

## ONTARIO BASKETBALL, CANADIAN SPORT FOR LIFE AND LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT



**ONTARIO BASKETBALL**

At Ontario Basketball (OBA), “we are unwavering in our commitment to basketball development according to the principles of Canadian Sport for Life.”

**Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L)** is one of OBA’s values that guides our decision-making. From grassroots programming to clubs and competitions to elite teams, OBA strives to ensure that our structure and programs align with CS4L principles, including **Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD)**.

### What is Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L)?

[www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca)

CS4L is a movement to improve the quality of sport and physical activity in Canada in order to enhance the health, wellness, and sport experiences of all Canadians. The key outcomes of CS4L are physical literacy, improved performance, and increased lifelong participation in physical activity.

### What is Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD)?

[www.ltad.ca](http://www.ltad.ca)

The LTAD model is a key feature of CS4L. It is a multi-stage training, competition, and recovery pathway designed to increase participation and optimize performance, guiding individuals’ experience in sport and physical activity from birth to adulthood.

LTAD is a holistic approach that not only considers individuals’ physical development, but mental, cognitive, and emotional development as well.

LTAD is athlete-centred, coach-driven, and supported by administration, sport science, and sponsors. Every National Sport Organization in Canada, including Canada Basketball, has adopted LTAD and adapted it to their sport.

### What are Canada Basketball’s LTAD stages of development?

Canada Basketball’s LTAD has eight stages, and OBA’s club players fall into three stages: Learn to Train, Train to Train and Train to Compete (see *Figure 1*).



Figure 1

## LTAD STAGES



## DEVELOPING PHYSICAL LITERACY

In the first three stages of development (Active Start, FUNdamentals, and Learn to Train), athletes should learn **fundamental movement skills** and develop **physical literacy** in a fun environment. They should also begin learning **fundamental sport skills**.

### PHYSICAL LITERACY

Physical literacy means having the confidence and competence to move in various ways in a variety of environments (e.g., land, water, ice, snow).

Physical literacy is the foundation of CS4L. It leads to both sport excellence (Train to Compete, Learn to Win, and Train to Win) and being Active for Life.

### FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS

Fundamental movement skills are basic movement skills, like running, jumping, throwing, and catching, that are necessary to participate in many sports.

The ABCs of movement (Agility, Balance, Coordination, and Speed) are also important skills to master to experience success in sports.

### FUNDAMENTAL SPORT SKILLS

Fundamental sport skills are fundamental movement skills, like throwing, that are sport-specific, like throwing a basketball to a teammate or into a basketball net. In order for children to be successful in sport, they should master fundamental movement skills before learning fundamental sport skills.

## DEVELOPING THE GAME

At the end of the Learn to Train stage, athletes either move into the Excellence Pathway to begin to “Develop the Game” in the **Train to Train** stage or they move on to the Active for Life stage.

When players enter the **Train to Train** stage, they should be physically literate. The goal in this stage is to develop overall basketball players, not positional players. Participants should play different positions to become well-rounded players.

The **Train to Train** stage is further divided into two phases, which have the following objectives:

**Phase 1 (females 11–13 years; males 12–14 years):** Participants should continue to build an athletic base and focus on sport-specific skill development. Coaches should resist the temptation to compensate for lack of skills with high-level tactics (e.g., zones, presses).

**Phase 2 (females 13–15 years; males 14–16 years):** The aim is to ensure that athletes are able to use basic skills in a competitive environment. When this aim is achieved, coaches can then move into more complex tactical concepts such as zone defenses and presses.

### WHAT DOES LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT RECOMMEND FOR TRAIN TO TRAIN ATHLETES?

- Further develop sport-specific skills.
- Build endurance, strength, and speed.
- In Phase 1, participate in multiple sports six to nine times per week.
- During Phase 2, begin to specialize in one sport.

**Note:** position specialization should not take place yet.

- In Phase 1, follow a 4:1 training-to-competition ratio; spend 75% of time in basketball training (e.g., practicing) and 25% of time competing (e.g., playing games).
- In Phase 2, follow a 3:1 training-to-competition ratio (66% of time practicing and 33% of time competing).
- Ensure that trained, qualified coaches lead programs that emphasize learning and performing well as opposed to winning. The focus should also be on individual improvement rather than team improvement.
- Avoid over-training, over-competing, or specializing too early. Athletes in this stage are most at risk for quitting sport due to injury, burnout, and/or excessive pressure from coaches and parents.



## HOW HAS OBA STRUCTURED ITS CLUB PROGRAMMING TO ALIGN WITH CS4L AND LTAD?

### COACHING

CS4L highlights the importance of knowledgeable and qualified individuals leading sport programs using stage-appropriate training to ensure participants' proper development.

#### Coaching Requirements

- Coaches must be certified through the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP).
- Coaches for U10 Novice to U12 Major Atom teams must have Learn to Train certification
- Coaches for U13 Bantam to U19 Junior teams must have Train to Train certification.

### RULES OF PLAY

LTAD promotes developmentally-appropriate training and competition. Children are not miniature adults; they are physically, mentally, emotionally, and cognitively different, and sport programs should be tailored to their unique developmental needs. Modifications used by Ontario Basketball include different sized equipment and variations in the rules of play.

The focus for Train to Train athletes is centered on developing fundamental basketball skills.

Traditionally, adult training regimes, competition schedules, rules, and strategies and tactics have been used when coaching developing athletes, and many coaches, parents, and athletes focus on the short-term outcome of winning a game, tournament, or championship, rather than the athletes' long-term development. Continuing to use full-court pressure after gaining a lead exploits young athletes' lack of skill with a game tactic for the purposes of winning, often to the detriment of their skill development (e.g., the opportunity to practice critical skills in the offensive half-court). Additionally, it is important for players to experience success so they have fun and are motivated to continue participating in basketball (or any sport).

Without a shot clock, athletes do not have to force shots on offense; they have time to create optimal scoring opportunities, which aids in their skill development.

### FUTURE CHANGES

In keeping with LTAD's philosophy of "Kaizen" (continuous improvement), OBA will continue to make changes to further align our programming with CS4L. Changes may include stage-appropriate league structures, game modifications, and annual periodized training and competition schedules.

For future changes stay connected at [www.basketball.on.ca](http://www.basketball.on.ca).

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. Active for Life website ([www.activeforlife.com](http://www.activeforlife.com))
2. Canadian Basketball Athlete Development Model ([www.basketball.ca](http://www.basketball.ca))
3. Canadian Sport for Life: A Sport Parent's Guide ([www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca))
4. Steve Nash Parents' Guide ([www.basketball.ca](http://www.basketball.ca))

### TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

Recovery is an important factor in training and performance. Proper rest is essential for athletes to adequately recover and ultimately achieve optimal performances. If athletes perform in a fatigued state, they will not receive the full benefit of practice or competition.

#### Tournament Structure Requirements

- OBA recommends that teams play a maximum of two games per day in tournaments, which is the format followed for all provincial championships.
- Teams are not permitted to play back-to-back games; they must have at least 90 minutes of rest between games.

#### Rules of Play Modifications

- Both males and females use a size six (28.5") basketball.
- No shot clock for U13 Bantam to U14 Major Bantam teams.
- U13 Bantam to U14 Major Bantam teams must drop back to half-court defense after gaining a 15-point lead.
- The closely guarded rule is applied when a defender is actively guarding and within one metre of an offensive player in possession of (holding or dribbling) the ball.

