

GENDER EQUITY IN SPORT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION REPORT



Prepared by: Holly Abraham
holly.abraham@womenandsport.ca
www.womenandsport.ca





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research indicates that gender equity, diversity and inclusion results in improved organizational performance. As Canadian society becomes more diverse, Speed Skating Canada will benefit from increased participation, better organizational performance, and access to more diversified streams of funding by advancing diversity and inclusion in the organization.

Embracing gender equity will improve sport for ALL involved. This report summarizes Speed Skating Canada's current activities through a gender equity and diversity lens and offers a set of customized recommendations for the organization to implement.

Speed Skating Canada demonstrates an awareness of the importance of gender equity and diversity and has embedded good practices throughout the organization. Notable examples of this include:

- 1) Gender parity on Speed Skating Canada's Board of Directors and senior leadership.
- 2) A culture survey is being conducted throughout the organization.
- 3) Gender parity exists in grassroots participation.
- 4) A strong policy suite that includes multiple policies related to gender equity, diversity and inclusion.

Areas for improvement were also identified through the assessment process. The recommendations are summarized here:

- 1) Expand on the current gender parity policy in board nominations and formalize a board policy that sets targets for women and people from other underrepresented groups in governance.
- 2) Implement a communications strategy around the 'business case' for gender equity and diversity to align the organization and sport around its purpose and tangible actions.
- 3) Develop a recruitment strategy that sets targets and creates intentional processes to recruit women and people from other underrepresented groups.
- 4) Create an implementation plan to accompany Speed Skating Canada's policy suite to outline focus areas, targets and strategies and demonstrate the organization's commitment to gender equity and diversity.
- 5) Collaborate with venues and P/TSOs to identify quantitative and qualitative data points that will benefit all parties involved, and collaboratively establish appropriate and feasible data collection systems to integrate with the new digital platform.
- 6) Evaluate Speed Skating Canada's training programs and review the allocation of funding and resources to determine if there are any inequities between the men's and women's national teams.
- 7) Communicate and collaborate with provincial and community level organizations to identify appropriate communication and recruitment strategies for new athletes.

The Gender Equity Assessment Service was designed for the purpose of encouraging continuous improvement and collaboration. Therefore, this report is not designed to be a punitive auditing tool. Instead, it is designed to support Speed Skating Canada in their gender equity, diversity and inclusion efforts.

THE VALUE OF GENDER EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION IN SPORT

While there is a moral case for gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in sport, there is also the business case to consider. The recommendations provided in this report will help decision makers and stakeholders in Speed Skating Canada to embed gender equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the organization to continue to grow the sport.

There are certain demographic realities in Canadian society:

- As many as 62% of Canadian girls are not participating in any kind of sport.¹
- One in three girls drops out of sport vs. one in ten boys drops out of sport.¹
- Women make up just over 50% of the Canadian population.²
- According to Statistics Canada, immigrants will represent between 24.6% to 30% of Canada's population in 2036.³
- In 2036, between 34.7% to 39.9% of the Canadian working age population will belong to a racialized group.³
- The Indigenous population is one of the fastest growing segments of Canadian society. From 2006 to 2016, Indigenous youth between 15 to 34 increased by 39%, while non-Indigenous youth grew by 6%.⁴
- 29% of boards of Canadian Sport Organizations have fewer than 30% women.⁵

Embedding gender equity, diversity and inclusion into Speed Skating Canada processes and practices will help the organization tap into new and growing segments of the population, growing the pool of athletes and participants.

Gender equity, diversity and inclusion policies are good for organizational performance as well:

- Teams with diverse leadership are more likely to report high-performance by 17%, high-quality decision making by 20%, and collaborative behaviour by 29%.⁶
- Diversity and inclusion lead to better innovation, creativity and problem solving.⁷
- Diversity and inclusion facilitate access to a larger talent pool.⁸

¹ https://womenandsport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Canadian-Women-Sport_The-Rally-Report.pdf

² <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14152-eng.htm>

³ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-551-x/91-551-x2017001-eng.htm>

⁴ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2018001-eng.htm>

⁵ https://womenandsport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Women-in-Leadership-Snapshot_2019-2020_Canadian-Women-Sport.pdf

⁶ Bourke, J., & Espedido, A. (2019, March 30). Why Inclusive Leaders Are Good for Organizations, and How to Become One. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2019/03/why-inclusive-leaders-are-good-for-organizations-and-how-to-become-one>

⁷ Dalhousie University & Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion. (2019) National Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarking Study (page 6). <https://ccdi.ca/media/1979/20190715-research-national-diversity-and-inclusion-benchmarking-study.pdf>

⁸ <https://opentextbc.ca/businessethicsopenstax/chapter/diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-workforce/>

Gender equity and diversity in organizational leadership will send a strong top-down signal to the rest of the organization. Improving gender equity and diversity at the leadership levels supports diversity in member participation, leading to increased participation, better organizational performance, and access to more diversified streams of funding.

Gender equity, diversity and inclusion also presents an opportunity to grow funding and sponsorship. The Canadian government and potential sponsors are recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion in Canadian society. The Canadian government has created a Working Group on Gender Equity in Sport, committing \$30 million over three years to achieve gender equity in sports at all levels by 2035. This has resulted in the creation of the Sport Canada Report Card, a tool for tracking sport organizations' progress in the areas of safe sport, gender equity, and governance. Several large businesses and corporations are also moving towards progressive platforms in gender equity and diversity. They will look toward organizations with a progressive stance on diversity and inclusion to sponsor as a positive representation of their values for the public.

THE GENDER EQUITY PLAYBOOK

Canadian Women & Sport developed a comprehensive service to educate, assess and create tangible action to improve the quality and effectiveness of sport and physical activity organization's policies, programs, and processes in advancing gender equity, diversity and inclusion. The service is called "The Gender Equity Playbook" and it includes the following activities:

1. **Gender Equity Lens e-learning module:** To increase sport leaders' understanding of gender considerations in sport and enhance their competence in applying a gender lens to the creation of policies and programming, and in the leadership and delivery of sport.
2. **Gender Equity Assessment:** To provide sport organizations the opportunity and the imperative to identify priority areas for action across multiple dimensions of the organization which uses the Gender Equity in Sport Assessment Tool (GESAT®).
3. **Gender Equity Action Planning:** To provide organizations the opportunity, tools and expert support to plan and implement an evidence-based course of action to create measurable change.

