

ATHLETE REPRESENTATION GUIDE




Athletes**CAN**



CHECKLIST FOR EFFECTIVE ATHLETE REPRESENTATION



The following list represents the criteria needed to provide the optimal environment for effective athlete representation. Both the Athlete Representative (AR) and National Sport Organization (NSO) will benefit from these items being met and therefore should share responsibility in creating this atmosphere. The availability of some of these resources may vary among NSOs. AthletesCAN has a number of resources and templates to provide NSOs and ARs to further explain many of the items in this checklist and to help facilitate the process. These will be referenced at the end of this document.



To enable effective athlete representation:

- The ARs should be elected or selected by the athletes, not appointed by the organization.
- The AR position should be filled by a current active athlete or an athlete recently retired within two (2) to four (4) years.
- The NSO should seek to have athlete representation at all decision-making tables throughout the organization. Where fulfilling these roles would be too much for one (1) AR, the NSO should develop a mechanism to assist the main AR in this respect, such as forming an Athletes' Council or having a specific Athlete Director role to sit on the board and supported by additional ARs who would sit on the various committees and working groups.
- The AR role must be clearly defined by a job description and terms of reference, and communicated to all parties including NSO support staff and coaches.
- The NSO should have an approved staff member or volunteer appointed to educate the ARs and to act as an ongoing resource and liaison. Contact details of this liaison should be provided to the ARs.
- The NSO should provide opportunities for the ARs to be mentored and to further their leadership skills.
- The ARs should develop the support of their peers and the NSO. They should reach out to past ARs to learn about their successes, challenges and future outlooks.
- The NSO should have a thorough orientation program for all ARs which should provide the following:
 - The Athlete Representative Job Description and Terms of Reference.
 - The NSO's bylaws and policies.



- An organizational chart showing reporting and supervision responsibilities and connections between all staff and volunteer positions within the NSO.
- An overview of “who is who” and an outline of the responsibilities of various committees, working groups and governance levels within the organization. This should include contact information for current board members and chairs of the relevant committees and working groups.
- A copy of recent and applicable committee and Board minutes and reports for the past two (2) to three (3) years to put current issues into context.
- The Athlete Reports from the past two (2) to three (3) years.
- A copy of the applicable Sport Development Model. This should outline the programs and opportunities that should be in place for athletes at different stages of their technical and competitive development.
- The NSO’s current strategic plan to learn what the strategic priorities, goals and objectives are for the organization.
- The audited financial statements for the past two (2) to three (3) years, plus current fiscal year financial information including the budget.
- A list of key dates on the NSO Calendar (ie. events, meetings, major decisions, deadlines, etc.) as well as key dates important to the relevant committees and working groups.
- AthletesCAN leadership resources suite.
- The ARs are responsible for reviewing and understanding the documents provided to them but their NSO.
- The NSO should provide the opportunity for the ARs to speak to a number of people in the organization and within the board to help develop a historical and current perspective. The ARs should determine how decisions are made, why particular decisions were made in the past, the current major issues and the plans for the future.
- The NSO should have a Conflict of Interest policy that is applicable to all staff, volunteers, and board and committee members.
- The ARs should create a Communication Plan and Schedule or adapt the previous ARs’ Communication Plan to current needs. The communication plan should include ongoing, multi-directional communication between the ARs and athletes and between the ARs and the NSO.
- The NSO should provide a budget to facilitate effective communication and engagement between the ARs and the athletes, through mechanisms such as conference calls and face-to-face meetings, and to allow the ARs to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. This budget should be communicated to the ARs.
- The ARs and the NSO should collaboratively discuss the current issues/concerns and/ or solutions effecting both the athletes and the NSO. At a minimum, this should include dialogue on these important topics:
 - **Athlete Assistance Program** – The ARs should be aware of the number of cards available and the nomination process the NSO uses for eligible athletes.



- **Athlete Agreements** – The ARs should ensure they and all current athletes are up to date with and understand the implications of the content of the agreement. The ARs along with the NSO should review the Athlete Agreement annually and come to a consensus on any areas of concern or required change.
- **Team Selection Process and Policies** – The ARs should be aware of these policies and processes, who is responsible for setting the criteria, as well as how these processes and policies change. In addition, ARs should determine what their role is in regard to team selection, which key stakeholders are involved, and how those stakeholders are being informed throughout the process.”
- **Dispute Resolution** – The NSO should inform the ARs about the channels for dispute resolution, including the appeals process, the key personnel for handling disputes, and other resources past ARs have used to solve disputed issues.
- **Coaching & Support Staff** – The ARs should understand the selection process of coaching and supporting staff, as well as how events are assigned.
- The ARs should also be aware of any other pertinent issues effecting the athletes.
- The NSO should ensure the ARs attend the AGM and all important meetings and cover the costs of attending. The NSO should also ensure the AGM or meeting is scheduled at a time that does not conflict with the ARs’ training or competition schedule.
- The ARs are responsible for delivering an annual Athlete Report to the board of directors, staff and membership at the AGM. This report should take into consideration feedback from teammates, outline key opportunities to improve the sport delivery and a review of the prior year’s recommendations.
- The ARs and NSO together should create a Succession Plan, or continually update the previous Succession Plan, to target and properly educate and prepare potential future ARs.

