

Leadership Module: Athlete Leadership & Representation

Athlete Leadership & Representation

In contributing to a strong and vibrant Canadian sport system, AthletesCAN is committed to developing athlete leaders, who lead by example, inspire others to excel and contribute to meaningful change where they live, work and play.

As a part of this objective, AthletesCAN is dedicated to providing effective training and leadership skill development to Canada's national team athletes to afford them the opportunity to gain a significant level of confidence, comfort and knowledge in representing their voice and those of their teammates at the decision making table.

What does it mean to be an “athlete leader”? How can you, as an athlete, help to direct decisions and influence change within your sport organization? What kind of power do the athletes have in a system of multiple organizations, government policies and accountability? To answer these questions, AthletesCAN has developed, collected and comprised a variety of resources to ensure that athlete leaders have the tools and the knowledge to support and further an athlete-centered sport system in Canada.

The Athlete Leadership & Representation online learning module represents one of the ongoing chapters of a competencies based learning model for athlete leadership development. The leadership modules have been tailored to create a more athlete focused, concise and user friendly learning experience, providing links to more detailed information as required and easily referenced materials to share with your teammates.



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Section 1: Athlete Centered Sport

In an athlete-centered sport system, the values, programs, policies, resource allocation, and priorities of sport organizations place primary emphasis on consideration of athletes' needs in a holistic sense, and performance goals within that context. Those responsible for leadership and decision-making in sport must include the athletes in both defining the needs and goals of the sport or event, and in determining how to meet them. The athlete should be an active subject, not the object of sporting programs.

The Essentials

Athlete-centered sport can take on a number of definitions – it's not one that defines it but the sum of all of them.

Accountability

A sport system needs to be accountable to its consumers - that's us – the athletes. It also needs to be accountable to all members of the sport organizations.

Mutual Respect

Athletes will learn to value and respect themselves through having the opportunity to exercise control over their own actions and lives.

Empowerment

The system needs to provide opportunities for athletes to develop leadership and decision-making skills both on and off the field of play. The best way to achieve this is to encourage athletes to develop and exercise their full range of abilities.

Equity & Fairness

Athletes must understand that training and competitive opportunities should be accessible, inclusive and equitable for all participants. In addition, Athlete Agreements must be fair, and understood by all parties and never signed under duress.

Excellence

In an athlete-centered sport system, athletes are able to pursue and demonstrate excellence because adequate facilities, qualified coaching, development opportunities and support networks exist both on and off the field of play.

Extended Responsibility

The transition from a training and competitive athletic world to post competitive life is a difficult one for many athletes. The sport system has to recognize the long-term impact it has on the athlete's life and decisions must be made with appropriate consideration of the long-term consequences for athletes. Further support for this transition needs to be developed and standardized to meet the needs of our athletes at all stages of the LTAD model.



Athlete Health

The health of athletes has to be safeguarded. Sport must contribute to overall health and well being for all participants. Policies and procedures surrounding return to play, injury prevention and safety education must be further developed, standardized and enforced across the sport system.

Informed Participation

In an athlete-centered sport system, the athlete is given choices and kept aware of potential consequences and trade-offs.

Mutual Support

Athletes and others in the sport system must work together to meet objectives and solve problems.

Athlete Rights

The rights of athletes must be clearly defined and mutually agreed upon by both the athletes and the sport organization leaders. The rights that are agreed upon need to be safeguarded through policies, procedures and organizational values.

Is your sport athlete-centered?

1. Is your sport experience positive for you & your teammates?
2. Do most athletes stay involved after retirement?
3. Does the system enable you and your teammates to achieve your full potential?
4. Do you and your teammates receive quality coaching and technical support?
5. Do you have access to appropriate training and competitive opportunities?
6. Do you and your teammates compete with the spirit of sport and fair play?
7. Does the system have a positive impact on developing the following characteristics throughout the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) process from grass roots to high performance?
 - Technical skills
 - Self-knowledge and self-esteem
 - Moral integrity
 - Leadership skills
 - Teamwork
 - Respect for others

If you answered **NO** to any of these questions, although your NSO may be trying to ensure these things are happening, there is still work to be done. That is where athlete representation comes in. The good news is, if your NSO has at least one athlete rep – they have already made the first step of many but it is your job to continue to move the sport towards athlete-centeredness – with our help of course.



Sport Canada Standards for Athlete-Centeredness

NSOs are held accountable to expectations defined by Sport Canada in order to receive funding. This level of accountability set out by Sport Canada has evolved over the years to reach the current inclusion of Annex A14 which addresses athlete-centeredness.

Annex A14:

NSOs must demonstrate their formal commitment to athlete centeredness, where athletes are treated fairly and have substantive opportunities to be involved in decisions which affect them. This commitment to athlete centeredness may be demonstrated in a number of ways, either by reflecting it in the structure and organization of the NSO and/or making this commitment explicit in policies, or other instruments, or by having a policy or other instrument that outlines and confirms this commitment. This also includes ensuring opportunities and mechanisms exists for national team athletes to be informed and to provide input into matters affecting them, particularly in the area of national team programming. NSOs must also provide national team athletes with access to due process. NSOs must provide to Sport Canada a copy of documentation demonstrating this commitment.

If you feel your NSO is not meeting these standards, please contact [AthletesCAN](#).

Additional Resources

For additional information on athlete-centered sport, check out the following publications:

[Athlete-Centred Sport – Discussion Paper 1994](#)

[A Deliberative Democratic Approach to Athlete-Centred Sport: The Dynamics of Administrative and Communicative Power](#)

[Organizational Changes in Canada's Sport System: Toward an Athlete-Centred Approach](#)

[Democratization and governance in international sport: addressing issues with athlete involvement in organizational policy](#)



Section 2: Athlete Representation

Ask yourself this question...

How much input, either directly and/or indirectly, do I have or do other athletes have into the decisions that affect me? Are there ways for my voice to be heard when things are decided?

Ensuring that there is a process for the opinions of athletes to be heard and acted upon is an important step in making sure that your sport is focused on your needs and on athletes in general. AthletesCAN believes that the most effective way for athletes to be heard is through an Athlete Representative.

Click [here](#) for Athlete Representative job description and selection process samples.

Understanding Roles and Responsibilities of Athlete Representation

An Athlete Representative is someone who speaks on behalf of athletes. They can be a current or retired national team athlete who has either been selected or appointed by their teammates to represent the athlete voice within the sport and in many instances, for multiple levels, disciplines and genders.

