Provincial Coach / Technical Director 2021/2022 review

Hello SSNB board members, club representatives, and membership.

The 2021/2022 season was another season greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. There were many competitions cancelled as well as cancelled Canada Winter Games camps. The travel restrictions that were in place largely prevented travel between zones which greatly affected club visits. Despite the setbacks caused by the pandemic, SSNB began the two-year Canada Winter Games cycle, and a few competitions ran on schedule or were re-scheduled for a later date. It was a challenge this season to navigate the ever-changing restrictions and to change plans at a moment’s notice, and things didn’t always go smoothly, but the season ended on a positive note with official competitions held in March and April, and a mini meet held in February.

2021 Canada Winter Games Camps:

The Canada Winter Games two-year cycle began in the spring/summer of 2021 and the Canada Winter Games camps in the Summer of 2021 got off to a slow start, with the first two camps needing to be adapted to accommodate the restrictions which prevented athletes from travelling outside of their own zone. Thankfully, the remaining summer camps went on as scheduled with the help of the guidelines outlined in SSNB’s return to play document. There was a Long Track camp scheduled and planned for December of 2021, however, this camp was cancelled by the ADCC because of the strict travel restrictions that were implemented by the NB government with regards to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Zoom Trainings:

Throughout the summer months and into the end of September weekly zoom training was held for athletes who were interested in skating specific programs and coaching from a distance. All these videos are still available on the SSNB YouTube page for athletes who wish to continue this kind of training.

Quebec Provincial competitions:

As for competitions throughout the season, SSNB sent three NB athletes to compete in the Quebec Provincial competition in Lévis Quebec in November of 2021. This was the first competition of the season and for most, their first time competing in Quebec. There was a steep learning curve, but all of them handled the challenge with a positive attitude and skated to personal bests.

We also had an athlete attend the Quebec provincial competition in Trois Riviere in March, who skated to personal bests and gained racing experience for the CYST competition held at the end of March.

Athletes attending Quebec Provincial competitions —Hannah MacDougall, Courtney Charlong, Nathan Dochstader, and Harrison Earle

Dieppe Mini-meet:

The end of the 2021/2022 skating season went from zero to one hundred quite quickly and left everyone in a flurry to figure out what competitions were going to happen and who would be able to attend. I, along with the Dieppe club, and numerous parents who stepped up to help volunteer were able to put together a one-day mini meet for athletes to compete in in February once restrictions lifted. With the short time frame to get the competition organized, it was amazing to see all the volunteers working together to make it happen for the kids. I want to give a huge thank you to the Dieppe club, Cathy Dochstader, and all of the volunteers who made it possible!

Canada Youth Competitions:

The ADCC worked quickly to create a fair qualifying process for the Canada Youth Short Track and Long Track competitions since most athletes had not been able to race since November. Once the team had been selected, many of the athletes and parents had never been to a Canada Youth competition since the competition has been cancelled for the past two years. To get the information out, I held a zoom meeting for everyone planning to attend the competition, which was recorded and posted to YouTube for anyone who was not able to attend.

NB sent 25 athletes to the Canada East Youth Short Track Championships in Sherbrooke Quebec at the end of the season in March. It was long overdue for our NB athletes to get the chance to compete against athletes from all over eastern Canada. For most of the athletes competing it was their first time at a competition of this caliber, which caused for a lot of learning and new experiences. All of the athletes who attended skated to personal best times, and it was great to see how much their racing improved throughout the short period of the two-day competition.

NB sent 6 athletes to the Canada Youth Long Track Competition, which was held at the brand-new oval in Ste Foy Quebec. For most of the athletes this was their first time skating long track, so there was a lot to learn in a short amount of time! They all embraced the challenge and performed well as they competed against athletes from all over Canada. We had three top ten overall finishes in the competition, which is amazing for our small province and the limited access to long track that all these athletes had.

2022 Canada Winter Games Camps:

To date, there have been two Canada Winter Games camps held in Hampton and Saint Andrews, and we have one camp scheduled for each month this summer and one to be held in September. Since restrictions have been lifted for a few months now, the camps have returned to a format similar to that of before the pandemic. We have a group of 26 athletes eligible to compete for New Brunswick next season at the Canada Winter Games and the camps help a lot with team building and giving the athletes pointers on how to train well so that they can be prepared for next season.

Provincial Camp:

SSNB along with the Dieppe Club will be hosting a week-long camp from August 8th to 12th. Athlete 5+ are all welcome to attend the camp, and the registration can be found on the SSNB website, so please share this with all of your membership!

Respectably yours,

Jamie Beamish

Technical Director / Provincial Coach for Speed Skating New Brunswick