AthletesCAN has developed these Leadership Resources and tools for both ARs and NSOs to use for help in creating the optimal environment for effective athlete representation:

Leadership Modules

- Athlete Representative 101
- Athletes’ Councils 101
- Athletes on Boards

Athlete Representative

- Athlete Representation – Getting Started
- Athlete Representative Job Description Template
- Athlete Representative Terms of Reference Template
- Athlete Representative Introductory Email Template
- Issue Identification Framework



- Athlete Report Information Document
- Athlete Report Template
- Succession Planning

Athletes' Councils

- Creating an Athletes' Council
- Athletes' Council Terms of Reference Template
- Athletes' Council Orientation Package
- Draft Email for Scheduling an Athletes' Council Meeting
- Meeting Agenda Template
- Robert's Rules 101
- How to Take Minutes at a Meeting

Athlete Directors

- The Case for Establishing an Athlete Director Position
- Role of the Athlete Director
- Annotated BOD Agenda Template
- Athlete Director Hacks
- Board of Directors 101



ATHLETE REPRESENTATIVES: GETTING STARTED



Have you just been elected as your sport's newest Athlete Representative (AR), Athlete Director (AD) or Athletes' Council (AC) Chair, and are wondering – what now?

This checklist outlines the initial actions to help you establish your role as an AR and become more comfortable with the internal workings of your National Sport Organization (NSO) and the Canadian sport system. The following steps will get you started on the right foot:



- Speak with your NSO to determine which staff member should be your main point of contact or liaison and get their contact information. This person should be available to answer any questions you might have; provide you with any required information, documents or resources for you to meet your responsibilities; and act as a communication conduit between yourself and the NSO staff/board as needed.
- Ask your NSO for a Job Description or Terms of Reference that would outline your role and responsibilities as an AR, if this information wasn't already provided when running for the AR position.
- Obtain an AR Orientation package from your NSO, or if one doesn't exist, request they provide you with the following documents that are relevant to your role and responsibilities:
 - Overview of all NSO committees and working groups;
 - Organizational Chart or Who's Who document of the NSO with contact information;
 - Policies and Bylaws;
 - Past meeting minutes from board and/or relevant committee meetings;
 - Past Athlete Reports from past two (2) to three (3) years;
 - Current Strategic Plan;
 - Audited financial statements from the past two (2) to three (3) years;
 - Current budget; and
 - List of key dates on the NSO Calendar (ie. events, meetings, major decisions, deadlines, etc.) as well as key dates relevant to your committee.



- Review the other AthletesCAN Leadership documents for helpful resources. Take the AthletesCAN Leadership training modules and reach out to AthletesCAN for any additional assistance you might need.
- Connect with the previous AR(s) to help with your on-boarding for the role. Ask your NSO for their contact information if you don't already have it. If they haven't compiled important information as part of a succession plan, ask about:
 - Recent issues affecting the athletes;
 - Which staff and board members make good allies or mentors for your role;
 - Successes they experienced and major obstacles they encountered;
 - What tactics they implemented to overcome any obstacles; and
 - How they maintained communication and connections with the athletes.
- Determine if you have an allotted budget for meeting your responsibilities, such as holding meetings or collecting feedback from athletes.
- Create a communication plan. This can be based off information you've been provided around budget and suggestions from previous ARs and other athletes:
 - Determine the best mode(s) and intervals for maintaining consistent and open conversation with the athletes (ex. in-person meetings, conference calls, Team meetings/events, email, WhatsApp, Slack, social media, video conferences, etc.);
 - Obtain a list of active athletes and emailing list from your NSO;
 - Set up the appropriate communication platforms required;
 - Consider setting up an NSO based email address for your official communications; and
 - Note the key dates for obtaining timely feedback from athletes.
- Establish some preliminary goals for your term and begin an Issue Identification Framework (see the AthleteCAN leadership resource of the same title for a template). These two items can be further refined and continually adjusted based off feedback you receive from athletes and your NSO throughout your term.
- Send an introductory email to all athlete members to share your communication plan, directions for connecting on the selected communication platform and other goals for your term as AR. The AthletesCAN template can provide an outline.
- Send a brief welcome to your fellow athletes via the chosen communication platform to start an open and continuous dialogue.



- Prepare for formal meetings of the organization by familiarizing yourself with Robert's Rules, the flow of a meeting agenda, common meeting jargon and etiquette, and conflicts of interest in sport. These items can be found in the AthletesCAN leadership resources and training module.

As you become more comfortable in your role, many of these items will evolve and become second nature. It will also be important for you to begin to develop or add to a succession plan for the ARs that will follow. If you need additional assistance at any step of the way, please reach out to AthletesCAN and your fellow athlete leaders.



ATHLETE REPRESENTATIVE JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE



[Download Template](#)

A job description should be developed and reviewed regularly for each major Athlete Representative (AR) position of the National Sport Organization (NSO) (ie. Athlete Representative, Athlete Director, Athletes' Council Chair, etc.). The job description should provide a comprehensive description of the role for prospective nominees. The following is a template with sections that should be included in a job description with examples of best practices for the AR role.

