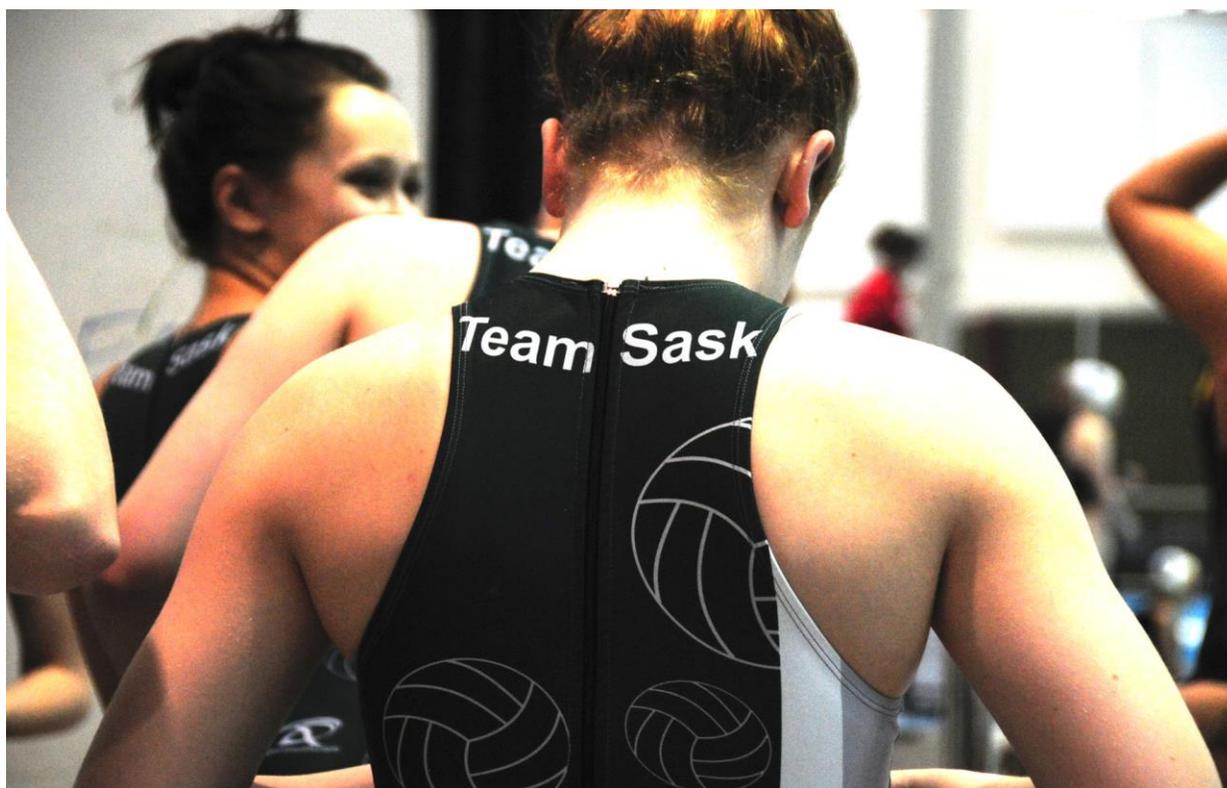




# 2014-2019 HIGH PERFORMANCE PLAN



**We strive to maximize the use of all our resources innovatively, efficiently, and effectively to support and encourage sustained excellence in all competitive contexts.**

## Message from the Chair, Water Polo Saskatchewan



*Water Polo Saskatchewan (WPS) is dedicated to developing the great sport of water polo in Saskatchewan and to working toward our vision of being a national leader in the sport. This is an ambitious vision, but not one that has been proven to be beyond our reach. Making that vision a reality requires purpose and planning, and an essential piece of that is having a High Performance Plan. SaskSport, our major funding source, developed a high performance planning initiative at the beginning of 2014. WPS has taken part in this initiative desiring to build on our path to excellence in water polo.*

*In 2007, WPS Executive Director, Jymmi-Kaye Demchuk, and WPS President, Conrad Hadubiak, embarked on a path to our vision of being a national leader. The result of a wide-ranging personnel search was the hiring of Cyril Dorgigné, former French national team member and club coach, to become Head Coach for WPS and to increase performance excellence in Saskatchewan. Coach Dorgigné began by implementing strategic plans, which resulted in increased success for Saskatchewan athletes and teams year after year. At the high performance level, the successes have been steady and increasing: bronze medals at national championships in 2012 and 2013, and this year, in 2014, a silver. Three consecutive medal-winning years is unprecedented in Saskatchewan. Our athletes are working hard and are being recognized: they've received many all-star honours and nominations to age-group national teams. No other sport in Saskatchewan has more nationally-carded athletes than water polo. There are several elements that support these carded athletes, allowing them to stay and train here, and to continue to flourish and grow: Regina is designated a National Development Centre; Head Coach Cyril Dorgigné is recognized as one of the best in Canada; high-level officiating is available.*

*The goal of our High Performance Plan is to put to paper the hard work that we've put in over the years, and to build on our successes in a sustainable way. We want to close the gap on the teams that we've been meeting in the finals and semi-finals at the National Championships, and to widen the gap on those that we've left behind us. Going forward with clear purpose and a complete plan improves our chances for success.*

*Yours truly,  
Susan Cameron  
Chair, Water Polo Saskatchewan*

## 1.1 Introduction

Water Polo Saskatchewan is committed to having teams systematically excel in high performance contexts and producing high performance athletes that consistently perform at the highest levels both nationally and internationally. As the provincial sport governing body for all water polo in Saskatchewan since 1972, we are also committed to growing our sport through membership growth and providing effective administration in all our interactions with our members. Our vision, mission, and values have been and are extremely important in ensuring that our organization is healthy and effective:

### VISION

Water Polo Saskatchewan is a National Leader in Water Polo.

