# The **True Sport** Long-Term Athlete Development Matrix

## Go For It

Always strive for excellence and rise to the challenge, but never at the expense of others. Discover how good you can be.

Play	Fair
Play honestly	and obey t

rules, in letter and spirit. Winning is only meaningful when competition is fair.

> Introduce co-operative activities Encourage young athletes to help put away equipment, toys and games.

for all, shaking hands).

Show respect for everyone involved in creating a sporting experience, both on the field and off. Win with dignity and lose with grace.

**Respect Others** 

The True Sport Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Matrix identifies ethical literacy as a key component of the overall Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) LTAD model.

Sport is a valuable public asset, one that impacts the community as well as its citizens. When sport is done right, these impacts have the potential to extend well beyond the commonly recognized health benefits associated with sport, including putting children and youth on a positive life course, building stronger and more inclusive communities, and contributing to economic and environmental sustainability. These benefits are realized when sport is good - when it is value-based and principles-driven. In Canada, we call good sport True Sport.

Stage 1:

Active Start

**Discovering Sport** 

(Girls 0-6, Boys 0-6)

Children should participate in

stimulating activities and games that

develop basic movement skills in a

FUN atmosphere.

activities to promote physical literacy.

physical experiences by keeping it fun.

Recognize active parental involvement

play and unstructured games.

• Reward and recognize effort.

Use the Active for Life website for

Emphasize equal participation for all.

Focus on play rather than competition.

Cultivate a sharing environment (e.g.,

people, equipment, attention, time).

Teach listening skills through activities.

and support as key.

physical literacy.

If we want sport to live up to its potential, we need to be intentional about ensuring that it reflects our shared values. and that the sport environment is positive. We must be deliberate to ensure that sport is accessible, affordable, excellent, inclusive, fun and fair, True Sport and Long-Term Athlete Development provide the opportunity to exercise this intention - to transform our desire for good sport into action.

As coaches, teachers, administrators and parents, we need to look at the larger picture for Canadian sport. We want to develop athletes who can compete at all levels of the spectrum We want to foster recognition of the value of lifelong participation and wellness. We also want to develop individuals with strong character, good morals and strong ethics who will contribute positively in sport and in their communities. Through the lens of the LTAD's athlete-centered approach, the True Sport Matrix provides guidelines to support this intention to develop well-rounded athletes and well-rounded citizens.

The True Sport Matrix is guided by the True Sport Principles -Go For It, Play Fair, Respect Others, Keep It Fun, Stay Healthy, Include Everyone and Give Back. The principles are simple enough to be understood at all stages of development. By living these principles, people can ensure that the benefits of sport such as the joy of achievement, the growth of community or the breaking down of social barriers will naturally flow. Although the True Sport Matrix has been created for coaches, whether you are a coach, volunteer, parent or athlete, it will inspire you to create ways to enhance ethical literacy at each stage of development.

Keep in mind that the True Sport Matrix is cumulative. Similar to physical literacy, ethical literacy progresses along the ages and stages of development whereby the ethical standards acquired in Active Start and FUNdamentals are relevant and central to an athlete's ethical development throughout the rest of the stages.