As an Athlete Representative, you play a critical leadership role as the conduit between the active athletes and the decision-makers in your sport. You help your teammates to become part of that decision-making circle.

The role of being an Athlete Representative is a challenging one. In some instances, you must put your personal needs behind those of your teammates. That is a tough thing to do for any athlete. At the same time, to best serve your teammates, you need their support, respect and understanding of the position you have accepted.

Whether you are already aware of what an athlete representative does or are new to the idea, you likely have some preconceived notions regarding the various aspects of the role – some may be true and some may be based out of fear of the unknown or hearsay. We explore these thoughts below.

Benefits of being an Athlete Rep

As an athlete representative you can...

- Effect positive change within your sport.
- Learn about your NSO and the Canadian high performance sport system to better understand your role in the sport landscape and represent your interests and those of your teammates.
- Enhance relationships - educate your NSO representatives about the current athlete needs / status of the national team effectively.



- Become an effective communicator - develop communication and presentation skills and leverage these to achieve your aspirations for your sport and in life.
- Build your career - put it on your resume.
- Build your network - meet other athlete reps through conferences, workshops, etc. -exchange ideas, network to strengthen the athlete voice.
- Build leadership skills - earn respect for your abilities outside sport.
- Become a mentor - educate your teammates about your NSO and the high performance sport system to ensure a level playing field and foster athlete leadership development.
- Give back.

What else can be achieved by Athlete Representatives?

You can change your sport world. Sport organizations aren't really different than other companies or organizations. Ideas may come from all levels of the organization, but major decisions are made by the people at the table. Athlete Representatives should have the opportunity to be at those tables to influence direction, priorities, competitive calendars and financial and human resource allocation

Potential Barriers to becoming an Athlete Rep

Most potential barriers listed below are often removed as understanding of the role becomes clearer.

I can't be an effective athlete representative because...

- I don't have time.
- I'm not interested.
- It's too stressful.
- I don't feel as though I have the skills to do it.
- I just want to focus on my sport.
- I don't want to be controversial or I don't want to piss anyone off.
- I don't like politics.
- I don't want the responsibility.
- It's too much work.

Remember, you are the only one that can hold yourself accountable for the decision to either speak up and effect change or sit back and face the consequences. Check out this [video](#) for some inspiration

Who is the ideal Athlete Rep?

There may not be one athlete who is PERFECT for the athlete rep role however there are pros and cons to having athletes representing the various levels of national team experience that should be reviewed and considered before running for or selecting the athlete representative for your sport.

Most importantly, it always comes down to who is willing to learn, to speak out and to best represent the view of the athletes. The key is that the representative is chosen by the athletes and is still involved with them on a regular basis.



Rookie National Team Athlete	
PROS	Areas of Concern/Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Are enthusiastic and eager to contribute → No preconceived notions as to how a program should be run (open to new ideas) → Willing to listen and bringing a new perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → May have limited experience from a team or business background → Afraid to “rock the boat” for fear of retribution → Could be unavailable for meetings due to work, training, school and competition demands

Veteran National Team Athlete	
PROS	Areas of Concern/Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Knowledgeable about the needs of athletes → Have a tendency to play a very active role within committees → Are motivated to make changes that will directly affect them → Ability to mentor younger, less experienced athletes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Afraid to paint an accurate picture (in some cases) for fear of losing their carding or status on the team → Could be unavailable for meetings due to work, training, school and competition demands

Retired National Team Athlete	
PROS	Areas of Concern/Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Are knowledgeable about the needs of athletes → Are not afraid to speak out for athlete rights → Have better availability for meetings → Are more informed about issues within sport that occur throughout the career path → Ability to mentor younger, less experienced athletes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Are slightly removed from current situation and depending on the communication and relationships, could present a challenge → Might be from a previous coaching or national team system

Issues with your Athlete Rep

If you have a problem with your athlete representative or don't think that they are doing their job properly then there are a number of things you can do:

- Speak to them directly about your problems with how they are doing their job.
- If you don't feel you can do this on your own, you could ask for a meeting with other athletes present to back you up.



- If many of the athletes feel the same as you, you may wish to ask for a new athlete rep election and nominate a new representative.
- If you feel your rep needs to do their job more effectively you should ask them to contact AthletesCAN who can help them carry out their duties.
- It is important to realize that your rep is elected by you the athletes. If they are not doing their job properly or you feel that someone else should be doing the job, it is up to you to make the changes happen.

Athlete Representative Checklist

Click [here](#) to view the Athlete Representative Checklist in a PDF.

Items you need to know as the New Athlete Rep within your Sport

1. The Athlete Representative roles and responsibilities as outlined clearly by a job description and/or terms of reference and communicated to all parties, including coaches. Click [here](#) for some examples.
2. AthletesCAN Leadership Modules: Athlete Leadership & Representation, Athletes on Boards, and Sport System 101. Click [here](#) to learn more about the AthletesCAN Leadership Modules.
3. The contact details of the NSO staff member or volunteer appointed to act as an ongoing resource and liaison for you.
4. An overview of “who is who” and an outline of the responsibilities of various committees and governance levels within the organization. All staff and most volunteer positions should have job descriptions, including you. You should be able to find most of this information in your NSOs various policies and procedures. Click here to see [Athlete Policies & Procedures](#) for Bobsleigh Canada Skeleton and their [Athlete Handbook](#).
5. A schematic or organizational chart showing reporting and supervision responsibilities and connections between all positions.
6. A summary of current issues/concerns and/or solutions from both the perspective of the NSO and the athletes. Determine where things stand in relation to:
 - **Athlete Assistance Program** – how many cards does your sport have, what is the nomination process
 - **Athlete Agreements** – review current document, determine any recent changes or recommendations for review from the previous athlete representative and ensure all current athletes are up to date and understand the implications of the content
 - **Team Selection Process and Policies** – how often do they change, who is responsible for setting criteria, what is your role, who are the key stakeholders and how are they being informed
 - **Dispute Resolution** – What are the channels for dispute resolution? What is the appeal process? Who are the key personnel responsible for handling disputes at the NSO level? What other resources have athlete representatives in the past used to solve these types of issues?
 - **Coaching & Support Staff** – Understand selection and assigned events
 - **Make yourself aware of any other pertinent issues affecting your athletes**
7. The opportunity for the Athlete Representative(s) to speak to a number of people in the organization to help you to develop a historical and current perspective. How are



