Pursuit of Excellence Stakeholder Meeting, November 17, 2019

Summary

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Introduction

Ringette Alberta is attempting to determine how to implement the participation contexts defined in the
Ringette Canada Competition Review and Restructuring Report and take action on the extensive
research that has been conducted on why athletes quit ringette.

The purpose of the Pursuit of Excellence (POE) Stakeholder meeting on November 17, 2019 was to share
background information with the stakeholders to explain why change is required and to give them an
opportunity to engage in a conversation about the biggest questions they had about “how” which were;
‘who gets in?’ and ‘how do we tier teams within the program?’ Due to the time constraints of a one
day meeting, other less frequently asked question, although certainly important, were not addressed.

The day was broken into two parts. The morning was spent establishing a base of knowledge with the
afternoon reserved for members to engage in the process to answer their top two questions.

To conclude the day, participants were invited to respond to two surveys: one, to gauge a change in
understanding and support for the general direction; two, to provide Ringette Canada feedback on
possible pursuit of excellence standards that program operators may be required to meet in the future.

Two email invitations were sent to the email address in Ringette Alberta’s registration system (gathered
through local registration) for U14, U16 and U19 A and AA registered players as well as to Directors of all
local ringette associations (excluding exclusively Adult Ringette associations). Additional social media
posts were made to invite stakeholders to engage.
136 individuals pre-registered to attend
6 individuals arrived un-registered
43 pre-registered individuals did not attend
99 attended excluding Ringette Alberta staff and speakers

The meeting ran from 8:30 – 4:30

Presentations
Each of the following delivered presentations to help establish a baseline of understanding for all participants.

David Myers, Executive Director, Ringette Alberta
This presentation provided background on the quantitative and qualitative research that has been done to obtain the athletes’ perspective as well as a high level summary of the need to transition to a talent development model from a talent ID model which is in place today.

Frances Losier, Director of High Performance, Ringette Canada
Frances provided a summary of Ringette Canada’s High Performance plan and why a shift in provincial programs are important.

Tara McNeil, Sport Performance Consultant
Tara provided an overview of performance readiness and what the implications are for proper yearly training plans.

Sandra Fenton, Ringette Alberta’s Treasurer
No powerpoint presentation. Sandra provided an overview of potential costs based on information supplied by some of Alberta’s current AA programs. With more complete information, the cost estimate may vary. An updated picture of cost will be provided once more program details are determined.

Stakeholder Discussion
As part of the registration process for the meeting, people were asked to indicate their biggest questions about implementing Excellence Ringette.

To paraphrase, the top two questions registrants had focused on:
  1. enrolment criteria (demonstrating readiness to enter the program)
  2. addressing tiering within the program (to facilitate meaningful competition).

To give the stakeholders the opportunity to help shape the answers to their most asked questions, they were asked to complete a number of tasks in small groups and record their recommendations. Although there are certainly other questions posed by the registrants, to keep the meeting to one day, a choice had to be made to focus on the most frequently asked questions.
**Discussion 1 – Enrolment Criteria at U16**

*Note:*

A U19 player would also have to meet this minimum if they enrolled for the first time in POE as a U19 player.

*U14 will be a stage-appropriate extrapolation from the U16 criteria.*

Each group was asked to address the following:

1. What should be in an athlete agreement assuming an athlete agreement is a requirement to access the program?
2. What should be in a parent agreement assuming a parent agreement is a requirement to access the program?
3. Thoughts on the use of a fitness assessment (simply completing a fitness assessment is sufficient regardless of the results vs there must be a minimum fitness level demonstrated).
4. What technical / tactical attributes should be considered?

The images in Appendix A show their work.

**Discussion 2 – Tiering Within an Excellence Program**

On the assumption that, even with minimum entry requirements in place, the need to tier teams would be likely, so the participants were asked to discuss, describe and record what they felt were the most important attributes to differentiate between tiers at U19 (with other age groups being extrapolated from there).

They were asked to identify the attributes for goaltenders and skaters separately.

The images in Appendix B show their work.

**Surveys**

Following the meeting, the participants were invited to respond to two separate surveys.

**Survey 1 – Alberta Stakeholder Meeting**

The first was intended to give them the opportunity to reflect on the discussion and indicate how likely they would be to support the general direction described on YourRingette.ca/excellence and through the presentations and discussions of the day.

The results are in Appendix C

**Survey 2 – Program Standards**

Recommendation #47 from the Ringette Canada Competition Review and Restructuring Report says, “Ringette Canada should establish formal standards based on the daily training environment for clubs to be recognized as a Pursuit of Excellence club. Standards should be progressively introduced to allow clubs to put the necessary program resources in place and to allow for parallel adjustments to the system of competition.”
During the 2019-20 season, Ringette Canada will be conducting its own process to define the standards, among other work.

Participants in the Alberta Excellence Ringette Stakeholder meeting were invited to indicate whether they agree or disagree with draft program standards that had been developed prior to the meeting as a starting point. Their responses have been provided to Ringette Canada.

