

Sport Recognition Policy for

# PROVINCIAL SPORT ORGANIZATIONS and MULTI-SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

A ***Game ON*** Commitment

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# Introduction

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport is pleased to present the Sport Recognition Policy for Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs) and Multi-Sport Organizations (MSOs).

Ontarians look to their government to ensure that sport activities within Ontario are offered by organizations that operate in a safe and effective manner, follow national standards and provide high quality programming. The Sport Recognition Policy assists the Ministry in identifying and recognizing sport organizations that will meet these requirements and who can partner with the government to develop a high functioning and effective sport system.

**Game ON – The Ontario Government’s Sport Plan** articulates the government’s sport priorities, identifies the measures that will be taken to achieve them, and provides clarity about the roles and responsibilities between the government and the sport sector.

The sport plan is designed to be athlete-centred and results-oriented and focusses on three priorities for amateur sport: participation; development; and excellence.

**PARTICIPATION:** All athletes are better able to participate in safe, organized sport.

**DEVELOPMENT:** Athletes receive the right support as their skills develop.

**EXCELLENCE:** Athletes can pursue excellence in high-performance sport.

A strong sport system is one that operates on a set of standards that effectively supports participation, creates fair opportunities and ensures athletes have a safe and supportive environment allowing them to excel. In order to effectively administer the sport plan and further develop the sport system, the ministry will need to work more closely and collaboratively with key partners including PSO/MSOs.

The Sport Recognition Policy sets out mandatory requirements that all PSO/MSOs must meet in order to be recognized by the province of Ontario.

## Provincial Sport/Multi-Sport Organizations (PSO/MSOs)

PSO/MSOs are not-for profit organizations formally recognized by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport as the governing body of a particular amateur sport in Ontario. The primary function of PSO/MSOs is the development of athletes, coaches and officials.

Recognized PSO/MSOs play an important role in the sport system by developing their respective sports across Ontario and encouraging participation in recreational and competitive sport programs. They are self-governing organizations responsible for: developing their sports; providing a competitive pathway for athlete development; selecting provincial teams; recruiting and training coaches, officials and volunteers; conducting provincial championships; and ensuring they operate within their National Sport Organization (NSO) rules.

Provincial sport organizations also play an important role by linking to the national sport system. To compete on a provincial team or represent Ontario at a national or international competition, an athlete or coach must be a member of a PSO/MSO.

A recognized PSO/MSO has access to Ministry sport consultants who provide day to day support and information on ministry programs and priorities. Recognized PSO/MSOs are eligible to apply for government programs, and will also need to meet all requirements outlined in Transfer Payment Agreements.

For the public, a provincially recognized PSO/MSO provides assurance that the organization:

- Operates in a safe and effective manner;
- Follows national standards when developing and offering a sport;
- Offers high quality programs to their members;
- Has certified coaches and officials;
- Has established risk management policies (discipline, harassment, anti-doping, screening for volunteers etc.); and
- Is working to promote participation from under-represented populations in Ontario.

## Provincial Sport Organization Councils

A PSO Council is a provincial sport governing body recognized by the Ministry that has two or more affiliate groups or member associations which provide programs and services on behalf of the PSO Council.

These councils are a result of the National Sport Organizations (NSOs) designating multiple organizations within Ontario as the governing provincial bodies for the sport. For these sports the Ministry deems that the council is responsible for ensuring that each of the organizations are compliant with the requirements of the Sport Recognition Policy. The Ministry's reporting relationship is with the Provincial Council.

## **Additional Requirements for Councils**

An organization seeking recognition as a PSO Council must ensure that a clear reporting structure is in place and all affiliate groups or member associations are aligned with the Council. This includes:

- An annual contract between the Council and its affiliate groups or member associations that outlines the Terms and Conditions for their working relationship. The contract must ensure that the associations recognize through their By-Laws that they are accountable to the PSO Council, and ultimately to the Ministry. The PSO Council must submit the signed Board-approved contract with each of the associations, By-Laws and Financial Review Engagement Report for each member Association. Association By-Laws and financial reporting must meet the recognition requirements detailed hereafter.

# Compliance

Decisions to grant or deny recognition status are made by the Ministry in accordance with this policy. Once granted, recognition status is ongoing provided that the recognized PSO/MSO continues to fulfill all of the criteria and obligations of the policy. Recognition status is a prerequisite to apply for funding under applicable Ministry funding programs.

The Ministry will only recognize one provincial governing body to be responsible for all aspects of a designated sport, unless the National Sport Organization for the sport endorses multiple provincial organizations. This principle has been established in order to avoid unnecessary and inefficient duplication of structures and costs.