PURPOSE

This section should explain the what, why and how of the AR role.

Examples:

- *The Athlete Representative (AR) is an elected representative of the National Team and the foundational mechanism for direct athlete feedback to the organization.*
- *The purpose of the AR is to represent and promote the views and interests of the various national team athletes of [NSO] to [NSO]'s Board of Directors and management on all issues which directly or indirectly affect athletes at the high-performance level.*
- *The AR will represent the voice of the [NSO]'s high performance athletes within his or her scope of authority (ie. full spectrum of disciplines, discipline specific, gender specific, team specific, etc.) and will assist the organization in its fulfillment of its mission and the pursuit of an athlete-centered sport environment.*
- *Representatives shall not take stands on issues or represent themselves as the AR in areas of personal interest having no connection with official AR responsibilities. An AR shall ensure that the views, comments and opinions of their teammates are communicated as appropriate.*

KEY DUTIES

The key duties should include a specific list of activities which the AR is to undertake.

Examples:

The Athlete Representative(s) will perform the following key duties:

- *Participate in decision making processes as a member of the Board of Directors (the "Board"), and various standing / ad hoc committees (including but not limited to HP Committee, Sport Development Committee, Finance Committee, etc.) where applicable;*
- *Ensure to the greatest extent possible that [NSO]'s policies and programs meet the needs of athletes;*

- *Provide athlete representation to the Board of [NSO] where applicable;*
- *Provide input prior to approval on key documents/policies/topics directly affecting athletes including but not limited to Athlete Agreements, Team Selection, AAP Nomination Criteria, High Performance training and competition plans, Own the Podium, coaching, etc.;*
- *Solicit and present athletes' views and positions to any relevant decision-making body on issues identified by the athletes as affecting athlete performance;*
- *Represent [NSO] and athlete interests at meetings and events;*
- *Contribute content to [NSO] communications for consideration;*
- *Provide athlete representation to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and any Special General Meeting of [NSO] with the support of [NSO];*
- *Provide a forum in which athletes may share and develop information or ideas as they relate to national, development and NextGen team athletes with the support of the [NSO];*
- *Build leadership succession and skills within the athlete community as a whole and within [NSO] with the support of [NSO];*
- *To name representatives as requested by [NSO] and other bodies for activities where athlete representation is an integral element. i.e. High Performance Committee;*
- *To attend the AthletesCAN Forum annually or identify an appropriate proxy if unable;*
- *Recommend Athlete Representation, where appropriate, to external agencies including but not limited to the AthletesCAN Board of Directors, Canadian Olympic Committee Athletes' Commission and Canadian Paralympic Committee Athletes' Council when possible.*
- *Maintain regular communication with the general athlete body with the support of [NSO], especially during key dates in [NSO] calendar, including Team Selections, Trials/Qualifying Events, National Championships, World Championships, Major Games, Board Meetings, AGM, AthletesCAN Forum, AAP Carding Nominations, Appeal Deadlines, Funding Grant/Bursary Application Deadlines and the development and release of Team Selection/AAP Carding Criteria and Athlete Agreements.*

OBJECTIVES / DELIVERABLES

This section should set out broad-level objectives and deliverables as necessary. The AR, in collaboration with National Team athletes and their NSO is strongly encouraged to set out clear objectives and deliverables as necessary, and especially after the AR election. The objectives should be simple, measurable and time-bound.

Example:

- *Review, revise or develop and disseminate an annual survey to national team athletes to solicit feedback on various aspects of the athlete experience in order to guide and inform AR strategies and recommendations.*
- *Provide an annual Athlete Report to the [NSO] management/Board with a copy circulated to National Team athletes.*

REPORTING

This section should specify how the AR makes reports, if it is not already defined in the sections above.

Example:

- *The AR will report quarterly with the pre-determined NSO/board liaison.*
- *The AR will report quarterly at a minimum with eligible members.*
- *The AR will present the NSO/board annually with an Athlete Report reflecting the business and recommendations of the National Team at the end of each competitive season or fiscal year.*

TERMS OF REFERENCE TEMPLATE



[Download Template](#)



A Terms of Reference (TOR) should be developed and reviewed regularly for each major Athlete Representative (AR) position of the NSO (i.e. Athlete Representative, Athlete Director, Athletes' Council Chair, etc.). The TOR should include guidelines for the eligibility and terms of the position, as well as the election process of the position. The following is a template of what sections should be included in a TOR with examples.