Speed Skating Canada staff and key stakeholders participated in both the Gender Equity Lens e-learning and the Gender Equity Assessment. The Action Planning consultation will support the prioritization of the recommendations identified in the sections to follow and will guide Speed Skating Canada in taking tangible action.

During the Gender Equity Assessment, the Gender Equity in Sport Assessment Tool (GESAT®) guided the conversation. The GESAT® is a comprehensive framework used to evaluate organizational processes, practices, and policies. Canadian Women & Sport partnered with the Diversity Institute at Ryerson University to develop the tool. The Diversity Institute takes a holistic systems approach to diversity and inclusion using the Ecological Model to map out the ecosystem.³ The Ecological Model examines three major levels to the ecosystem (see Figure 1 below):

1. **macro-level**, which considers government policies, political structures, culture, and other societal-level factors,
2. **meso-level**, which looks at the impact of organizational practices on the greater ecosystem and the reciprocal impact of the ecosystem on organizational practices, and
3. **micro-level**, which incorporates individual agency into the theoretical framework.

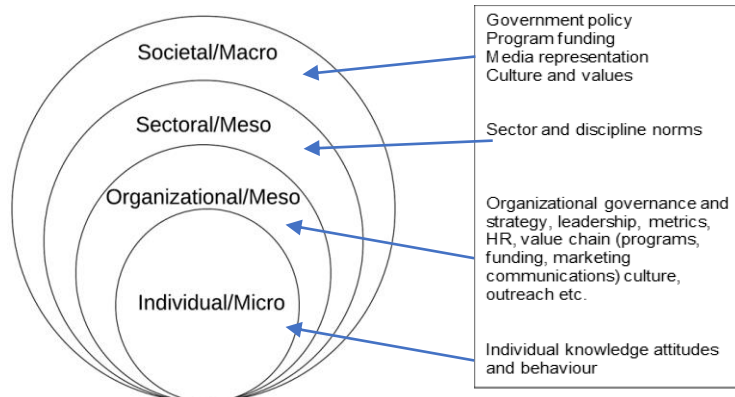


Figure 1. The Ecological Model

These three levels mutually intersect in complex ways. It is necessary to think about the entire ecosystem and plan strategically in order to advance diversity and inclusion throughout the ecosystem.

Organizations have the greatest level of control at the meso level with organizational practices and decisions. This is the level at which the GESAT® operates. The GESAT® takes a comprehensive and systematic assessment of organizational processes, practices, and policies to identify the areas that could be improved from a gender equity, diversity and inclusion lens. The GESAT® and, as such, this report, is divided into six categories:

- 1) Governance, Leadership, Strategy
- 2) Recruitment, Selection, and Promotion
- 3) Values and Culture
- 4) Measurement and Tracking Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- 5) Gender Equity and Diversity Across Organization Activities
- 6) Expanding the Pool

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The information contained in this section is based on the pre-assessment data collected from Speed Skating Canada’s website, responses to the GESAT® and the assessment discussion. Speed Skating Canada enlisted the support of several individuals to collect the evidence and additional information required to complete the assessment. The assessment itself was conducted February 17th and March 25th, 2021; and involved seven members of Speed Skating Canada. It included the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Sport Officer, Director of Marketing and Engagement, Manager of Sport Development, and Senior Coordinator of Membership and Alignment.

The summaries and recommendations are provided for each of the six assessment areas.

1. GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND STRATEGY

a) Governance and Leadership



Summary of Findings:

A balanced number of women and men on boards expands innovation by ensuring that multiple perspectives are considered, particularly when faced with complex decisions. Gender equity signals a commitment to diversity to your stakeholders.

At the time of this assessment, Speed Skating Canada’s Board of Directors consisted of five men and three women⁹ and the senior leadership team consisted of two women and two men.

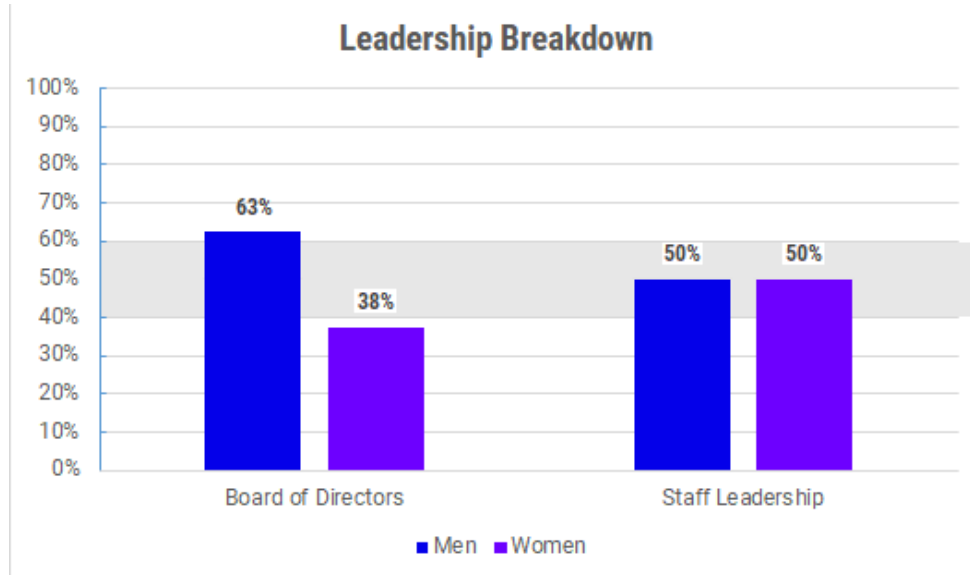


Table 1. Gender breakdown of Speed Skating Canada’s leadership team. Includes the gender equity goal of 60/40 gender parity by 2024 (highlighted in grey).

