

# 2024-25 Triathlon Ontario Provincial Development Program

## Vision Statement

To be a World Leader in Triathlon Development at all levels.

Unite – Motivate – Perform

## Mission Statement

Deliver national and world leading programs and services for Triathlon outcomes today and tomorrow. Committed to a multifaceted approach involving:

1. Providing excellent athlete and coaching resources
2. Developing sustainable funding partnerships
3. Being recognized as innovative and collaborative leaders
4. Enhancing training environments with specialized support and resources

## Overview

The Triathlon Ontario Provincial Development Program (“PDP”) consists of four main areas. The overriding objective of the PDP is to support and prepare athletes and coaches for long term success in draft legal racing at the national and international levels.

The four areas the PDP focusses on are as follows:

- 1) Racing Environment
- 2) Coach Education and Development
- 3) Training Environment
- 4) Education and Event Support.

## Racing Environment

Having a provincial series available for all demographics within the development pathway is critical for the development of tactical, technical and emotional skill sets necessary to be competitive in national and international racing. Ontario is one of only two Provinces that has

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developed a provincial racing program for development pathway athletes from 12 to 23+. The ability to experience draft legal racing early and in “your own back yard” cannot be overstated.

The PDP oversees the running of and operations of the following relevant provincial competitions: Youth Cup Series, Junior Cup Series, Elite/U23 Series, Ontario Summer Games, Youth Club Championships, Draft Legal Provincial Championships and, if applicable, Canada Summer Games.

**Table 1: Cup Series Membership Participation**

Year	Total 12-23		% of Members in Cup Series	Total Members	12-23 Members as a % of Total Members
	Members	Cup Series			
2016	366	155	42%	3,997	9%
2017	401	181	45%	3,836	10%
2018	392	149	38%	3,938	10%
2019	393	164	42%	4,188	9%
2020	250	N/A	N/A	2,586	10%
2021	283	N/A	N/A	1,994	14%
2022	242	90	37%	2,660	9%
2023	238	93	39%	2,687	9%
2024	245	105	43%	2,543	10%

When evaluating the Cup Series program, Table 1 shows certain trends within the province. These trends are consistent with other provinces across the country. Pre-Covid, participation in the Series was at an all time high and this is directly related to the number of members in that demographic. Post-Covid, the Series participation has significantly decreased, as has that specific demographic. A similar trend can be seen when looking at Ontario Summer Games participation, which is 15-16 year olds in the draft legal pathway. Table 2 shows the same participation trend. The conclusion is, to deepen the fields and increase quality, a focus needs to be placed on growing the youth, junior, and U23 participation demographics.

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**Table 2: Ontario Summer Games Participation**

Year	Spots Claimed		Total
	Male	Female	
2024	10	18	28
2022	9	14	23
2022	7	7	14
2019	24	24	48
2017	24	24	48
2015	24	24	48

2022 offered 17-18 year olds participation from the previous cancelled year

When comparing youth participation in races across the province in 2024 versus 2023, Triathlon Ontario saw a year-over-year growth rate of 23%. Early signs are pointing to a COVID related bottoming out, and 2024 and beyond is setting up for a recovery in participation in the 12-23-year-old demographic.

### Coach Education and Development

The PDP actively supports and promotes the pursuit of professional certification and education through the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP). This is done by overseeing the execution and certification of the program in the province. Two main areas of support are assisting with accessing financial support through the Coaching Association of Ontario and working with individual coaches to offer mentoring and other professional development opportunities where possible.

In the 2023/24 PDP year, seven development coaches attended multiple provincial training days, camps and drafting certifications as mentorship and professional development opportunities. Any program initiative held in the province is open to any development coach to use as mentorship or professional development opportunities.

In 2024, Triathlon Canada offered a professional development opportunity to competition certified development coaches to assist with the execution of its national development camp. For a variety of reasons, none of the four qualified Ontario coaches expressed an interest, and therefore Triathlon Ontario did not nominate a coach.

### Training Environment

There are two primary areas where the PDP works to improve and enhance athlete's daily training environments.

1) **Club Support** – The PDP has access to resources and services that not all current clubs do. It runs targeted, specific training and education opportunities that are open to any athlete and coach in the province to participate in, at little to no financial cost. These opportunities include

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access to nutritional and mental strength seminars, experts in specific fields like swimming or running during camps or clinics, and track certifications. The PDP also provides training camps and training days throughout the province that provide opportunities for athletes to train together in larger groups and be exposed to coaches with international coaching experience in multisport and single sport arenas.