- decisions made today? Why were particular decisions made in the past? What are the issues of the day? What are the plans for the future?
8. A Communication Plan – what is the current communication plan between the Athlete Representative, the NSO and the athletes? Are there any breakdowns? Are all key stakeholders being reached and engaged? If there is not already one in place, develop one with the input of outgoing or past reps and current teammates.
 9. Communication Schedule & Templates – Have there been standardized templates created in the past and successfully used by previous Athlete Representatives? Has a schedule been created for key communications throughout the season? Click [here](#) for important factors to consider when developing or reviewing your communications plan.
 10. The Athlete Representative Succession Plan to target potential reps for future responsibilities prior to the end of your term. Click [here](#) for a Succession Planning matrix.
 11. The following documents should be provided by your NSO and/or outgoing representative(s).
 - A copy of applicable committee and Board minutes, and meeting reports for at least the past 2 to 3 years. These will help to put current issues into context.
 - List and Contact details for current Board of Directors & previous minutes
 - List of Committees and Committee members with contact details
 - A copy of the applicable Sport Development Model. What programs and opportunities should be in place for athletes at different stages of their technical and competitive development?
 - A copy of the NSO's current strategic plan. You need to learn what the strategic priorities, goals and objectives are for the organization. Click [here](#) for the Athletics Canada Strategic Plan as an example.
 - The audited financial statements for the past 2 to 3 years, plus current fiscal year financial information including the budget. Contact your Board Treasurer to help explain them to you.
 - The budget (if one exists) to facilitate communication and continuity among and between Athlete Representatives and athletes.

Athlete Representation Structures

Some sports have implemented a combination of representation structures where multiple reps (genders, disciplines, abilities, etc.) are available and responsible for various meetings, initiatives and duties to share the load and provide a better snapshot of the athlete membership and voice for any one sport.

A more formal version of this revolving structure is the **Athletes' Council** explained further in the next section.

Athletes' Councils

Every sport has issues that are pertinent to high performance athletes. These may include team selection, competitive schedules, training conditions and expectations, assistance with time off work to travel, carding, team coaches or support personnel, the Athlete Representative at the table, conduct issues, communication, and more. Athletes need to be part of the development of these policies and practices, as well as the decision-making bodies that ratify or approve them.

Unless athletes are at the table, you may not be heard. Athletes need to ensure that the decisions made take athletes' interests into account. The Athlete Representative should have a



structure in place for communication and knowledge sharing among all athletes. Some sports have established an internal Athletes' Committee or Council where a "team" of Athlete Representatives can discuss issues within a supportive environment. Sharing the load also means that a single Athlete Representative does not have to be the athlete expert on every issue. However, it is critical that information be shared and consensus reached on key issues. This committee or council could include representation from a variety of interest groups including, the "A" and "B" team, Male/Female, East/West and others depending on the sport. The committee or council will also be the training ground for the athlete leaders of tomorrow.

Formation and on-going meetings of an Athletes' Council has been the answer to more effective communication and representation for many sports.

How to create an Athletes' Council

Click [here](#) to view How to create an Athletes' Council in a PDF.

1. Get a group of interested athletes together and determine whether or not the sport needs an Athletes' Council. You'll need to consider the following areas to better define your objectives:
 - What will the Council try to do for athletes?
 - What are some of the issues facing athletes in your sport?
 - Which athletes will be included through this representation? (e.g. gender, ability, discipline, etc.)
 - How will a Council function? (Structure, communication, working with other parts of the organization)
2. An Athletes' Council could function on an informal basis and not be officially recognized by the sport, however, your influence and resources may be limited and the athletes will have to meet at camps, by phone or e-mail. To be formally recognized by the NSO, decide whether the Council should be included in the Bylaws or in policy. Ideally, you want the NSO to recognize the Athletes' Council as the voice of the high performance athletes, with the Athlete Representatives as its ambassadors at board and/or committee meetings in addition to a budget that would allow your group to meet at least once a year face to face and host regular conference calls. You will need your NSO's Board of Directors to approve this.
3. Use the example of existing Athletes' Councils' Terms of Reference to determine how your Council will work. Decide how meetings will take place. As funding for meetings is always an issue a good alternative is to meet electronically through a message board for athletes (password protected) on the NSO website or through Skype. Click [here](#) for an Athletes' Council Terms of Reference.
4. Make sure that all athletes are well-represented (e.g. national team, junior and development, women, men, able bodied and disabled, and the different disciplines your NSO represents).
5. Between formal meetings, communicate informally at events, on the phone, or electronically to keep all athletes well-informed about issues.
6. DEVELOP SOLUTIONS! From day one, the Athletes' Council should endeavour to be "solution oriented". It is one thing to find a situation or issue about which you are not happy – it is more difficult but also more productive to develop solutions and recommendations to address those issues.
7. Develop a communications strategy for the Council. Different components of the plan should cover internal communication amongst the athletes; formal communication with the Board and committees through the Athlete Representatives (including the determination of which committees should have athletes reps sitting as members); and



- informal communication (with key messages) for meetings and events. Click [here](#) for a reporting guideline and template.
8. Figure out how to get your point across!
 - Ask your sport organization's Board of Directors to extend two positions to allow for two athletes reps (male and female) to ensure greater opportunity for your message to reach the appropriate decision makers.
 - Ask the Board to support these athlete reps by making sure they understand how the board makes decisions. Please refer to the AthletesCAN online [Athletes on Boards Leadership Module](#) for more information.
 - Ask for athlete reps on the committees of the Board, e.g. national team committee, high performance, finance, personnel, coaching, selection, etc. – this is usually where the real decisions are made.
 9. Contact [AthletesCAN](#) for help! We'll be glad to give you advice on how to get started and how to be effective.

What types of Athlete Rep opportunities exist?

There are a number of opportunities at the national and international levels to be an Athlete Representative.

If you are interested in becoming involved as an Athlete Representative at any level, the following steps are encouraged:

- Let people know that you are interested in getting involved
- Find out what the eligibility criteria or requirements are for the various positions
- If you are not yet qualified for a position in which you are interested, then work to fill the gaps in your experience. (Ask the organization what it is looking for in terms of experience and commitment.)
- Speak to past athletes who have fulfilled these roles and ask for their candid feedback on what to expect

Opportunities within a NSO

Within the sport organization structure, representation from athletes should be included in a number of key areas.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors or equivalent is the legitimate governing authority of the organization. It is a required element in an incorporated non-profit organization. Members of the Board are elected by the membership of the organization or appointed by a specific arm of the organization or an outside body. This is determined by the Bylaws of the association. As an Athlete Representative, you were probably elected or appointed by the high performance athletes, not by the membership as a whole.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Athletes on Boards.