Their responses are in Appendix D
Appendices
Appendix A

1. **Explanation of commitment expectations**
   - 1.1 Clear
   - 1.2 Consequences of not meeting expectations
   - 1.3 Details of training program overall
     - 1.3.1 Feedback - self, coach
   - 1.4 Athlete accountability
     - 1.4.1 Communication
       - 1.4.1.1 Self evaluation
       - 1.4.1.2 Development needs
       - 1.4.1.3 Issue resolution

2. **Commitment expectations**
   - 2.1 Volunteer position
   - 2.2 Detailed role in program support
   - 2.3 Copy of athlete agreement/acknowledgement
   - 2.4 Realistic financial costs
   - 2.5 Code of conduct
   - 2.6 Communication expectations
Appendix A continued

3. Disagree
   - Other factors to be considered to display readiness for program
   - Minimum fitness standard

4. Technical consistency
   - Tactical
     - How will it be assessed:
       - How are they being coached vs. not being coached?
       - Demonstrating interaction
     - Removing disadvantage of prior coaching
Appendix A continued

Minimum Athlete Requirements:

- On-ice commitment:
  - 3-4 x 1 week
  - 1 at x: 1 session will be substituted with off-ice sessions (i.e. dryland, mental prep, nutrition sessions)

- Commitment to physical preparation:
  - Nutrition and mental training:
    - It should be a program responsibility to provide him/standard of education info/physical readiness
    - Athlete is responsible for being open/receptive to info provided.
    - Participation in sessions.
    - Agreement to baseline level fitness plan participation in program.

- Desirable attitude:
  - Athlete must agree to adhere to Code of Conduct
  - Discussion in group around accepting to reach agreement “player card” that can be used as a tool for accountability in program in future years.
Appendix A continued

Question D: Athlete Agreement

Participation: Games, Practices, Tournament, Extra Cell.

Healthy Living: Physical Activity, Nutrition, Strength

Safety: Diet, Equipment, Sleep, Emotional

Communication: Mechanism

Enforceability: Consequences

Multi-Sport Awareness

Attitude

Education

Volunteerism
Appendix A continued

2) Parent
   Partnership / Support
   Provide tools and resources for the athlete to achieve the athlete agreement.

3) Fitness Baseline
   [Agree] They must value fitness

4) OMT-Nb
   ADD - Measurable Criteria
   - # of opportunities to test
   - Problem solving focus
Appendix A continued

Minimum Attributes

Athlete
- attitude
- dryland
- tournaments
- social media
- probation

Parents
- help with prioritization
- financial
- nutrition
- code of conduct

- let the coach coach
- volunteerism

(assoc. + team)
Appendix A continued

Baseline Fitness

- insufficient
- bad day?
- starting point

Technical [X]
Focus on implementation.

Parents
- help, motivation
- commitment
- volunteerism
- sense of goal

Dry tech
- complete, no priority

Attitude
Appendix A continued

Athlete Agreement

- Fun (Nurture love of sport)
- Up to $X/week
- dependent on Preseason & midseason needs etc.
- Mixture of on/off ice
- Be an ambassador of the sport
- Willingness to be open to direction from a qualified nutritionist (assessment/guidance)
- Agreement to partake in team/independent mental training

Parent Agreement

- Support athletes learning journey
- Trust the coach → Support your child
- Pay your bills
Appendix A continued

3. Yes → fitness testing:
   - safety
   - ability

4. Technical:
   - Safety Checking
   - Positioning + tech
   - Rules + knowledge of the game

Tactical: Penalty avoidance:
- Defense scenario's: 5 sec offence
- Goalie pull
- etc.
Appendix A continued

~Minimum Requirements~
- willingness to compete
- want to be your best
- dedication to develop
- come to practices & games
- be on time (Attendance)
- athlete driven (not parent driven)
- be coachable!!
- be mentally & physically prepared
- baseline
- willing to commit to time commitments
- prepared off season
- very specific: how many practices, following nutrition plan, uploading into personal sport program

~Parent agreement~
- cost
- getting athlete to training on time
- supporting team of athletes
- clear path of who to talk to (conflict)
- nutrition support
- respecting team rules
- team eating together
- team building activities
- respecting player’s needs
- need to sleep at appropriate time
- you’re a parent not a coach!!!
Appendix A continued

1. Athlete Agreement
   - academic standards maintained
   - attendance / commitment & events
   - willingness to learn & improve
   - respectful coaches / teammates / officials
   - maintaining standards of performance expectations
     · fitness / nutrition / lifestyle

2. Parent Agreement
   - supporting athlete attendance / commitment
   - appropriate conflict management system
   - support overall program philosophy
     · training expectations
     · nutrition
     · sleep / lifestyle
   - financial commitment clearly outlined and agreed to
   - volunteer expectations / commitments / involvement

3. AGREE.
Appendix A continued

Parent Agreement

1. Pay, cheer, transport

2. Supportive of athlete + program
   - nutrition, sleep, recovery

3. Open communication with coaches

4. Respectful of coaches, athletes
   - officials; not undermining

Minimum Grade Level

- Respect for coaches, officials, peers

Positive attitude - focused, balanced
ATHLETE AGREEMENT → COMMITMENT
  - ATTITUDE ➔ *BUY IN*
  - FILTERS THROUGHOUT ALL ASPECTS
  - MENTAL ➔ ENCOURAGE INTO EVERYTHING
  - ICE • 3-4 TIMES/WEEK
  - PHYSICAL
    - OFF-ICE TRAINING • 1 PER WEEK?
    - PROPER WARM-UP/COOL DOWN
  - NUTRITION
  - FOLLOW THE PLAN
  - SLEEP

TIES INTO EACH OTHER
Appendix A continued

- 3/4 On-ice experiences/week
- Minimum requirement to need to be in the program
- 2 office experiences/week
- 12-month fitness plan
- Nutrition Commitment / Hydration
- Sleep / Recovery Plan
- Mental / Perf Training
- Minimum Grade Level
- Respect → Coaches, Teammates, Officials, Parents, etc
→ Positive Attitude → On Time, Focused, Coachable
Appendix A continued