2) **Team Ontario** – Team Ontario is a full-service training program run by the province according to national and provincial training and development standards. Team Ontario operates within the PDP to bring internationally experienced triathlon coaching to athletes and to coaches mentoring with the program across the province. Team Ontario provides a daily performance environment for athletes training out of its centres, in addition to providing programming support for athletes who do not have youth triathlon infrastructure in their communities. The coaching staff is NCCP Competition Stream certified and provides planning, organization and assessment of the camps and clinics operated through the PDP. These programs are based on the sport’s best practices and are operated with the support of our sport science partners.

## **2023/24 Programming**

### **Seminars**

During the 2023/24 PDP programming season, Triathlon Ontario offered six online seminars with professional practitioners in nutrition and physiology. These seminars were free, as a means to reduce costs to athletes, coaches and parents. The average attendance per seminar was 30, which was an increase from an average of 20 from the previous year.

### **Training Days**

From November 2023 to April 2024, Triathlon Ontario offered seven monthly Provincial Training Days, up from four the previous year. The attendance of the days ranged from 10 to 21 athletes, which also was an increase from 13 to 17 athletes the previous year. The Training Days were technical swim and run sessions, supported by an educational seminar hosted by the Canadian Sport Institute Ontario through the Project Sport Initiative. The cost of the Training Days was a nominal \$15-\$20 as a means of reducing costs to athletes and parents.

### **Training Camps**

Triathlon Ontario hosted a Nationals and Provincials Preparation training camp in Ottawa during the summer of 2024. The camp was delivered by four development coaches and intertwined able-bodied and para athletes. The combination of athletes worked effectively and was well received by athletes, coaches and parents. This was the first time the province had done something like this, but due to the overwhelming response, Triathlon Ontario will look to leverage further opportunities going forward. 10 athletes attended the camp, which was a reasonable number given the busy time of year.

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Triathlon Ontario once again ran a camp in the UK in conjunction with British Triathlon at the Brownlee Training Centre in Leeds, England. The two-week camp is a unique opportunity for Ontario athletes to immerse themselves in one of the world's premier training environments along side some of the world's best development athletes and coaches. Eight athletes took advantage of the opportunity, up from seven the previous year. The opportunity was entirely self funded by the athletes. The camp and the relationships formed were three years in the making and Triathlon Ontario is the only Canadian governing body to run such a camp, and likely one of the only ones in the world to leverage such an opportunity. Further collaborations between the training centre and Triathlon Ontario are in discussions.

### **National Camps**

Triathlon Ontario also plays a role in supporting Triathlon Canada's national development camps. In 2024, seven Ontario development athletes expressed an interest and were nominated to Triathlon Canada's national development camp held in Quebec.

### **Education and Event Support**

Understanding and navigating the performance pathway can be a confusing and challenging process. Through the PDP, the Provincial Coach works with Triathlon Canada's High Performance program to ensure that information on Triathlon Canada policies and processes are directed to athletes and coaches who are not familiar with them. The Provincial Coach also brings years of international competition knowledge to share with athletes and coaches who can adjust training to meet the demands of international racing. Under the PDP section of the website, we provide a number of tools, manuals and videos that are accessible to anyone. The resources developed by the Provincial Coach are used by athletes and coaches, not just in Ontario, but across the country.

The PDP is involved in several other areas that help support athletes, parents and coaches. These areas include:

- Developing resource materials and a resources library located on the website accessible to anyone in the province.
- Overseeing and standardizing the draft legal certification process
- Providing direction and support to help understand the Triathlon Canada's policies such as the SMARTABASE system, and athlete information and tracking.
- Guiding athletes on international racing accreditation, including the International Competition Card and Pre-Participation Exam which are both required by World Triathlon and Triathlon Canada to race outside Canada.
- Allocating provincial grant/funding, if available.

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The PDP is built on an Athlete Development Model (ADM) based on analysis of the sport of triathlon along the full development pathway. We have worked with our partners to develop and implement a system that provides athletes with an understanding of the demands of the sport, from community level to international level competition. The ADM is in final revisions and will be ready for publication in late 2024/early 2025 for all to use and incorporate into their daily training environments.

Since 2014, Triathlon Ontario's Provincial Coach has worked closely with Triathlon Canada in many ways to ensure that Ontario athletes and Triathlon Ontario's mandate is heard at the national level. The Provincial Coach also sits on Triathlon Canada committees that are developing training and assessment policies for national programs and athlete development. Currently he is leading the development of an Athlete Skills Matrix for Triathlon Canada's updated Long Term Athlete Development Model. As one of only a few Master Coach Developers in the country, he has certified numerous Provincial Coaches through the National Coaching Certification Program.