Terms of Reference

<p>Purpose</p>	<p><i>This section should explain the what, why and how of the AR role.</i></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Athlete Representative (AR) is an elected representative of the athletes and the foundational mechanism for direct athlete feedback to the organization.</i> • <i>The purpose of the AR is to represent and promote the views and interests of the various national team athletes of [NSO] to [NSO]'s Board of Directors and management on all issues which directly or indirectly affect athletes at the high performance level.</i> • <i>The AR will represent the voice of the [NSO]'s high performance athletes within his or her scope of authority (full spectrum of disciplines, discipline specific, gender specific, team specific, etc.) and will assist the organization in its fulfillment of its mission and the pursuit of an athlete-centered sport environment.</i> • <i>Representatives of the AC shall not take stands on issues or represent themselves as the AR in areas of personal interest having no connection with official AR responsibilities and shall ensure the views, comments and opinions of their teammates are communicated as appropriate.</i>
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<p>Eligibility</p>	<p><i>This section outlines the criteria a member must meet in order to be eligible to run for the AR position.</i></p> <p>Example:</p> <p><i>“ELIGIBLE MEMBERS”:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Any able-bodied or para senior national team athlete actively competing, who has been officially invited to and/or represented Canada at the Olympic/Paralympic Games, Pan/Parapan Am Games, Commonwealth Games, World Championships, and/or World Cup event in the calendar year prior to the call for nominations (as defined below); and/or</i> • <i>Any able-bodied or para senior national team athlete actively competing, who, in the event that any of the above listed events or a discipline thereof is cancelled or is not offered in a given year, is the top ranked athlete in their discipline as determined by [NSO]’s selection criteria, policies and/or official ranking; and/or</i> • <i>Athletes in [NSO]’s high performance athlete training program, if any such program exists, who are listed by [NSO] as enrolled in the program;</i> • <i>An Eligible Member must be a current registrant of [NSO].</i> <p><i>“ELIGIBLE ALUMNI MEMBERS”:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Alumni of any of the above senior national teams from within the last two years*, who are not employed by [NSO] and/or actively coaching at the national or international level.</i> <p>* Timelines can be variable and adjusted to the unique requirements of each NSO and their athlete members; however, AthletesCAN strongly recommends an AR who has been an active athlete on the National Team within the previous 8 years, at maximum.</p>
<p>Nomination and Election Procedures</p>	<p><i>This section describes the process by which a member is nominated for the potential AR position and how the election is to be run.</i></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A male and female representative will be elected to fill two (2) AR positions OR a male and female from each discipline will be elected to fill [number] Athlete Representative positions.</i> • <i>Eligible Members must reside in Canada during their term.</i> • <i>Election of the AR position(s) will take place in the 1st and 3rd year of the quadrennial.</i> • <i>Eligible Members (as defined above) will be called upon electronically to make nominations no less than thirty (30) days prior to [election date].</i> • <i>An Eligible Member may nominate himself or herself for an AR position.</i> • <i>After receipt of nominations, the eligible nominee(s) will be notified. The nominees will be called upon to accept or reject their nominations.</i> • <i>An electronic election will be held with the names of the eligible nominee(s) that have accepted their nominations. Eligible Members hold one (1) vote each. Eligible Members and/or Eligible Alumni Members who received the most votes will be appointed to the available AR position(s).</i>

Term	<p><i>This section specifies the length and number of terms an AR may hold their position. It may also include additional points relevant to term eligibility, such as reasons a term may end prematurely.</i></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thereafter, AR members shall be elected for a two (2) year term.</i> • <i>AR members can serve up to a maximum of three (3) terms.</i> • <i>Athletes may be removed from the AR position in the following ways.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Violation of [NSO]’s Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy.</i> – <i>A vote of non-confidence supported by at least three-quarters of the eligible members.</i> – <i>Resignation, in which case the athlete representative must make reasonable effort to recommend a suitable replacement.</i>
Resources	<p><i>This section would apply if budgetary resources have been allocated to the AR.</i></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The AR(s) will receive the necessary resources from [NSO] to fulfill their mandate, and may, from time to time, have staff persons assigned to assist the AR with their work.</i>
Reporting	<p><i>Specify how the AR makes reports if not defined in the sections above.</i></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The AR will report quarterly with the pre-determined NSO/board liaison.</i> • <i>The AR will report quarterly at a minimum, with eligible members.</i> • <i>The AR will present the NSO/board annually with an Athlete Report reflecting the business and recommendations of the national team at the end of each competitive season or fiscal year.</i>
Approval	<p><i>These Terms of Reference were approved by [NSO] on [Date].</i></p>
Review	<p><i>The Athlete Representative(s) will review these Terms of Reference on an as needed basis and will make changes if necessary.</i></p>



ATHLETE REPRESENTATIVE INTRODUCTORY EMAIL TEMPLATE



[Download Template](#)

The following template can be used to make an initial connection with the athletes in your sport. It can be tailored to meet your needs and the information you would like to share as a starting off point. It is just one piece of a communication plan that should consist of ongoing, open dialogue between you as the Athlete Representative, the athletes and your National Sport Organization.

Hello fellow athletes!

My name is [YOUR NAME] and I will be your new athlete representative for the next [NUMBER] years. I have been on the national team since [YEAR] and look forward to furthering my involvement in [NSO] with a more hands on approach, as your Athlete Representative. As your Athlete Rep I want to ensure that YOUR VOICE is heard and YOUR RIGHTS are respected.

As your Athlete Rep, my job is to:

- Effect positive change within our sport.
- Learn as much as possible about [NSO] and the Canadian high-performance sport system to better understand and represent your interests and those of our teammates.
- Educate our [NSO] representatives about current athlete needs and the status of the national team effectively.
- Meet and work with other Athlete Representatives from various sports to exchange ideas, network, and strengthen the athlete voice.
- Educate you and our teammates about [NSO]'s strategic plans, policies and procedures, and the high-performance sport system to ensure a level playing field and foster athlete leadership development within our team.

