



PROJECT EXCEL

ACTION PLAN

Update – December 2023



PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT & BACKGROUND OF THE PEWG



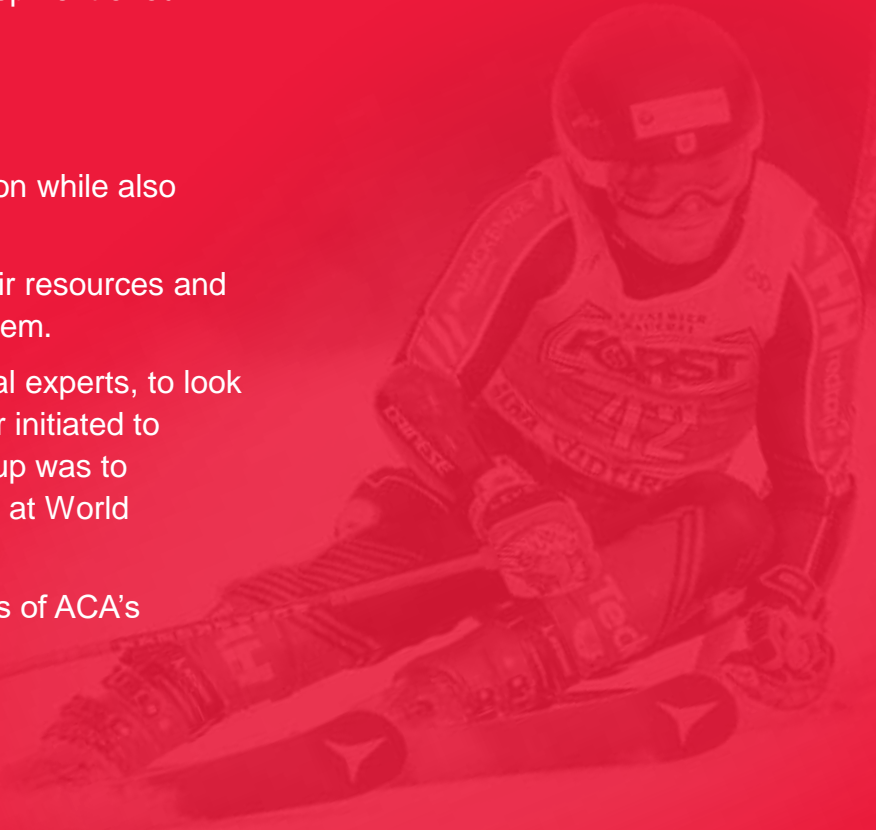
PROJECT
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Purpose of Document

- This document summarizes the work of the Project Excel Working Group (PEWG), formerly the High-Performance System Working Group, over the past six months. This work includes significant **feedback** from key stakeholders such as CAST coaches, PTSO sport leaders, and Provincial coaches.
- The result of all this feedback is the development of a **2023/24 Action Plan** designed to accelerate the development of our high-performance skiers.

Background of the Project Excel Working Group

- Alpine Canada (ACA) wants to build on the **momentum** of their national team's success in the 2023-24 season while also ensuring Canada's future success as it looks ahead to 2030 and beyond.
- For this to happen, ACA and the PTSOs need to continue to build on their strong **collaboration** and align their resources and activities to increase the number of athletes capable of achieving international success at all levels in the system.
- In May 2023, ACA formed the **High-Performance System Working Group** (HPSWG), comprised of technical experts, to look critically at our current athlete development system and identify what should be maintained, changed, and / or initiated to ensure continued success of our athletes at the highest level. More specifically, the focus of the Working Group was to generate a set of recommendations that will increase the pool of Canadian skiers who can ultimately **podium** at World Championships and Olympic Games.
- The HPSWG's name has evolved to the **Project Excel Working Group** to align it with the activities and focus of ACA's existing Excel Program.



PROCESS USED BY PROJECT EXCEL WORKING GROUP DURING PAST SIX MONTHS



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High Performance Advisor Committee (HPAC)

Generated a set of priorities to increase HP athlete development and Olympic/WC podiums.