⁹ <https://www.speedskating.ca/about/speed-skating-canada/board-of-directors>

During the assessment consultations, Speed Skating Canada stated, “historically there has been only one woman on the Board of Directors.” With the recent increase of women on the board, the current directors recognize the importance of inclusion, gender equity and diversity in board membership. The organization would like to work towards gender parity to meet the Sport Canada objective.

Speed Skating Canada’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, states, “SSC will work toward achieving gender parity on its Board of Directors by ensuring that at least 40% of the nominees for positions on the Board of Directors are from the minority gender identity.” The CEO has actively recruited nominees to reach that goal. It was suggested the president of the board can also recruit a woman for the athlete representative position, which is an appointed position.

The current nominations committee consists of one board member (currently a man) an external representative which is usually a woman and one former athlete.

Speed Skating Canada uses a skills matrix to vet all the nominees and recommend a slate for the board to review. The skills matrix evaluates skill competencies but does not include any gender or diversity metrics. Including gender and diversity metrics on the skills matrix will help identify qualified women and people from other underrepresented groups to move forward in the process.

Within the governance structure, Speed Skating Canada’s member Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSOs) nominate candidates. Experience in the sport of speed skating is not a requirement to be nominated however, individuals are typically nominated from the Speed Skating community. By extending board nominations postings beyond the sport, specifically to organizations that serve women and people from other underrepresented groups, helps ensure a more diverse candidate pool outside of the organization’s traditional channels.

Communication about the importance of gender equity and diversity is promoted inside the organization and through SSC’s AGM. Speed Skating Canada stated, “they would like to do a better job communicating this from the senior leadership team to the broader speed skating community.”

This Gender Equity Playbook project is overseen by two staff members at Speed Skating Canada and is formally approved by the CEO.

Recommendations:

- 1) Strengthen the current gender parity policy on board nominations and formalize a board policy that sets targets for women and people from other underrepresented groups in governance.
- 2) Build on the current skills matrix to include gender and other diversity metrics, including non-visible diversity factors. This will allow the organization to collect and analyze valuable diversity data from applicants to successful candidates and identify appropriate strategies to seek out a more diverse candidate pool.
- 3) Request the PTSO’s to extend their calls for expressions of interest to organizations that serve people from underrepresented groups when nominating candidates for the Board of Directors to reach qualified candidates who may not have the connections to be nominated within the speed skating community.
- 4) Formalize the nominations committee makeup into policy to ensure diversity on the committee.

- 5) Communicate organizational commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion from senior leadership to external stakeholders through various communications platforms such as newsletters, publications, email signatures and social media platforms.
- 6) Communicate that sport-specific knowledge is an asset, but not a requirement, in your call for nominations to attract qualified candidates that may not otherwise apply. These candidates could fill identified competency gaps created during board turnover and lead to increased diversity and strengthened decision making.
- 7) Mobilize a strong business case to communicate to members about the value of gender equity and diversity. Creating buy-in within the provinces and territories will allow Speed Skating Canada to work within the current governance structure to promote gender equity on the Board of Directors. The value of gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in sport is noted in this document.

b) Strategy



Summary of Findings:

Speed Skating Canada communicated the importance of gender equity, diversity and inclusion in their 2018-2023 strategic plan but would like to embed gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in the upcoming 2023 strategic plan. Embedding gender equity into the strategic plan will enhance diversity efforts by advancing women and people from other underrepresented groups. Equity actions focus on changing the structures and systems that create the inequities in the first place. Including gender equity and diversity objectives in the strategic plan, would serve to demonstrate Speed Skating Canada's commitment to eliminating inequities in the organization.

Recommendations:

- 1) During the strategic planning process, embed considerations of gender equity and diversity into the general organizational strategy, targets, priority areas, and goals.
- 2) Identify and engage women and people from other underrepresented groups in the organization's strategic planning process as a part of the organizational strategy and goals.
- 3) Implement a communications strategy around the 'business case' for gender equity and diversity to align the organization and sport around its purpose and tangible actions.

2. RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND PROMOTION

a) Recruitment



Summary of Findings:

Speed Skating Canada acknowledges that they do not have a specific strategy to recruit, train, and retain women and people from other underrepresented groups as coaches, officials, and board or staff members. Speed Skating Canada stated in GESAT®, "We have programs and targeted efforts for all but our admin

staff but not a formal strategy. We have specific funding for projects, so they are budgeted for.” Speed Skating Canada also stated that each department is responsible for their own recruitment and hiring. Developing a formal recruitment strategy that is uniform across all departments streamlines the process and support the goal of gender equity, diversity and inclusion across the organization.

The organization makes sure that vacant positions are accessible and are posted for anyone to apply, and that qualifications for vacant positions are connected to the actual skills that the job requires. Vacant staff positions in the organization are posted publicly on the Speed Skating Canada website and affiliated websites such as SIRC and Indeed.

Reaching out to organizations that serve women and people from other underrepresented groups to share job postings expands the opportunities for a diverse candidate pool.

When writing job postings, Speed Skating Canada does it’s best to reduce gendered language but has identified more training is needed among staff in this area. There is an upcoming lunch and learn to cover this topic.

When applying to jobs, the results show that while women and men explore opportunities similarly, there’s a clear gap in how they apply to jobs and in how companies recruit them.¹⁰ While men apply for positions that they have only 60% of the qualifications for, women do not apply unless they have 100% of the qualifications for the job.¹¹ The propensity for men to apply at higher rates for jobs is used as a justification for the current status quo. Organizations are adjusting the language in job postings to include objectives that the hire will be expected to achieve rather than focusing on qualifications and requirements.¹² This adjustment supports how women apply for jobs. Intentional efforts and equitable opportunities are required to reverse imbalances and advance women as leaders in sport.