I will represent your voice and strive to ensure our sport is athlete-centered and that the values, programs, policies, resource allocation, and priorities of [NSO] is placing primary emphasis on the consideration of our needs as athletes, both professionally and personally. We should be an active subject, not the object of sporting programs.

As my fellow teammate, I want you to know that I am open to any and all feedback at any time and I will do my best to respond to you within 24 hours with either a recognition, a promise to help, or with a solution/plan of action. The best way to get in contact with me is via *[COMMUNICATION PLATFORM]* at *[USERNAME/ADDRESS]*. I encourage you all to join our group chat on *[COMMUNICATION PLATFORM]* by *[ACCESS INSTRUCTIONS]* for easier communication.

The only way I can effectively represent the needs of our team is if we all work together. I will make sure to keep you up to date on anything affecting us as athletes. Please always feel free to let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

To get the ball rolling, I would love to hear your feedback on any of the following topics:

- Athlete Representation/Athlete Communication – what methods of communication do you prefer and find works best with your schedule?
- Athlete Assistance Program/Carding
- Athlete Agreements
- Dispute Resolution
- Team Selection
- Communication with our NSOs
- AthletesCAN – are you familiar with the organization, and do you use their services?

I look forward to working closely with each of you and representing the athlete voice in *[NSO]* for at least the next *[NUMBER]* years!

Sincerely,

[NAME]

Athlete Representative

YOUR VOICE MATTERS



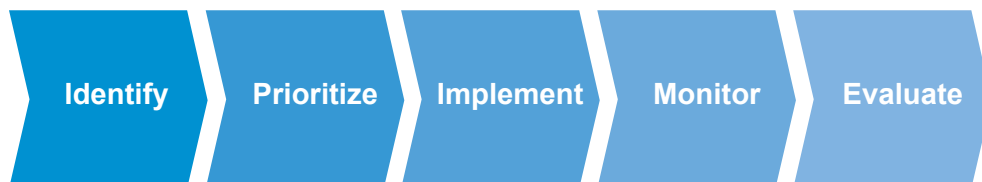
ISSUE IDENTIFICATION FRAMEWORK



OVERVIEW

An Issue Identification Framework (framework) is a key governance tool that organizations use to assess and mitigate risk. As a future risk assessment exercise, the framework can help Athlete Representatives (ARs) predetermine risk and plan solutions for recurring issues that may arise during their term. For example, at the beginning of your term this framework can be completed with input from the former AR and members of the Athletes' Council (AC). It is typically revisited each year to ensure the risk remain relevant and new risks are added to the framework. The channels to collect information on the framework include ARs, membership surveys, National Sport Organization (NSO) staff, the NSO Board of Directors (BOD), the AthletesCAN Forum, workshops, or Sport Solution.

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION FRAMEWORK: SEE EXAMPLE IN ANNEX A



IDENTIFY

Identify the risk by using the following considerations:

- Name the issue/risk and provide an overview.
- What is the size, scope, or impact of the issue?
- Who is affected?
- Who has authority in the matter?
- Is this issue being addressed by another group?
- What are the expected outcomes of the issue?
- Who are potential partners?
- Is there/what is the budget?
- Are there supporting documents?
- What is the status of the issue?
- Is there a timeline to resolve the issue?
- How urgent is the issue?
- What level of risk does the issue possess?



PRIORITIZE

Determine the urgency, importance, and impact of the issue by using the following considerations:

- What amount of control or influence do you have over issue?
- Is the issue a sport, societal or personal issue?
- Is there research and evidence available on this issue and/or a solution?
- What is the likelihood of successfully resolving the issue?
- Are partners available?
- Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the issue.
- What are the implications of taking action towards resolving the issue?
- What are the implications of not taking action towards resolving the issue?
- Are there potential sustainable solutions?



IMPLEMENT

At this stage, your carefully considered action plan can be initiated. Additional considerations should include:

- Communicate updates to the AC, committee and/or BOD. Updates should include a recommended action plan, progress made to date, and recommended actions for other parties/partners.
- Timelines, key milestones, and the responsibility of who will oversee each issue for action should be clearly identified.



MONITOR

Create and implement a monitoring strategy for the actions taken to mitigate the risk. Key considerations should include:

- Timelines: i.e. action steps, time-sensitive deadlines, milestones, estimated date of solution, etc.
- Communication: Provide updates to the AC, committee and/or BOD with regular updates regarding the progress made to date, emerging issues, expected outcomes, key indicators of success, etc.



EVALUATE

Create and implement an evaluation strategy for the actions taken to mitigate the risk. This can include a summary report of actions taken and outcomes achieved. Key considerations should include:

- Overview of issue using baseline data – report on information gathered in the identification and prioritization stages.
- Report on key indicators of success and expected outcomes, etc.
- Report on actions taken, timelines, and parties involved.
- Report on outcomes.
- Measure the long-term impacts of the actions taken.
- Provide future recommendations.



