

PC/TD Report to the 2014 AGM



Greetings SSNB Club delegates and SSNB Board Members,

I want to take the time to thank all the volunteers that put their time and energy into our sport. When we look at the core principles that define our sport, I think we should be very proud of what our sport is and can be. Look at the amount of voluntarism required at the club level just to keep these programs going and then some even volunteer even more time and expertise at the SSNB level to create a safe and healthy sporting environment for our youth to learn how to be good competitors, is truly amazing.

The values we teach our skaters in our programs should reflect that “Sport truly is an apprenticeship for life”, if we take the time to learn what it is trying to teach us. The value of being able to compete against each other and still know that there is a common “respect for each other” and that the skaters value the effort that each competitor has put into their performance, is what makes this an amazing sport. It is what drives us forward. We know that our trainings and competitions are fueled by those values of “excellence of effort” and the “integrity” that allows us to be able to honestly evaluate ourselves and strive to be better. We have an amazing sport, we just need to share it with more people.

So a huge THANKS to each parent at all the clubs who slave behind the scenes to the betterment of our sport. Without your dedication and vision for your clubs, the skating opportunities for your children do not exist, either now or into the future. And to those skaters who truly are trying to emulate the values that our sport has to offer. I love to watch the development of skaters, who may not be the most talented, but are the most determined. Those are some of the elements that magnetise me to this sport. Thanks

As we gather in Saint John to have our Annual General Meeting to set direction for the 2014 – 15 season, It is time that we as a group look ahead to what could be real issues for SSNB in the future. I was very disappointed that we did not have better attendance at the SSNB LTAD symposium that was held last fall, in the Hampton area. There was a lot of very useful material and I am sure, could have lead us to some very positive discussions for both Club and SSNB development. What disappointed me the most. It was a chance for all SSNB clubs to get together and work out ways to improve at all levels and we did not get the level of interest that I thought these subjects deserve. The National scene in speed skating is in flux with many changes brought about by the Long term Athlete Development (LTAD) changes as well as safety issues. I feel that the Maritime Provinces have responded to these changes better than most. However, everyone must realize that SSNB is only as strong as its club base. The skaters at the Provincial level can only improve if they receive good quality coaching and training at the club level in a coordinated manner. We also need to understand that the Provincial level means, skaters from every corner of the Province deserve the same chances to have success. How do we (SSNB) best manage that?

- We need to talk about, as a group and not in the rushed winter season, how do we grow our numbers at the club levels? What is it that we need to promote about our sport, that will draw new and young families to the sport of speed skating?

- Do we promote SSNB across the Province to add value to all local club levels and grow the sport? How would we structure such a campaign?
- Could this type of promotion lead to more club development within New Brunswick? Can SSNB handle more club development?
- How would we fund this type of club development?
- Has the new SSC safety & board pad rules effected the clubs skater recruitment as well as practice structure?
- How has the SSC safety & board pad rules effected the SSNB competition structure and are there more ways we can structure events based on skater size & speed related to rink size, track sizes, Board pad thicknesses to give our skaters more opportunity? Will younger skaters travel to fill such events ?

These are just some of the questions that come to mind when I think of where SSNB might be headed in the future.

One last comment, with this being a Canada Games year, people's emotions tend to run higher than normal in CWG winters and I just want to point out that there is no rational need for that. Yes, you want then to be successful in their quest to go to Canada Games, every parent does. However, If your skater is diligently doing their training and paying attention to the details of training correctly, and monitoring their improvements, then that is all they can do. They will be the best they can be. That is all you can ask. Now it is time to compete.

When it is time for either the LT or ST selection, this will be their opportunity to allow all that training to pay off. For Canada Games, SSNB wants skaters who are prepared and self-confident and can compete at their highest level every time. For that to happen, they need everyone around them to have that same level of confidence and belief in their preparedness. Time to let all that effort come to the forefront, It will be time to compete with both respect and integrity.

Respectfully submitted by:

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