### Stage 2: Stage 3: Stage 4: Training to Train Building Physical and **FUNdamentals Learning to Train** Mental Capability Fundamental Movement Skills Fundamental Sport Skills (Females 11-15, Males 12-16) (Girls 6-8, Boys 6-9) (Girls 8-11, Boys 9-12) Skill training demands and training Players are introduced to disciplined loads are increased to develop and training and begin to develop their that develop basic technical skills understanding of principles of play introduced and progressed. alongside their skills practice. Encourage lots of different unstructured Teach the various fundamental Teach overall sport skills and avoid Consolidate basic sport-specific skills movement skills and build overall motor excessive single-sport training while and tactics. Teach fundamental movements through skills refining fundamental movement skills. • Teach coping mechanisms for the • Encourage enrolment in multi-sport • Focus on shaping positive attitudes physical and mental challenges of programs that offer a wide variety of • Create an enthusiasm for attempting new towards winning and losing. competition. different activities Develop the ability to focus through • Recognize the value of winning and • Offer a variety of well-structured skill-based drills losing. activities that develop basic skills • Begin to understand the pursuit of Teach athletes to honour the game by • Continue to encourage all-round physical giving their best. personal excellence literacy • Foster an appreciation for work ethic Use motivational techniques to • Become a trained or certified leader or and its contribution to outcomes. achieve success, especially in the face age-appropriate activities that will develop coach for each stage of development. Highlight examples, reward effort over of adversity. outcome, and model good behaviours. Continue to focus on effort, learning and • Begin to identify athletes that are showing a drive to win and could skill development rather than Cultivate a sense of responsibility by encouraging athletes to lead warm-ups outcome-focused games. pursue a high-performance stream. and maintain their personal equipment, • Continue to foster personal motivation • Use process-driven activities, directing or by assigning tasks such as picking up efforts towards goals. and encourage athletes to document cones and setting up/taking down personal and/or team goals. Introduce more complex games that equipment increase problem-solving abilities. • Ensure everyone participates equally at Ensure everyone gets to participate. • Play by the rules. Encourage reflection on play, practice and competition Opportunities to compete are earned personal actions as well as those of through effort and commitment, not just parents, coaches and teammates. • Have the participants play different ability. positions and try different activities. Explore the concept of controlling • Play by the rules. Encourage ethical emotions. • Introduce simple rules. discussions by asking "What would you Introduce sportsmanship (e.g., high fives • Begin to introduce concepts related to do if..." commitment (e.g., encourage Demonstrate and reward sportsmanship participants to be responsible for their by highlighting good examples of fair play own equipment). of the game. Use situations to help and by discussing situations that are athletes evolve their decision-making. • Teach individual responsibilities. considered unfair. • Appreciate that not everyone learns the • Make a Coaches Assessment Form Introduce team-building exercises. same way or at the same pace. Select players according to their available to parents behaviour both on and off the field of Encourage debate surrounding tactical Introduce skills and activities that foster teamwork and cooperation. sport strategy among athletes. play. • Demonstrate that actions have • Have athletes take time to share and Support discussions about moral or learn from their teammates to build consequences, both good and bad. observation and communication skills. • Define and demonstrate respect towards playing. Model good behaviour when athletes are officials, players, coaches and parents. • Strive for good team chemistry and a • Teach players the values of playing (e.g., avoid yelling, respect positive interaction between everyone officials, shake hands after the game). sportsmanship, honesty, work ethic, officials). • Differentiate between fairness and respect for rules as well as loyalty to the justice. team/club. • Win with dignity and lose with grace.

Celebrate and recognize athletes who

• Encourage the expression of opinions in a

demonstrate these principles.

respectful manner.

• Legitimize feelings and challenges. • Ensure that athletes understand the importance of respecting their surroundings (e.g., pick up after themselves, do not damage facilities).

- Promote ethical choices (e.g., no bending the rules, no drug use, no cheap shots). Explore why cheating violates the integrity
- ethical issues through scenarios and role

involved in the game (coaches, parents,

use that energy positively. athletes to do the same.

- When children are introduced to activity and sport appropriately, they will have the necessary motor skills and confidence (physical literacy) to remain Active for Life in virtually any sport they choose.
- Share the True Sport Principles and have all members of your group (participants, coaches, parents) sign the True Sport Declaration. Use these principles to help guide your programming decisions.
- By using the LTAD stages, participants can ensure that they have the physical, mental, technical and tactical knowledge they need to stay involved in sport and be active for life
- Remember you are not only building athletes, you are shaping people. A positive experience in sport is the key to retaining athletes after they leave the competition stream. We call that experience... True Sport.



### Stage 5: Training to Compete

Athletes can begin

competitive strea

• Provide year-rour

sport.

obiective.

colleagues.

High Performance Sport Females 16-23, Males 15-2 their skills are exposed to hich extend their capabilities

Stage 6: Training to Win High Performance Sport (Females 18 +, Males 18 + Players are training and

competing at the highest level The focus of training shifts to optimization of performance

in to specialize in one sport and pursue an elite	
am.	
nd, high-intensity, individual event and	

- position-specific training.
- Train athletes to peak for major competitions.
- Increase the emphasis on personal commitment to achieve individual and collective outcomes.
- Work with athletes to help them master the emotional elements of
- Define excellence with athletes so they contribute to the shared
- Provide training opportunities that maximize athletes' mental readiness (e.g., preparation, positive attitude, perception, concentration, control).
- Encourage elite athletes to pursue the most intense training suitable for winning performances.
- Encourage athletes to participate in a variety of goal-setting exercises to help them stay focused.

• Apply rules consistently (as an individual) and reason through your behaviour as well as the behaviour of athletes, parents, officials and

• Channel emotional energy.

