



CHANGING THE

GAME

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A Playbook for Girls' Sport in Saskatchewan

Section 5: The Organizational Playbook: Strategies for Growth and Sustainability

 **SASK SPORT**

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We acknowledge the financial support of Sask Lotteries.

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Introduction

You have a passion for sport and want to make a positive impact in your community. You likely have a specific goal in mind, like starting a new program for girls or women to get active. But to make that dream a reality, you need “capacity.” In simple terms, capacity is your organization’s ability to do good work. It is the engine under the hood that keeps your programs running smoothly.²² This section covers the “off the field” work—from paperwork to people power—that ensures your project is built to last.

A Note on Language

Throughout this guide, we often use the term “girls” and “women” as a broad term. We want to be clear that this is intended to be an inclusive term that includes girls, transgender women and gender-diverse individuals, such as nonbinary and Two-Spirit people. Our goal is to create a welcoming sport system for everyone.



Continue the Journey

This guide is just one part of the picture. To explore how to support women in other roles within sport, check out the other guides in this series:

- **Section 1:** *On the Field: Creating Programs Where Girls Thrive*
- **Section 2:** *Beyond the Sidelines: A Playbook for Welcoming Women into Sport*
- **Section 3:** *On the Field of Play: Women as Technical in Sport*
- **Section 4:** *From the Sidelines to the Boardroom: Empowering Women in Sport Leadership*

Dig Deeper

This guide is your starting line. To help you keep going, we have gathered a collection of helpful tools, reports, and websites. Check out the **Dig Deeper: Useful Resources** section at the end of this guide to find more ways to build your knowledge and take action.

Part 1: Groundwork & Vision

Understanding Your Community

You might think you know what the girls and women in your community want. However, unless you ask them, you can’t be sure you actually know. If you do not have the same lived experience as the people you are trying to reach, you need to talk to them. This ensures your project will actually benefit the community.²²

“Nothing About Us Without Us”

This principle means that the girls and women you want to serve should be involved in the planning. Their voices should guide your decisions. When you include an “equity lens,” you recognize that different participants have different needs and you design your program to fit those different lives.²²

Conducting a Community Needs Assessment

One way to figure out what girls and women want is by conducting a community needs assessment. A community needs assessment is a step-by-step plan that paints a detailed picture of your community’s strengths, challenges and gaps.² It helps you:

- **Understand the culture:** Learn what matters to local girls and women.¹⁰
- **Focus resources:** Spend money and time where it is needed most, rather than guessing.¹⁰
- **Get support:** Show funders and partners that your plan is based on facts, not assumptions.¹⁰

Taking the time to assess your community helps you:

- **Prioritize:** Identify the most pressing needs and resources.
- **Inform:** Create impactful initiatives based on facts, not just guesses.
- **Support:** Prove to funders and supporters that your program is necessary and well-planned.

How to Gather Information

There are a variety of ways to gather information. We can hear directly from our potential participants, and we can also look at existing data to see the bigger picture.

- **Surveys:** These are great for reaching many people at once. Keep questions plain and simple. Use “closed-ended” questions (multiple choice) for clear statistics and “open-ended” questions (text boxes) to understand feelings and opinions.²⁴
- **Focus Groups:** Gather a small group of girls or women to talk through their thoughts. This can reveal personal stories or specific barriers you wouldn’t catch in a general survey.²⁴
- **Existing Data:** You don’t always have to start from scratch. Look at census data or school reports for facts on age, income and ethnicity in your area.³

Survey Tips

- **Keep it Short:** If it takes more than 10 minutes, people are likely to quit.²⁴
- **Be Balanced:** If you ask “How helpful was this?”, give equal positive and negative options (Ex. Very Helpful to Very Unhelpful).²⁴
- **Use Inclusive Language:** Instead of “he/she,” use “they/them.” Avoid asking for personal data (like birth dates) unless you absolutely need it.²²



Finding Statistics

Finding Statistics from the Canadian Census: Need help finding data? The Laurier Library offers a helpful video tutorial on how to find statistics from the Canadian Census to help you understand your community demographics.