- **Dave Ellis**, High Performance Director, Ski Cross, Alpine Canada
- **Erik Guay**, Alpine coach & Alpine Canada Board director
- **Anders Hestdalen**, CEO, BC Alpine and former coach Norway Alpine Ski Team
- **Cara Thibault**, High Performance Advisor, OTP & former HPD Speedskating Canada
- **Jeff Thompson**, VP Sport Development & Events, Alpine Canada

JAN TO APRIL 2023

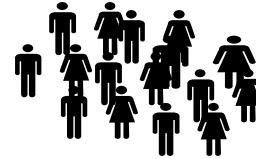


High Performance System Working Group (HPSWG)

Review priorities, develop and socialize a list of recommendations.

- **Josh Benge**, AD, Alberta Alpine Ski Association
- **Patrick Biggs**, ED, Alpine Ontario and former World Cup athlete
- **Johnny Crichton**, VP BC Alpine
- **Dave Ellis**, HP Director, Ski Cross, ACA
- **Eric Prefontaine**, High Performance Director, Ski Quebec Alpin
- **JF Rapatel**, ACA's HP. Director, CAST
- **Francis Royal**, CAST Lead Coach Women's SL, Alpine Canada
- **Jenni Stielow**, ACA's Excel Performance Pathway Manager & Perf. Data Analyst
- **Jeff Thompson**, ACA's VP Sport Development & Events

MAY TO AUGUST



Socialization of Recommendations

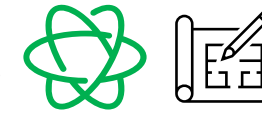
Communicate recommendations, conduct stakeholder meetings, collect survey feedback.

Activities:

A series of stakeholder meetings and presentations to share the recommendations.

Extensive feedback collected via survey and participation in virtual meetings.

AUGUST TO OCTOBER



Analyze Feedback & Create Action Plan

Summarize, analyze stakeholder feedback and decide on 2023/24 action plan.

Activities:

Analyzed all data collected.

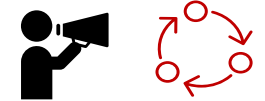
Considered staff capability and ability of provinces / system to implement change.

Review with key stakeholders.

Selected recommendations that will have greatest short and long-term impact.

OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER

Today



Communicate & Take Action

Communicate & engage stakeholders; implement action plan, assess & refine.

Activities:

Build and resource a detailed implementation plan.

Implement and monitor results.

Adjust as needed.

Continue to engage key stakeholders via regular communication and active participation where possible.

NOVEMBER ONWARD

KEY STAKEHOLDERS PROVIDED EXTENSIVE FEEDBACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS



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COLLECT FEEDBACK



Four virtual stakeholder meetings
(BC, Alberta, ONT, Quebec)

Qualitative data collected
Meeting notes, verbatim
comments, etc

30 completed surveys:
90% attended a stakeholder
meeting



**Quantitative & Qualitative
data collected**
Survey questions and
open-ended comments

ANALYZE FEEDBACK

Qualitative Data
Summarized & themed
meeting and survey
responses

Quantitative Data
Calculated percent
agreement scores
and ranked-ordered
the recommendations

USE FEEDBACK



Key input into **selection**
of recommendations for
2023/24 Action Plan



Identification of important
issues to focus on to
improve implementation
planning.



Key source of information
to **create** communication
strategy to inform &
engage stakeholders.

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY RESULTS: RANK ORDERING OF PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS



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	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	% FAVORABLE / RANK
1a Complete individual athlete seasonal planning tool and standardize use among coaches of our top skiers:	37%	25%	62% - 7
1b Publish performance/fitness and skills progression' data by age group to broader racing community.	17%	63%	80% - 3
1c Relaunch the national fitness combine protocols ensuring CAST, IST, and PTSO teams are aligned around how it is applied to different athletes (aka teams and levels).	29%	42%	71% - 5
2a Organize and run a FIS race series (ex: Coaches Cup-type race) in spring and/or fall of 2024 that includes CAST & top athletes on podium pathway.	42%	42%	84% - 1
2b Leverage NorAm competition opportunities through increased communication and planning with NorAm, CAST and PTSO Coaches	29%	42%	71% - 5
2c Pilot test and analyze the benefits/limitations and outcomes of using “randomized start-order” for U14/u16 events. Ensure a comprehensive communication plan is developed that articulates the “why” of this proposed recommendation.	29%	38%	67% - 6
3a Review and analyze the current gap-analysis tools and process being used by ACA, PTSOs, and clubs:	25%	33%	58% - 10
3b Research other existing gap analysis tools such as the US “Podium Club Certification Program”, Tennis Canada, and Own the Podium’s (OTP) gap analysis tool to assess applicability to ACA.	21%	21%	42% - 11
3c Pilot test one or more versions of the gap-analysis tool and evaluate impact:	46%	13%	59% - 9
4a Investigate and develop a business plan within the financial resources that exist today for a full-time program to service the best HP athletes, on the podium pathway, but outside of the CAST (ex: a “PTSO/ACA Excel Team”).	13%	58%	71% - 5
4b PTSOs and ACA to develop a strategy aimed at keeping our top athletes, who reside outside of Canada, connected to Canada’s HP development system (integrate with 2a, 2b).	30%	48%	78% - 4
4c Ensure all Excel projects enhance what is currently done by the PTSO’s and avoids duplication. Projects that are needed but difficult for PTSOs to design and implement.	17%	61%	78% - 4
4d ACA/CAST to schedule and communicate two-three opportunities per season for our best-performing athletes, who are just outside of the CAST, to attend a WC race.	35%	48%	83% - 2
4e Investigate the development of an ACA identification program for HP athletes as a method of recognition; This program would leverage ACA’s fitness combine and would be similar to Rowing Canada’s “Earn the Leaf” program.	30%	30%	60% - 8



The Working Group considered all the feedback provided by stakeholders plus the following criteria:

- Can the recommendation be fully implemented within the financial resources that exist in the system today?
- Can ACA and PTSO staff support the implementation of the recommendation in addition to their current workload given the time of year?
- What recommendation(s) will have the greatest immediate impact on the high-performance pathway?
- What recommendation(s) received the greatest support from the key stakeholders?





FOCUS AREA #1

Use national benchmark standards to guide athlete development

FOCUS AREA #2

Identify competitions where athletes can develop and be tested

**INCREASE THE POOL OF CANADIAN
ATHLETES WHO CAN PODIUM AT
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS AND
OLYMPIC GAMES**

FOCUS AREA #3

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

FOCUS AREA #4

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

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS - KEY ISSUES RAISED BY STAKEHOLDERS



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Approximately **50** of Canada's top coaches and sport leaders provided their feedback on the proposed recommendations via meetings and survey. Below are five key issues that surfaced:



PRE-CAST TEAM

The progression from club to national team is broken. A full-time program to service the best HP athletes (primarily U21) who are outside of the CAST is needed.



ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

ACA/PTSOs need to continue supporting and focusing on better coach and skill-development programming (ex: Snow Stars) as early as U12 to U14.



ADAPTATION

Recommendations will only work if the realities of different clubs, geographies, and demographics are taken into consideration.