Advocate drug-free sport, equity, fair play, safety and non-violence.

## **Active for Life**

At any stage in the LTAD model, regardless of their level of ability, players may decide to play a sport as a purely recreational sport so they can continue to enjoy the game and maintain lifelong wellness.

- Ensure that all children are given a solid foundation - technical, tactical, physical and mental - upon which to build their lifelong athletic abilities.
- Encourage participants to try new sports, stay involved and stay active, and always try to do their personal best

• Promote playing by the rules. Teach and live them as a group, regardless of your role

• Encourage athletes to be constructively critical of themselves and to

• Make a Coaches Assessment Form available to athletes and parents. Speak out about social issues that matter to you and encourage

- Insist on respect for all at all times.
- Win with dignity and lose with grace.

• Reinforce positive behaviours that help build character and set standards.

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Keep it Fun Nind the joy of sport and have a good time. The pa positive attitude and look make a positive difference, on e field and in your community.	<ul> <li>Use the CS4L/LTAD resources to ensure that physical activity skills and drills are fun and appropriate for this stage.</li> <li>Be creative in the use of equipment and of coaching/teaching methods.</li> <li>Teach parents, colleagues and administrators that by keeping it fun, kids will likely continue to stay involved in sport.</li> <li>Encourage parent-led activities.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Focus on learning and having fun. Introduce formal competition in moderation.</li> <li>Have a positive attitude.</li> <li>Discourage specialization in a single sport.</li> <li>Follow your sport's LTAD guide to coordinate structured, age-appropriate games and activities.</li> <li>Stress the importance of fun and developing friendships.</li> <li>Ensure access to ongoing professional development as it builds new skills for incorporating fun into every training session.</li> <li>Enrol in continuing education courses in coaching or sport as part of your overall development.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Encourage participation in land-based, water-based and snow/ice-based activities.</li> <li>Introduce fun competitive elements (e.g., races between groups).</li> <li>Foster a strong work ethic.</li> <li>Maintain a high level of enjoyment while learning new skills.</li> <li>Accentuate the importance of friendships in the context of the team.</li> <li>Highlight good role models to ensure continued participation.</li> <li>Recognize that boys and girls learn differently and have fun doing different things.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Ensure the joy of sport is central to counter increasing social pressures to drop out.</li> <li>Recognize that as athletes master skills, self-confidence will increase.</li> <li>Help athletes develop the skills they need to overcome challenges and celebrate the joy that comes from meeting those challenges.</li> <li>Focus on the joy that comes from the experience of participating in sport.</li> <li>Encourage a balance between the demands of sport, family, friends and school.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Foster continuous athletic improvement by maintaining a level of fun.</li> <li>Emphasize the joy of effort and the commitment to excel.</li> <li>Understand that the thrill of competition provides an opportunity to continuously learn and master new skills.</li> <li>Recognize the achievement of objectives.</li> <li>Stress the importance of social networks both in and out of sport.</li> <li>Accentuate the bond between athletes, their friends and the coach/athlete family dynamic.</li> <li>Recognize the relationship between an athlete's intrinsic motivation and participation at a higher level of competition.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Try new sports and activities to keep the joy alive. Move from one sport to another (e.g., sprinting to bobsleigh, soccer to rowing).</li> <li>Participate for the enjoyment of it.</li> <li>Continue to create social connections to enhance your life.</li> <li>Find the joy that comes from maintaining a healthy active lifestyle.</li> <li>Seek new/additional ways to enhance your sport and recreational experience</li> </ul>
Stay Healthy Acce physical and mental health above all other considerations and avoid unsafe activities. pect your body and keep in shape.	<ul> <li>Use LTAD resources and guidelines to foster active play.</li> <li>Use age-appropriate equipment.</li> <li>Model healthy behaviour. Make being healthy a fun thing.</li> <li>Start talking about the importance of taking care of our bodies.</li> <li>Provide caring and knowledgeable adults as role models.</li> <li>Create opportunities and encourage children to be active daily for a minimum of 60 minutes.</li> <li>Enhance emotional development and build social skills.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Develop skills through a combination of unstructured play in safe and challenging environments, and quality instruction from knowledgeable teachers, leaders or coaches.</li> <li>Encourage daily unstructured physical play with friends and family.</li> <li>Ensure an appropriate practice-to-competition ratio as per your sport's LTAD guide.</li> <li>Make being healthy a cool thing.</li> <li>Introduce proper eating, sleeping and hydration habits.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Introduce nutritional concepts.</li> <li>Encourage your athletes to keep track of their daily physical activity levels and share them at practice.