Defining Your 'Why'

Once you know what the community needs, you need to define who you are as an organization or as a program. Taking the time to develop clear vision, mission, and values statements helps to keep you on track when things get busy or new opportunities arise.

- **Vision:** Where are you going? This is your "North Star." It describes the future state you want to create for your community in three to five years.⁴ A vision statement should be short, inspiring, and easy to remember.⁴
- **Mission:** Why do you exist? This is your purpose right now. The mission statement should explain who you serve (Ex. teenage girls, newcomer women) and what you do for them every day.⁴
- **Values:** How will you behave? Values statements are the guidelines that direct your actions and help you make difficult decisions.⁴



Impact Guide

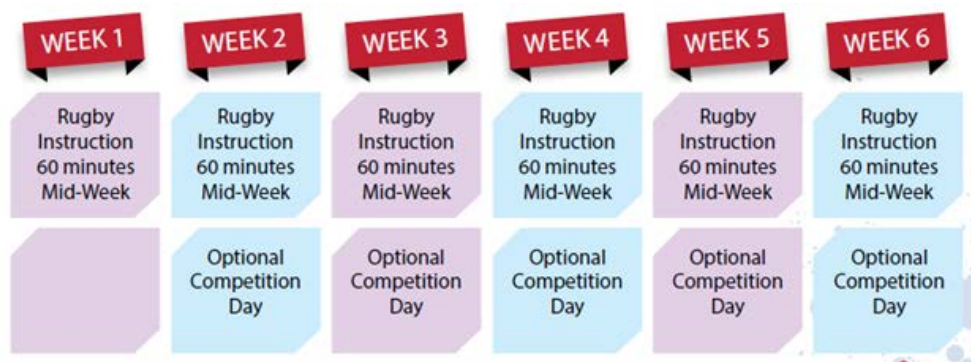
[Sask Sport Impact Guide](#): Need help putting your purpose into words? This guide offers tools to help you write clear and powerful vision, mission, and values statements.

Choosing the Right Format

How will girls or women participate in your program? The format you choose changes how you plan your budget, your schedule and your staffing.

- **Pilot Program:** This is a short-term test to see if an idea works before you commit to a full season.
- **"Try-It" Events:** A one-time, low pressure event to introduce the sport. If you run a Try-It event, make sure you have a "next step" ready for participants who want to keep playing.²²
- **Leagues:** Leagues offer ongoing play (over a number of weeks) and are excellent for building community and friendships. While leagues take more planning and equipment, they are the best way to keep players involved long-term.^{3,15}
- **Skill Building Sessions:** These sessions focus on learning and fun over competition. They allow participants to practice specific skills, build confidence and get comfortable with the sport in a supportive environment.
- **Festivals:** These are high-energy events that focus on celebration and community rather than just winning. They often combine short games with fun social activities, making them a great way to build excitement and bring new participants into the sport.
- **Drop-In:** A flexible option where participants pay as they go. This is great for people with unpredictable schedules, though it can be harder for organizers to plan for numbers.

Sample 6-Week Program Timeline.¹⁵



Long-Term Athlete Development

You do not have to guess what your program should look like. Long-Term Development (LTD) is a framework that helps you design the drills, games and competition levels that are right for the age and stage of the athletes. Visit your Provincial Sport Organization's (PSO) website. They have specific LTD models and age- and stage-appropriate resources to help you design a program that fits your participants perfectly.

Part 2: Building a Solid Foundation

A strong foundation keeps your participants safe and your organization stable.

Legal and Administrative Structure

You have options for how to structure the business side of your initiative:

- **Operating Informally:** You can start simply as an unincorporated association. This is often the easiest way to begin, but keep in mind that the group has no separate legal identity from its members, meaning members may be personally responsible for debts or legal claims.
- **Partnering:** Many new initiatives start by falling under the umbrella of an existing organization, like a community association or Tribal Council.
- **Incorporating:** Incorporating as a non-profit creates a legal entity separate from its members.

To Incorporate or Not?

"Incorporating" gives you legal status. It treats your organization like a "person" in the eyes of the law.

