



Project Excel is a national initiative focused on accelerating the performance of Canada's high performance ski racers.

ACCELERATING PERFORMANCE

The primary focus of Project Excel is on racers, who are within the high performance pathway and graduated through U21, but outside of the Canadian Alpine Ski Team.

While Project Excel is lead by ACA, its strength comes from the strong collaboration and expert guidance provided by the Provincial Ski Associations. As such, the Project Excel Working Group is comprised of technical experts from across the country including both the National Ski Team and National Ski Cross Team. This Working Group has been formalized and will continue to generate new ideas, develop action plans, and consult with coaches and technical leaders from across the country moving forward.

The 2023/24 Project Excel Action Plan has four focus areas:

FOCUS AREA

Use national benchmark standards to guide athlete development.

1

FOCUS AREA

Identify competitions where athletes can develop and be tested.

2

FOCUS AREA

Implement gap-analysis with PTSOs/clubs to drive continuous improvement.

3

FOCUS AREA

Identify creative solutions, programs, and partnerships for athletes on podium pathway.

4

The Project Excel Interval Report will be published periodically to report on activities, outcomes and milestone achievements of the Project Excel Working Group.

ACTION PLAN ITEMS UPDATE

1

Increase the opportunity of our top athletes to enhance their FIS ranking by running a FIS race series in spring of 2024 that includes CAST members.

STATUS

ON TRACK

Benefits

1. Provide a domestic, low penalty event, spring and/or fall, that includes members of the CAST and all HP athletes identified on our performance pathway.
2. Provide a head-to-head competitive race for our top Canadians
3. Will lower our athletes' points in the system which will improve their start position at upcoming events

Current Activities

- a. Confirming dates for spring Project Excel camp for U16 and U21.
- b. Confirming potential FIS spring race series.
- c. Considering integrating a coach professional development opportunity into project.
- d. Working to confirm CAST participation and associated schedule and budget.



The 2023/24 Project Excel Action Plan consists of eight key recommendations.

ACTION PLAN ITEMS UPDATE *cont.*

2	Establish a full-time program to service our best athletes who are on the podium pathway but outside of CAST.	STATUS ON TRACK
	Benefits <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Centralize our top athletes into one program/team.2. Respond precisely to the needs of athletes at this level.3. Prepare this group for the demands of skiing at World Cup level.4. Re-focus PTSO's time and resources on athletes further down the development pathway.	Current Activities <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Finalizing draft business plan (inclusive of associated budget) to be presented to ACA & PTSOs – by end of Jan/24b. Partner Go / No Go decision – by Feb/24c. Pending decision, will establish athlete selection process and seasonal plan by March/24.
3	Accelerate the development of our best-performing athletes who are just outside of the CAST, by providing access to WC races.	STATUS ON TRACK
	Benefits <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide high quality training opportunities during the preparation phase.2. Assist HP athletes measure themselves against World Cup groups.3. Provides increased motivation and confidence to those athletes who have a chance of winning a title at NorAms.	Current Activities <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Finalizing athlete identification guidelines.b. Identification and coordination of WC starts at Levi, Killington, and Mont Tremblant.c. Debriefing identified athletes who attended the Mont Tremblant WC event for lessons learned.d. Actively communicating with CAST and top provincial coaches to identify other potential athletes – ongoing
4	Improve the competitive readiness of U14/U16 racers by piloting and analyzing the benefits / limitations of using randomized start order.	STATUS ON TRACK
	Benefits <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Develop stronger and more well-rounded FIS-ready athletes by developing key skills and competencies needed when they graduate to FIS.2. Educating our top HP athletes to what the next step will be like – start positions, snow conditions, which affects technique and their mental approach to high-performance racing.	Current Activities <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Project Excel "White Paper" outlining concept completed and circulated to key stakeholders for review.b. BC, Alberta Ontario and Quebec have finalized plans on how they will pilot different structures of RSO for the 2023/24 season.c. Structure for ACA U16 Regional Championship seeding has been established.d. Developing the process to collect data and analysis results at end of season (to be completed).
5	Implement a national recognition program that targets our top junior athletes, and which provides access to equipment suppliers plus other benefits.	STATUS ON TRACK
	Benefits <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provides national recognition and motivation to those athletes that are achieving performance standards.2. Provides performance support such as equipment and resources (ex: levels the playing field with our competitors by providing "World Cup Stock" race equipment to our racers).3. Assists our non-national team athletes in accessing Government funding (carding) when they qualify.	Current Activities <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Updating performance data to revise Performance curves – completed by end of Jan/24b. Based on updated performance curve data, create draft recognition standards – by end of Feb/24c. Liaise with suppliers to ensure alignment on recognition criteria – by early March/24d. Develop program outline (including policies) – by end of March/24e. Manage contacts to ensure athletes are receiving needed equipment - Spring 2024 onward



**THE PROJECT EXCEL
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ACTION PLAN ITEMS UPDATE *cont.*

6 Leverage NorAm competition opportunities through increased communication and planning with NorAm, CAST and PTSO Coaches. STATUS | **ON TRACK**

Benefits

1. Enhances the opportunity to get collaborative speed training in advance of fall NorAms.
2. Optimizes the chance of winning NorAm titles.
3. Helps to lower the points in the system.

Current Activities

- a. Excel Project organized at Panorama for World Junior long-list athletes – Nov/23
- b. Training space secured at Copper Mtn for speed training in advance of NorAm speed events – Dec/23
- c. Proactive outreach to all World Junior long-list athletes, regardless of program location, to enhance and increase communication and awareness of opportunities within Canada - ongoing

7 Align our developmental system through improved communication of performance / fitness and skills progression data by age group to broader racing community. STATUS | **TO BE STARTED**

Benefits

1. The adoption of national targets/goals in key performance and skill areas will help to standardize how our coaches coach, as well as establish the right expectations for athletes and their parents.
2. Provide an alternative method to identify our top athletes - U14 and up – rather than relying solely on our national point system.

Current Activities -

To be initiated following 2023/24 ski season

- a. Collecting, organizing, and data mining existing data.
- b. Contracting a graphic designer to create a simple, clear and concise method for sharing information to ski community – by June/24
- c. Launch initiative by end of August/24

8 Become the world's fittest ski nation by relaunching the ACA fitness combine ensuring CAST, IST, and PTSO teams are aligned around how it is applied to different athletes. STATUS | **ON TRACK**

Benefits

1. Improved performance by raising the physical fitness of our top athletes.
2. Alignment amongst CAST and PTSOs regarding the implementation of a fitness combine for national and provincial athletes on the podium pathway.
3. Provides the foundation to ACA re-branding efforts as "the world's fittest racers".

Current Activities

- a. Sharing existing ACA Fitness Combine with CAST S&C experts for feedback – by Jan/24
- b. Updating ACA Fitness Combine - by May/24
- c. Relying on ACA Fitness Combine scores for athlete inclusion in 2024 Excel Projects – beginning in July/24
- d. Inserting ACA Fitness Combine into all Canadian HP programs (CAST / PTSOs / Clubs) – by Sept/24

WHAT'S COMING UP

- The dates for the spring FIS race series (inclusive of CAST athletes) to be finalized by the end of January. The proposed venue is Sun Peaks.
- The Project Excel Working Group will initiate the 2024/25 planning cycle next month.
- A Town Hall event to solicit feedback on the 2024/25 plan from key stakeholders is being considered to take place during the FIS race series at Sun Peaks. This will provide an opportunity for those in attendance to offer direct feedback on Project Excel action plans.
- Those not able to attend will be provided with an opportunity to provide feedback through other forums.