The Ministry will encourage any new sports looking to be recognized to amalgamate into existing PSO/MSOs with similar activities, when appropriate.

On an annual basis, the Ministry will require currently recognized PSO/MSOs to verify that they continue to meet the recognition criteria and obligations. If a recognized PSO/MSO cannot demonstrate that it meets all of the recognition criteria and recognition obligations of this policy to the Ministry's satisfaction, the Ministry may take one or more of the following actions, at its discretion:

- a) Attach such conditions to the PSO/MSOs recognition as the Ministry considers appropriate, and the PSO/MSO shall abide by such conditions. Before attaching conditions, the Ministry will give the PSO/MSO:
  - Written notice of the deficiencies; and
  - An opportunity to correct the deficiencies to the Ministry's satisfaction, by a date to be determined by the Ministry.
- b) Provisionally and immediately, suspend the PSO/MSOs recognition, if the Ministry, in its judgement, considers that the deficiencies give rise to serious health and safety or capacity concerns. In such situations, the Ministry will give the PSO/MSO:
  - Prompt written notice of the provisional suspension of the organization's recognition and the reasons thereof; and

- An opportunity to correct the deficiencies, to the Ministry's satisfaction, by a date to be determined by the Ministry.

If the PSO/MSO fails to correct the deficiencies to the Ministry's satisfaction, within the allotted time, the Ministry may revoke the organization's recognition.

- c) Withhold or terminate any funding that the Ministry provides to the PSO/MSO and /or terminate any agreement(s) under which such funding is paid, in accordance with the terms of any funding agreement(s) between the Ministry and the PSO/MSO.
- d) Revoke the PSO/MSO's recognition. Before revoking such recognition, the Ministry will give the PSO/MSO:
  - Written notice of the Ministry's intent to revoke such recognition, and the reasons thereof; and an opportunity to correct the deficiencies, to the Ministry's satisfaction, by a date to be determined by the Ministry.
  - If the PSO/MSO fails to correct the deficiencies, to the Ministry's satisfaction within the allotted time, the Ministry may revoke the organization's recognition.

## Administration of the Sport Recognition Policy

The Ministry reserves the right to review and amend the Sport Recognition Policy at any time upon reasonable notice. These reviews may result in changes in the requirements in both policy and programming that organizations will need to meet in order to continue to be recognized. When changes are made to this policy, the Ministry will contact the President and Executive Director from each recognized PSO/MSO and post the revised policy on the Ministry's website.

# Recognition Criteria

To be recognized by the Ministry as the governing body for its sport, a PSO/MSO must meet all of the requirements below.

## General

### 1. Sport Definition

The ministry will only recognize PSOs for sports that meet the following definition:

***Sport** is a regulated form of physical activity organized as a contest between two or more participants for the purpose of determining a winner by fair and ethical means. Such contests may be in the form of a game, match, race or other form of event.*

A sport has the following characteristics:

- a) It involves, where repetition of standardized or required movements or forms are included in competition, a high degree of difficulty, risk or effort in such reproduction;
- b) It involves two or more participants in its competitive mode, engaging for the purpose of competitively evaluating their personal performance;
- c) It involves formal rules and procedures to ensure a safe and fair outcome for all participants;
- d) It requires fair, ethical and effective tactics or strategies;
- e) It requires specialized neuromuscular and cardiovascular skills (such as speed, strength, stamina, flexibility, balance, precision and coordination) that include significant involvement of large muscle groups, and that can be taught, learned and improved;



- f) It requires the development of coaching personnel trained in both general subjects such as bio-mechanics, sport psychology, nutrition, group dynamics, physiology, etc., and in the specific skills of the sport;
- g) It is, or has been, traditionally regarded as a sport in its competitive mode; and
- h) Its primary activity involves interaction between the participant and the environment (air, water, ground, floor or special apparatus). No activity in which the performance of a motorized vehicle is the primary determinant of the outcome of the competition is eligible in this policy (e.g. racing automobiles, powerboats, aircraft or snow machines).

## **2. Endorsement from a National Sport Organization**

PSO/MSOs must have an annual letter of endorsement from a National Sport Organization (NSO) funded by Sport Canada. The letter must stipulate that the NSO recognizes the PSO as the governing body for the sport in Ontario. The Ministry at its discretion may consider recognizing PSO/MSOs for populations that have individual programming needs (e.g. gender) provided that they meet all other recognition requirements and have the endorsement from a National Sport Organization.