Since 2009, Triathlon Ontario's Provincial Coach has had over 25 international coaching assignments through Triathlon Canada and the Barbados Federation of Island Triathletes (BFIT) including World Championships, Pan AM Games and Regional Championships, World Cups and WTCS events. This experience has provided an exceptional understanding of the how the sport has evolved and how the technical, tactical and physical demands of the sport at the top levels of the sport do not always align with our provincial level competition. It is this insight that guides the program's structure and delivery.

Triathlon has become a global sport, and athletes need to be prepared to travel to different parts of the world and to execute in one-to-two-hour events. Successful athletes need to be problem solvers and independent learners and must be able to make informed choices in training, as well as in life. For over 20 years, Triathlon Ontario's Provincial Coach has specialized in developing Youth/Junior and U23 programs with a single focus on the draft legal pathway, working with athletes who have stood on the podium at Provincial and National Championships, World Cups and World Championships.

Triathlon Ontario programs abide by all Safe Sport policies and procedures. Our PDP program partners only with established, licenced and certified professionals, organizations and businesses that are reputable and respected within the sporting community. The program takes a holistic approach to athlete development and stresses sport/life balance, developing positive support networks and long term goal setting. Triathlon Ontario's PDP program is based on best practices in the sport of triathlon and has one of the countries best sport retention and success records.

### **Drafting Certification Process**

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Triathlon Ontario offered five draft certification opportunities in 2024, each in different locations in the province. All opportunities were free of charge, again to reduce costs to athletes, parents and coaches. Five coaches have gone through the process to be able to certify athletes on their own and be recognized by Triathlon Ontario.

### **Funding and Event Support**

Triathlon Ontario has access to two primary funding opportunities to support athletes and programming financially. Those opportunities include private sponsorship and government grants.

**Private Sponsorship** – Triathlon Ontario is the only Canadian governing body, including Triathlon Canada, to have secured cash sponsorship for development pathway programming. What was originally a three-year funding agreement with Raymond James, Triathlon Ontario has been able to extend the agreement for a total of seven years as of 2024, each year providing a modest \$3,500 to go towards PDP programming. Private funding is extremely rare and difficult to obtain in the sport of triathlon given the lack of exposure, high profile athletes or sustained international results.

**Government Grants** – As a provincial governing body, Triathlon Ontario only has the ability to apply for provincial funding opportunities. There are only two government related programs Triathlon Ontario is eligible to apply for, Quest for Gold and the Project Sport Initiative.

- **Quest for Gold** – Previous to 2020, the Quest for Gold program was a carded athlete program that offered up to eight funding cards to triathlon. The number of cards assigned to each sport is determined by the province and no sport has the ability to increase or change the amount of cards or funding. Originally, each funding card was worth \$5,000. If less than eight athletes were able to meet the criteria, the funding for each card not used was lost. Towards the end of the pre-Covid 10-year period, while the standards had not changed, the number of athletes earning a card each year decreased to the point of only five athletes in 2020 being able to meet the standards to receive funding. During Covid, the program was suspended, and the government re-evaluated the success of the program. Using the metric of whether a provincially funded athlete was able to move up to national funding within a three-year period, the government found that just 15% of athletes across all sports were successful (triathlon had 17% over the evaluated period). When restarting the program in 2022, the structure was changed to give each sport the discretion on how best to spend the funding. Triathlon elects to use a hybrid model of offering funding support to athletes using an objective matrix that supports athletes at events who are racing the appropriate levels and funding training opportunities at no or nominal cost to development athletes. Over the past 10 years, the government has been

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consistently reducing the amount of funding available from \$40,000 to \$31,000 as of 2024.

- Project Sport Initiative – Triathlon Ontario was one of only two sports successful in obtaining funding from the Canadian Sport Institute Ontario through the Project Sport Initiative in 2023 and again in 2024. The grant represents \$10,000 split evenly between para and able-bodied programming. The funds must be used towards specific programming and cannot be used for direct financial support to athletes.

### **2024 Event Funding Support Matrix**

The following direct financial support is available to any Junior, U23 or Elite athlete that earns the specified results.

**Worlds** – Top 15, \$1,000

Selection, \$500

**World Cups** – Top 15, \$500

**Continental Championships** – Top 10, \$750

Selection/Participation, \$300

**Continental Cups** – Top 5, \$350

**National Development Series Final Standings** – Top 10, \$300

**National Championships** – Top 3, \$250

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