Recommendations:

- 1) Take a more proactive approach to recruitment of staff and coaches. A statement in the job posting inviting applications from people from underrepresented groups is one of the most effective and equitable recruitment strategies. Reach out to women and people from underrepresented groups directly for positions and include them on every candidate slate.
- 2) Update the current HR manual to formalize hiring practices with intentional gender equity and diversity targets and measures. At the end of every hiring process, leaders can track how well they have done against the diversity goals they set out to achieve.
- 3) Experiment with the wording of job postings by removing adjectives closely associated with a particular gender.
- 4) Develop a recruitment policy and implementation plan that sets clear targets and creates processes to recruit women and people from other underrepresented groups into various roles.
- 5) Include diverse hiring committees and a skills matrix for each department. Formalize this into policy to mitigate the impact of unconscious bias on decision making.

¹⁰ <https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/business/en-us/talent-solutions-lodestone/body/pdf/Gender-Insights-Report.pdf>

¹¹ <https://hbr.org/2014/08/why-women-dont-apply-for-jobs-unless-theyre-100-qualified>

¹² <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/2015/06/performance-based-hiring-is-your-best-bet-for-diverse-hiring?trk=BU-pros-ebook-2019-genderreport>

b) Selection



Summary of Findings:

At Speed Skating Canada, no formal policy exists to ensure the selection committee is gender equitable or diverse. Sometimes the hiring manager for a position is a woman, but there are no processes in place for a woman to be invited to join the selection committee when the hiring manager is a man. A policy will signal a commitment to gender equitable practices in the selection process.

Speed Skating Canada acknowledged, “the CEO can informally make these committees diverse, but having a formalized policy can make intentionally diverse selection committees a requirement regardless of leadership.”

During the assessment consultations, Speed Skating Canada has identified that a policy could be put in place for administrative positions but would be more difficult on technical positions.

There is currently no training or safeguards in place during the interviewing process to mitigate unconscious bias. Providing unconscious bias training can ensure that no matter which staff members are conducting the interviews, there is an opportunity to have a fair evaluation of a candidate’s skills and qualifications throughout the process.

Interview processes can be vulnerable to inequities. They can often be based on affinity bias (selection of candidates with similar traits as hiring managers) or based on certain personality types over candidate skills. While certain personality traits might be required in some roles, stereotypes of personality traits are highly gendered (like the alpha male leader) and subject to biases. There is also the concept of “fit” that sometimes drives hiring decisions - “fit” is often a codeword for “just like me” and excludes diversity.

Recommendations:

- 1) Mandate selection committees that have balanced representation of women and people from other underrepresented to prevent a single, homogeneous evaluation of candidates. Diverse selection committees can then be codified in a policy.
- 2) Biases can be mitigated by using objective scorecards. Scorecards can be designed to better isolate the skills and experiences required for the position. They may also serve as a prompt for individuals to reflect on their biases and reduce biased decision making.
- 3) Implement unconscious bias and gender equity training to help the selection committee and other decision makers recognize bias in hiring decisions.

c) Training and Retention



Summary of Findings:

Training is a way of instilling the values of diversity and inclusion in the workplace that can lead to changes in behaviour. When discussing training opportunities, Speed Skating Canada stated that they believe there is adequate training at the administrative level but recognizes that more can be done at the

technical level. There is broader education provided during the annual general meetings, as well as training for coaches through GamePlan and the Coaching Education Program.

Speed Skating Canada also stated during the assessment consultations that the Board of Directors could use gender equity training, and this can be made available throughout the organization and its membership. The Gender Equity LENS training provides important tools that can be used to inform day-to-day decision making on gender equity topics, as well as teach foundational learnings to staff and members.

Speed Skating Canada demonstrates efforts to protect its personnel from harassment and discrimination through multiple safe sport policies. There are many drivers of turnover among women and people from other underrepresented groups. Even though Safe Sport policies are in place, women from all backgrounds are significantly more likely to face sexual harassment than men.¹³ It is important for organizations to understand what is needed to retain underrepresented talent by promoting inclusion and creating a sense of belonging for all.

Recommendations:

- 1) In addition to Safe Sport training, make training on gender equity, diversity, and inclusion widely available for staff, coaches, officials, and athletes to communicate the organization's and sport's commitment to creating an inclusive environment for all. This will help build an organizational culture that values gender equity and diversity and create buy-in to support engagement in training.
- 2) Communicate the value of gender equity and diversity to organizational stakeholders. A mandatory training program may not be received well by the stakeholders if they do not understand the value and importance of gender equity and diversity.

d) Promotion (career path)



Summary of Findings:

In their GESAT® response, Speed Skating Canada states one of their goals is to better communicate available opportunities for promotion across the entire organization through their new performance review process.

Professional development opportunities are offered to all employees and extra opportunities were provided for women and women board members.

There is currently no succession planning in the organization that takes gender and diversity into account. Leaders need to assess their organization's demographics and age profile, identify when employees in mission critical positions will retire, understand what knowledge and skills will be lost, and develop a plan to advance and onboard the next generation of diverse talent.¹⁴

¹³ <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/diversity/2020/how-to-retain-underrepresented-talent>

¹⁴ https://www.diversitybestpractices.com/sites/diversitybestpractices.com/files/attachments/2019/06/succession_planning_-_building_leadership_diversity.pdf

Recommendations:

- 1) Consult women in the organization and emerging women leaders to better understand their experiences and perceived barriers to advancement and identify potential organizational change required and the support women require.
- 2) Embed gender and diversity targets into succession planning to ameliorate historical disadvantages, adding an element of accountability to the process.
- 3) Introduce more transparency in promotional opportunities and processes by communicating promotional opportunities to all employees.
- 4) Proactively reach out to women and people from other underrepresented groups within the sport directly to offer opportunities to advance in the sport. For example, directly reaching out to women athletes to mentor, develop and sponsor for coaching and refereeing positions.

e) Termination



Summary of Findings:

Speed Skating Canada conducts exit interviews which will be integrated into their Bamboo HR program the organization is introducing. The organization stated there has been low turnover since 2017.

There are no gender or diversity considerations in the organization's exit interview questions. Tying gender and diversity data to exit interviews can provide qualitative data to identify barriers present in the organization for women and people other underrepresented groups. The organization can also analyze the data for trends in separations across different demographics and how their experiences in the organization's working environment may have contributed.