ANNEX A

Issue Identification Framework

Issue	Identify the issue.
Identified by	Name of person who identified the issue.
Issue Overview	Include a brief description of the issue.
Size/Impact/Scope	Explain if the issue is an organization-wide issue, individual issue, team issue, peer-to-peer issue. Solicit research and evidence to determine the size, impact, and/or scope of the issue.
Who is affected?	Include who is affected by this issue (i.e. athlete, team, all senior National Team athletes, coach, IST, etc.).
Who has authority?	Who can make decisions about this issue? (i.e. coach, athlete representative, HPD, CEO, etc.).
Is the issue currently being addressed by another group?	Determine what has been done in the past to address this issue. Contact us to learn if other reps have run into the same issue and can provide advice.
Expected outcomes	Decide the course of action to resolve the issue and its expected outcomes. Provide details on the outcome if the issues were NOT addressed.
Potential partners	Who needs to be involved? (i.e. AC, NSO staff, AthletesCAN, Sport Solution, etc.).
Budget	Does the solution require a cost?
Support Documents	NSO Policy, etc.
Status	Detail whether a solution is inactive, in progress, ongoing, or complete.
Timeline	When do you expect to arrive at a solution? Are there steps to addressing the issue that are time sensitive?
Urgency	Assess if the issue has high, medium, or low urgency.
Level of Risk	Assess if the issue is of high, medium, or low risk.



THE ATHLETES' REPORT

Building Performance Through Athlete Feedback



The Athlete Report is a pivotal way to bring dynamic first-hand feedback to the forefront of your sport by mobilizing the voice of Canadian athletes. A formal Athlete Report legitimizes the voice of athletes, demonstrates responsible Athlete Representation, and provides an invaluable resource to advance the performance of both you and your National Sport Organization (NSO). To support you in the creation of an Athlete Report this document outlines key considerations on Athlete Representation and provides guidance in the preparation of an Athlete Report.

ATHLETE REPRESENTATION

A key responsibility of the Athletes' Council (AC) or Athlete Representative(s) (AR) is to embody the collective interests of current athletes participating in the sport at the high performance level. As such, the Athlete Report should sample a broad cross section of athletes to ensure the concerns of the entire athlete community are addressed.

Through the use of individual feedback, team meetings and/or surveys, it is the responsibility of the AR(s) to ensure open lines of communication and be receptive to athlete feedback (see sample feedback methods below).

WHAT IS AN ATHLETE REPORT?

The Athlete Report is a formal document presented to your NSO's Board of Directors (BOD) and members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) providing key insights and feedback from the athletes.

Each year the AGM brings together key constituents of your NSO including coaches, officials, staff and provincial section heads, each of whom has the opportunity to weigh in on performance of the NSO (both on and off the field of play). Often times, an AC and/or the AR(s) within your NSO structure are afforded the opportunity to act as the voice of the athletes at this meeting.

If athletes within your sport are not afforded this opportunity at your AGM, the Athlete Report could be presented to your NSO's Board by proxy via a board member or on a yearly basis, at a date that coincides with a board meeting that perhaps precedes the AGM.



It is important to know that if your sport is funded by Sport Canada, the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework requires that all sports provide athletes with the opportunity to be informed and to provide input into matters affecting them, particularly in the area of national team programming. Athlete Reports have resulted in major shifts in programming and policy which have directly impacted team members at many NSOs, highlighting the importance of the athlete voice and the ability to provide feedback in a professional and organized manner.

REPORT OUTLINE

The Athlete Report is a pivotal way to bring athlete feedback to the forefront and typically includes the following sections:

- Introduction
- Year in Review: Major Accomplishments & Challenges
- Athlete Feedback on Key Events
- AthletesCAN Forum Review
- Review of Previous Year's Recommendations
- Performance Review & Areas for Improvement
- Looking Ahead Recommendations
- Concluding Remarks

The above sections are informed by the feedback you would have collected from your fellow athletes (see sample feedback methods below) and support the concerns that will be addressed in the report.

SAMPLE FEEDBACK METHODS - CONNECTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

The following methods are all excellent ways to engage the athlete voice within your sport and receive athlete feedback to provide in the Athlete's Report.

Athlete Meetings

- Hold an open athlete meeting at the largest event on your competition calendar (eg. National event). This will ensure the maximum participation of athletes across your sport.
- Smaller athlete meetings may need to be held at different venues to ensure representation of all groups.
- Organize meeting in advance and solicit athletes' opinions for discussion topics to prepare an agenda.

Individual Meetings with Athletes

- Make yourself available and provide accurate contact information on your sport's website.
- Network with athletes of various NSOs to obtain other perspectives within the Canadian sport system.



Athlete Survey

- Surveys provide athletes with the ability to give feedback regarding concerns and challenges.
- Online survey tools ensure effective collection and analysis of athlete feedback.
- Survey responses are kept anonymous.
- Use AthletesCAN's Athlete Survey as an example for potential information to gather from your team.

WHAT NEXT?

