

## ONTARIO BASKETBALL, CANADIAN SPORT FOR LIFE AND LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT



At Ontario Basketball (OBA), “we are unwavering in our commitment to basketball development according to the principles of Canadian Sport for Life.”

**Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L)** is one of OBA’s values that guides our decision-making. From grassroots programming to clubs and competitions to elite teams, OBA strives to ensure that our structure and programs align with CS4L principles, including **Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD)**.

### What is Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L)?

[www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca)

CS4L is a movement to improve the quality of sport and physical activity in Canada in order to enhance the health, wellness, and sport experiences of all Canadians. The key outcomes of CS4L are physical literacy, improved performance, and increased lifelong participation in physical activity.

### What is Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD)?

[www.ltad.ca](http://www.ltad.ca)

The LTAD model is a key feature of CS4L. It is a multi-stage training, competition, and recovery pathway designed to increase participation and optimize performance, guiding individuals’ experience in sport and physical activity from birth to adulthood.

LTAD is a holistic approach that not only considers individuals’ physical development, but mental, cognitive, and emotional development as well.

LTAD is athlete-centred, coach-driven, and supported by administration, sport science, and sponsors. Every National Sport Organization in Canada, including Canada Basketball, has adopted LTAD and adapted it to their sport.

### What are Canada Basketball’s LTAD stages of development?

Canada Basketball’s LTAD has eight stages, and OBA’s club players fall into four stages: Learn to Train, Train to Train, Train to Compete, and Active for Life (see *Figure 1*).



Figure 1

## LTAD STAGES



# TRAIN TO COMPETE STAGE



## DEVELOPING PHYSICAL LITERACY

In the first three stages of development (Active Start, FUNdamentals, and Learn to Train), athletes should learn **fundamental movement skills** and develop **physical literacy** in a fun environment. They should also begin learning **fundamental sport skills**.

### PHYSICAL LITERACY

Physical literacy means having the confidence and competence to move in various ways in a variety of environments (e.g., land, water, ice, snow).

Physical literacy is the foundation of CS4L. It leads to both sport excellence (Train to Train, Train to Compete, Learn to Win, and Train to Win) and being Active for Life.

### FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS

Fundamental movement skills are basic movement skills, like running, jumping, throwing, and catching, that are necessary to participate in many sports.

The ABCs of movement (Agility, Balance, Coordination, and Speed) are also important skills to master because they underpin all fundamental movements.

### FUNDAMENTAL SPORT SKILLS

Fundamental sport skills are fundamental movement skills, like throwing, that are sport-specific, like throwing a basketball to a teammate or into a basketball net. In order for children to be successful in sport, they should master fundamental movement skills before learning fundamental sport skills.

## DEVELOPING THE GAME

At the end of the Learn to Train stage, athletes either move into the Excellence Pathway to begin to “Develop the Game” in the Train to Train stage or they move on to the Active for Life stage.

When players enter the Train to Train stage, they should be physically literate. The goal of the stage is to develop overall basketball players, not positional players. Participants should play different positions to become well-rounded players. By the end of the stage, participants should begin specializing in one sport.

After the Train to Train stage, a small number of elite athletes continue along the Excellence Pathway and enter the Train to Compete stage, while most participants move into the Active for Life stage.

The Train to Compete stage is characterized by pursuing sport excellence through a periodized, high-intensity sport-specific as well as individual training schedule. The major objective of this stage is learning to compete under any circumstance through a high performance daily training environment. Athletes, who are now proficient at performing both basic and sport-specific skills, learn to perform these skills under a variety of competitive conditions during training. This stage also emphasizes personal preparation with individualized fitness plans, recovery programs, psychological preparation routines, and technical development to address each athlete’s individual strengths and weaknesses.

## COMPETING FOR THE NATION

After the Train to Compete stage, a very small number of athletes advance to the Learn to Win and Train to Win stages to “Compete for the Nation” in international competitions. Athletes who are not training and competing in a high performance daily training environment then transition into the Active for Life stage. Learn to Win and Train to Win athletes play in professional leagues and/or in international competitions representing their country.



# LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT



## WHAT DOES LTAD RECOMMEND FOR TRAIN TO COMPETE ATHLETES?

- Focus on one sport and developing sport- and position-specific skills.
- Participate in basketball-specific training six times per week.
- Adhere to the following Training to Competition and Competition-Specific Training Ratio:
  - Spend 40% of time in basketball developing technical and tactical skills and improving fitness.
  - Spend 60% of time devoted to competitions and competition-specific training, like end of game situations related to time and score (e.g., playing out a scenario of being down by two points with 45 seconds remaining while in possession of the ball in the front-court with both teams in penalty and only having one timeout remaining).
- The most skilled and qualified coaches should lead **periodized** training programs that ensure athletes' physical, mental, and emotional needs are adequately addressed.
- Athletes should be supported by an **Integrated Support Team**.

Being a high performance athlete is about more than just on-court performance. In addition to having the necessary technical basketball skills, high performance basketball players must have other skills, including:

- Mental/Social-Emotional (e.g., passion, leadership, commitment to training, resilience)
- Physiological (e.g., speed, strength, agility)
- Tactical (e.g., decision-making)

High performance programs should address all these aspects of athlete development to provide a holistic training environment.