## **Administration**

### **3. Registered Not-For-Profit Organization**

PSOs must be a registered not-for-profit organization under Ontario's *Corporations Act* or the *Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010*.

### **4. Board of Directors**

The organization must have a Board of Directors who are elected by its members and residents of Ontario. The organization is expected to update the Ministry regarding any changes in its Board's composition and to ensure all contact information is accurate.

### **5. Governance**

The organization must have effective governance structures in place and demonstrate that it has the organizational capacity to provide programs and services to its members province-wide. This includes the following Board approved documentation:

#### **a) By-laws and Operational & Financial Policies**

The organization must have and implement policies and procedures which outline the organization's democratic governing structure and operational procedures. This should include policies on conflict of interest, human resource and/or a policy dedicated to emergency management (including, but not limited to, processes related to the retention of emergency contact information).

Organizations must also have a comprehensive financial management policy in place outlining processes and procedures that must be met in order to protect the financial integrity of the organization. This policy should address issues such as signing authority, regular financial reporting, annual budgets, travel expenses and fees for services. The Board of Directors must review the organization's financial position regularly and ensure effective financial controls are in place. All of these policies must have been reviewed and approved by the Board within the last three years.

**b) Multi-Year Strategic Plan**

The organization must develop a Board approved Strategic Plan for a minimum of three years, with annual Operational Plans to guide operations and align resources with the identified priorities. PSO/MSOs will be required to submit an Operational Plan for the current year when submitting their application and subsequently submit Operational Plans at the start of each future year of their Multi-Year Strategic Plan. The Multi-Year Strategic Plan should include a vision statement/mandate, strategic directions, overview of current and future programs and activities, and risks and mitigation strategies. The yearly Operational Plans should include performance measures and a financial budget including staffing requirements.

**c) Budget and Financial Review Engagement Reports / Audits**

Organizations must submit a detailed budget for their current and previous fiscal years (projected and actual amounts). They must also submit a financial review engagement report or audit prepared by a chartered accountant for their last fiscal year.

**d) Insurance**

The organization must carry a minimum of \$2,000,000 in insurance, including commercial general liability insurance on an occurrence basis for third party bodily injury, personal injury and property and meets current industry standards for the sport.

**e) Annual General Meetings**

The organization must hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in accordance with their By-Laws and be transparent and accountable to stakeholders and members about the outcomes and results of its operations. Organizations must post a copy of the notice of the AGM meeting, the agenda, minutes and all attachments on their website.

## Policy

These policies must be approved by the Board of Directors, posted on the organization's website and made available to all members and affiliated clubs. The Ministry at its discretion may in the future provide a template for policies including minimum requirements as an appendix to this policy.

## **6. Code of Conduct**

The organization must have separate and distinct codes of conduct for the Board of Directors, coaches, officials, and athletes addressing the specific needs of each group.

## **7. Discipline**

Outlines discipline matters that may arise during the course of all sport activities, including but not limited to tournaments, training, camps, meetings and travel associated with these activities. The policy should identify the type and definition of misconduct and suggested minimum penalties and fair play code or references to code of conduct policies.

## **8. Dispute Resolution**

Provides direction as to how individuals or organizations that have a dispute with the decisions of the PSO/MSOs are afforded due process in the resolution of these disputes. The policy should outline the appeal process including purpose, definitions, representation, steps and timelines, confidentiality, grounds for appeal and resolution.

## **9. Harassment**

Illustrates that the PSO/MSO is committed to providing a sport environment free of harassment on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion and creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, being in receipt of public assistance, or pardoned conviction. The policy should outline the complaint procedures, including hearings, sanctions and appeals as needed.

## **10. Concussion Management and Return to Play**

Outlines procedures to identify and manage concussions based on the *International Concussion Consensus Guidelines (Zurich 2012)*. The policy should include an emergency medical plan removal from physical activity, notification of all affected parties (e.g. parents, coaches, officials) medical examination, as well as a medically supervised and individualized plan to return to play.

## **11. Membership**

Member policies for clubs and each paying member category (Board of Directors, athletes, coaches, officials). The policy should outline the requirements/rules for clubs and paying member categories, including member obligations, fees and the terms/conditions of membership.

## **12. Selection Policy**

All policies that are used for the selection of athletes, coaches, managers, officials, team chaperones, etc, must have clear criteria and use a timely, transparent, published process detailing the criteria and approvals process.