Committees

There are usually two types of committees in an organization. A Standing Committee, is included in the Bylaws along with specific information about how people are elected or appointed and duties of these types of committee members. For example, high performance or national team committees are usually Standing Committees. The Board may also create "ad hoc" committees



from time to time which are short-term committees pulled together to perform a specific function or take on a particular task. Examples of ad hoc committees planning for the development of facilities, marketing of national teams, major fund development or hiring committees for coaches and staff.

Those who may sit on standing committees include coaches, technical staff members, a VP or Chair of High Performance and possibly other “members-at-large”. The High Performance Committee is probably of great interest to the Board as the national team provides influence to the profile of the sport, and a good portion of the association’s financial resources are usually allocated to the high performance program. The decision-making authority of the committee will depend on its terms of reference. It may only be able to make recommendations to the Board, or it may have sweeping powers to determine programs and budget. Be sure to find out how the committee functions and what it can and can’t do.

Athletes’ Councils

Click [here](#) to learn more about Athletes’ Councils.

Opportunities within the Sport System

AthletesCAN

The AthletesCAN Board of Directors has 11 to 12 positions from sports and various multi-sport organizations. There are 7 elected positions by the athlete membership and one appointed from each of the following multi-sport organizations: Canadian Olympic Committee, Canadian Paralympic Committee, Commonwealth Games Canada and the Aboriginal Sport Circle. There are also several ad hoc committees throughout the year assembled for various events and initiatives including the AthletesCAN Forum and advocacy issues. Contact [AthletesCAN](#) if you’re interested in getting more involved!

Canadian Sport Centres

The Canadian Sports Centres (CSC) have athlete representatives on their individual Boards of Directors while some have established Athletes’ Councils as well.

Click [here](#) for a list of CSCs.

International Sport Federations

A number of International Sport Federations (ISF) include athlete representatives on their Executives, Boards and/or committees. Check out the applicable ISF website or speak to the senior staff or President of your NSO to find out what your sport-specific opportunities may be.

Click [here](#) for a list of ISFs.

Multi Sport Games Organizations

Canadian Olympic Committee (COC)

The Athletes’ Commission represents the voice of athletes to the Canadian Olympic Committee Board of Directors and is instrumental in presenting Canadian athletes’ perspectives on policy and program decisions, such as Olympic Team selection, athlete funding and other matters concerning high performance sport in Canada. For more information visit www.olympic.ca.

Terms of Reference

The general purpose of the Commission is to represent current and aspiring Olympians and Pan American Games athletes (“Athletes”). In contributing to the achievement, and the development of philosophies, policies, and strategic plans of the COC, Commission members shall rely on their unique perspective to promote the views and concerns of the Athletes.



GENERAL DUTIES

- Each Commission member will be expected to make their best effort to participate in all Commission meetings.
- Each Commission member is assigned to a group of F-members who are not on the Commission. The Commission member is responsible for providing information about the business of Commission to his/her assigned F members and acting as a liaison through whom they can communicate concerns to the Commission.
- Commission members shall make best efforts to communicate, at least once annually, about the activities of the Commission to their respective F member groups.
- Commission members may be asked to actively contribute to an Athlete Leader area within the COC. The Commission members shall make best efforts to participate in all required meeting asked of them.
- Commission members assigned an Athlete Leader area are required to attend a minimum of 75% of all meetings and respond to communication in a timely fashion, or may be asked to resign.

Click [here](#) to view the full Canadian Olympic Committee Athletes' Commission Terms of Reference.

Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC)

For more information visit www.paralympic.ca.

Commonwealth Games Canada (CGC)

The Athlete Council, an ad hoc Committee of the Board of Directors, shall advise the Athlete Representative on matters related to athletes and their requirements. Share the view of the athletes within Commonwealth Games Canada's National Sport Organizations with the Board and CEO.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

- Represent the views of all Commonwealth Games athletes both past and present to the Athlete Representative
- Provide recommendations to the Athlete Representative on Games related decisions such as, but not limited to, clothing, team member policy and athlete agreements
- Actively participate in Commonwealth Games Canada communication initiatives
- Participate in Commonwealth Games Canada marketing and fundraising initiatives
- Work on the establishment of a Commonwealth Games Canada Athlete Alumni database.

For more information visit www.commonwealthgames.ca.

International Olympic Committee (IOC)

The IOC Athletes' Commission, which meets once or twice a year, serves as a consultative body and is the link between active athletes and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Members of the Athletes' Commission are involved in the IOC's main commissions and working groups. The Chair of the Athletes' Commission serves as a member of the IOC Executive Board, and the Commission makes recommendations to the IOC's executive bodies. To learn more about the IOC Athletes' Commission visit www.olympic.org.



International Paralympic Committee (IPC)

The IPC Athletes' Council is the collective voice of Paralympic athletes within the IPC and the greater Paralympic Movement. As the liaison between IPC decision-makers and Paralympic athletes, the IPC Athletes' Council works to provide effective input into decision-making at all levels of the organization. To this end, the IPC Athletes' Council works to ensure effective athlete representation on all IPC committees and commissions as well as to create other opportunities for athlete representation both within and outside the IPC.

To be eligible for election to the Athletes' Council an individual must be an active Paralympic athlete. An active Paralympic athlete is defined as an athlete that is competing in the current edition of the Paralympic Games or Paralympic Winter Games at which the election is taking place, or has competed in either of the previous two editions of the Paralympic Games (if the election concerns Summer Sport athletes) or Paralympic Winter Games (if the election concerns Winter athletes). Contact the IPC Athletes' Council at athletescouncil@paralympic.org or visit their website at www.paralympic.org for more information.



Section 3: Athlete Rep Communications

One of the key but most difficult issues in being an effective Athlete Representative is making sure that you represent all athletes. Your sport may have a number of positions for Athlete Representatives. Different Athlete Representatives may sit on different committees, or different teams or events may have their own Athlete Representative. Regardless, communication between Athlete Representatives and back to the constituents is crucial.

How can you be effective as an athlete rep?