### MISSION

Water Polo Saskatchewan:

- Provides leadership resources and services to enable its members to achieve EXCELLENCE in water polo
- Encourages PARTICIPATION through athlete centered and member driven programming.
- Builds CAPACITY of the sport including through the development of partnerships with its stakeholders
- Provides strong ADMINISTRATION, accountable and responsive to its members

### VALUES

The principles and beliefs that guide our actions are as follows:

#### ACCOUNTABILITY

- We believe in holding ourselves accountable for our actions and holding our members accountable for theirs.

#### ATHLETE-CENTRED

- We believe that funding and program decisions should be made with the individual athletes in mind.

#### DEVELOPMENT

- We believe in empowering our members by providing opportunities to improve their skills and abilities and to overcome their difficulties.

#### EXCELLENCE

- We believe in the pursuit of personal and organizational excellence.

#### FAIRNESS

- We believe in striving to be fair in all our dealings with members and stakeholders.

#### INTEGRITY

- We believe in maintaining dignity and upholding our values in all actions.

#### RELATIONSHIP

- We believe in fostering goodwill and friendship in all our relationships.

#### RESPONSIVE

- We believe in being responsive to our members concerns and needs.

#### SPORTSMANSHIP

- We believe in fair play and playing in the spirit of the game. This includes behaving in an ethical manner with integrity and respect for all.

This plan focuses on high performance, specifically how Water Polo Saskatchewan can continue to realize its vision as a national leader with respect to high performance. In the last 20 years, we have achieved significant high performance successes with several medals at National Club Championships and many athletes going their respective national team programs. However, the ebb and flow of these successes has led to regular and significant gaps in high performance results. In 2007, Water Polo Saskatchewan was in crisis. We were too small of a sport and had too many high performance gaps. Our annual funding was at risk. To minimize this risk and increase the level of high performance in Saskatchewan, the then executive director Jymmi Kaye Demchuk took the decision to hire former national team athlete and high performance coach Cyril Dorgigne. Since his arrival, level of high performance has consistently increased.

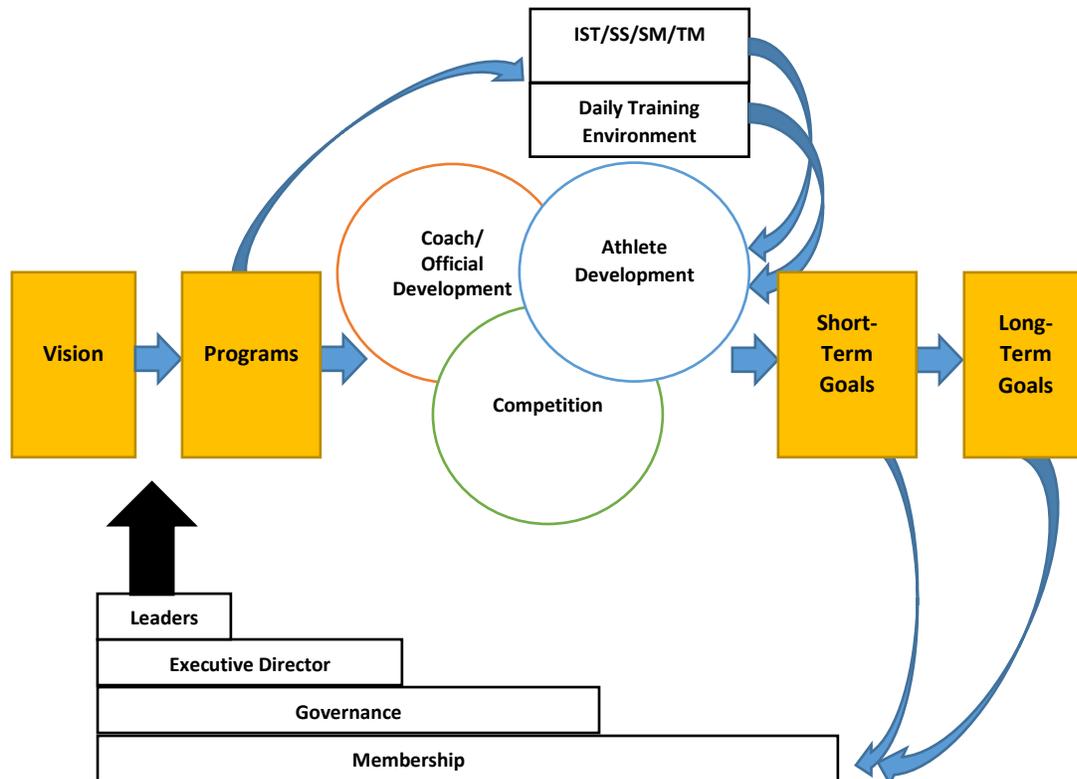
Our teams are performing better more consistently and the number of athletes selected for national teams has increased. Since 2007, we have won three national club championship medals, and are now averaging seven to ten athletes who are selected to national teams annually. Currently, we have nine nationally carded athletes, higher than any sport in Saskatchewan. Changes to programming, increases to the quantity and quality of practices, and innovative recruitment and retention strategies largely accounts for these recent successes. However, there is room to grow, to “close the gap” against our toughest competition, and “increase the gap” from mediocre teams.

## 2.1 High Performance Planning Initiative

At the beginning of 2014, Water Polo Saskatchewan took advantage of an initiative proposed by Sask Sport, our main funding source, to develop a high performance plan. Since the initial consultation phase, a high performance planning committee was formed and met several times to determine how this plan would develop, the level of stakeholder engagement, and the strategic implementation process. We achieved this plan in three phases – visioning, background/gap analysis, and document review – during which a relatively large high performance committee made up of key, knowledgeable stakeholders heavily contributed. Programming and other operational aspects, such as determining main competition, of this plan were developed Water Polo Saskatchewan staff. The planning process gave us a chance to put to paper Dorgigne’s vision, develop a deep analysis of high performance gaps, and expand our programming to meet aggressive performance goals. The combination of performance goals and the programs to achieve them are intended to “close the gap” against our toughest competition and “increase the gap” from mediocre teams.