**13. Privacy**

The policy should inform parents, athletes and stakeholders how personal information is collected, used, disclosed and protected. Policy should meet the requirements with respect to personal information under applicable Canadian privacy legislation.

**14. Accessibility**

Organizations should have an accessibility policy to accommodate the different needs of their members. The policy should meet the requirements outlined under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and cover such issues as communication, assistive devices, support persons and service animals.

**15. Inclusion**

To support participation and the pursuit of excellence in sport, organizations should have policies and programs in place which support inclusion, particularly for the under-represented populations of Ontario, including women and girls, children in low income families, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, older Ontarians, newcomers to Canada and members of the LGBTQ community.

Inclusion policies should ensure equal and fair opportunities for women and girls to participate in sport and have equal access to governance, programming, training and coaching.

**16. Screening Policy**

Due to the positions of trust that are inherent in the provision of sport activities, organizations must have risk based screening policies and procedures in place to ensure the protection of children participating in sport.

**17. Confidentiality**

Policy requesting all employees and directors maintain confidentiality with respect to information pertaining to its operating including: financial, human resources, and program delivery and current employees and community members affected by such.

**18. Social Media**

Guidelines on appropriate items to post, good sportsmanship and representing the sport.

**19. Anti-Doping**

The policy should include an overarching statement outlining the organization's commitment to fair play and transparency as it relates to doping, as well as stipulating that the PSO adheres to all NSO standards as applicable.

## 20. Code of Conduct for Parents

The organization should have a code of conduct for parents, which outlines their roles, responsibilities and practices to promote high standards and ethical behavior.

### PSO/MSO Websites

All organizations must post the following material on their website:

- The organization's elected Board of Directors
- By-laws, Operational and Financial Policies
- Insurance Certificate
- Minutes or summaries of their Annual General Meeting
- The following policies:
  - Separate Codes of Conduct for the Board of Directors, Coaches, Officials and Athletes;
  - Discipline Policy
  - Dispute Resolution Policy
  - Harassment Policy
  - Concussion Management and Return to Play Policy
  - Membership Policy
  - Selection to Provincial Teams Policy
  - Privacy Policy
  - Accessibility Policy

## Technical And Safety Standards

To be a recognized PSO/MSO, the organization must agree and adhere to the technical and safety standards in place to govern the sport and protect the safety of its members.

## 21. Alignment with NSO Rules

The organization must adopt and comply with the rules and regulations of its NSO that outline: rules of play; requirements for athletes, coaches, officials and referees; the field of play; equipment; scoring; and competition. Organizations must meet additional standards set by the Province that exceed those set by the NSO.

## Programming

The Ministry recognizes that PSO/MSOs will be important partners in ensuring the effective implementation of **Game ON – the Ontario Government’s Sport Plan**. It is important for all PSO/MSOs to recognize the importance of working within their sport at the club, regional, provincial and national levels to develop an effective and efficient sport system. The Ministry’s priorities of participation, development and excellence are outlined in **Game ON** and should be reflected in the programming and services offered by PSO/MSOs.

Recognized PSO/MSOs must provide the following programs and services to support the development of their members:

### 22. Programming for Athletes

The organization must use sport-specific development models that are based on sound science and principles of long-term athlete development. The Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) model is used by many organizations in Ontario.

### 23. Certification of Coaches

The organization must certify its coaches through a formal sport-specific certification program that is either conducted through the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) or a program that is of the equivalent standard to NCCP, as determined by the Ministry, and is endorsed by the NSO.

### 24. Certification of Officials

The organization must certify its officials through a formal sport-specific certification program that is to a standard acceptable to the Ministry and endorsed by the NSO.

### 25. Para Sport Programming

A key priority of the Ministry is to increase programming and support for para-athlete participation. The Ministry encourages all PSO/MSOs who are part of the Paralympic program to ensure that they provide structured programming for their para-athletes.

# Combative Sport

In *GAME ON* – the Ontario Government’s Sport Plan, the ministry commits to work with the combative sport community to develop and implement appropriate health and safety measures for these sports.

In this regard PSOs for combative sports must meet the following criteria in addition to the requirements set out above.

## 26. Definitions

**COMBATIVE SPORT:** A sport that features a contest where participants use striking with fists, hands, feet or any other part of the body, throwing, grappling, wrestling, immobilization or submission techniques, or any combination of these techniques.

**CONTEST:** A contest means a competitive event or exhibition where:

- Spectators are admitted, expressly or by implication, for a fee or for free; or
- Athletes are required to directly or indirectly pay a fee to participate; or
- The event is recorded for commercial broadcast; or
- Any other circumstance prescribed by the ministry.