- Determine your mandate -- who do you represent? What do those people want you to do? Understand how to be an effective advocate for these issues.
- Establish strong and continuous lines of communication between you and those you represent, other board and/or committee members and with association staff.
- Learn and understand how your organization works -- which are the committees where decisions are made, how do athletes become a part of the decision-making?
- Learn about the Canadian sport system and how your peers and all sports fit within that framework.
- Know the policies and issues in your organization, especially those that affect the high performance and coaching programs and personnel.
- Attend meetings and be prepared! Read pre-meeting materials, talk to other committee members – you cannot contribute if you do not attend prepared to discuss the issues.
- Follow up...do what you have been asked to do promptly and well. Report on meetings to those you represent. Let them know what is happening BEFORE it happens!
- Learn about all sides of an issue by asking questions, discussing the situation and listening.
- Have a plan - if you see something that you and those you represent think is not right, be prepared with a plan to change it. Clearly identify the problem and offer paths to solutions.
- Don't be afraid to speak up or ask questions when you do not understand. You may feel stupid, but you cannot be effective without understanding (chances are someone else has the same question, anyway).
- Where you are knowledgeable, be sure of yourself. Athletes live the sport system – we understand how it really works (not just how it is supposed to work).
- Remember - a stronger sport system starts with you!!

Communication with your athletes and/or within your Council

Athlete representatives and councils are becoming more creative and sophisticated in communicating with their teammates and NSOs. Keeping our members and partners informed through ongoing communication is essential to the effectiveness and smooth operation of both representatives and councils.



Why do we want to communicate?

To communicate effectively, we need to understand *why* we want to communicate. What are we trying to achieve through communication?

Communication helps us:

- Build relationships and understanding among our respective sport, partners, and the sport system as a whole
- Demonstrate to our teammates and others the value and importance of what we are doing
- Mobilize our teammates and others to join us in bringing about positive change for athletes and the Canadian sport system

What do we want to communicate?

We need to be clear about our key messages. What do we want our members and others to know? Different types of information can be communicated in different ways, and often the *method* of communication determines how well the message is received and understood.

Important information includes:

- The purposes and goals of the council—Why does it exist?
- Why would an athlete want to become involved?
- What does the council do day-to-day, month-to-month?
 - events
 - meetings
 - services

What opportunities does the council offer athletes?

- Education
- A forum for discussion of sport related issues
- The opportunity to be involved in sport/team planning
- The opportunity to be involved in setting priorities for the sport and/or team
- Leadership experience
- Organization of events

Communication Plan

When creating or revising your communications plan, there are several components to take into consideration and include the following:

1. Effective Contact Management

As an Athlete Representative, it is important to be organized. In order to ensure that you are able to re-direct any inquiries to the appropriate person, you should create a contact database.

Don't have a contact list to start from? With permission, the NSO may give you e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers for the athlete membership you represent. If not, ask your teammates at every meeting/training camp to add their contact information to your list. Alternatively, contact [AthletesCAN](#) to send an email on your behalf to your teammates indicating their response is required to your attention. In addition to athletes, you should also keep track of key NSO and partner contacts to ensure you have access to all stakeholders at any given time.



In order to quickly access your contact list, we suggest having both a hard copy and an electronic copy. In case of unforeseeable technical problems, you should have an electronic copy that is accessible without the internet, such as a spreadsheet or word document.

2. How can we communicate?

There are two basic ways to communicate - written and oral. At your first opportunity to communicate with your members, it is wise to determine how they like to receive information: What gets their attention? What do they usually ignore?

Written communication includes:

- E-mail
 - Remember to show good judgment in your use of e-mail. Reserve it for important information such as issue identification, meeting/deadline reminders and upcoming events, and keep your messages short. Use the e-mail function, Blind carbon copy (Bcc), sometimes in the advanced settings, that allows you to hide the addresses on your list so that no one else can use them. Encourage recipients to “Read the message, delete it, or pass it on.”
Click here for an introductory athlete representative email template.
- Notices (Facebook posts, online message boards)
 - Remember, these messages, unless privacy settings are restricted and members are approved, can be viewed by the public. Make sure you’re only communicating information that has been approved to be released to the public. Avoid speaking to issues and soliciting opinions within this channel to lower risk. Click here for the Social Media Guide.
- Newsletters
- Calendars
- Set up an online calendar that everyone can access; ensure a monthly calendar is distributed either by email or personally where possible. Encourage teammates/council members to submit input on the calendar contents.
- Meeting minutes and reports
 - Circulate these either by email to your teammates/council or create an online site where documents can be shared and uploaded by the group.
- Surveys
 - These are a great way to solicit anonymous feedback from your teammates/council members to ensure a safe environment for sharing. Surveys will also allow you to collect baseline database and extrapolate major themes in feedback to identify key issues within your group to bring forward.
- Bulletin boards (@ key training centres)
- Websites (athletes only access)
 - Websites that have an ‘athletes only’ section are great for forum type discussions, ongoing posts, and for providing an open feedback channel for those who want to bring an idea, issue and/or solution to the group without having to email everyone. There are costs associated with this and you would need to ensure a level confidentiality should your NSO be involved in creating the secure site.



Oral communication includes:

- Council meetings
- Committee meetings
- Focus groups
- Meetings with NSO and support staff
- One-to-one conversations
- Conference calls or Skype
- Training Camps

Even with the ease of electronic communication, nothing replaces the personal touch, especially when you are trying to persuade busy people to become involved in something new. Word of mouth remains one of the best ways to reach people. In that sense, sometimes a council may find that a 'phoning committee' draws more athletes in and makes them feel welcome—a key ingredient to greater involvement.

3. Important Dates & Events

- Team Selection Criteria
- Team Selection
- Athlete Agreements
- Appeal Deadlines
- AAP Carding Nominations
- Annual General Meeting
- Nationals
- World Championships
- Trials / Qualifying Events
- Major Games
- AthletesCAN Forum
- Board Meetings
- Funding Grant/Bursary Application Deadlines

4. How will we know we are communicating effectively?

Athlete representatives and/or Councils need practical measurements to assess how well they are communicating with their members and partners. Some measurements are:

- Attendance and participation at meetings and other events
- Level of participation in focus groups, special events, or projects
- Feedback from surveys or requests for information. This includes both the *quantity* of feedback and what the feedback *tells* you about athlete awareness and understanding of issues.
- Frequency of member requests for information or assistance
- Level of response to requests for volunteers

Click [here](#) for a meeting evaluation form to measure your/council performance and athlete engagement at meetings.



Navigating the NSO/Athlete rep Relationship

Creating a Sustainable Athlete Rep Environment

Regardless of the individual skill set of the Athlete Representative, both he/she and the NSO must be willing to develop an environment of support and training in order to have effective leadership from athletes.