Minimum Requirements
Needed → Yes

Tech/Team Assessment

Additions
→ Work ethic
→ Communication
→ Supportive teammate
→ Checking
→ Goalie → skating /
Appendix A continued

ATHLETE AGREEMENT

1) 95% Attendance of Activities (Commitment)
2) Nutrition
3) High Level of Fitness
4) Training Logs/monitored
5) Player Code of Conduct

PARENT AGREEMENT

1) Commit to Athlete Schedule
2) Parent Code of Conduct
3) Support/Respect for the Coaches
4) Volunteer

AGREE/DISAGREE

AGREE BUT

- Overall Fitness
- Health Status
- Mental Maturity

TACTICAL

+ Game Sense
+ Breaking

MIN REQ

Speed of Technical Skills?
Appendix A continued

Minimum Enrollment Attributes

- 3-4x/week of team program functions.
  - 2-3 ice times
  - 1-2 dryland/mental training/office
  - max 5x/week incl. personal workouts
  - giving 100% to your efforts (team/individual)
- Nutrition attend
  - agree to an educational session(s) with parents
- Mental training
  - agree to attend and be willing to practice mental training session(s)
- Desirable attitude
  - agree to sign and uphold a Player Code of Conduct
Appendix A continued

What should be in the Athlete Agreement?
- agree to commitment to fitness programming
- agree to 3-4 team program initiatives / week
- agree to program, rules and expectations as determined by the coach / team

1) Parent agreement to Athlete Agreement / Conduct
AGREE to willingness to, baseline fitness testing undergo

TECHNICAL / TACTICAL ASSESSMENT

- no omissions from skills presented (technical)
- tactical demonstrations prior to assessment
Appendix A continued

#3. Yes, fitness testing

# 4. Technical: Safe checking/
  Positioning + tech
  + Rules + knowledge of
  the game

* Karen notes

Tactical: Penalty avoidance
  * Scenario's - e.g. 5 sec.
    offence
  * Goalie
Appendix A continued

1. ATHLETE AGREEMENT

- Will make choices consistent with objections of the POE
- Code of conduct & RC Policy
- Committed to all ice times
- "Office training/Att"
- Follow nutritional guidelines consistent with POE
- Mental training & injury assessment & awareness
- No priority as commit to program - wholeistic program
Appendix A continued

2. PARENT AGREEMENT
   - Support child in program
   - Leave coaching to coaches
   - Understand and agree to fees of program.

3. INITIAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT
   Disagree
   (give outline of testing prior)
Appendix A continued

4. TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT

Agree Technical

Comment - Tactical is learned/experience based

Sports I&O
6/11/97

U19 Tier 1 Programme

Team management
Insight based on game + input + analysis
Appendix A continued

~baseline fitness~
- it's a start, gives a snapshot
- continue training out of season

~Technical/ Tactical Assessment~
- basic understanding player needs to have
  ie/skating skills -they should be strong at this level

4. Technical/Tactical
  - like same level athletes grouped together
Appendix A continued

Skates
- Teamwork
- Coachability x
- Communication
- Game sense x
- Stabbing
- Area passing
- Speed
- Adaptability
- Stick skills (Frozen)
- Agility
- Timing
- Checking

Goalies
- Agility, movement
- Ability to track
- Anticipation
- Push artificially
- Angle mgmt.
- T pushes
- Vertical angles
- Active hands
- Reaction times
- Measured improvement
Appendix B

UL6 Attributes for tiering + U19 as well
- extremely subjective depending on competition goals and coaching/philosophies/preferences
- nobody is right or wrong in their selection criteria
- you have to entrust certain skilled/experienced evaluators to assist in tiering athletes
- physical, social, motivational attributes can also come into play and that is not necessarily measurable quantitatively.

(potential considerations for promotion?)

* IDEAS:
  For the zone could you offer Dryland/Mental Training for all teams at UL6? Decrease costs, offer similar programming standards.
  - Webinars for Rural participants
  - Economies of Scale
Appendix B continued

U16 - # Skaters
1. Above average agility and multi directional speed.
2. # game above average IQ
3. Physical fitness
4. 

U19 - 
1. Superior agility and multi directional speed
2. Superior IQ
3. Superior fitness

Goal tenders

U16
- Stand-up Style
- Above average skating skills
- Confidence in communication to team
- Ring distribution skills
- Exhibit resilience
Appendix B continued

~U16/U19~
flexible in playing diff positions
best game sense

U16 - Tier 1
best body positioning
relentless players
Tier 2

~RAB consistency ~

...across AB!
Appendix B continued

Tier Differences:
- Backwards skating
- 1 on 1 abilities
- Performance when stressed
- 1, 2, or 3 Zone Player
Goal Tend Skills

- Tracking Angles
- Challenge
- Tush, Cat Butterfly
- Shuffle Step
- Telescopic
- Basic Stance
- Ring Distribution
Appendix B continued

Ul6 Tier 1 Attributes:
- A game sense + tactical awareness
- Forward/backward skating strong enough to create opportunities
- High accuracy + decision making with passes
- Full complement of shooting skills (forehand/backhand/hi-low)
- Higher percentage of good shooting decisions

Ul6 Tier 2 Attributes:
- Lower % of execution of above attributes

U19 Tier 1 Attributes:
- Game management
- Impact level on game + impact on outcomes
Appendix B continued

Goalies

U16 → U19

- Decision making
- Distribution
- Movement (standing up or not...)
- Fast recovery
- Butterfly
- Movement control
- Positioning
- Speed
- Agility
- Stance

Skills are more refined
Purposeful movements
Focused
Consistency
Endurance

Skaters

U16 → U19

- Compete level (battle factor)
- Drive/Thrust/Motion
- Communication
- Coachability
- Endurance
- Team play
- Discipline
- Efficiency in play
- Ability to play different roles on the team
- Positions but not lead
- Defined thresholds

Gameplay vs. Skill level

Play all sides of the game
- Speed
- Transitions on turnovers
- Decision making in movement
- RUSH

Standardized Evaluation Criteria

Standardized Evaluation method + Scoring system
Appendix B continued

TIERING WITHOUT EXC.