- **Advantages:** Incorporating limits the personal liability of your members (so you aren't personally responsible for the group's debts), allows the group to own property, and opens doors for major grants that only grant to incorporated organizations.¹⁸
- **How to do it:** In Saskatchewan, you can apply online through the Information Services Corporation (ISC). You will need to reserve a name, create "Articles of Incorporation" (the rules of your group), and list your directors.¹⁷



Starting a Non-Profit

To legally register your group in Saskatchewan, check out [How to Incorporate](#) from PLEA. This guide includes all the forms and filing instructions you need to get started.¹⁷

Risk Management

Risk management is simply identifying things that could go wrong and planning how to prevent them.²⁰ It protects your participants, your volunteers, and your reputation.²⁰

You can manage risk by creating a simple plan:

1. **Identify:** Create a list of everything that could possibly go wrong (Ex. an injury, lost equipment or theft).
2. **Assess:** For each item, ask two questions:
 - o How likely is this to happen?
 - o How severe would it be if it did happen?
3. **Plan:** Create a plan for the risks that are very likely or very severe. The plan should identify ways to make the risk less likely or less severe and have a plan of action for what to do if the risk occurs.

Risks change over time. It is a good idea for your Board to review your risk list at least once a year to make sure your plans are up-to-date.²⁰



Managing Risk

To identify, analyze, and manage risks in your non-profit, use the [Risk Management: Five Step Plan](#) from SaskCulture.

Insurance

You cannot run a program without some risk. Insurance moves most (or all) of that risk to an insurance company. It is vital that your Board and employees understand exactly what is covered. Key types include general liability (if someone gets hurt), accident insurance for volunteers, and directors and officers liability (to protect board members).²⁰

PSO Support

You are not alone. Most Provincial Sport Organizations provide insurance coverage to their member clubs as part of their membership fees. Reach out to your Provincial Sport Organization today to make sure you are covered.

Safety Policies

Policies are the boundaries that help everyone know what is allowed and what is not. They act as a framework for your organization. You don't need fancy language, but you do need clear rules that everyone knows.

Operational Policies

These policies help you run the business side of the club:

- **Registration Policy:** How and when people sign up, and if you accept late registrations. When money is due and how it is collected. What happens if someone quits or gets injured.
- **Privacy Policy:** How you protect people's personal information.
- **Social Media Policy:** Guidelines for online interactions.
- **Screening Policy:** Rules for background checks.
- **Conflict of Interest Policy:** How to handle bias in decision-making.⁶

Participant Protection Policies

These policies keep people safe from harm and maltreatment:

- **Code of Conduct and Ethics:** Expected behaviour for everyone.
- **Athlete Protection Policy:** Guidelines to keep participants safe, including during travel.
- **Discipline and Complaints Policy:** How to handle instances of maltreatment.
- **Dispute Resolution Policy:** A process for solving disagreements.
- **Appeal Policy:** What to do if someone disagrees with a decision.⁶
- **Weather Policy:** A policy that outlines when to cancel due to lightning, extreme heat, or severe cold.
- **Emergency Action Plan:** A written plan for what to do if there is a medical emergency or an accident.

Check with Your Sport

Your Provincial Sport Organization likely has safety policies ready for you to use that would match the rules of your National Sport Organization (NSO). Adapting their policies saves you time and ensures you are following the right rules for your specific sport.

The Rule of Two

It is best practice to utilize the Rule of Two when interacting with minors. The Rule of Two ensures that all interactions with participants are open and observable. It means that two responsible, screened adults (coaches, parents, or volunteers) should always be present with a participant. This protects the participant from potential abuse and protects the coach from false accusations.²¹ Learn more about Rule of Two through the Responsible Coaching Movement.⁷

How the Rule of Two Works

How the Rule of Two works



Work as a team. A coach should have another coach or screened adult (parent or volunteer) present when interacting with participants.



Remain open to the public. Have a training environment that ensures all situations are open, observable and justifiable.



Plan transportation. Have two adults present when traveling with a participant(s), and refer to your club travel policy.



Be sensible. Be considerate of the gender of the participant(s) when selecting coaches or volunteers.



Transparent communication. Ensure that all communications are sent to a group and/or include parents/guardians, without one-to-one messaging.