If met, the list below provides an optimal situation for effective athlete representation:

- Your National Sport Organization (NSO) must have a thorough orientation program for all Athlete Representatives. Please see below for NSO orientation contents.
- The Athlete Representative(s) must have the support of their peers and the NSO. They should be elected / selected by the athletes, not appointed by the organization.
- The NSO should have an approved staff member or volunteer appointed to educate the Athlete Representative(s) and to act as an ongoing resource and liaison.
- There must be communication and continuity among and between Athlete Representatives with a budget to facilitate that process. (E.g. conference calls, face to face meetings, etc.)
- The Athlete Representative role must be clearly defined and communicated to all parties, including NSO support staff and coaches. Please click [here](#) for a sample job description.
- The Athlete Representative(s) must have the confidence, skill and knowledge to fulfill the role. Skills can be learned, knowledge garnered and confidence built, but, to some degree, the Athlete Representative should also have some previous experience taking on a leadership role on the team, or in sport in general. The NSO should support leadership education by providing professional development opportunities.
- Ongoing, multi-directional communication is essential for the Athlete Representative(s), as it is with all committee or Board positions.
- An Athlete Representative succession plan should exist so that potential reps targeted for future responsibilities can work with past representatives (mentors) before being asked to step into the role. Click [here](#) for a sample recruitment template for future reps.

NSO Orientation

Your NSO should have a thorough orientation program for all athlete representatives. This should include:

- An overview of “who is who” and an outline of the responsibilities of various committees and governance levels within the organization.
- A job description or document including roles and responsibilities of the Athlete Representative. Click [here](#) for sample job descriptions.
- A schematic or organizational chart showing reporting and supervision responsibilities and connections between all positions.
- A copy of applicable committee and Board minutes, and meeting reports for at least the past 2 to 3 years. These will help to put current issues into context.
- A copy of the applicable Sport Development Model. What programs and opportunities should be in place for athletes at different stages of their technical and competitive development?
- A copy of the NSO's current strategic plan. You need to learn what the strategic priorities, goals and objectives are for the organization.
- The audited financial statements for the past 2 to 3 years, plus current fiscal year financial information including the budget.
- The opportunity for the Athlete Representative(s) to speak to a number of people in the organization and within the board to help develop a historical and current perspective. How are decisions made today? Why were particular decisions made in the past? What are the issues of the day? What are the plans for the future?



Section 4: Advocacy

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is a process that involves the coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders to challenge existing practices, ideas, viewpoints and distributions of power and resources. The advocacy strategies used will vary widely because they always emerge in response to particular circumstances, issues, opportunities and constraints faced by the acting stakeholders.

Why do we advocate?

- To ensure that your concerns are addressed
- To influence policy making and implementation
- To be part of the decision-making process, rather than having to merely accept the outcome

How to approach advocacy

- Choose our issues
- Define your objectives
 - Be very specific (e.g. Increase AAP budget by 20%)
- Research the issues
 - What has already been done?
- Develop an advocacy strategy
 - Who is your target audience; what tools do you have to support your side (statistics, contacts, etc.) both low profile and high profile;
- Mobilize support
 - Who are the influencers in your target audience, what channels of communication can you use
 - Lobby decision-makers
 - Media relations, direct contact with key decision makers, press releases, face to face meetings, etc.

Desired Outcomes

What can we learn from advocating for athlete interests?

- Athlete voices do influence change
- Public support for athletes and excellence can be acquired
- Sustained, planned, and professional approach required
- Advocating beyond our own interests builds credibility and makes links to other priority objectives

Click here for an [Issue Identification, Assessment and Evaluation Guide](#) and [Template](#).



Advocacy Issues to be Aware of as an Athlete Leader

Navigating the dispute resolution process can be overwhelming. Sport Solution, a program of AthletesCAN, is committed to helping national team athletes find solutions to a wide range of sport related issues. The complimentary program offers access to free information, as well as assistance and guidance on sport issues that may require legal council, such as selection, carding and discipline disputes.

Sport Solution has developed and compiled a number of resources that can help you better understand the process and your situation. These documents are meant to serve as tools, templates and tips to help you research and prepare your sport-related issue; however, consulting with the Sport Solution is still strongly encouraged.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Sport Solution resources.

Several key issues have maintained their popularity throughout the years and include:

[Team Selection](#)

[Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program \(AAP\)/Carding](#)

[Athlete Agreements](#)

Click [here](#) for a sample Athlete Agreement.

[Athlete Rights](#)

[Anti-Doping](#)

[Income Taxes](#)

Funding

There are a number of funding opportunities for high performance athletes in Canada, some of which are listed below. In addition to these, athletes should contact their post-secondary institution (if applicable) to find out about scholarships for athletes competing for a university or college, as well as academic scholarship options. Many Provincial Sport Organizations and National Sport Organizations also have internal scholarships established as "memorial" tributes to past members or Directors, or scholarships supported by corporate sponsors. Athletes should contact the appropriate sport organization or Canadian Sport Centre to investigate these possibilities. Click [here](#) for a list of funding opportunities across Canada.

Retirement/Career Transition

You may or may not be thinking about retirement at this particular point in your athletic career, but it will happen some day. It may be your choice, it may be forced upon you through injury or it may be that you don't make a team and time slips away until you decide that it's too late to try again. Regardless, every national team athlete has to make that transition to being a former national team athlete. As an Athlete Representative, you can help your fellow athletes with suggestions on different resources that they can access as they consider retirement.



Retired athletes have a great deal to contribute to the Canadian sport system. It may be the time to get involved as coaches, officials or sport administrators. Or maybe your sport needs more retired athletes to offer their expertise on programming or technical committees or in the development of technical materials. Encouragement from the Athlete Representative to the retiring athlete to stay involved in some capacity or to come back after a short break may be the catalyst needed. We need the knowledge that athletes develop over their years of training and competition and we need to nurture and support that knowledge to empower other athletes to life-long involvement with sport.

Click [here](#) for IOC Athlete Career Programme.

Canadian Sport System

It may seem redundant to provide a resource on the Canadian sport system for members of Canadian National teams, but many athletes have been focusing so hard to get to that level that they haven't had the time to learn about the various "organizational players" in the system. Sport organizations make decisions that can affect the participation of individual athletes and of Canadian teams at various events or games. Your own sport organization has developed rules, regulations and procedures that determine team selection, resource allocation and programming priorities. There also seems to be a love affair with acronyms in sport, so figuring those out is an education unto itself. AthletesCAN has developed a one-stop shopping guide to "what is what" when it comes to linking different organizations in the sport system together in the Sport System 101 Leadership Module. Click [here](#) to go to Sport System 101.