GOALSTERS
- What is benchmark?
- Low shots to goal ratio
- Movement - high speed - across crease
- Perform under stress
- Always square up
- Communication off ice.

SKATER
- U16 → U19 (similar but higher)
- Control speed (skating)
- " " of game
- Fast transitions
- Game sense
- Passing & receiving (high % accuracy)
- Off/Def strategy implementation
- Reads plays - thinks ahead
Goalies

U16 & U19
Positioning
Shooting vs Crease Movement
Compete level

Skaters

[Handwritten notes on the page]
Appendix B continued

Attributes

Goalies U16-U19
- Fitness
- Flexibility
- Problem Solving
- Awareness
- Decision Making

Skaters U16
- Good edging
- Game IQ
- Positional Awareness
- Attitude

Skaters U19
- Skate backwards as well as forwards
- Game IQ
- Positional Knowledge
- Attitude
Appendix B continued

attributes that a player needs to exhibit to be considered to be a "top" player:
- High level of technical skating
- Superior skill (selection/execution)
- Very high/consistent intensity & work rate on ice
- Superior ability to read & react on ice
- End of season coach assessment identifies as top player of previous year (player card idea)

same attributes for top players at U16 & U19 levels but higher level of execution expected at U19 level.

Please provide written description of program operators to ensure validity/reliability of program qualification.
Appendix C

**Question 1:** Now that you have attended the meeting, do you feel you understand things better? This question is not asking if you agree or disagree; only if you have gained more understanding.

Yes = 19
No = 18

**Question 2:** Now that you have attended the meeting, how likely are you to support the general direction things are headed?

Very Likely = 5
Likely = 19
Unlikely = 16
Very Unlikely = 2

Participants were also invited to share the reasoning for their responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasoning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In theory, I’m in favour of the evolution of the idea of a COE model compared to how ringette in Alberta differs from association/region today. Until there is more specific information or a COE model to be able to have more meaningful dialogue, I feel that we are in a perpetual circle of going nowhere. I feel we need to move from talking “in theory” to start assessing some COE model examples in the different regions/zones. Start applying the actual resources available in each region to a theoretical COE model. Have meaningful mindful dialogue to identify the challenges, benefits, revisions, etc. The participants involved in these discussions must be open minded and honest - not proprietary or territorial. At the end of the day, this is about the benefit to the athlete - however it has to be both attainable and affordable. COE may look different from region to region in order to service all applicable athletes. Culture from region to region also needs to be a consideration. COE may have to be a phased in approach to reach the final goal. Perhaps phase in beginning with a U14 age group year, and phase it in moving forward for every group coming in after that initial U14 group. That allows for correction/revision of the program.</td>
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<td>I understand some of the motivation of creating an excellence program that is accessible to more players than just ‘AA’ players. The problem for me is the path to implementation. I feel that if RAB really has no idea what implementation looks like, then the time should have been spent brainstorming implementation options, not trying to identify parameters for athlete and parent agreements and standards for entry into the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I support the concept of making a high-performance program available to athletes regardless of their skill but I am still unsure of how exactly the implementation would look like. I agree with allowing players to sign up and have access to these resources while still playing with girls their age. One issue that concerns me is since ringette is not a very big sport, creating another program will further divide the groups and there will be fewer teams being able to be formed in each program. This spreads girls out and makes it harder for athletes to play on a team where everyone is of similar skill. Another part of the program where I do not totally agree with is the impact it will have on classic ringette. Athletes (such as myself) who do not want to commit to all of the details of excellence ringette lose the opportunity to play with girls at a AA caliber as we will lose them to the excellence program and my home association is not big enough to field a AA classic team. I do think that providing more resources to athletes who are interested in improving and playing at the top level is a good idea, and I do support the development of an excellence ringette program, whatever that may look like.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There isn't enough concrete information presented at the association level to decide if the association will support or not support the Centre of Excellence programming. There really wasn't anymore information provided at the meeting that wasn't already discussed at either the AGM or posted on</td>
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the Website. While I appreciate what the guest speakers have to say, and Ringette Canada's mandate, my focus from an association level is on attracting athletes to our sport at the grassroots level while competing with a very popular and fast growing female hockey program in our area.

Do I agree that change is necessary to improve our sport? Yes. Do I support change? Yes, however,

I struggle to understand how our sport will support all three program choices Flex, Classic and Excellence and how the Excellence program will effect athletes that choose to stay in the Classic stream. Are we potentially, inadvertently going to create a less than desirable environment for the athletes left at the Classic level if half of the "A" athletes choose to pursue the Excellence stream and now the association has to ice a "B" team to complete. Will that result in athletes choosing to leave the sport at U16/19 as the experience has now drastically changed for them? What happens to that athlete who wants to compete at the Excellence Level, has all the tools, and her friend group is going that route but parental support is not there; does this athlete now choose to leave the sport altogether as well?