## 27. Affiliation with a National or International Federation

In combative sports where there is no NSO funded by Sport Canada, a PSO must have an annual letter of endorsement from an NSO or International Federation (IF) generally regarded as the governing body for the amateur version of the sport in Canada.

The ministry will consider the following factors in determining if the NSO or IF is generally regarded as the governing body for the sport in Canada:

- Whether the NSO or IF has a formal working relationship with Sport Canada;
- The IF is a commonly recognized governing body for the amateur version of the sport internationally (e.g. recognized by the International Olympic Committee as an IF or is a member of the SportAccord);

- The NSO or IF has formal affiliations with PSOs in multiple provinces and territories that would demonstrate that the organization is national in scope;
- The NSO or IF sanction/conduct national championships that feature participants from other provinces and territories that are used to determine qualification for international events sanctioned/ conducted by the IF (e.g. world championships);
- The NSO is a not-for-profit organization that has been active at the national level for more than three years; and
- Such other factors as the Ministry considers necessary and appropriate.

## **28. Sanctioning**

Each combative PSO must have posted to its website and apply a sanctioning policy that includes at a minimum:

- Who is eligible to apply for sanctioning;
- Categories of sanctioned contests (e.g. club show, tournaments, championships), if applicable;
- The application process, form and applicable fees;
- Evaluation criteria and process, including written letter of decision;
- An appeals process, which includes timelines, required information and the decision making process;
- Reference to the technical and safety standards that must be adhered to; and
- A process for monitoring compliance with technical and safety standards.

Combative sport PSOs must provide the ministry notice of a sanctioned contest at least 30 days in advance, and submit an annual sanctioning report in a format determined by the ministry.

## **29. Certified Officials**

Combative sport PSOs must ensure that all contest officials are certified through a formal sport-specific program that is to a standard acceptable to the ministry and endorsed by the NSO and/or IF.

## **30. Medical Personnel**

Combative sport PSOs must ensure that medical personnel consistent with the industry standard for each sport should be in attendance at all amateur combative sport contests.

## **31. Emergency Medical Response**

Combative sport PSOs must have policies and procedures that outline emergency medical response protocol that will be followed at all competitions.



### 32. Age Appropriate Activities

Combative sport PSOs must ensure contestants are only permitted to engage in age appropriate activities, to promote safety and mitigate the risk of injury.

### 33. Safe Weight Management

All combative sport PSOs must have a policy that promotes safe weight management practices among athletes.

### 34. Identifying PSO Sanctioned Combative Sport Events

Combative Sport PSOs must identify all sanctioned contests by including the Ontario logo in any promotional activity or publications related to the event, as well as this phrase:

*This contest is sanctioned by an organization officially recognized by the Province of Ontario.*

## Contests In Sports With Strikes To The Head

In combative sports that permit full contact strikes with any part of the body to the head of an opponent (i.e. a full contact strike to the head is not considered a foul), PSOs must also meet the criteria below.

For this purpose:

- **Full contact** means the use of purposeful physical force that may result or is intended to result in physical harm to the opponent, including any contact that does not meet the definition of light contact or noncontact;
- **Light contact** means the use of controlled techniques whereby no contact to the face is permitted and no contact is permitted which may result or is intended to result in physical harm to the opponent; and
- **Non-contact** means that no contact occurs between contestants.

### 35. Headgear

All amateur combative sport contestants under the age of 18, participating in a contest that permits full contact strikes to the head, must wear sport appropriate protective headgear. Contestants age 18 and over, in a contest that permits full contact strikes to the head, may compete without sport appropriate protective headgear only where it is consistent with the technical and safety standards of the NSO and/or IF.

**36. Annual Medicals**

All amateur combative sport contestants participating in a contest that permits full contact strikes to the head, must annually submit medical examination forms to the PSO for their respective sport, signed by a physician indicating they are fit to compete. Out-of-province contestants may be permitted to submit a letter from a physician, indicating they are fit to compete for a specific event.

**37. Physicians**

For all amateur combative sport contests involving the use of full contact strikes to the head, a licensed physician must be present and in close proximity of each contest at all times.

**38. Pre and Post Contest Medicals**

In amateur combative sports involving full contact strikes to the head, all athletes must be available for a pre and post contest medical examination.

**39. Passport Control System**

In all amateur combative sports involving full contact strikes to the head, PSOs must establish and implement a passport control system to document each athlete's photo identification, membership/registration information, emergency contact information, medical data, contest results and suspensions.



**Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport**  
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