and participants is critical. Coaches in all sports, as well as teachers at school need to be informed of a participant's various activities so that they can monitor fatigue and provide proper recovery time.
 - That the social element of sport be maintained. When too much emphasis is placed on competition, participants often lose interest and will quit sport all together.
 - Participants may experience pressure from friends, family, coaches to specialize in a given discipline of speed skating, choose a sport, or reduce sport activities to focus on school during this stage. It is okay to specialize towards the end of this stage, however it is not necessary.