I think that there are a lot of fundamental questions that need to be answered that are a lot larger and more important than "What skills are needed to qualify for the Excellence Program?". What does the athlete agreement look like? What does the parent agreement look like? What skills differentiate a tier 1 from a tier 2 player? I feel that a lot of time was spent on these questions while more important questions are left unanswered. A comment was made at our table that Calgary very closely matches what the Excellence Program will look like. If that is the case, lets start talking at the BGL level to see how the north can more towards that model. A more focussed discussion with the right people around the table needs to take place which is what I thought was in place following the AGM.

I also struggle with the "Unethical" portion of Dave's presentation at the beginning. While I see and agree with his point, I fail to see how the Excellence Program is going to solve the problem of Coaching quality at all levels, especially since the players that don't meet the threshold will be in the same spot or potentially worse off (if all the quality coaches are recruited for Excellence). More coach development, training, mentorship needs to happen at all levels of Ringette and from an association level I believe that different programming should be available to all age groups / levels throughout the year offering skating and skill specific development from coaches who know how to breakdown and coach skill so players that are motivated to improve, have an additional avenue to pursue outside of the team they were placed on - no matter what tier. Therefore, the bubble player who was place on the B or C team has additional resources to pursue outside of practice time to "get better" if that is what they strive for.

I only say likely because the changes are coming and I feel that we have to adapt, not because I am in favor of the changes. While I agree with the opportunities that are in the planning stage by Ringette Canada for those athletes who are interested in the high performance pathway, eg. U17 and U18 camp and CWG planning, I do not agree with all of the changes made at the association level. I do not believe that the system needs to be overhauled. Calgary's model gives a variety of players the opportunity to play with like skilled and like minded players and could benefit from the implementation of some of the Center of Excellence proposals into the program. I need more information on the tiers within the program - Is there any movement from one tier to another after teams are made? What if girls quit if they aren't on the top tier? How do we fundraise? How do we deal with awkward numbers? Who do the COE A teams play?

Trying to improve ringette is always a good thing and I will support that.

I really think fitness testing should be part of the AA and A programs to start. Players need to meet a minimum threshold of fitness to make a team. This could hopefully start in 2020.
I like the idea of a U18 or even a U16 La Releve...something the players can work toward each year.

We need to be a part of and follow the Sports Canada High Performance Strategy. Becoming leaders in "Excellence" could help ringette gain more exposure in the sports world in general and help grow the sport.

I have hope that this type of program will reduce the amount of politics and enable more athletes the opportunity to access a higher level of training.

It is a good idea in a very early stage. Much more detail on proposals and options must be presented in order to get worthwhile feedback and consultation.

I understand the concept and it makes sense.

The concept of a holistic program is a good one - and one we use in Calgary AA. I continue to support that concept.

However, I have a great number of questions about implementation/practice/setup, etc - most of which were not addressed during the meeting in any formal way (only, informally, in one on one discussions with certain RAB staff and, while helpful, it is hard to know what to take from informal discussions about how things *might* look). Those unanswered, practical questions about implementation are what keep me and others 'up at night', not the concept/philosophy of a 360 degree program (which is what much of the discussion at the meeting was about).

I have tried to address most of those questions/issues in the next question below.

While I take Dave's point that there is a 'damned if you do/damned if you don't' aspect to putting together too comprehensive a plan before seeking input (and think seeking input is important before the plan is formed), I am hopeful that RAB can take our position that we can only give tentative support to the POE without knowing the plan.

I would *strongly* urge a process going forward that involves at least the following further steps:

- formation of a tentative/comprehensive plan and timeline for implementation (specific things to be done and proposed dates)

- a further meeting to go through the details of the plan with the associations.

- that could be MORE than one meeting, depending on the scope of the proposed plan/changes.

- further, given that the implementation of POE will have a very different impact in Calgary vs Capital Region, it might make sense to have separate implementation plans

AFTER that information gathering on a detailed/comprehensive plan, time to go back, take the feedback and re-work the plan to be recirculated to the associations.

I mean no disrespect when I observe that the actual details of how something like this could be implemented vary greatly across the province (from access to ice to geographic issues, etc) and it is very unlikely that either a 'one size fits all' approach OR one in which RAB spells out how each local association is to implement the plan will work. We know our resources and the limits on those
resources - and those limits are very different between, say, Calgary or St Albert/Sherwood Park. A POE that dictates changes from above without knowing/working with us on what is possible will be a recipe for anger and damaging to the sport.

Further, while I also agree that it can be good to be first out of the gate and set a standard across Canada, I also think it is important to make sure we get it right for Alberta first - getting it done right is more important in my mind than getting it done fast.