## 2.2 Critical Success Factors

Water Polo Saskatchewan’s High Performance Plan is comprehensive. The comprehensiveness of the plan accounts for goals and programs that span six critical success factors or variables. These critical success factors are athlete development, coach / official development, competition, daily training environment, integrated support team / sport science / sports medicine / technology management, and governance. We view these critical success factors as highly interconnected and the following figure illustrates how these the interconnectivities relate to the planning framework:



### 2.3 High Performance Vision

The first phase of the high performance planning process involved determining a high performance vision. Our high performance vision stems directly from our overall vision of being a national leader in water polo in Canada:

***We strive to maximize the use of all our resources innovatively, efficiently, and effectively to support and encourage sustained excellence in all competitive contexts.***

### 2.4 Our Main Competition

Water Polo Saskatchewan focuses most of resources within the competitive stream on preparation for and performance in National Club Championships (now national club league) or national level events. Both 16U and 18U (now 19U) training programs and mid-season competition schedules are structured and developed to support excellence achievement at end of the season national events. We strive to support high performance in provincial events and encourage athletes to be selected for and excel on their respective national teams, these auxiliary foci emerge from our primary focus of excellence at national events.

The identification of our main competition depends on the age and gender of the high performance group we are focusing on, the assessed potential of that group and the expected success of competitive teams/clubs/provinces in the upcoming domestic season. WPS staff identifies main competitions using information from previous seasons and through closely monitoring teams' progress throughout events and league play to determine who will be the main competition for the upcoming season at national events. As a result, our main competition is a moving target but generally for women is a CAMO (Quebec), Calgary (Alberta) and Pacific Storm (British Columbia). For the men, our main competition in the past has been similar to the above teams but also includes Ottawa (Ontario) and Fraser Valley (British Columbia). This upcoming season the men's major competition will likely be Winnipeg (Manitoba) and Tsunami (Alberta).

### 2.5 Overarching Goal

Water Polo Saskatchewan is committed through this high performance plan and through all our interactions with our sport leaders, our stakeholders and our members to achieve the following overarching goal:

***To have a sustainable high performance program that consistently produces teams in the top rankings in the country and consistently produces successful national team athletes at all levels.***

Performance targets and program goals will be listed at after the analysis section.

### 3.1 Analysis

#### *Background Information.*

The background information was derived from a SWOT analysis. SWOT – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats – allowed us to look at what was working or not, what we can fix, and what us relatively fixed to prepare us to determine what areas are considered gaps (for a complete description of the SWOT analysis see Appendix 1).

#### 1) Athlete Development:

- a. Strengths
  - i. Professional Coaching – The quality of practices is high in Regina and Saskatoon.
  - ii. High Performance Programming – The regional development centres, high performance centres, and the high school excellence program run very efficiently and get high results given some threats and weaknesses.
- b. Weaknesses
  - i. Low numbers
  - ii. Facility Limitation – Regina, Weyburn, and Estevan all have facility constraints that limit high performance potential.
- c. Opportunities
  - i. More high performance in Saskatoon
  - ii. New National League format
- d. Threats
  - i. Low numbers and facility constraints can shut down high performance programming

#### 2) Coach/Official Development

- a. Strengths
  - i. Knowledgeable and certified coaching/official leaders and evaluators
  - ii. Budget support for official and coaching development
- b. Weaknesses
  - i. No high performance coaches in Weyburn and Estevan
- c. Opportunities
  - i. High Performance Coaching Grant Extension
  - ii. New Official Evaluation tool
- d. Threats:
  - i. Loss of Funding

#### 3) Competition

- a. Strengths
  - i. Competition Schedule
- b. Weakness
  - i. Cost of competition schedule
  - ii. Have to travel for high performance competition
  - iii. 18+ Athlete Retention
- c. Opportunities
  - i. New National League format (14U, 16U, 19U)

- d. Threats
    - i. Rising costs
- 4) Daily Training Environment
- a. Strengths
    - i. Quantity of High Performance Programming in Regina (13.5 hours in 7 practices)
    - ii. High School Excellence Program
  - b. Weaknesses
    - i. Cost of facility rentals
    - ii. Facility constraints in Weyburn, Estevan and Regina
  - c. Opportunities
    - i. Potential to implement programs in Regina in Saskatoon
    - ii. Potential to develop better linkages with local daily training environments and IST/SS/SM/TM critical success factors
  - d. Threats
    - i. Cost and facility quality
- 5) Integrated Support Team (IST) / Sports Sciences and Sports Medicine (SS/SM) / Technology Management (TM)
- a. Strengths
    - i. Professional Coaching Education
    - ii. Virtual connectivity platforms
  - b. Weaknesses
    - i. No integrated support team
    - ii. Use of SS/SM is limited
  - c. Opportunities
    - i. More research can be done
  - d. Threats
    - i. Cost of services, need innovative cost-saving opportunities
- 6) Governance:
- a. Strengths
    - i. High performance operations are entirely provincially determined
    - ii. Governance/Organizational Structure of WPS – Governance board manages policy and Executive Director manages operations
  - b. Weakness
    - i. Membership engagement in previous bottom-up activities (ie working groups)
  - c. Opportunities
    - i. More effective membership engagement (eg virtual platforms)
  - d. Threats
    - i. Potential for decision-making to be unduly influenced by non-neutral and biased board members

### Gap Analysis

The purpose of the gap analysis is to understand get a better understanding of the effects of prevailing weaknesses, imminent threats, and missed opportunities. In addition, it allowed us to better link the underlying causes of gaps to the gaps themselves so that we may propose programming that is comprehensive and on target. Below is a table of summarizing the gap analysis.