Recommendations:

- 1) Ask questions related to diversity and inclusion in exit interviews to capture potential issues that lead to women and employees from other underrepresented groups leaving the organization.
- 2) Utilize insights gathered through exit interviews in feedback loops to put in place actionable strategies.

f) Women as Coaches and Officials

Summary of Findings:

Coaches

Research shows that gender equity among coaches:



- Leads to new and innovative approaches to coaching, training, management, and refereeing.¹⁵
- Retains coaches by reducing the additional emotional toll that the role places on women.¹⁶
- Improves recruitment and retention of sport participants, coaches, and volunteers and leads to a higher level of satisfaction.¹⁷

In sport, women are often underrepresented as coaches at the higher levels of competition and are not traditionally encouraged to seek out coaching as a career path in the same way as men. This often results in a lack of confidence in women and includes less exposure to the opportunities. Coaching requires an extraordinary investment of time and effort. While all coaches at the high-performance level face these stressors, women coaches face several distinctive challenges. These include:

- a traditionally male-dominant domain
- lack of social networks and role models; and
- reported conflict between coaching and personal responsibilities.¹⁸

This has created barriers for women entering coaching and having a continued engagement with coaching.

Speed Skating Canada has a small pool of coaches which makes it difficult to have gender balance at the national level. There is currently one women coach on the national team staff out of ten.

At the younger age grassroots level, athletes' mothers are typically the meet organizers, and the fathers end up being starters, which is an entry point of the coaching pathway. The gender stereotype of women being "unable to make tough calls" is also recognized as a barrier.

There are women national coaches at Speed Skating Canada, but there has been a reasonable amount of turnover in both men and women coaches in the past few years. One woman coach has left to coach for another country and told SSC that she left because of a gender issue.

Speed Skating Canada also stated that the current pool of coaches does not have sufficient gender equity, diversity, and inclusion training or an understanding to, "support or accommodate gender specific athletes on teams".

Speed Skating Canada recently identified two high potential women coaches: one on the long track program, and another in the pipeline.

Based on discussions with women athletes in the sport of speed skating, Speed Skating Canada acknowledges that coaching and leadership positions on the ice are held by men, but feedback suggests they would prefer having a woman coach or woman in a leadership role to travel with the team. Research

¹⁵ Official Journal of the European Union 14.6.2014 C 183/39. Council Conclusions of 21 May 2014 on Gender Equality in Sport (2014/C 183/09)

¹⁶ Norman L, Rankin-Wright A. Surviving rather than thriving: Understanding the experiences of women coaches using a theory of gendered social well-being. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 2018 06;53(4):424–450

¹⁷ Wicker, P., & Breuer, C. (2013). Understanding the importance of organizational resources to explain organizational problems: Evidence from nonprofit sport clubs in Germany. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 24(2), 461–484

¹⁸ <https://theconversation.com/more-money-may-be-pouring-into-womens-sport-but-theres-still-a-dearth-of-female-coaches-91486>

suggests that women tend to be over mentored and under sponsored.¹⁹ Mid level women coaches who have the potential to become high performance coaches can be sponsored by men who hold those powerful positions.

Officials

In the official's development pathway, the provincial/territorial sport organizations are responsible for level 1 and level 2 training. Speed Skating Canada does not have any information on these officials as it is not mandatory for the P/TSOs to share this information. There is a new database system being developed that will require this information to be available at the NSO level.

Speed Skating Canada stated that historically senior officials used to select officiating teams at national level competitions. This is often based on an affinity bias which may exclude women. This has stopped recently, but there is no evidence to determine if this continues to happen at the provincial level.

In order to encourage more women to become officials and progress along the development pathway, Speed Skating Canada is looking to provide incentives for reaching a target number of women in the pathway and providing a grant to create opportunities for women which was provided in the past. Speed Skating Canada also recognizes these clinics can be provided remotely to break down geographical, travel, and cost barriers that women and people from other underrepresented groups face in attending.

The SSC would also like to make the evaluation process more straightforward. Currently, officials need to be evaluated over several events. A system where they would take the required training and are evaluated at a single event would be more accessible to all officials along the pathway.

There is also discussion about how to communicate that starters are an essential role in the sport of speed skating. There is a greater percentage of men applying for these roles even though there are many qualified women for the position.

Recommendations:

- 1) Collaborate with Provincial chapters to explore ways to support provinces with lower levels of coach participation at the competitive level and to establish alternative ways for local coaches to advance or continue their development.
- 2) Create a process for mentoring or sponsoring women coaches and officials as a way to increase confidence, skills and opportunities for growth.
- 3) Review structure of coaching and officiating pathway and develop a coaching strategy to ensure equitable access to opportunities for women and people from other underrepresented groups.
- 4) Consider subsidizing childcare for women coaches, which may lead to higher participation of women coaches at higher levels of competition which involves travelling.
- 5) Discuss the coaching and officiating development pathway with newly identified women coaches and officials to understand the barriers to their advancement along the pathway.

¹⁹ <https://hbr.org/2019/08/a-lack-of-sponsorship-is-keeping-women-from-advancing-into-leadership>

- 6) Develop a communication strategy to shift the societal gender norms around coaching and officiating being stereotypically for men.
- 7) Establish and widely promote communication channels for women coaches and officials in the sport to share their experience, specifically at the provincial level. This will allow Speed Skating Canada to better isolate relevant factors leading to inequity.

3. VALUES AND CULTURE

a) Policies



Summary of Findings:

Speed Skating Canada has a number of policies that formalize and demonstrate its organizational culture.

- Gender Equity Policy
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy
- Trans Inclusion Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Ethics and Code of Conduct Policy
- Persons with Disability Policy
- Conduct Review Policy

Speed Skating Canada is in the process of finalizing a Safe Sport policy which will be included by April 1, 2021. The organization is also revising the Ethics and Code of Conduct Policy, as well as the Persons with a Disability Policy.

In their GESAT[®] response, Speed Skating Canada states, “We have a disability policy that is also outdated but not an accessibility policy.” Speed Skating Canada can utilize their Persons with a Disability Policy and expand on it to create an Accessibility policy that includes women and people from other underrepresented groups. While the organization might be accommodating diversity informally, it is important to formalize these practices in an Accessibility policy so that the organizational practices are not dependent on individual willingness.