| The concept is good. Implementation needs a lot more discussion and fore thought |
| My daughter has always been the 'bubble kid'. Not usually making the elite teams the first year around. This has affected her ability to develop alongside her peers in a similar environment. She ends up on lower level teams with inexperienced coaching and lack of commitment. If this program is able to be delivered as planned it will offer her the opportunity to develop at a level she has always strived for. |
| It is always best to move the sport forward than staying stagnant resulting in the possibility of losing athletes to other sports. |
| I believe this level of standardized training creates the professional environment that Ringette is lacking in and puts the athletes on a performance platform that they deserve to experience. For the majority of our younger families and athletes they are not aware of the level of play that is out there such as striving to play for Team Canada, making the CWG team or even the NRL. I feel it gives our athletes exposure to just what is out there to strive for. |
| Something has to change. The current AA programs are not even programs. These teams in the North are not competitive and are for the most part being run by parents. I feel the groups would be better served with a larger/combined group of athletes and non parent coaches drafting and coaching the teams instead. The current AA associations will need to be blown up and remade in order for all to be fair and equitable. No one will want to give up their AA status/club. New ones must be formed with a mixture of people from different areas/organizations. |
| It's a good idea that has evidence backing |
| First off, the meeting did not give us any real direction as to where RAB is heading with this new program. There is no clear path of what next year really looks like, just some notions that seem to be brought up by people who quite frankly don't have any idea how to measure success and/or know how the girls still playing ringette feel about competition. |
| RAB is going about this all wrong. Trying to implement a complete change to a sport that 80% of girls and parents are happy with to try and appease the 20% that have a problem with it. If you want to implement change do it in small increments over several years and get a feel for how the changes are being received by the players who actually play ringette. This way you can make small alterations to make sure it ends up being the best program for the girls and their future. |
| I am answering Unlikely because I don't have an improved understanding of where we are heading with Excellence ringette. I very much agree with the introduction of Flex, retaining Classic, and the shift to half-ice games at the younger ages. |
| With Excellence, the first talk by David was very much looking at trying to improve the girls experience across the province, providing resources, alignment with LTAD, leveling play, and how it was not exclusively for NRL and Team Canada as the ultimate goal. However, the next two talks were very much focused on daily training in accordance with yearly development plans, the goal of developing a High Performance program for athlete development into world-class. The later talks highlighted High Performance opportunities at the U17, U18, and U19 level, as well as Team Canada. |
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I was left with a mixed message on what the goal of the program changes are meant to be. Is it meant to develop players for Team Canada by opening up a candidate funnel with broad inclusion, or is meant to improve the experience for talented players? The training regimen is not the same.

The opportunities for High Performance ringette are quite limited, with university programs being more akin to intramurals instead of varsity treatment by schools, and World's provide an outlet for only a few of the girls currently participating. I applaud the changes at the younger ages, and I truly believe they will increase the sport's participation by attracting and retaining players. At the end of the second and third talks on Sunday morning, I was not convinced that retention of the "Excellence" level players is a goal beyond funneling a select few to Team Canada. I don't believe that designing a program modeled on Olympic sports is relevant to the girls currently playing.

Ringette has a heavy reliance on volunteer coaches, both parent and former/current players. I am worried that the Excellence focus and requirements are going to drive out those volunteers that don't have the time, on top of their day-to-day work and families, for the development and maintenance of yearly development plans, if those plans are to be meaningful, in any way. Shifting to coaches and support personnel as paid positions will drop participation, increase costs, and will reinforce that the Excellence program is simply a funnel for Team Canada.

I am hopeful that the development of coaching resources and additional training opportunities for coaches are going to take place. I see adding these supports as essential for the girls as they progress through the levels. We need to have improved coach training at all levels of play, not just Excellence, and I would love to see more involvement of current and former players in the role of assistant coach, again, across all tiers. I believe there are opportunities to strengthen and broaden both the University ringette programs and Open leagues.

I heard both a number of positive initiatives that might take place, and I heard a number of points which I am not yet convinced will serve the current base of players. I don't believe that change is bad, and I am glad that Ringette Canada and Ringette Alberta are looking for improve the game and the program. However, Sunday's meeting didn't leave me with any understanding of the end goal that we are trying to achieve. It felt that David's talk was an RAB position, and the other two talks were the RC position. I don't know which to believe is the future.

I am unclear whether or not the thrust of the Excellence program is meant to retain this tier of players as lifelong participants or if you are expecting those who don't have Team Canada aspirations to self-select out of the sport. My daughter loves playing and she loves coaching. She is already wondering whether full-time university studies are consistent with AA. My wish is that she will continue both for many years. If she has the support and opportunity to grow in both, I will be thrilled.

Ringette Alberta was unable to answer majority of the questions asked by stakeholders. Many answers simply consisted of ‘we’ve thought about it, but we don’t know yet’. It is hard to support an idea that is so unclear. It is also hard when board members do not even have a clear understanding of the plan and board members are communicating different messages.

The estimated budget was also missing so many components that it had very little legitimacy.

I feel like mixed messages were presented at this meeting, and I came out of it feeling more confused around the direction RAB is heading. Further comments and additional thoughts will be shared shortly in my report back to the Athlete Advisory Council.

I don't know what the general direction is at this point because the only topic that was discussed
Appendix C

Beyond repeating the outlines presented on the Your Ringette page, was how we are going to evaluate players and nothing about how the program is actually going to work. I was expecting to be informed on how teams will be formed, how the number of teams for each level (A, AA) would be decided, who the teams will play (whether it’s inter-provincial or out of province), and how these teams are going to be formed to compete at nationals. Instead, topics that are very premature in the process of implementing the Pursuit of Excellence were discussed.

I have always played ringette with my friends, that is important to me. I do not want me and my friends to be split up onto different teams. My friends are saying they will only play A if this happens or quit. We are getting to the end of ringette and I don’t want to not play with my friends.

By sending a misleading email to the membership regarding the premise of this meeting RAB contributed to the panic and drama around this issue. Getting buy in to this program needs to be based on a trust in RAB to communicate openly with its stakeholders, not trick ppl into attending a meeting. FYI: I was registered prior to the misleading email to the members.