<b>Key Gaps</b>	<b>Major Contributing Factor</b>	<b>Secondary Factor</b>
<b>Athlete Development</b>		
Low numbers	Need greater numbers in participation stream	Recruitment and Retention
Retention of 18U+	18U age grouping (WPC)	Cost/No Programming
Low Training Quality in Weyburn and Estevan	No high performance coaches	Volunteer coaches
Low Training Quantity in Saskatoon	Numbers	Cost
<b>Coaching (and Officials)</b>		
HP Coaching Skills	HP Coaching requires experience	No program to supplement a lack of experience
More Referee Education in Saskatoon	Low numbers	New Programming
<b>Competition</b>		
No Intra-Provincial High Performance Competition Program (No local hp competition)	Low participation numbers means smaller high performance pool of athletes	Low feeder numbers in Estevan, Weyburn, and Saskatoon to feed into a sustainable competition program
Cost of HP Competition Schedule	No local HP competition	Numbers
<b>Daily Training Environment</b>		
Low Training Quality in Weyburn and Estevan	No high performance coaches	Volunteer coaches
Low Training Quantity in Saskatoon	Numbers	Cost
Weak Linkage with SS/SM, IST, TM	Availability and access (including cost)	Not enough research
<b>Sport Sciences/Sports Medicine, IST, Technology</b>		

<b>Management</b>		
No IST	Cost	Lack of research of cost effective options/partnerships
Limited use of SS/SM	See above	
<b>Governance/Management</b>		
Better engagement		

#### 4.1 Performance Targets

In all categories, we want to do better each year and put more athletes on national teams; however, annual increased annual successful performance in national leagues will require a synchronicity of many factors to get sustained and systematic improvements. For now, we have defined short term performance targets and roughly estimated long-term targets.

<b>Performance at National Leagues</b>					
	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>16U Boys</b>	<b>Top 6</b>	<b>Top 6</b>	<b>Top 5</b>	<b>Top 4</b>	<b>Top 3</b>
<b>19U Men</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Prairie Div.</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Prairie Div</b>	<b>Top 6</b>	<b>Top 5</b>	<b>Top 4</b>
<b>16U Girls</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Prairie Div.</b>	<b>Top 6</b>	<b>Top 6</b>	<b>Top 5</b>	<b>Top 4</b>
<b>19U Women</b>	<b>Top 3 Western Conf.</b>	<b>Top 4</b>	<b>Top 3</b>	<b>Top 3</b>	<b>Champions</b>

## 5.1 Goal Summary

The following table illustrates the suite of program goals that should address the gaps listed above. The table describes the goal, its priority type, when it should be completed (horizon), the steps or milestones likely to be seen as the goal moves through time, the key performance indicator (KPI) or way the goal's success is being measured and the alignment. Alignment refers to whether the goal aligns with other goals (horizontal) and/or whether it aligns with Water Polo Canada (vertical). A full list of program goals that includes existing programs and their descriptions is in the next section.

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Horizon</i>	<i>Gap</i>	<i>Milestone 1</i>	<i>Milestone 2</i>	<i>Milestone 3</i>	<i>Milestone 4</i>	<i>Alignment</i>
<b>1) Development Centre in Saskatoon with at least 10 Members</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Short-Term (12 Months)</b>	<b>Low Training Quantity in Saskatoon</b>	<b>3 Mos: Invitations Sent</b>	<b>6 Mos: Program Launch</b>	<b>9 Mos: Review Implementation KPI: At least 10 athletes registered</b>	<b>12 Mos: Adjust Re-launch Season 2 KPI: Financially Sustainable</b>	<b>Horizontal with other development centres</b>
<b>2) High Performance Centre in Saskatoon with at least 5 members</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Short-Term (12 Months)</b>	<b>Low Training Quantity in Saskatoon</b>	<b>3 Mos: Invitations Sent</b>	<b>6 Mos: Program Launch</b>	<b>9 Mos: Review Implementation KPI: At least 5 athletes registered</b>	<b>12 Mos: Adjust Re-launch Season 2 KPI: Financially Sustainable</b>	<b>Horizontal with other development centres</b>
<b>3) Identify and certify 1 Coach in Each Area in Competition: Introduction</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Short-Term (9 Months)</b>	<b>Low Training Quality in Estevan and Weyburn</b>	<b>3 Mos: Identify 2 Coaches from each Community</b>	<b>6 Mos: Offer Courses</b>	<b>9 Mos: Inclusion in Team Sask Events KPI: 1 more athlete in</b>		

						14+ Team Sask teams		
4) Identify and certify 6+ officials in Saskatoon	Medium	Short-Term (6 months)	More Referee Education in Saskatoon	3 Mos: Notify Membership	6 Mos: Hold Course	KPI: 50% of new Saskatoon Referees reffing at Winter Provincials		Vertical with national certification program
5) High Performance Plan & Vision	Medium	Short-Term (6 months) / ongoing	n/a	3 Mos: First Meeting: set vision and schedule	6 Mos: Review final plan and disseminate	Ongoing: yearly review		Horizontal
6) 100% Increase in Development Centre Program	High	Long-Term (2 Years)	Low Numbers	6 Mos: Implementation of Saskatoon DC / 25% Increase	1 Year: 25% net increase KPI: 25% Increase in 14U overall membership	1.5 Years: 25% net increase	2 Years: 25% net increase KPI: 100% increase in DC members	Horizontal: DC and HC programming
7) 50% Increase in High Performance Centre	High	Long-Term (3 Years)	Low Numbers	1 Year: 10% Increase (from original)	2 Year: 20% Increase	3 Year: 20% Increase	KPI: 50% Increase from original numbers	Horizontal: DC and HC Programming

<b>8) Develop and integrate IST/SS/SM (3 low cost partnerships)</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Long-Term (2 Years)</b>	<b>No IST</b>	<b>6 Mos: Research</b>	<b>1 Year: Research</b>	<b>1.5 Years: Report to ED KPI: Green light from ED regarding sustainability</b>	<b>2 Years: Implementation KPI: Successful feedback on Members Survey</b>	<b>Horizontal: Daily training environment</b>
<b>9) Identify 2 Technologies or management platforms</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Long-Term (2 Years)</b>	<b>Limited Technology &amp; Tech Mgt.</b>	<b>6 Mos: Research</b>	<b>1 Year: Research</b>	<b>1.5 Years: Report to ED KPI: Green light from ED</b>	<b>2 Years: Implementation KPI: Successful feedback on Members Survey</b>	<b>Horizontal: Daily Training Environment</b>
<b>10) High Performance Competition Program in Saskatchewan</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Long-Term (5 Years)</b>	<b>No Local HP Competition</b>	<b>2 Years: Success in Goal 6</b>	<b>3 Years: Success in Goal 7</b>	<b>4 Years: End season with at least 10 HP athletes per gender in 1 age group for 3 teams (Also KPI)</b>	<b>5 Years: Pilot KPI: Quality HP Games for low cost in all centres</b>	<b>Horizontal: all programs</b>

## 5. 2 High Performance Programming

(Additions/Modifications in Red)

The following programs will lead to our short and long term performance targets, contributing to closing gaps against the toughest teams and widening gaps against mediocre teams. This is a framework that has been expanded to account performance and program gaps that have been identified in previous sections. Our high performance vision guides the day to day decision-making relating to how these programs are implemented and in all cases, the interactions with our sport leaders, members, and stakeholders will determine the effectiveness of existing programs, their expansions, and new programs.