The Rule of Two in virtual settings

In addition to the recommended guidelines, virtual training sessions also entail the following:



Parental awareness. Obtain consent for virtual sessions, plus inform parents of activities that will occur.



Record each session and they should be in a professional setting (not a bedroom).



Weekly debriefing. Encourage regular check-ins with parents, coaches, and participants about the virtual training.

Child Abuse Protocol

In Saskatchewan, every person has a legal “duty to report.” If you have a good reason to believe that a child is being abused, you must report it to a child protection worker or police officer. It is not your job to investigate or ask questions; it is your job to report the suspicion immediately.²¹



Child Protection

To understand the guidelines and protocols for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect, consult the [Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol](#) from Sask Sport.

Financial Management

Good financial habits protect your organization from fraud and ensure you can pay your bills. Even small clubs need to treat their money with care.

Fraud Prevention

The organization's funds must be protected. Best practices, for even the smallest organizations, include:

- **Count Cash with a Partner:** Always count cash with two people present.
- **Two Signatures:** Require two people to sign every cheque.¹³
- **Separation of Duties:** The person who collects the cash should not be the same person who deposits it at the bank. To ensure fairness and safety, individuals from the same household should not be responsible for these duties at the same time.
- **Regular Review:** The Board should review the bank statements every month to catch errors early.⁹

Budgeting Basics

A budget is simply a plan for the organization's money. To create one:

- **Calculate Revenues:** Estimate income from membership fees, grants, sponsorships, and fundraising. Be careful—it is better to estimate low than to run out of money.¹⁹
- **Calculate Expenses:** List "fixed costs" (things that don't change, like membership fees with the provincial sport organization or league fees) and "variable costs" (things that change based on participant numbers, like jerseys or travel).¹⁹

A solid budget gives you clarity and control, helping you see exactly how much money is coming in versus going out. This transparency allows you to make smarter decisions about where to spend your resources and builds trust with your board and members.

Sample Budget for Try Rugby Day

Projected Numbers

| | | |
|-------------|----|---|
| Kids | 60 | Assume that each team will have 7-10 kids |
| Coaches | 6 | Assume that each team will have 1 coaches |
| Total Teams | 6 | Use this target to guide your overall process |

Projected Revenues

| Item | Per Item | Total Revenue | Notes |
|-------------------|----------|---------------|--|
| Registration Fees | \$25 | \$1,500 | \$25 per participant |
| Sponsorship | | | A great way to offset costs. |
| Donations | | | A great way to offset costs. |
| Fundraising | | | Run a small fundraiser to raise funds. |

Revenues \$1,500

Projected Expenses

| Item | Per Item | Total Expense | Notes |
|-----------------------|----------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| Starter Kits | \$220 | \$440 | Plan for one kit per 30 participants |
| Rookie Rugby T-shirts | \$10 | \$660 | T-shirts for Coaches/Players |
| Rookie Rugby Stickers | \$0.50 | \$50 | 100 Rookie Rugby stickers |
| Printing | \$0.50 | \$50 | 100 fliers, posters, etc. |
| Banner | \$100 | \$200 | Two banners for event marketing |
| Medical Kit | \$50 | \$50 | One for event administration |
| Whistles for Coaches | \$5 | \$30 | One for each coach |

Total Expenses \$1,480

Funding Sources

Revenues can come from many different sources.

- Membership Fees: The primary source of revenue for most clubs.
- Sponsorships: Support from local businesses and community supporters.
- Grants: Funding from local authorities, charities, and governing bodies.
 - MAP Grants: The Membership Assistance Program (MAP) supports community and club-level sport development in Saskatchewan. Contact your PSO to learn more.
 - Other Grants: There are many other grants available.
- Fundraising Events: Raffles, BBQs, or contests can raise money and build spirit. (Note: You may need a lottery license for raffles.)
- Competition Event Revenue: Ticket sales, food stalls and merchandise.
- Facility Rentals: Hiring out your facilities to other groups.



Funding Opportunities

To find an extensive list of grants and funding opportunities, consult the **Dig Deeper** section at the end of this guide.