**Periodization** is defined as “a strategy to promote long-term training and performance improvements with pre-planned, systematic variations in training specificity, intensity, and volume organized in periods or cycles within an overall program.”

A periodized yearly training and competition plan is essential to ensure maximum gains and long-term development for high performance athletes.

Weekly and yearly training plans incorporate all aspects of an athlete's life (i.e., training, competition, rest and recovery, academics, social life, etc.) and are planned strategically in phases, with varying intensity and volume, which build towards ensuring athletes peak at one or two culminating competitions throughout the year (e.g., national or international competitions).

An **Integrated Support Team** is composed of professionals in sport science, medicine, and administration who provide support for high performance athletes and teams with regards to training, competition and rest and recovery (e.g., physiotherapist, nutritionist, performance analyst, etc.).



## WHAT PROGRAMS ARE IN PLACE TO DEVELOP TRAIN TO COMPETE ATHLETES?

### Centre for Performance

Centre for Performance (CP) is a nationally established program designed to develop athletes for the purpose of competing at the international basketball level. CP is not based on a competition model; rather it is a group of athletes (ages 13-16) training in pods across Ontario with the common goal of improving.

### Targeted Athlete Strategy

The targeted athlete strategy (TAS) surrounds identified Canadian athletes (aged 15-18) with the individualized support that they need in their development to enhance what the team based system already provides. Working with provincial partners, TAS identifies top athletes within the national team program's depth chart and assesses those athletes to determine their individual areas of need in various core areas of development.

### Team Ontario

Team Ontario consists of the top male and female basketball players and coaches in the province in the U15 and U17 age categories and is a continual medal favourite.

For the 2015 Canada Basketball National Championships, the girls will be competing in Edmonton, AB from July 24-29 and the boys will be hosted in Halifax, NS from August 3-9.

### National Teams

Athletes and coaches can represent the nation at various levels. Within the Train to Compete category, Canada Basketball has Cadet (males) and Cadette (females) national teams (ages U16 to U17) and Junior national teams (ages U18 to U19).

The National teams will be participating in the following competitions this year:

- Cadet Team - U16 FIBA Americas in Argentina
- Cadette Team - U16 FIBA Americas in Mexico
- Junior Men - U19 FIBA World Cup in Greece
- Junior Women - U19 FIBA World Championship in Russia

## BEING ACTIVE FOR LIFE

The majority of the population is in the Active for Life stage. Participants can enter at any time following the Learn to Train stage, and they should be physically literate.

The Active for Life stage has the following three streams:

- **Competitive for Life:** Some participants compete in structured, organized sport such as Ontario Basketball's member club teams and provincial championships.
- **Fit for Life:** Most Active for Life participants are Fit for Life. They take part in physical activities such as hiking, snowboarding, and yoga as well as recreational sports like pick-up basketball.
- **Sport and Physical Activity Leaders:** Being part of the Active for Life stage also means being active in sport as coaches, officials, administrators, and volunteers.

## WHAT ARE THE CANADIAN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES TO BE ACTIVE FOR LIFE?

Youth between ages 12 to 17 should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity every day, including:

- Vigorous-intensity activities at least three days a week.
- Activities that strengthen muscles and bone at least three days a week (e.g., using free weights, running on an elliptical, etc.).

Moderate-intensity physical activities cause participants to sweat a little and to breathe harder and their heart rates become elevated. Examples include brisk walking and cycling.

Vigorous-intensity physical activities, like running, cause participants to sweat and their heart rates greatly increase.



## HOW HAS OBA STRUCTURED ITS CLUB PROGRAMMING TO ALIGN WITH CS4L AND LTAD?

### COACHING

CS4L highlights the importance of knowledgeable and qualified individuals leading sport programs using stage-appropriate training to ensure participants' proper development.

#### Coaching Requirements

- Coaches must be certified through the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP).
- Coaches for U10 Novice to U12 Major Atom teams must have Learn to Train certification.
- Coaches for U13 Bantam to U19 Junior teams must have Train to Train certification.

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. Active for Life website ([www.activeforlife.com](http://www.activeforlife.com))
2. Canada Basketball Development Model ([www.basketball.ca](http://www.basketball.ca))
3. CS4L: A Sport Parent's Guide ([www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca))
4. Steve Nash Parents' Guide ([www.basketball.ca](http://www.basketball.ca))

### FUTURE CHANGES

In keeping with LTAD's philosophy of "Kaizen" (continuous improvement), OBA will continue to make changes to further align our programming with CS4L. Changes may include stage-appropriate league structures, game modifications, and annual periodized training and competition schedules.

For future changes stay connected at [www.basketball.on.ca](http://www.basketball.on.ca).

### TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

Recovery, for example, performing a proper cool-down or ensuring sufficient hydration, is an important factor in training and performance. Proper rest and recovery is essential for athletes to adequately recover and ultimately achieve optimal performances. If athletes perform in a fatigued state, they will not receive the full benefit of the training session or competition. Additionally, athletes who are being over-trained, without adequate rest and recovery, often experience overuse injuries and in many cases will experience a career-altering or career-ending injury early in their career (e.g., ACL tear, jumper's knee, etc.).

#### Tournament Structure Requirements

- OBA recommends that teams play a maximum of two games per day in tournaments, which is the format followed for all provincial championships.
- Teams are not permitted to play back-to-back games; they must have at least 90 minutes of rest between games.