I honestly feel that this meeting did not bring stakeholders together to discuss the framework of what excellence would look like. Most of the round table was spent discussing minutia without a framework in place. I feel that this was set up this way to limit the discussion that really needs to happen and to speed up the implementation. I would rather see a well thought out approach than a plan rushed through to be ahead of the rest of the country. Please take the time the program deserves to do this right.

Because it is clear most of the big issues still are not resolved and the meeting was in effective and I have lost confidence in RAB’s director’s ability to manage change and effectively engage meaningful dialogue. Very disappointed. This feels like an opportunity wasted. Not a single meaningful outcome from the day. Left wondering what the point of the day was.

Felt like the meeting was put together strategically to check box the requirement of having "community consultation".

Very little was understood on the actual vision of the program. I felt like we wasted an entire Day talking about what competitive sports mean.. everyone in the AA program believes there is a firm commitment from their athletes, coaches, and parents. We did not need to spend an entire day trying to convince us or have us reiterate the importance of commitments and competitiveness.

Also felt that Tara McNeill was trying to steer everyone into the idea that there should be air conditioning test before entering the program. This seems a little underhanded in. It feels that the decisions already been made but she's trying to make it seem like it's our idea....

The game, the whole meeting felt very sneaky and insincere.

we were really hoping to go and get an understanding of what the framework would look like and the impact it would have on us....

Very frustrating

I feel that I can't answer the above statement the way it is worded above. If there was another "maybe" category I would have answered that way. In principle, I support the talent development model and a good part of the athlete development matrix and understand why RC wants to move towards that. That being said, I am needing WAY more information and details about how the Excellence Program will be rolled out in Alberta before I can say whether I can support the general direction that we are headed in.

There should be an 'unsure' option in the previous question. The key questions were not answered. I
understand that this is still very much a work in progress and I certainly support 'improving ringette' but I can't say I support the direction because I still don't have a good understanding of what the direction is. 'Improving ringette' is too vague. Of course everyone supports that.

Ringette is a wonderful sport. Sometimes feel that ringette jumps at the chance for a change and it is not always for the better for the sport. Way to much time in the groups not sure there was a need for it.

I agreed with many points on the shortcomings of the current state of high level development: (1) tier bias for both coaching and player development and opportunities, (2) need to develop more talent and not just small fraction of kids so more have opportunity to reach higher potential. However, I do not agree with the POE pathway to address these. I understand many of the needs/wants/feedback from athletes were done with ideal situations in mind but creating 3 separate paths is not the solution - based on my current understanding. I now understand that there are issues in the north about what AA is (tier vs. program) however I think there are better ways to address this without creating so much change that rural ringette (small associations the most) are disintegrated and the upper talent/skill level athlete needs are addressed at the expense of lower current talent/more recreational players.

If RAB moves the POE players to a bigger center (aka Calgary) then you are also moving those 'better/more experienced' coaches with them thus increasing the tier bias. There should be more ongoing support and training for coaches at all levels. Currently, local associations try to connect coaches and set up mentors but the most useful and common way that coaches learn is by sharing ice during practices.

And from a practicality/logistics point of view - are these registration fees for the POE now being lost from local associations?

There was no discussion around other reasons that kids choose to not play AA such as the desire to stay with friends in home community, inability to commit to the schedule in AA program for other sports/activity interests, cost or family reasons. So being able to give POE opportunities to kids who need/want to stay in home communities during their teens but may want to try for University ringette or NRL or Team Canada etc. is important.

There also seems to be a lack of understanding about how the south works - Calgary does not include Zone 2 in City Championships, many Calgary teams refuse to travel to Zone 2 and Zone 1 rinks and U10 is not integrated into the same league (Zone 2 U10 excluded). Also, Lethbridge and Med Hat need to be included in this somehow as they have many talented players but having a separate stream would not be possible for them either.

I appreciate that we are being asked about this, however I have been involved with the residency policy changes as well and felt there were many with concerns that were completely ignored. That meeting included lots of push back from small associations that were ignored. There have been problems directly attributed to this but Dave told me that those were unfounded. Although we were told over and over that nothing has been decided yet.... every question or issue I raised to Dave was met with a very quick answer to the effect, ‘they will just have to figure that out’. This makes me very skeptical that decisions have not already been made about this.

Agree in general with many of the proposed standards and the desire to give every athlete the best training environment that she wants to have. But I think separating athletes into two separate contexts (Classic and Excellence) is going to be too difficult to implement, and cause too much
### Appendix C

- disruption to the Associations to try and manage and adapt to. Also will not allow small associations to participate.

- I think a better approach would be to take the existing structure and find a way to offer extra options of the DTE to those athletes that want them.

- I believe more athletes will achieve more in their 'ringette career' (whatever that may be) IF THEY WISH. Standardized system will have athletes having similar experience and advantages.

- I think the highest level of ringette in the country (below AAA and CWG) can benefit from having a consistent standard of programming so all athletes nation wide are offered the opportunity to pursue the game with the best support network necessary at the level they wish to play.

- And having standards province wide can also even the playing field and help to shape the competition level within the province.

- Knowledge / understanding of the why. Also having Ringette Canada add context to the why is VERY helpful.

- Looks like one sport and helps participants realize that this is a national initiative not just here in Alberta

- It's an opportunity for those who can’t be on a AA a team to get the same training and become a better player

- Not only will this be good for the players wanting to achieve there very best but I feel this will benefit all of the other athletes within their home associations. some won’t have the minimum requirements or dedication but still want to play the game at a level that is fun for them.