### Athlete Development

- 1.1 Development Centre – Expansion (Saskatoon)
- 1.2 High Performance Centre – Expansion (Saskatoon)
- 1.3 High School Excellence Program

### Coach/Official Development

- 2.1 Coaching Certification Program – Recruitment (Estevan & Weyburn)
- 2.2 Official Certification Program

### Competition

- 3.1 Competition Schedule
- 3.2 Intra-Provincial High Performance Competition Program

### Daily Training Environment

- 4.1 Weight/Dryland Programming

### Integrated Support Team / Sports Sciences & Sports Medicine / Technology Management

- 5.1 Research & Development Program
  - 5.1.a Integrated Support Team / Sport Sciences / Sports Medicine
  - 5.1.b Technology Management (2 New Technologies)

### Governance

- 6.1 High Performance Plan Strategic Implementation and Review

<b>Program 1.1: Expansion of Existing Program</b> <b><i>Development Centre – Regina, <i>Saskatoon</i>, &amp; Weyburn/Estevan</i></b>	
<b>Program Description:</b> This is a flagship program of WPS in the last several years. It is the entrance to the high performance stream that nearly all high performance athletes have taken and recent national team members from Saskatchewan have started in. It involves additional weekly practices and exposure high quality of coaching and training environments.	
<b>Key Final Outcome: Achievement of Goal 1 &amp; 6</b>	
<b>KEY STAKEHOLDERS/ACCOUNTABILITIES</b>	
<b>Key Driver – primary responsibility</b> <b>1 Provincial Coaches – operation of program</b> <b>2 Executive Director – oversight</b>	<b>Other stakeholders necessary for effective implementation</b> <b>1 Athletes</b> <b>2 Community Club Coaches</b>

<b>Program 1.2: Expansion of existing program</b> <b><i>High Performance Centre – Regina, <i>Saskatoon</i>, &amp; Weyburn/Estevan</i></b>	
<b>Program Description:</b> The high performance centres currently operate in 2 regions and an expansion of the program would bring this centre to Saskatoon. This would increase the quantity of high performance practices in the region and provide consistency of training across all centres.	
<b>Key Final Outcome: Achievement of Goal 2 &amp; 7</b>	
<b>KEY STAKEHOLDERS/ACCOUNTABILITIES</b>	
<b>Key Driver – primary responsibility</b> <b>1 Provincial Coaches – operation of program</b> <b>2 Executive Director – oversight</b>	<b>Other stakeholders necessary for effective implementation</b> <b>1 Athletes</b> <b>2 Community Club Coaches</b>

<b>Program 1.3 Existing Program</b> <b><i>High School Excellence Program</i></b>	
<b>Program Description:</b> This program involves 3 additional lunch time practices a week for athletes who live in or are centralized in Regina during the school week. It provides an opportunity for high quality and quantity of training.	
<b>Key Final Outcome:</b> A sustainable program with at least 10 members.	
<b>KEY STAKEHOLDERS/ACCOUNTABILITIES</b>	
<b>Key Driver – primary responsibility</b> <b>1 Head Provincial Coach – operation and oversight</b> <b>2 WPS Staff – support</b>	<b>Other stakeholders necessary for effective implementation</b> <b>1 Athletes</b> <b>2 High School Partnership</b>

<b>Program 2.1 Expansion of Current Program</b> <b><i>Coaching Certification Program – Recruitment of HP Coaches in Estevan and Weyburn</i></b>	
<b>Program Description:</b> Currently we certify coaches annually offering a courses as a capacity building service. Courses are designed at the national level (vertical alignment), organized by the province, and delivered by key provincial facilitators.	
<b>Key Final Outcome:</b> Achievement of Goal 3	
<b>KEY STAKEHOLDERS/ACCOUNTABILITIES</b>	
<b>Key Driver – primary responsibility</b> <b>1 Executive Director or staff delegate – planning and recruitment</b> <b>2 Facilitators – facilitation of courses</b>	<b>Other stakeholders necessary for effective implementation</b> <b>1 Participants</b> <b>2 Club Representatives</b> <b>3 Water Polo Canada</b> <b>4 Coaches Association of Canada</b>

<b>Program 2.2 Expansion of Existing Program</b> <b><i>Official Certification Program – Identification and Certification of Future HP Officials in Saskatoon</i></b>	
<b>Program Description:</b> Currently we certify officials annually offering a courses as a capacity building service. Courses are designed at the national level (vertical alignment), organized by the province, and delivered by key provincial facilitators. This is buttressed by a national evaluation program, stewarded locally by our Referee in Chief, the province and certified evaluators. At this time we have very little officials certified from Saskatoon.	
<b>Key Final Outcome: Achievement of Goal 4</b>	
<b>KEY STAKEHOLDERS/ACCOUNTABILITIES</b>	
<b>Key Driver – primary responsibility</b> <b>1 WPS Staff – planning and oversight</b> <b>2 Facilitators – facilitation</b> <b>3 Referee in Chief – oversight and liaising with Water Polo Canada</b>	<b>Other stakeholders necessary for effective implementation</b> <b>1 Participants</b> <b>2 Club Representatives</b> <b>3 Water Polo Canada</b>