There is currently no implementation plan for the above policies. Having an implementation plan in place allows policy to not just exist in paper form but would identify clear actions being taken to embed gender equity throughout the organization and sport community. Explaining what change is taking place and what the benefits are is important to creating buy-in from those who would be resistant to changing the status quo.

Recommendations:

- 1) Create an implementation plan to accompany Speed Skating Canada’s policy suite to outline focus areas, targets and strategies and demonstrate the organization’s commitment to gender equity and diversity.

- 2) Implement and encode best practices in an Accessibility policy, building on the current Persons with Disability Policy, to remove barriers of access for certain groups.
- 3) An engagement survey could help the organization understand the lived experience of women and girls as athletes, coaches and officials and provide an opportunity for men and boys to contribute to positive change in the organization.
- 4) In the upcoming review cycles, review existing policies with a gender equity and diversity lens to identify and potentially reduce/remove barriers to women and individuals from underrepresented groups.



b) Inclusive Organizational Culture

Summary of Findings:

An inclusive culture indicates a climate in which respect, equity, and positive recognition of differences are all cultivated. Speed Skating Canada is undergoing a culture review, which was initiated by a complaint and was escalated to a more widespread issue throughout the organization. This began a couple years ago as an organizational culture review and is now a training environment review.

There were focus groups and private interviews held by the NSO for provincial level coaches and science leads from both short and long track programs. These focus groups and interviews at the P/TSO level included parents.

When discussing gender equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the organization and its membership, Speed Skating Canada identified a need to create buy-in at the provincial level. Speed Skating Canada hopes this culture of Gender Equity and Diversity will trickle down to the grassroots level.

According to the GESAT[®], Speed Skating Canada does work to create an inclusive workplace, however they have focused only on gender as it relates to programs or facilities. SSC stated during the assessment consultations that the gender breakdown across events were equal.

Speed Skating Canada does not currently engage men to be allies for gender equity in the organization. Speed Skating Canada recognizes the opportunity to seek out allies in the organization who will promote and advance the culture of equity and inclusion in forming stakeholders this is not a women's issue, it's a sport issue.

Recommendations:

- 1) Communicate Speed Skating Canada's vision, core values on inclusivity and the actions that will be implemented to signal an organization-wide commitment to those values.
- 2) Encourage the open discussion of gender equity, diversity, and inclusion between Speed Skating Canada and their stakeholders around the results of the ongoing culture review.
- 3) Create a targeted communication plan for the organization's gender equity, diversity, and inclusion policy in collaboration with key stakeholders across the sport of speed skating.

Included in the communication plan should be key messaging around the importance of allyship in gender equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- 4) Identify allies for gender equity and diversity in the organization who are men and engage them in recognizing and encouraging women and people from other underrepresented groups to succeed in their development.
- 5) Include key messaging around the importance of allyship in gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in a communication strategy.

c) Organizational Flexibility & Support



Summary of Findings:

Speed Skating Canada is in the process of formalizing their employee handbook as a compilation of the organization's administrative policies. The organization is also planning on developing policies for providing childcare to those travelling for work, training, or competitions. Pay audits are conducted informally by the finance department and other staff members. Speed Skating Canada does not currently have a pay equity policy. Formalizing policies that relate to pay equity will ensure as the organization grows or as leadership shifts that pay equity remains a priority. Broadly speaking, while progress has been made over the years in closing the gender wage gap, on average, women still do not earn as much as men.²⁰ "The true gender pay-gap is not known with certainty, but the crucial question remains its cause. One common explanation is that women are less likely to negotiate their salaries."²¹

On the volunteer side, Speed Skating Canada recognizes that some positions are more accessible than others because some positions require them to be on the ice. Speed Skating Canada would like to mandate the importance of volunteers in the success of their sport in their communications.

Speed Skating Canada has focused its efforts on increasing accessibility in the sport for people with disabilities. A strategy is in development for a learn to skate program for athletes with a disability, but the organization has not had the capacity to build out the program. Speed Skating Canada has also employed sight and sound experts to assess the sport from grassroots to high performance as a way to be more intentional with accessibility.

Speed Skating Canada noted they are interested to understand what mental health services are being utilized. Anecdotally, more mental health benefits have been activated during COVID-19 and they have the ability to confirm this through quantitative data. SSC also stated there are on-going efforts from the leadership team to be proactive in addressing mental health concerns. One example is scheduling time for staff to connect to combat working from home and isolation.

²⁰ <http://www.payequity.gov.on.ca/en/GWG/Pages/default.aspx>

²¹ <https://hbr.org/2018/06/research-women-ask-for-raises-as-often-as-men-but-are-less-likely-to-get-them>

Recommendations:

- 1) Develop an Accessibility Policy, including information from SSC's current Persons with Disability Policy, to ensure everyone has the same information when accommodating people with disabilities.
- 2) Offer subsidized daycare in certain situations when such accommodations might be necessary. For example, subsidized daycare for work-related international events will allow women to participate to the same extent as men.
- 3) Review requirements for achieving pay equity, develop a policy on pay equity and review the communication strategy regarding how to advance within a salary band.
- 4) Develop a communications strategy to demonstrate the importance of volunteers in the sport.
- 5) Gather data and analyze usage trends from SSC's insurance provider with a gendered lens to determine any unintentional barriers to applying for these services.

4. MEASUREMENT AND TRACKING GENDER EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

a) Gender Equity and Diversity Metrics



Summary of Findings:

Speed Skating Canada does have goals to engage women leaders and people from other underrepresented groups at all levels of the organization, but there is no structure in place to achieve them. The organization is in the process of implementing a digital system and determining what data they want to track.

Organizations have run into a capacity problem in terms of what can be monitored, and data paralysis due to the volume of data that can be tracked. Determining what data would be the most beneficial to the organization during the collection phase is important in combating those issues. The use of targets and quotas is important in the advancement of gender equity, then progress can be tracked and evaluated year after year. Having a dashboard that allows you to monitor and track if there is any regression in the short term, will allow the organization to address issues before they become trends.