- What direction? After attending meeting, I am more confused than ever. There is a disconnect between the on-line messaging provided before and what was delivered at meeting. I am unclear on the purpose of this new program. On the one hand, David was describing a more inclusive program; one that wouldn't close the door on unidentified talent at such a young age. It sounded like we are trying to move away from the anti-tiering biases however then it was introduced that there would be further tiering within the POE program. France's and Tara's messages confused me further. Is the Provincial program being re-vamped to 'feed' the national team a larger pool of potential candidates, these being of 'high performance' calibre? If so, I am unsure this program serves our family's needs anymore. We are excited about our daughters' playing in a highly competitive and committed environment, not developing high performance athletes for the national team.

- I felt very "tricked" when it was stated that the only reason RAB put out the statement "Status quo for aa will not be the same" was to get people to come to the meeting. I honestly left the meeting feeling like it was a waste of time, and that this was never going to happen. There is a lot of talk but honestly no action being done. Since the AGM meeting in April there does not seem to be any real movement done. It was a very disappointing meeting and the negative atmosphere did not help. When you have people leave in the middle of the meeting just shows that many ppl were disappointed with how this was carried out. I honestly felt mislead as it truly seemed that it was going to be carried out in the new season and that is far from true.
Appendix D

Program Standards

1. Integrated Service Team (IST)

Each Program Operator will establish a relationship with local sport science and sport medicine providers to support each Program Operator’s sport personnel.

- Agree = 34
- Disagree = 2

2. IST Hub

Each Program Operator must designate no less than one individual to coordinate the athletes’ access to the IST ensuring service providers are well informed of athlete needs and that athletes are referred to appropriate service providers in a timely fashion.

- Agree = 29
- Disagree = 7

3. Yearly Plan

Program Operators will ensure stage-appropriate yearly training plans are developed and used.

- Agree = 35
- Disagree = 1

4. Training to Competition ratio

Program Operators must ensure programs maintain the following training to competition ratio:

- Train to Train 60/40
- Train to Compete 40/60
- Train to Win 25/75

- Agree = 30
- Disagree = 6

5. Off Season Contact

Program Operators must ensure stage-appropriate off-season contact with athletes to ensure appropriate training and competition during the off season.

- Agree = 23
- Disagree = 13

6. Mental Performance Coaching

Program Operators will ensure that the mental training programming follows a standardized curriculum that is aligned with the YTP and the stage of athletes.

- Agree = 35
- Disagree = 1

7. Mental Performance Coaching

All Program Operators will also ensure that athletes have access, at the athlete’s expense, to a mental performance coach (MPC) to aid in the athlete’s preparation.

- Agree = 28
- Disagree = 8
Appendix D continued

8. Mental Performance Coaching
Coaches must demonstrate a standard of awareness / education of mental performance.
   Agree = 36
   Disagree = 0

9. Injury Prevention Warm-Up
Program Operators will be expected to implement an injury prevention warm-up as part of their training program. A protocol will be provided by Ringette Canada
   Agree = 35
   Disagree = 1

10. Fitness Assessment and Program Prescription
Program Operators must ensure at least two fitness testing sessions per year are conducted.
   • Prior to first on ice session
   • Mid-season
     Agree = 35
     Disagree = 1

11. Fitness Assessment and Program Prescription
Results of these assessments must be recorded in the central database.
   Agree = 25
   Disagree = 11

12. Fitness Assessment and Program Prescription
Program Operators must provide individualized strength and conditioning programs, designed by trained individuals (e.g. strength and conditioning coach), based on assessments and relative to the ADM.
   Agree = 32
   Disagree = 4

13. Data Management
Program Operators are required to complete periodic individualized assessments and record each athlete’s progress in the common data base and make that data available to the athletes.
   Agree = 25
   Disagree = 9

14. Data Management
Program Operators are required to conduct formal meetings with each athlete (and parent) a minimum of 2 times per year to discuss individual progress relative to the Athlete Development Matrix (ADM)
   • Mid-season
   • Post season
     Agree = 29
     Disagree = 7
Appendix D continued

15. Financial Accessibility - Cost Controls
Program Operators will not mandate or facilitate the purchase of apparel and other branded equipment (e.g., equipment bags, footwear) beyond the standard apparel ‘kit’.
   
   Agree = 32
   Disagree = 4

16. Financial Accessibility - Cost Controls
Program Operators will establish budgets in line with the appropriate Yearly Training Plan and ensure they are followed.

   Agree = 33
   Disagree = 3

17. Athlete Eligibility
Program Operators must accommodate all athletes at or above the entry threshold.

   This does not mean all athletes must be placed on the same teams. Tiering of teams is acceptable within Excellence Ringette.

   Agree = 30
   Disagree = 6

18. Information session
Program Operators must conduct a minimum of 1 formal session (e.g., open house) for interested athletes (and parents) per calendar year

   Agree = 35
   Disagree = 1

19. Provincial Ringette Association Registration
Athletes must be registered participants in good standing of their Provincial Ringette Association to enroll in a recognized Excellence Ringette program.

   Agree = 34
   Disagree = 2

20. Provincial Ringette Association Registration
Program Operators must be members in good standing of their provincial ringette association or Ringette Canada.

   Agree = 35
   Disagree = 1

21. Program Director (working title)
Each Program Operator must ensure one representative (Program Director?) participates in an annual meeting with Ringette Canada High Performance staff and other experts. This may include travel, accommodation and meal expenses.

   Agree = 34
   Disagree = 2