<b>Program 3.1 Existing Program</b> <b><i>Competition Schedule</i></b>	
<b>Program Description:</b> The competition schedule is designed yearly with the goal of maximising the number of high quality games at as low of a cost as possible, recognizing we have limited capacity for local high performance competition and a schedule somewhat predetermined by national leagues and external organizers.	
<b>Key Final Outcome: n/a</b>	
<b>KEY STAKEHOLDERS/ACCOUNTABILITIES</b>	
<b>Key Driver – primary responsibility</b> <b>1 Head Provincial Coach – planning and scheduling</b> <b>2 WPS Staff – event and travel planning</b>	<b>Other stakeholders necessary for effective implementation</b> <b>1 Participants</b> <b>2 Parents</b> <b>3 Other PSOs</b> <b>4 Water Polo Canada</b>

**Program 3.2 New Program**

<b><i>Intra-Provincial High Performance Competition Program</i></b>	
Program Description: This program will be a culmination of other programs. It would involve enough athletes in the high performance stream to have three to four teams in each gender in the provincial. The program would likely take a league format.	
Key Final Outcomes: Achievement of Goals 1 – 7 and 10. At least 10 HP athletes in 1 category in both genders and quality HP games held in each centre.	
<b>KEY STAKEHOLDERS/ACCOUNTABILITIES</b>	
<b>Key Driver – primary responsibility</b> <b>1 WPS Staff – planning and scheduling</b> <b>2 Club Leaders – participation</b>	<b>Other stakeholders necessary for effective implementation</b> <b>1 Athletes</b> <b>2 Coaches</b> <b>3 Parents</b> <b>4 Officials</b>

<b>Program 4.1 Existing Program</b> <b><i>Weight Training/Dryland Program</i></b>	
Program Description: High performance athletes add additional 3 weight training sessions a week to their pool training and short dryland sessions before each training time.	
Key Final Outcome: n/a	
<b>KEY STAKEHOLDERS/ACCOUNTABILITIES</b>	
<b>Key Driver – primary responsibility</b> <b>1 Provincial Coaches – planning and oversight</b> <b>2 Weight Trainer – programming and facilitation</b>	<b>Other stakeholders necessary for effective implementation</b> <b>1 Athletes</b> <b>2 Facility Managers</b> <b>3</b> <b>4</b>

<b>Program 5.1 New Program</b> <b><i>Research &amp; Development Program</i></b>	
<b>Program Description:</b> Research will be done regarding the identification and formulation of partnerships that will help us form a cost-effective integrated support team, engagement with sport sciences and sports medicine and better ways to manage technology.	
<b>Key Final Outcome: Achievement of Goal 8 &amp; 9</b>	
<b>KEY STAKEHOLDERS/ACCOUNTABILITIES</b>	
<b>Key Driver – primary responsibility</b> <b>1 WPS Staff – research</b> <b>2 Executive Director – monitoring</b>	<b>Other stakeholders necessary for effective implementation</b> <b>1 Future Partners</b>

<b>Program 6.1 New Program</b> <b><i>High Performance Visioning and Planning</i></b>	
<b>Program Description:</b> This program involves the annual review and strategic implementation of this plan. In addition, this program will involve the review and replanning of the entire plan after 5 years	
<b>Key Final Outcome: Achievement of Goal 5</b>	
<b>KEY STAKEHOLDERS/ACCOUNTABILITIES</b>	
<b>Key Driver – primary responsibility</b> <b>1 High Performance Planning Committee – visioning and review</b> <b>2 WPS Staff – implementation</b>	<b>Other stakeholders necessary for effective implementation</b> <b>1 Sask Sport</b>

## **Appendix 1: Background Information – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

### **Athlete Development**

#### Strengths:

Our main strengths stem from three areas: Professional Coaching, High Performance Training Programs, and High Performance Development Programs. Currently we have two full time provincial professional coaches and one part time professional coach. These coaches have a relatively high level of exposure to strong high performance training and competitions as athletes themselves and now as coaches and officials. Our head provincial coach is current Junior Women's National Team head coach and a recognized leader in the Canadian water polo community. Through this, he can provide unique insight on the needs of our athletes locally to excel nationally and internationally when selected to national teams. Our professional provincial coaches are located in key centres (Regina and Saskatoon).

Our high performance training program exceeds the national standard. The high performance athletes train 13.5 hours a week in seven practices. They train four out of five nights a week and three times a week at lunch through our high school excellence program. In addition, training support pertaining to dryland and weight condition is provided through external trainers.

We provide direct linkages to this training program through a high quality high performance development program. We have three main areas that provide these linkages: a development centres (located in Regina and Weyburn), High Performance Centres (located in Regina and Weyburn) and a age respective provincial leagues that span the domestic season and result in competition in all four club regions (Estevan, Weyburn, Regina, and Saskatoon).

These strengths directly lead to a competitive context for athlete development wherein those athletes that are committed and dedicated experience high levels of athlete development.

#### Weaknesses:

We are both limited by general sport constraints and by unique sport-specific challenges. Three main weaknesses emerge that are likely to be general sport constraints. First is that because we have low numbers, the quality of practices can be adversely affected and cause us to include non-high performance athletes that lower the quality of those practices. This is necessary in order to have a team. Second, in order to deliver a robust competition schedule that allows for greater exposure to other teams, the cost of a high performance season can range anywhere from \$7000 to \$10,000. While these two weaknesses are significant, they are the most difficult to address the latter of which is relatively unchangeable. Third, in our main centre (Regina), we have significant pool limitations. We are not able to get the pool time required to grow and diversify our high performance programming in Regina.

Another fixed weakness is that our smaller communities (Weyburn and Estevan) have limited facility capacity. This limits the high performance development of these athletes. The limited

facility capacity coupled with a limited coaching resources in these communities provides a context where high performance can be limited and where our provincial coaching staff must travel weekly to these communities.

Retention of older athletes, particularly as they transition from 16U to 18U and from 18U to Senior limits the development of the youngest athletes. This limitation results from breaking a continuity of and intergenerational transmission of knowledge and experience from older to younger athletes. It also lowers the pool of financial and human resources to support a high performance program overall.

Interactions with current national team programs can cause weaknesses. For example, carded athletes use their own trainer which prevents the proper implementation of a team weight training program and because national team training takes precedence, a team-wide provincial weight training program is not possible.