- Know the timelines of your NSO's AGM and deadline to submit the Athlete Report.
- Reach out to your fellow athletes to collect their feedback.
- Based on the feedback, create an Athlete Report (see AthletesCAN's Athlete Report Template)
- Confirm with your NSO that the Athlete Report has been added to the AGM Agenda.
- Confirm the attendance of the AC and/or the AR and/or the proxy at the AGM, in order to present the Athlete Report.
- Communicate and share athlete feedback and learn from others at the meeting.
- Share your report with AthletesCAN.

AthletesCAN is here to support you in this process – please contact us should you have any questions along the way!



ATHLETES' REPORT TEMPLATE



[Download Template](#)

This template has been created to help you build an effective Athlete Report which is presented to the Board of Directors (BOD) of your National Sport Organization (NSO), typically at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The objective is to have a consistent format year after year that will allow for clear and simple communication between the athletes and the other stakeholders of your sport. This template is intended to communicate your opinions in a responsible and collaborative matter.

This tool can be PERFORMANCE enhancing by aligning the interests of coaches, technical staff, the board of directors of your sport, the administration, and the athletes.

*It is recommended that you maintain the titles in **red bolded font**, and delete and replace the content in black font with personal input appropriate to your sport based on feedback from your teammates.*

This report can be submitted to your BOD or to the Executive Director (ED) of your sport. It is intended to be a PUBLIC document that is available for all stakeholders of your sport which may include external parties such as the Canadian Olympic Committee, Canadian Paralympic Committee, Commonwealth Games Canada, Own the Podium, Sport Canada, Coaches of Canada, and AthletesCAN.

For further support in building your report, reach out to AthletesCAN.

INTRODUCTION

Provide a brief one (1) to two (2) paragraph introduction and overview of the past year and any comments on the upcoming year or competitive season.

Year in Review: Major Accomplishments and Challenges

List major events, accomplishments, and challenges.

- Connect activities with the goals and objectives of your sport.
- What was the impact of the steps taken by your NSO?
- Be specific and highlight achievements which contributed to improved NSO performance both on and off the playing field.
- Where is there continued opportunity to improve these initiatives or the system overall?

Athlete Feedback on Key Events

This section can examine any event such as:

- Trial Events;
- Training Camps;
- National Championships;
- Major Games and
- International Competitions.

It is important to consider whether these events were well organized, if the format was appropriate, and if the facilities and support provided were adequate.

AthletesCAN Forum Review

Share your personal impressions from attending the AthletesCAN Forum. This section is to be written by the athlete representative who attended the AthletesCAN forum. Feedback may include:

Key messages from the AthletesCAN Forum and relevant sessions.

- Key messages from the AthletesCAN Forum and relevant sessions.
- Best practices towards Athlete Leadership and Representation.
- Current sport topics of interest – i.e. sport system issues, identified gaps.
- Relevant takeaways to share with teammates (i.e. tools & templates, leadership training opportunities, sport excellence partner programs, etc.)

Review of Previous Year's Recommendations

These recommendations could be the action items decided upon by the Athletes' Council (AC) or suggestions provided to the NSO to improve the sport or athletes' performances.

Recommendation 1:

Identify last year's recommendation; was it acted on? If not, why? What was the impact?

Recommendation 2:

Identify last year's recommendation; was it acted on? If not, why? What was the impact?

Recommendation 3:

Identify last year's recommendation; was it acted on? If not, why? What was the impact?

Performance Review and Areas for Improvement

Examine and discuss major initiatives, experiences, efforts, changes, etc. in your sport, for example:

- Training environment and competitions;
- Coaching, coaching changes or coaching support;
- Communication between Athletes/AC, Athletes/Coaches, Athletes/NSO, AC/NSO;
- Technical support;
- Medical support;
- Financial support;
- NSO support for Senior, Junior and NextGen level athletes;
- Selection processes;
- Leadership development;
- Competition schedule and
- Other aspects of the athlete experience.

This could be done by creating an athlete survey to distribute amongst the sporting members. AthletesCAN can help provide guidance on building an effective survey.

Looking Ahead

Create action items for the committee to consider and provide suggestions on how the NSO could assist in improving performance within the sport. Focus on two (2) or three (3) critical areas and describe their importance and potential positive impact on athlete development and performance.

The goal is to provide the Board with evidence-based rationale for these suggestions (i.e. athlete surveys, examples from other sports, athlete meetings, AthletesCAN resources, etc.). If possible, provide S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) goals and steps to reach these athletes driven objectives.

Recommendation 1:

Be precise, identify how this recommendation is in the interest of, the athletes' performance, fairness, alignment with the goals of the organization, etc.

Recommendation 2:

Be precise, identify how this recommendation is in the interest of, the athletes' performance, fairness, alignment with the goals of the organization, etc.

Recommendation 3:

Be precise, identify how this recommendation is in the interest of, the athletes' performance, fairness, alignment with the goals of the organization, etc.

Concluding Remarks

Provide any additional feedback for your coaches, administrators, leadership and technical teams to consider.

Yours in sport,

Name – Athletes' Council Chair

Name – Senior National Team Athlete Representative

Name – etc...



ATHLETE REPRESENTATIVE SUCCESSION PLANNING

A succession plan is a vital tool for ensuring continuous, consistent athlete representation. It establishes a slate of potential successors and allows for a smooth transfer of knowledge from one (1) Athlete Representative (AR) to another at the end of their term. This document describes what to consider when building a succession plan.



PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

It is important to recognize and connect with athletes who show interest and potential in becoming the next AR. Identifying these individuals before the end of your term will give you the time to target those with a specific skill set, leadership experience or specific characteristics that would make them successful in the role. This may also assist in searching out persons with expertise in areas that may be missing for the Board of Directors (BOD) or various committees to perform successfully. You can use a Succession Plan Matrix (see example in Table 1 below) to help you keep track of identified individuals.

Table 1 – Sample Athlete Representative Succession Plan Matrix

Name	Gender	Discipline	Language	Geographic Location	Team Experience	Leadership Experience	Skill Set
Jane Doe	Female	Distance	French/English	Quebec	8 Years National Team	Athletes' Council – 4 years	Communications
John Smith	Male	Para-Throws	English	Alberta	5 years NT	NT Captain – 3 times	Finance

When recruiting potential future ARs, the following are some considerations to keep in mind:

- Are they actively engaged in Team meetings and/or discussions with your National Sport Organization (NSO)?
- Are they actively engaged with their fellow National Team athletes?
- Do they communicate consistently with the current AR?
- Do they show an interest in organizational operations of the NSO?
- Are they passionate about amplifying the athlete voice?
- Do they display characteristics needed to be an effective representative for the athletes?



- Do they have any other type of leadership experience?
- Do they have the time to commit to the work required?
- Are they knowledgeable in any areas required for organizational operations, such as finance, marketing, law, business, etc.? (This is not a requirement, as athletes are experiential experts, but can be helpful)

ON-BOARDING

The process of transferring your position to the incoming AR can be made easier if prepared for in advance of your term ending. This can ensure that important board or committee information does not get lost or miscommunicated and can provide a smooth transition at the board and committee levels. It's prudent to keep track of things you learn throughout your term, so you can properly educate your successor when the time comes. This athlete-to-athlete on-boarding should be an adjunct to a more thorough on-boarding from your NSO.

In addition to the orientation package your NSO should deliver, predecessors should provide each new AR with the following:

- A summary of recent or ongoing issues affecting the athletes.
- Identify which staff and board members have been good allies or mentors during your term.
- Any successes you experienced during your term.
- Any major obstacles you encountered and how you tackled them.
- The communication modes that worked best for keeping in touch with and soliciting feedback from the athletes.
- Any training, courses or documents you found helpful to boost your confidence and voice.

As the outgoing rep, making yourself available for questions from the new AR until they get on their feet can be invaluable. Working together as athlete leaders will help to build an athlete-centered sport system and strengthen the collective athlete voice!



ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER:

A Brief Guide To Effective Meetings



Robert's Rules of Order is a book that was first published in 1876 by US Army General Henry Martyn Robert that provides a structure of how to run effective meetings. Some of the main aspects of Robert's Rules are set out below:

Agenda – Meetings should follow a strict agenda, which ensures structure and consistency.

Minutes – Meeting minutes are a documented summary of the meeting. Typically, the Secretary takes minutes throughout the meeting, and will later distribute them to both the attendees and absent invited members. Robert's Rules requires that only the main motions are documented in the minutes, though some organizations will go into more detail. The minutes of a particular meeting are approved at the next meeting as part of the formal agenda.

Motion – Motions are used to discuss a new item of business, such as an action to be taken or a decision that should be made by the organization. For example, "Can I get a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting?" Motions are introduced on the agenda or can be introduced at the meeting. Motions must be made ("put forward") by one person, and seconded ("supported") by a different person. Thereafter, the entire group can debate or discuss the motion, and then vote on it. If there is no second (i.e. no support for the motion), then the matter is dropped.

Postpone Indefinitely – This move is taken if a motion will not be discussed further during the current meeting, though it may be reintroduced at a later meeting. The decision to postpone indefinitely must be seconded and voted on.

Table – This action is used to postpone discussion of an item until later in the meeting or at a later date. Again, the decision must be seconded, and voted on.

Question – This can be used to stop a debate, so that a motion can be voted on. As with all of the other actions, it needs to be seconded by a different person. Directly after a question is posed, a vote is held, and a two-thirds majority is needed for it to pass. In the case of the vote passing, the motion is then voted on directly.





Amend – Sometimes, an action or item needs to be changed after it has been debated on. A member might suggest an amendment, and in this case, it must be seconded to be voted on. If accepted, the amendment stays. For example, a debate might lead to a change in the minutes (noticing of a discrepancy, or a simple spelling error). In this case, the motion would be changed to say, “Motion to approve the minutes subject to the amendments proposed.”

Commit – One step that can be taken with motions is to have them researched further by a separate committee, who will then file a report at the next meeting. This job might be assigned to an existing or a newly organized committee. It must be seconded and be passed by majority vote for this action to occur.

Adjourn – At the end of the meeting, someone will typically make a motion to end the meeting, or “adjourn” it. Once again, this motion must be seconded and followed by a vote to adjourn the meeting. The agenda helps to set a time and schedule and usually the chairperson will call to end the meeting. If applicable, a follow-up meeting should be scheduled.



Athletes**CAN**

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