

**Skater Development Report**  
**Skate Canada Nova Scotia Section**  
**2015 – 2016**

The primary objective of Skater Development this past year was to get some initiatives up and running again, after a brief period of inactivity. Upon review of our activities over the past year, I feel that we were quite successful in accomplishing that primary objective and look forward to building on what we have accomplished over the past year.

None of the Skater Development initiatives would have been possible this year without the assistance and input of our excellent committee of volunteers and our Executive Director, Jill Knowles. The members of the Skater Development Committee for the 2015-2016 year were as follows:

Heather Dawe (Chair)  
Sheila Beard  
Erin Craig  
Braden Davie  
Cheryle Gaston  
Heidi Sparks  
John Mattatall  
Katherine Short  
Ann Young

**High Performance Pathway**

The provincial government has recently changed the manner in which it allocates funding to provincial sport organizations. One of the new requirements was for each sporting organization to prepare a document called a “High Performance Pathway”. In consultation with the Skater Development Committee, Jill Knowles, Ross Ashbourne, and John Mattatall worked tirelessly to prepare an excellent document for submission to the government, which, among other things, set out various objectives and benchmarks for our organization and athletes to meet over the next 4 years. In making decisions throughout the year regarding activities to be carried out by the Skater Development Committee, the key performance requirements and goals set out in our High Performance Pathway were taken into consideration, and we will have to do so each year to ensure that we continue to receive funding from the provincial government.

**Skater Development Initiatives**

The following sets out a summary of the various initiatives undertaken and supported by Skater Development over the past year.

**Summer Simulation**

On August 23, 2015, in conjunction with the Officials Committee, the Skater Development Committee organized a day of simulations for our skaters. Skaters were given the opportunity to skate their programs in a simulated competition environment, with a panel of officials assessing their programs. Following their skate, the skaters and their coaches were given direct feedback

from the officials. Overall, the simulations were quite successful, with all of our available time being utilized, and skaters participating from throughout the province.

### New Brunswick Fall Skate

The first weekend of October two of our officials, Sheila Beard and Braden Davie, travelled to New Brunswick to monitor our skaters at the New Brunswick Fall Skate. Following the completion of their programs, skaters and their coaches were given the opportunity to meet with Sheila and Braden to receive feedback. Neither Sheila nor Braden were officiating at the competition, so their sole focus was providing useful feedback to our skaters. Again, there was good participation by our skaters and coaches and Sheila and Braden were kept very busy throughout the weekend.

### Synchro Day

On November 11 we held a “Synchro Day” for our coaches, synchronized skating teams and skaters that are interested in participated in synchronized skating. Overall, we had close to 70 skaters participating from throughout the province, which was great! We were very fortunate to have 2 excellent facilitators join us for the day from Ontario and Quebec - Chris Stokes and Yvan Rouille - both of whom are very experienced synchronized skating coaches and also synchronized skating technical officials. Overall, the day was not only a great learning experience for our coaches and skaters, but Chris and Yvan also made it a lot of fun. The benefits from Synchro Day are still ongoing, as our coaches have continued to communicate with the facilitators, seeking their input and feedback on programs and elements throughout the competitive season.

### Challenge Team Event

The Skater Development Committee also organized an event on November 11 for our Challenge Team members. The skaters, with their coaches, were given the opportunity to skate together for a couple of hours, with some training time and a few fun activities. Following the on-ice session, we held an information session for the skaters and their parents, focusing on what skaters could expect at Challenge, and giving everyone an opportunity to ask questions and chat with other skaters about their experiences.

### National Performance Centre Atlantic

A new initiative of Skate Canada over the past year has been to create National Performance Centers throughout the country. Given the geographic limitations of our region, the decision was made to create a “Virtual” performance centre for Atlantic Canada, whereby our skaters and coaches would be able to access resources from the other performance centers virtually. In conjunction with the development of the National Performance Centre Atlantic, Skate Canada organized and provided funding for 4 development seminars throughout the year.

The first seminar was facilitated by Monica Lockie, who is the National Performance Centre Director. This seminar was solely for coaches, and focused on coach development. All coaches were invited to participate, with there being no limit on numbers.

For the remaining seminars, which included both coaches and skaters, Nova Scotia was allotted a certain number of spots for skaters in the seminar, and again, all coaches were invited to attend the seminars. Participants for the seminars were selected by a sub-committee of the

Skater Development Committee. Decisions were based on the criteria set by Skate Canada and skaters' performance at Sectionals, with our focus being on the developmental levels of Pre-Juvenile and Juvenile. We were very pleased with the participation level by our skaters in Nova Scotia. We filled all of our spots for all of the seminars, and when we were allocated additional places because other provinces could not utilize them, we were able to fill those as well.

The second seminar, hosted in Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia on December 28-29, was facilitated by Robert O'Toole, who is one of the few Level 5 coaches in Canada. The third seminar was held in Amherst, Nova Scotia on February 14-15. The facilitator for this seminar was Shae Zukiwsky, past National Team Member for Senior Dance, ISU Technical Specialist and currently he is a doctoral Candidate in York University's Dance Studies PhD Program. The focus of this seminar was Program Components. The final seminar for the season was the Elvis Stojko seminar, which was held in Newfoundland and Labrador on March 24-25. This seminar was a very technical seminar, designed for our higher level skaters working on Double Axel's and above.

The overall quality of the facilitators and seminars was excellent and we're hopeful that we will be able to continue working with Skate Canada in the coming season to continue offering these seminars to our skaters.

In the coming year our hope is that we can continue with and improve upon the initiatives we started in the 2015-2016 season and establish some new initiatives as well. In doing so, we plan to work towards accomplishing the goals set out in the High Performance Pathway and the Skate Canada Nova Scotia Strategic Plan, and provide our members with the opportunities and support they need to succeed.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather E. Dawe  
Member at Large, Skater Development