Additional resource materials can be found at:

[Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada](#)

[Sport Law and Strategy Group](#)

[Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport](#)



Section 5: Athlete Leadership

Some people seem to be “born leaders”. They are dynamic, have a vision for the future and have an idea of how to get there. They also seem to have the ability to take people with them. In reality, the skills necessary to listen with empathy, to think strategically, to speak with conviction, to verbalize a preferred future and then articulate the steps to be taken are all things that can be learned.

As an Athlete Leader and/or Representative for your sport, you have an opportunity to be a leader for a critical group (high performance athletes) within your national sport organization. By virtue of your position as an Athlete Representative, there is an expectation from other athletes that you will represent their needs, protect their interests and keep them informed about what they need to know. As an Athlete Representative who sits on the Board of Directors or on a Standing Committee, there is also an expectation from your NSO that you will have some knowledge about necessary aspects of the organization and that you can see the big picture of the organization’s business.

Being a leader is not about “being in charge”. It is the ability to influence, to be visionary and to communicate that vision to others. Decide what is important to you. Use these beliefs and values to guide your actions with others and to help you decide what changes you want to make.

Your leadership “style” will develop as you implement effective practices and ways to communicate. While leadership traits and behaviours are important, ultimately your leadership style will be situational. Different ways of dealing with people will work in different situations. Remember to be purposeful and respectful. You are not at the decision-making tables to destroy but to build and effect positive change.

This section includes information on leadership styles, power, managing change and other relevant skills and knowledge for being an effective athlete leader.

Principles of Leadership

Following certain principles of leadership will help you to gain the attributes necessary to be effective as an Athlete Representative.

- Know yourself and seek self-improvement by learning.
- Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions.
- Make appropriate decisions. Use good problem solving, decision-making, and planning tools.
- Set an example. Be a good role model for your teammates.
- Know your teammates and look out for their well-being.
- Keep your teammates informed. Develop and follow your communication plan.
- Develop a sense of responsibility and leadership attributes in the other athletes.
- Use the full capabilities of your team. Develop a team spirit.



How do you become a practicing leader?

LOOK FOR A BETTER WAY

Ask questions about why something is the way it is. Try to see the full picture with all of its consequences and possibilities. Think bigger than what is in front of you. This doesn't mean that everything has to change. Sometimes you may find a different path, and sometimes you will find and be convinced that the current way works best. Don't be afraid to take risks but ensure that you learn from your mistakes. Don't just ask questions, but develop possible alternatives. Look for a better way. Challenges to authority should be made in a respectful and thoughtful way. Have a clearly stated rationale, options and alternatives ready. Your questions should not be threatening. Do your homework first.

DEVELOP AND COMMUNICATE YOUR VISION

Identifying what you think should be changed is only part of effective leadership practices. Develop a vision for what you think should happen, and how to get there. Don't be afraid to talk about your hopes and dreams for the future. Ask others about their thoughts and really listen to their replies. Package your vision so that it is **inclusive** and inspires. We rarely find a totally new idea coming from just one person. Refine your vision to address relevant questions and points. Develop key messages for your vision.

EMPOWER AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS

Encourage others to voice their beliefs. Work with others to develop shared goals and strategies. ***Athlete leadership will be most effective when all athletes understand and contribute to the messages. Encourage other athletes to take on small tasks and to think about their sport, their organization and their situation as athletes. Can we be better? Can we do better?*** Remember to thank people for their contributions and recognize their efforts. Encourage other Directors, committee members and athletes to publicly acknowledge the vision and the steps that can and will be taken.

BE AN EXAMPLE

Walk the Talk! Make sure that you live what you believe. Promote your vision at every opportunity through examples, applications and stories. Use athletes' stories to underline the emotional attributes of all that needs to be done by and for athletes to ensure an athlete-centered sport system.

UNDERSTAND YOURSELF & LEARN FROM OTHERS

Effective leaders have to understand their own strengths and weaknesses. Bring people into the fold who can fill gaps in skills. Ask yourself - What am I good at? What do I need to learn? Ask respected colleagues for feedback. Look to AthletesCAN and your NSO's leaders to help you to be better at what you are doing; learn from those around you; observe leaders you admire and take note of what they do and think about how you can use those skills to improve your own leadership abilities.

James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. 1995



Effective Listening and Communication Skills

Effective listening is a key leadership skill. As a leader, you listen so that you will understand others. Good leaders listen first.

Here is a checklist to help you develop listening skills:

LISTEN ATTENTIVELY

Don't interrupt a speaker and don't let your mind wander. Listen to the words and what is between the lines. Watch body language and notice gestures.

RECEIVE THE MESSAGE

Responses can be both verbal and nonverbal (nods, expressing interest) but you must prove you received the message being given, and more importantly, prove it had an impact on you through appropriate responses and gestures.

DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING

Make sure you understand what is being said. Repeat the message back in your own words. Summarize occasionally to communicate that you understand the speaker's ideas.

DON'T JUDGE

Listen without judging or evaluating the speaker. Listen to the emotion behind the message. Don't let your impressions of the speaker interfere with understanding their ideas. Listening is not the same as agreeing.

KEEP AN OPEN MIND

Ask a question if you start to feel defensive. How did you come to that conclusion? Can you say something else about that? Be aware of words that trigger an emotional response in you.

DIFFUSE EMOTION

When emotion appears, acknowledge it with a simple statement: Diffuse the emotion but don't negate it.

Group Dynamics

Working in groups can be both an invigorating and frustrating experience. The concept of "team" does not come naturally to everyone. All teams have to be built and nurtured. People in a group may have their own agendas or personal goals that don't necessarily align with the group's goals. This is okay. Use their different perspectives to make the group stronger.

B. Tuckman identified five defined "stages" of development that most groups pass through on their way to becoming constructive in their task.



FORMING

At the beginning of group development, members will rely on “safe” behaviour and will want acceptance in the group. They will look to the group leader for guidance. They will spend time becoming oriented to the task at hand, as well as getting to know each other. Serious topics and controversy are avoided although transition to the next stage requires that members accept the risk of possible conflict.

STORMING

As the group members organize for the task, some conflict will inevitably arise. Questions will be asked about who is doing what, what the rules are, what the goals are and what the criteria for completion of the task will be. There will be an increased need for structure and commitment. Conflicts over leadership, structure, power, and authority will likely exist although they may be unspoken. Any conflict may cause some members to be quiet while others will attempt to dominate. The group has to move from a "testing and proving" mentality to a problem-solving mentality, and when they have learned to listen to each other, the group will progress to the next stage. This transition can be influenced by the behaviour of the group leader.