#### Opportunities:

There are three main areas of opportunity. The potential for high performance to increase in Saskatoon, increased funding and changes that increase older group retention. First, at the start of the 2013-14 season, our organizational structure was adjusted resulting in a provincial coach (part-time professional) being employed in Saskatoon. There is a larger opportunity to increase high performance membership and the talent pool as a result of this change. In addition, unlike our other communities, there are no facility constraints in Saskatoon. Pool time is easier to acquire and the facility (The Shaw Centre) is world class. Second, a High Performance Coaching Capacity Grant has been extended for three more years. This allows us to support and maintain three professional coaches for that time.

Last, changes at the national level are supporting greater competitive contexts for older athletes. Water Polo Canada has developed the Major League and the Canadian Women's Support 8 League that allows for some opportunities for athlete 18+ to be able to compete nationally and thus have something to train for. In addition, through a national competition review process, a shift from 18U to 19U for National Club Champions allows for retention for one more year of athletes who do not centralize with national team.

#### Threats:

Two main fixed weaknesses act as significant threats to a successful athlete development program: low numbers and facility constraints. The sustainability of a high performance program in relation to athlete development is significantly threatened by lower numbers to an extent that high performance programming can disappear at any given year if we do not have viable high performance candidates coming through our programs. In addition, facility constraints through the struggle to provide quantity and quality of training in relation to pool time and space prevent current programming from expanding.

## **Coaching and Official Development**

### **Strengths:**

Our coaching development and athlete development strengths are closely related. Securing financial support for high performance coaching for the next three years allows us to support three professional coaches within the province. This allows for greater knowledge transmission for developing coaches providing contexts wherein developing coaches work closely with WPS staff coaches in Regina and Saskatoon.

We support coaching development through providing coaching education both in annual classroom settings and in practical settings. We have knowledgeable and certified facilitators to deliver these courses and support coaching development by developing additional materials for coaches. In practical settings, coaching by developing coaches is monitored by WPS staff and regular feedback is provided during provincial events.

Our official development is supported by our budget which includes support for HP Officials. This support is delivered through professional development opportunities such as courses and high performance tournaments. This is coupled with the fact that we have quality official development leaders who are linked into of high performance officiating at the national and international level. In particular, our referee in chief is an experienced official trainer, evaluator and mentor that is also the chair of the Water Polo Canada Officials Work Group. Through this linkage, we recently adopted a national referee evaluation program and certified several evaluators. We have also increased official development awareness through our website and Facebook page.

### **Weaknesses:**

We have no high performance coaches in Weyburn and Estevan. This limits the ability for coaching education and knowledge transmission among high performance and developing coaches.

Because high performance officials in water polo require a specific knowledge set even as they develop, previous water polo experience is necessary. This limits the available pool of referees, despite the quality official leadership and training we have in place. And if there is little interest in participating as an official, our official development can suffer.

### **Opportunities:**

A significant opportunity for coaching development relates directly to the extension of our High Performance Coaching Capacity Grant. Because we have secured professional coaching for three staff we can continue to identify new ways to capitalize on the benefits of knowledge transmission among professional and developing coaches.

Opportunities also stem from changes taking place at the national level. The new national club championship league format will provide a greater frequency and quality of high performance

opportunities for both coaches and officials as their exposure to high performance increases. This coupled with the future increase in evaluations both by local and other provincial evaluators through the new evaluation program will lead to developing high performance officials to gain practical experience and critical feedback.

Threats:

Our major threat results from the potential to lose funding if we do not comply with Sask Sport expectations. We increase our capacity through dedicating portions of our budget to official and coaching development. If this funding is taken away, then official and coaching development will suffer significantly.

### **Competition**

Strengths:

Our main strength is the strong linkage between high quality and sustainable high performance development programs and our high performance competition program. Our high performance development program is notably efficient. Our program involves provincial leagues, provincial team camps, and three provincial championship events all delivered in a cost-effective and easily accessible way. The program involves a high frequency of events, is accessible to all four communities and integrates an understanding of the particular features of a prairie province such as geographic, demographic and climate realities. As a result, the efficacy of the high performance development program leads to relatively high levels of participation in each development age group and the level of participation is increasing annually. This facilitates greater high performance identification and development of the limited number of high performance athletes that we have. It also increases the quality of competitions that encourages greater exposure to high performance competitive situations for our other athletes. Linking high performance development programs with our high performance competition program, participants transition into a competition program that builds on the foundation provided in the high performance development program.

Our high performance competition program maximizes the use of resources and is successful. There is a high frequency of games and this is expected to increase in the upcoming seasons. Our teams are able to play against the best teams in Western Canada. In addition, we build into each season international exposure such as annual trips to California which house the best teams in North America.

Weakness:

In order to deliver a high quality high performance competition program, the cost for families is significantly high. This is exacerbated for families who have multiple water polo athletes in the family, which is typical for water polo.

Because the number of high performance athletes is low, we cannot implement a provincial high performance competition program. We must rely on interprovincial and international

travel. The burden of travel for some families can be high as a result of this and can discourage recruitment for the high performance competition program.

The role of the 18+ athletes who are not centralized with national teams or participating in the NCAA is critical to raising the level of local competitive contexts and we do not have a high performance competition program for them. Costs can be too high for athletes who are also balancing greater personal financial responsibilities such as with university.

#### Opportunities:

As a result of the new national club championships league format, 16U and 19U competitive age groups will get a greater exposure to high performance competitions through a higher frequency of games at a lower than average cost. Maximising on recruitment for the teams for these leagues will be key to taking advantage of the benefits of this new format.

There is a potential to build a high performance program for 18+ athletes resulting from the 18U to 19U category transition and the development of the Major League for western teams. Through this, the potential to change cultural expectations of competitive water polo finishing for athletes when they turn 18 to one where competitive competitions are integrated in the lives of current and future 18+ high performance athletes exists.

#### Threats:

Again cost is an issue in particular for athletes who are 18+. Costs cannot be the same for athletes who are under 18 and those who are over 18 because of the latter group typically assumes greater financial responsibility as they get older. This means numbers of 18+ athletes need to be high to support sustainable programming.