</li> <li>Recognize moods and begin to deal with emotions.</li> <li>Introduce the notion that drug use in sport is neither healthy nor fair.</li> <li>Enhance personal development through sport. Character development through sport participation translates well into life skills.</li> <li>Recognize that boys and girls grow and mature differently.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Introduce specific sport fitness training concepts (e.g., sport nutrition).</li> <li>Teach positive body image and educate athletes, parents, and coaches about normal body changes.</li> <li>Provide current anti-doping information.</li> <li>Recognize that sport can be a stress reducer.</li> <li>Empower athletes using positive imagery and foster positive self-esteem.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Increase knowledge about sport nutrition, doping, sport psychology, positive body image, fitness training, and proper equipment usage.</li> <li>Ensure athletes think about their future sporting life.</li> <li>Set the stage to remain healthy for life.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Find a positive work-life-play balance.</li> <li>Maintain healthy eating habits.</li> <li>Participate for the health benefits of a active lifestyle.</li> <li>Use sport as a stress reducer.</li> <li>Recognize that the transition from one sport to another always requires an adjustment period.</li> </ul>
Actuate everyone Share sport with others, regardless of creed, ethnicity, nder, sexual orientation or ability. Invite everyone into sport to make it more meaningful for the whole community.	<ul> <li>Ensure your program is open and accessible to everyone.</li> <li>Embrace diversity.</li> <li>Create participation opportunities for athletes from all backgrounds (e.g., financial, faith, ethnicity, ability).</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Pair up athletes with others of varying skills sets to create opportunities to learn from each other and/or to learn new skills.</li> <li>Ensure that athletes have the opportunity to try various positions, techniques and skills.</li> <li>Create fun ways to welcome new athletes and their families to the program or team.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Accentuate the importance of being friendly, respectful and kind with teammates, parents, coaches, officials, and opponents.</li> <li>Coordinate an "All Sport One Day" activity in your community.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Intentionally set up your training groups to mix and match various skill sets and positions throughout the season.</li> <li>Introduce team-building activities to help athletes and their families get to know one another and to learn more about each other.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Host a free drills and skills program for younger, less skilled players from your school, club, or community.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Be accepting of varying levels of ability and structure activities to accommoda them.</li> </ul>
<b>Give Back</b> ways remember the community that supports your sport and helps make it possible. Find ways to show your opreciation and help others get the most out of sport.	<ul> <li>Introduce junior athletes as role models/coaches in Active Start programs providing opportunities to give back.</li> <li>Provide recycling at all facilities.</li> <li>Share team responsibilities among all families (e.g., bringing snacks, co-coaching, setting up or taking down equipment).</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Provide opportunities for youth to participate in fundraising activities.</li> <li>Advocate for quality physical education programs in the school curriculum.</li> <li>Have participants set up and take down equipment before and after practice or competitions.</li> <li>Respect your facilities (e.g., pick up garbage and water bottles after the activity, participate in the local seasonal environmental community clean up days).</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Take up a cause. Get athletes to raise money for a charity or donate used equipment to those in need.</li> <li>Have athletes think about their preferred True Sport Principle and share their choice and rationale with their teammates.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Encourage social giving.</li> <li>Create a youth activator position on your club's organizing committees to engage youth and solicit their input.</li> <li>Encourage athletes to volunteer. In certain provinces, high school students can log these hours for school credits.</li> <li>Encourage coaches, athletes and parents to become officials.</li> <li>Use the True Sport Principles to encourage dialogue on how athletes can</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Encourage critical thinking and taking a stand on issues of importance.</li> <li>Provide opportunities for athletes to share their experiences through public speaking and role modeling.</li> <li>Become a champion for True Sport and encourage your athletes to do the same.</li> <li>Become a champion for Canadian Sport for Life and encourage your athletes to do the same.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Transfer your knowledge back to your community by mentoring, coaching, or community sport leader or role model.</li> <li>Evolve as a participant – become a co an official, or an administrator.</li> <li>Consider sport-related careers such as coaching, officiating, sport administral small business enterprises, or media.</li> <li>Find ways to encourage your communitake a stand.</li> <li>Rally your community to become a Tru</li> </ul>

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• Rally your community to become a True Sport Community.