The national database collects general demographic data including, name, date of birth, and sex. Speed Skating Canada has jurisdiction to collect data at the national and PTSO level, but not at the grassroots club level. The organization does engage venues such as regional training centers and the oval training centre to collect athlete data.

As a result of the culture survey, focus groups, and interviews previously mentioned in the "Inclusive Organizational Culture" section of this report, implementation and recommendations are given to Speed Skating Canada to be applied through their "Technical Alignment Project" and along the Long-Term Development Pathway.

In their GESAT® response, Speed Skating Canada states that gender equity and [lack of] diversity reflects the wider speed skating community, but "if our current community becomes more diverse [diversity within the organization would be underrepresented]." The organization also stated that the administrative staff

would be considered diverse, technical staff less so, and coaching staff the least diverse area of the organization.

Recommendations:

- 1) Analyze and utilize the recommendations from the ongoing culture survey to measure employee satisfaction and understand how employee experience may differ based on gender, racialized status, and other metrics.
- 2) Set aspirational targets using the baseline data as a reference. Targets can be set on different levels, from coaching staff to management positions. A policy and implementation plan can institutionalize commitment to gender equity and diversity.
- 3) Analyze gender and diversity data collected via the membership database to identify or uncover any potential gaps or inequities and consult with the relevant communities to identify potential strategies to mitigate them.
- 4) Collaborate with venues and P/TSOs to identify quantitative and qualitative data points that will benefit all parties involved, and collaboratively establish appropriate and feasible data collection systems to integrate with the new digital platform.
- 5) Create a dashboard of the data and ensure continuous tracking and regular progress updates.

5. GENDER EQUITY AND DIVERSITY ACROSS ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES

a) Programs and Services



Summary of Findings:

Programs

As mentioned previously, Speed Skating Canada’s programming focuses on the National level with no jurisdiction at the provincial level. In the past, SSC attempted to hold town halls to disseminate information on gender equity at the club level, but some member P/TSOs pushed back because the national organization bypassed them. As a response, the organization would like to develop a “learn to skate” program with a gender lens that the P/TSOs can deliver to positively affect gender equity at the club level.

There is a perception at the provincial and club level that Speed Skating Canada is already gender equitable based on participation. This however only takes into account one metric of potential stakeholders. Analyzing the data to look for trends in participation and retention may further support SSC’s programs and services. Developing a communications strategy around gender equity initiatives, including the goals of Speed Skating Canada, will ensure stakeholders understand they are part of the solution.

When allocating resources, Speed Skating Canada focuses on medal potential, regardless of gender, from a high performance perspective. Speed Skating Canada athletes train together in the short track program. The long track and sprint teams are co-ed. The organization has identified an opportunity to analyze the team's in-training to determine whether resources need to be allocated differently to allow all teams a chance to succeed at the highest level. One example Speed Skating Canada has identified is that women athletes in speed skating progress through the LTD pathway quicker than men because the pool of athletes is smaller.

Speed Skating Canada participated in research with the University of Calgary with the women's team, analyzing their activity in the university's wind tunnels to evaluate mechanics and performance. They also have a partnership with McGill University in a concussion study, and the Sport Centre in Montréal, Quebec.

When conducting research, sport science is heavily dominated by men in terms of subjects of research. As science is trending towards research conducted for women specifically, it is important that sport realizes that women's bodies are different from men's and need different considerations in that can only be determined through research.

Recommendations:

- 1) Review existing programs and resources with a gender lens to identify areas for improvement and revision to ensure the needs of women and girls are met through the programs and services. (Canadian Women & Sport offer a "Review and Endorsement" service as a resource to organizations.)
- 2) Explore how persons with disabilities, newcomers, Indigenous peoples, and people from other underrepresented groups may face other unidentified barriers to equal participation.
- 3) When possible, ensure that programs specifically targeting certain population groups (e.g., women and girls, newcomer or indigenous communities) are led by, or include leadership and capacity development for people from within those communities.
- 4) Provide training at the club and provincial/territorial levels on engaging women from and people from other underrepresented groups to ensure that they are attentive to their unique experiences.
- 5) Develop a communication plan, explaining the "business case" and the current state of gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in the sport of speed skating to generate buy-in at the club and provincial/territorial level.
- 6) Mandate equitable policies and practices when working with sport science research partners to ensure women are included and selected as research subjects for their studies.

b) Marketing, Media, and Communications



Summary of Findings:

Speed Skating Canada would like to develop a database of images of women in speed skating to apply to several initiatives, including, but not limited to:

- Stock images of skill presentations for manuals featuring boys and girls
- Women in officiating and in non-traditional roles, such as starters
- Coach training showing women coaches and athletes

The organization has set aside funds in the budget to hire a photographer at the youth championships this year, as well as to provide a grant for local clubs to have photographers at their events.

Speed Skating Canada currently does not communicate the importance of gender equity and diversity in their internal and external publications. Communicating these benefits reinforces the good work the organization is already doing and reminds their stakeholders of their commitment to gender equity, diversity and inclusion. It also provides reminders to those making an attempt to shift their way of thinking into being more supportive of gender equity and diversity than they have in the past, why changes are being made and how it will affect the organization long term.

Speed Skating Canada recognizes that the organization could use training in ensuring that gender stereotypes and stereotypes related to diversity have been eliminated in all organizational communications and promotional material.

Speed Skating Canada also specifies awards for women but would like to have a more diverse pool of nominees and winners.