#### Daily Training Environment

##### Strengths:

We have a strong daily training environment given our available resources and typical constraints. We have provided the quantity and quality within those constraints that allow for a high level of high performance training. For example, we have a total of seven practices in water Monday to Friday for a total of 13.5 hours for the majority of our high performance athletes. Those athletes that have moved to Regina to access this training are able to return home on noncompetition weekends within this weekly schedule. Included in those hours, our High School Excellence Program involves lunch time practices as a result of an arrangement with a high school in Regina. While high frequency of training and competing can adversely affect academics with our high performance athletes, partnering with the local high school is both a strength in relation to allowing for a more robust daily training environment and an opportunity as a precedence-setting partnership for other regions to adopt a similar program when they have the numbers and interest to support it (eg Saskatoon).

While there are significant facility constraints, one benefit is that we are able to utilize on site weight training facilities and dryland areas in our major centre.

#### Weaknesses:

Costs of pool rentals and weight rooms are always increasing and because of low numbers and external factors (carded national team athletes accessing other weight training programs), costs to the membership are high and weight training programs are not possible. The former issue strains families budgets and reduces the attractiveness of high performance programs for future candidates and the latter issue results in adverse effects toward team dynamics.

The facility access is also a weakness in the daily training environment. Our smaller communities (Weyburn and Estevan) do not have the facilities to support an effective high performance daily training environment, although our provincial programming involves access to Regina's environment. The facility in Regina is limited as we only have one 25 meter deep area to train with deep water activities and because of the limited space our night time practices are very late (eg ending at 10 or 10:30pm). This stains the daily training environment, strains the capacity of our developing high performance athletes' schedule, and burdens families who must transport their children to from the pool at such late hours.

Support for a successful daily training environment is available but sometimes difficult to access. For example, physiotherapy is not onsite and difficult to access. This hurts the linkages between

#### Opportunities:

Saskatoon has the only facility that could support an appropriate daily training environment. This a world class facility and more appropriate daily training hours are available. However, the current performance of level of athletes and membership base does not support this.

There is a greater opportunity to develop higher linkages between daily training environment and SS/SM, IST and TM Critical Success factors. Sask Sport has the support available to more properly develop these linkages. We need to find cost effective ways to both build these services into our programming and raise awareness of these services with our participants.

#### Threats:

As with other critical success factors, cost and facility quality is an issue for Regina as a major centre and smaller communities in relation to their development of more effective daily training environments.

Similarly, our low numbers in our competitive high performance program is a major threat to proper daily training environments. The threat is that we will have to close the program if numbers dwindle too much. In addition, secondary effects of low numbers in a daily training environment results in intangible adverse effects such as poor team dynamics.

## **Sport Science/Sport Medicine, Integrated Support Team and Technology Management**

### **Strengths:**

While we need to create greater linkages among other critical success factors with this one, one strength is our coaches are educated in through their own university programs and/or through coaching education and professional development offered through the National Coaching Certification Program.

We have accessed SS/SM resources in the past and Sask Sport offers many services that can allow for more effective and structured use of SS/SM and TM services.

We use technologies as they arise (such as on site video modelling with IPad). Also raising awareness of high performance programming, competition and results through Facebook and our website is commonplace in our technology management profile. We also updated our website to increase the exposure to high performance activities.

### **Weaknesses:**

Currently we do not have an identified integrated support team and our use of SS/SM is limited. While we use external trainers who add innovative training methods to our high performance training environments, we lack a clearly defined integrated support team. We encourage access to sport medicine and sport medicine, we do not do so in a formalized and structured way. This is largely cost-related.

### **Opportunities:**

There are many opportunities to create more successful applications of this critical success factor and there is potential to effectively use these services to offset some of the weaknesses in the daily training environment critical success factor. More research could be done in the relevant and innovative use of technologies that could support more robust training environments. Greater awareness of the benefits of SS/SM could be disseminated to athletes if a cost-effective program was developed. This would result in informed participants with greater interest in these type of services. More research into developing an integrated support team could lead to a cost-effective and desired IST that capitalizes on the use of SS/SM.

More awareness raising through use of Facebook, social media, youtube and other virtual platforms could be done.

### **Threats:**

If the costs of services are too high especially in relation to existing training and competition costs, then this aspect of a high performance program will be the first to be cut.

## **Governance**

### **Strengths:**

Our governance structure facilitates a skills-based system in relation to high performance programming and operations. Water Polo Saskatchewan's board is a governance board

responsible for policy making and directing the actions of the Executive Director. As a result, they evaluate the performance of the executive director and do not define the means and content of the high performance program. This is optimal because it allows for a maximisation of skills for both the board and the executive director. As a result, high performance operations are determined by someone with the appropriate knowledge base and the program is largely independent to the board. In addition, qualified and knowledgeable board members are recruited which allows for appropriate and comprehensive evaluations of the executive director in relation to high performance operations.

We have a close alignment with our national sport organization in relation to operational policy. Our policies and organizational structure have been developed and validated by the same individuals who developed and validated our national sport organizations policies and organizational structure. This close alignment is a major strength in governance.

High performance governance, under the direction of the executive director, is entirely provincially determined. This leads to a consistency in programming and a greater likelihood of guaranteeing sustainability.

#### Weaknesses:

There are very little weaknesses in governance. Weaknesses can arise when we attempt to integrate our membership in bottom-up governance activities that support high performance indicators. For example, we have developed working groups that looked at, among others, recruitment, retention, coach and official develop. While we had some interesting feedback during initial meetings, these groups' activities eventually died out.

#### Opportunities:

There can be more opportunities to engage our membership in more effective ways, for example through the use virtual platforms. However, these opportunities are limited to the level of membership interest and the knowledge base within our membership about high performance programming. If other areas can be identified that are known to support high performance programming, such as general recruitment and retention, and the right platform can be implemented, then we can capitalize on membership intelligence and support the actions of the executive director from both the top-down (our board) and the bottom-up (our membership).

#### Threats:

While our board is governance board, there is still potential at least indirectly for high performance decision-making to be influenced by our board members. Although this is a rare issue, the potential of non-neutral and biased influence is a threat to the critical success of governance within an effective high performance decision-making process.