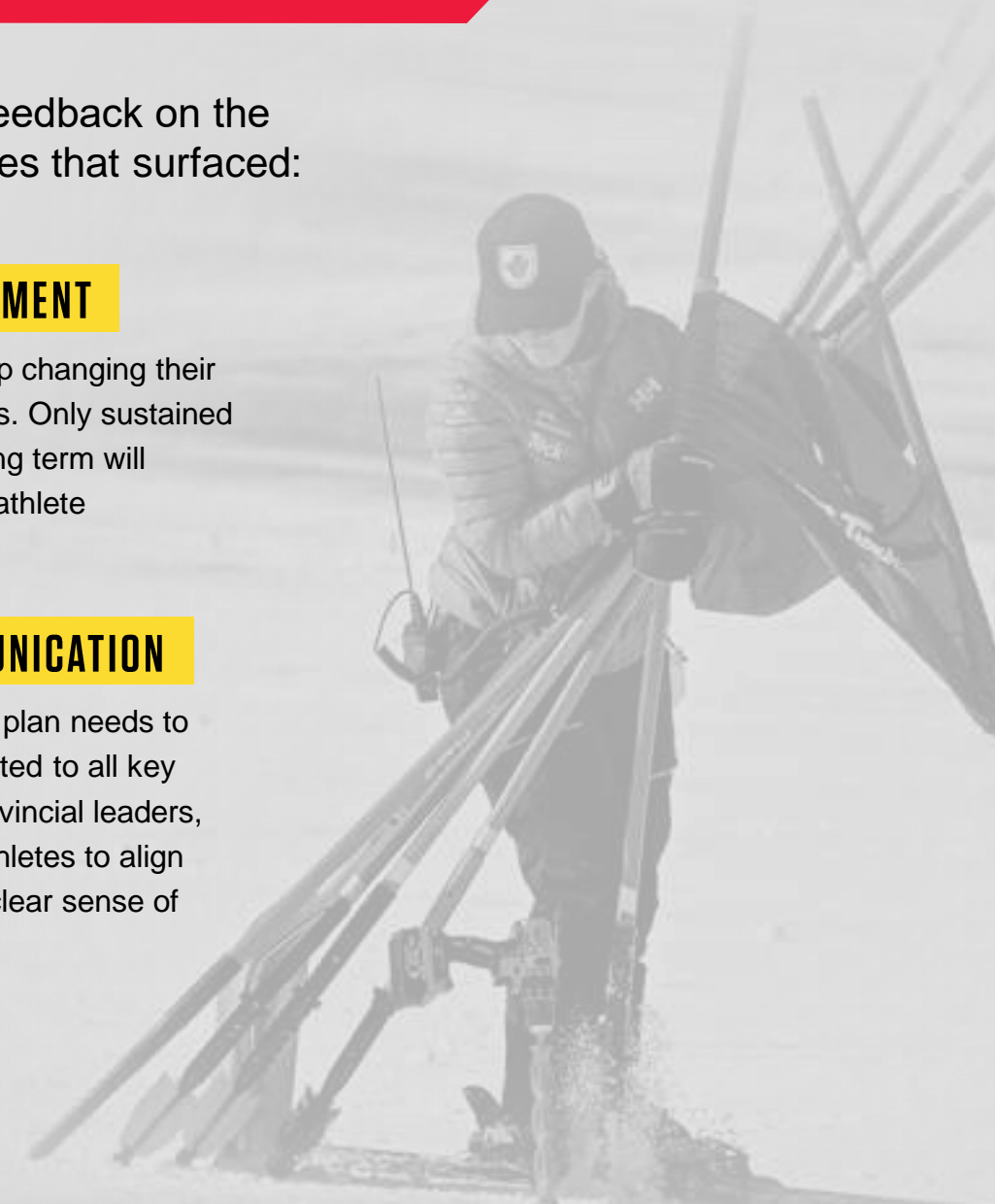
LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

ACA/PTSOs can not keep changing their strategies every 2-3 years. Only sustained programming over the long term will positively impact the HP athlete development pathway.



CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION

The vision, pathway, and plan needs to be effectively communicated to all key stakeholders such as provincial leaders, coaches, parents, and athletes to align everyone and provide a clear sense of direction.



EIGHT KEY RECOMMENDATIONS MAKE UP THE 2023/24 ACTION PLAN



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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.

2

Establish a full-time program to service our best athletes who are on the podium pathway but outside of CAST.

3

Accelerate the development of our best-performing athletes who are just outside of the CAST, by providing access to WC races.

4

Improve the competitive readiness of U14/U16 racers by piloting and analyzing the benefits / limitations of using randomized start order.

5

Implement a national recognition program that targets our top junior athletes, and which provides access to equipment suppliers plus other benefits.

6

Leverage NorAm competition opportunities through increased communication and planning with NorAm, CAST and PTSO Coaches.

7

Align our developmental system through improved communication of performance / fitness and skills progression data by age group to broader racing community.

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.



1. A detailed implementation plan is being developed for each recommendation
2. A new communication and branding strategy are being created to support the implementation plan
3. Integrate Project Excel's Action Plan with ACA's existing 2023/24 overall strategy and plans.

PROJECT EXCEL WORKING GROUP

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