Recommendations:

- 1) Develop or adopt policy on the use of inclusive language. This will ensure that it is considered in all marketing and communications efforts, and relevant inclusive practices are resilient to changes in personnel.
- 2) Regularly review and update the organization's policy on inclusive language and include definitions that update as the language evolves in the space.
- 3) Embed the organization's commitment to the values of gender equity and diversity by communicating their gender equity and diversity goals through their external and internal publications.
- 4) Continue to compile a database of images featuring women and expand it to include people from other underrepresented groups, to be made available to Speed Skating Canada and their stakeholders.
- 5) Actively reach out to high-potential award nominees from underrepresented groups for awards to consider them early in the selection process.

c) External Relations



Summary of Findings:

There are currently no gender or diversity considerations in procurement. Consideration is defaulted to the level of service provided by the company. Organizations can use their buying power as leverage to work

with companies that focus on gender equity and diversity as a core value.²² As an organization, choosing to work with companies that are led by women or people from other underrepresented groups communicates their commitment to gender equity and diversity and aligns with organizational values. Speed Skating Canada recognizes they are in a position to choose to work with companies that align with their values and not only those who can provide the best deal.

In the development of sponsorship decks, the values of Speed Skating Canada are mentioned up front and they would generally steer away from vendors that do not share the same values of the organization. In the assessment consultations, Speed Skating Canada shared that they do not have the power to veto a supplier unless there is a major contract breach or something egregious happens. The organization would be open to including a policy to make sure that a gender equity lens is applied to all procurement and sponsorship materials.

Speed Skating Canada also recognizes that most of the companies that are contracted with the organization are male led and would be interested in doing an inventory to ask if these organizations have women in leadership positions or are actively looking to promote women in their company to meet the gender equity and diversity values of Speed Skating Canada.

Speed Skating Canada does not own its own facilities. Newer facilities would be up to code in regard to accessibility, but older venues might not be able to accommodate all people.

Recommendations:

- 1) Develop a procurement policy that targets organizations owned by women and people from other underrepresented groups.
- 2) Initiate partnerships with companies with shared values in gender equity and diversity. There is an opportunity to leverage the connection between sport, leadership and skills development to form corporate partnerships and bring in new corporate sponsors.
- 3) Leverage existing partnerships to support their efforts in advancing gender equity and diversity to achieve mutually beneficial gender equity and diversity outcomes.
- 4) Discuss with facilities how Speed Skating Canada can work with them to address barriers related to accessibility in and around their environments.

6. EXPANDING THE POOL AND OUTREACH



Summary of Findings:

Speed Skating Canada is currently working on developing a “learn to skate” program, in collaboration with the P/TSOs to address the gaps in their member clubs. Speed Skating Canada would like to apply a gender lens to the creation of this program, recognizing that the organization has resources to help attract women and people from other underrepresented groups to the sport.

Speed Skating Canada works with RBC Training Ground to encourage the transition and re-entry of former athletes into the organization, but it does not focus on women or people from other underrepresented

²² <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/3/the-power-of-procurement>

groups in particular. The Sport Canada Innovation Grant proposal would do similar work but with a gender equity and diversity lens. Speed Skating Canada also worked with Fast and Female in 2020 to deliver free workshop opportunities for girls aged 8-12 to develop leadership skills and speak to their national, NextGen, and Development Team skater to help get more girls interested in speed skating.²³

In their GESAT® response, Speed Skating Canada does not consult with women and girls already participating to develop programs and services that meet their needs. Surveying former athletes can provide valuable data on their sport participation and reasons for leaving so Speed Skating Canada can address the issues pertaining to drop-out. Learning about a participant's proposed professional development pathway early in their speed skating career can be important in designing the pathway for advancement for athletes, coaches, and officials. By creating one unified system from the club level to provincial level, to national level, while using a gender equity lens can eliminate some of the barriers that girls and women might face across the country.

Recommendations:

- 1) Identify and consult with girls and women athletes who drop out and uncover the underlying reasons for the dropout. Consult with women, generally in the development and design of programs and/or services to help overcome barriers to participation.
- 2) Some clubs are unaware of the value of diversity and inclusion. Educate these clubs on the importance and necessity of gender equity and diversity in programming. Canadian Women & Sport's Retention Workshop discusses designing and delivering programs for girls. Canadian Tire Jumpstart's Keeping Girls in Sport e-learning module supports 'expanding the pool' and retaining girls.
- 3) Begin drafting an implementation plan for the Sport Canada Innovation Grant proposal to allow former women athletes to re-enter and transition into meaningful roles in the organization.
- 4) Conduct formal evaluations on the effectiveness of current and new outreach programs to determine whether said programs are having the desired impacts and ensure gender equity and diversity metrics are included in these efforts.
- 5) Communicate and collaborate with provincial and community level organizations to identify appropriate communication and recruitment strategies for new athletes.
- 6) Develop an intentional strategy to support and encourage girls into the development pathway.

²³ <https://www.speedskating.ca/news-and-info/news/ssc-fast-and-female-power-hour>

CONCLUSION:

Speed Skating Canada has made good progress in advancing gender equity at the highest levels of the organization. The recommendations in this report are aimed to help Speed Skating Canada identify areas where they can focus their efforts to strengthen the engagement of women and girls as participants and leaders.

As a follow up to the review and analysis of organizational policies, processes and practices in this recommendations report, the Gender Equity Assessment Playbook includes an Action Planning consultation. Through this service, Canadian Women & Sport aims to provide Speed Skating Canada with support in:

- prioritizing the recommendations set forward in this report
- aligning those recommendations to their organizational goals; and
- guiding the development of tangible actions.

These important next steps will positively impact the organizations while advancing gender equity for women and girls in Canadian sport.

APPENDIX 1

Resources

1. [Gender Equity Policy Template and implementation guide](#)
2. [Selection Committee Guidelines](#)
3. [Equity Statement for hiring](#)
4. [Board profile and competency matrix tool](#)
5. [Ways men can support their female colleagues- Remotely](#)
6. [The Gender Pay Gap](#)
7. [Working from home](#)
8. [Overcoming hidden biases to harness diversity's true potential](#)
9. [Retention workshop](#)

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Canadian Women & Sport is dedicated to creating an equitable and inclusive Canadian sport and physical activity system that empowers girls and women—as active participants and leaders—within and through sport. With a focus on systemic change, we partner with sport organizations, governments, and leaders to challenge the status quo and build better sport through gender equity.



Ted Rogers School of Management's Diversity Institute at Ryerson University was founded in 1999 by Dr. Wendy Cukier with the aim of undertaking research on diversity in the workplace to improve practices in organizations.