NORMING

In the “norming” stage, relationships between group members will be less conflictive. Leadership may be shared, and cliques dissolve. Members are more willing to change their preconceived ideas or opinions on the basis of facts presented by other members, and they actively ask questions of one another. The level of trust rises. It is during this stage of development (assuming the group gets this far) that people begin to experience a sense of group belonging. Information is shared and feedback solicited. Creativity is high. A major drawback of the “norming” stage is that members may begin to fear the inevitable future break-up of the group; they may resist change of any sort.

PERFORMING

If group members are able to evolve to stage four, their capacity, range, and depth of personal relations expand to interdependence. Their roles and authorities dynamically adjust to the changing needs of the group and individuals. Stage four is marked by interdependence in personal relations and problem solving in the realm of task functions. By now, the group should be most productive. The need for group approval is past. The task function becomes genuine problem solving, leading toward optimal solutions and optimum group development. There is support for experimentation in solving problems and an emphasis on achievement. The overall goal is productivity through problem solving and work.

ADJOURNING

The final stage involves the completion of the task and withdrawal from the group and those relationships. If it has been a personally rewarding situation, this can create a degree of apprehension - almost a kind of minor crisis. In many organizations, adjournment can be eased through some kind of recognition for participation and achievement and an acknowledgement of the value of the contribution. People need to feel good about having been involved.

This theory suggests that there are no established “timelines” in place for groups to go through these stages. Some are dependent on how well people know each other and the complexity of the task. An effective leader understands group dynamics, can identify individual and group behaviour and appreciates the metamorphous of this journey.

B. Tuckman, & M. Jensen. Stages of Small Group Development. Group and Organizational Studies. 1977



Sources of Power within an organization or group

Power enables a person to make or influence decisions. The way in which a leader uses their power reflects their leadership values. Power comes from different places and can be direct or indirect.

The list below defines several types of “power” within an organization.

POSITIONAL POWER

Positional power is the authority received from the office or position to which you are appointed or elected. To different degrees, the Association President, a national coach, a committee chairperson and an Athlete Representative all have positional power.

PERSONAL POWER

Personal power is the authority you command as a result of who you are as a person. People will do something because they admire and respect the leader.

REWARD POWER

Someone with Reward Power can provide something that others want or value, in return for desired behaviours by the followers.

COERCIVE POWER

This form of manipulative power achieves results through fear or avoidance of punishment or demotion.

EXPERT POWER

The “technical experts” have expertise or special knowledge in an area that others depend on to achieve their goals.

There are different degrees and combinations of the above examples and it is rare for anyone to own or exhibit only one kind of power. For example, in the sport world, coaches, by definition, own a number of different types of power. It is the prudent and appropriate use of their authority and expertise that can define the coach’s relationship with the athletes and with the sport organization.

It should be noted that when positional power is used wisely, it can increase personal power. However, when any type of power is used inappropriately, it reduces whatever personal power collateral has been developed.

There are occasions when positional power should be used. Examples are chairing a meeting, or making decisions that need to be made because of someone’s position. But positional power has its limits and this is especially true when leading volunteers.

Volunteers, unlike paid employees, have the luxury of deciding whether to follow or not. They are far more influenced by personal power than by positional power. This is actually an advantage for an Athlete Representative. Use the position appropriately and learn the skills to develop personal power through effective leadership. If you are an effective leader, you will be listened to by other athletes, by coaches, by the sport’s volunteers and by the staff.



Section 6: Tools and Templates

Whether you've made it through the Athlete Leadership & Representation learning module (congratulations if you have!!) or if you're looking for specific tools & templates to get you started, you've come to the right place.

Below is a list of resources referenced within this Leadership Module for quick access.

AthletesCAN Resources

Sport System 101

Sport System 101 is a web based leadership tool to help guide high performance athletes, and those looking to become high performance athletes, through the Canadian sport system from development to retirement. This learning tool allows for both developing and high performance athletes to easily find answers to frequently asked questions about the sport system while providing step-by-step solutions and/or links to additional resources.

Athletes on Boards

Athletes on Boards is a web based leadership tool to help Canada's athletes develop the expertise they need to be strategic leaders in the boardroom. This interactive, searchable online learning tool presents information in a user-friendly manner. From understanding your role; attending, chairing and managing meetings; agendas and meeting materials; rules of order; meeting preparation; ensuring your voice is heard; conducting business between meetings; to dealing with conflict – you'll get a crash course in everything you need to know to effectively represent the athlete voice at the decision making table.

Sport Solution

Sport Solution provides assistance to national team athletes in resolving sports related legal issues and offers support throughout the dispute resolution process. The program also offers athletes guidance on how to prevent conflict and understand the fair administration of sport. Sport Solution responds to the legal needs of athletes on a full range of issues and can provide information about:

- General Inquiries and Concerns
- NSO Procedures
- How to Prepare for NSO Appeals and Arbitration at the SDRCC
- Your Athlete Agreement
- Corresponding With Your NSO
- Athlete Agreement (link to English / French document)
- Team selection (link to webpage)

Athlete Leadership and Representation Module Resources

Athlete-Centered Sport

[Athlete-Centered Sport](#)

Athlete Representation

[Athlete Representative Checklist](#)

[Athlete Representative Job Descriptions & Selection Process](#)

[Communications Timeline](#)

[Succession Planning Matrix](#)

[How to Create an Athletes' Council](#)

[Canadian Divers Athletes' Council Terms of Reference](#)

[Athletes' Council Report Guidelines – Diving Plongeon Canada](#)

[Athletes' Committee Report 2008 – Diving Plongeon Canada](#)

[Canadian Sport Centres](#)

[Canadian ISF Websites](#)

Communication

[Introductory Athlete Rep Email Template](#)

[Social Media Guidebook](#)

[Athlete Representative Job Descriptions & Selection Process](#)

[Sample Recruitment Template](#)

[Athlete Rep-Council Meeting Evaluation Form Template](#)

[Dale Carnegie Training: Speaking More Effectively](#)

Advocacy

[Issue Identification, Assessment and Evaluation Process](#)

[Athlete Agreement](#)

[Athlete Rights – Netball America](#)

[Athlete Funding Opportunities](#)

Additional Resources

[IOC Athlete's Handbook](#)

Other Important Links

[Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada](#)

[Sport Law & Strategy Group](#)

[Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport](#)