Writing Strong Grant Applications

Winning a grant often comes down to clarity and preparation.

- **Be Clear:** State exactly what you will do and how much it will cost. Funders should understand your project after reading just the first two paragraphs.⁸
- **Show personality:** Let your club's authentic personality shine through the application. Show your passion to help the funders connect with your initiative.
- **Do the Math:** Ensure your budget is accurate and specifically relates to the project description.
- **Follow the Rules:** Every funder has different rules. Answer the specific questions they ask, not the ones you wish they asked.⁸
- **Report Back:** Write strong follow-up reports. Use your data to tell a story of success to your funders. This builds trust and paves the way for your next application.



Funding Your Vision

To write clear, successful grant applications, access practical tips and templates in the [Grant Writing Guide](#) from the Community Initiatives Fund.

Evaluation: Continuous Improvement

Evaluation is not just about checking a box; it is the key to reporting back well. When you can prove your program works, funders are more likely to support you again.

- **Formative Evaluation:** This happens during the program. It asks, "Is this working right now?" You might do a quick check-in with participants to see if they are having fun or if they feel like their skills are developing.²²
- **Summative Evaluation:** Measure your success at the end of the project. It asks, "Did we meet our goals?" This helps you decide what to change for next time.²²

Storytelling with Data

When reporting your success to your community or funders, mix numbers with stories.

- **Quantitative Data (numbers):** "We had 50 participants and 10 volunteers."
- **Qualitative Data (stories):** "One participant told us this was the first time she felt safe in a gym in 10 years." Combining these paints a powerful picture of your impact.²²

Determining Registration Fees

Setting the right price for your program can be tricky. You want to be accessible, but you also need to cover your costs.

- **Know Your Costs:** Use the "True Cost Per Participant" method. Divide your total expenses by the number of participants you expect. This gives you your break-even number.¹²
- **Compare:** Look at other sport and non-sport activities in your community. What are they charging? This helps you understand what families are used to paying.

- **Plan for Growth:** Don't price your program so low that you break even down to the penny. It is healthy to build in a small "emergency fund" (a rainy-day fund) for unexpected costs or to help grow the program next year.
- **Support Accessibility:** If your break-even price is high, don't just lower the fee and risk going into debt. Instead, look for grants or connect families with financial support charities like KidSport or Jumpstart to help offset the cost.⁹

Financial Considerations for Families

When setting your fees, remember that the program registration fee is just one piece of the pie¹⁴. To keep sport accessible, consider the "hidden costs" families face:

- **Equipment Costs:** Start-up costs for gear and replacement costs as children grow.
- **Uniforms:** Tracksuits, warm-up gear and team kits.
- **Hosting:** Costs for team snacks, meals or social activities.
- **Travel:** Gas, bus fares, hotels and food for competitions.
- **Parasport Costs:** Potential increased costs for adaptive equipment or specialized transport.¹⁴
- **Competition Fees:** Extra costs for tournaments or competitions.

Part 3: Board Best Practices

Whether you are a formal board or a small organizing committee, good habits help your group run smoothly.

Separating Governance and Operations

For many local clubs, the board members are usually doing the work (operations) and making the decisions (governance). It can be hard to switch hats. To balance both:

- **Separate the Conversations:** Create space for "strategic conversations". Try adding a standing item on your agenda specifically for strategic discussions.
- **Group Your Discussions:** Group all your governance discussions together and your operational tasks together so you can stay focused.
- **Use a Physical Cue:** It might sound silly, but try miming the action of taking off your "governance hat" and putting on your "operational hat." This physical movement helps the brain recognize that it is time to switch from big-picture thinking to actually doing the work.

Diverse Representation

A strong board represents the community it serves. Recruiting a diverse group of people—diverse in ages, backgrounds, experiences, and ethnicities—leads to better decision-making.

Learn More: Refer to Section 4: From the Sidelines to the Boardroom: Empowering Women in Sport Leadership for detailed strategies on building diverse leadership.

Effective Meetings

Productive boards use their meeting time for discussion, not just reading reports.

- **Send out Reports Early:** Whenever possible, written reports should be sent out days in advance. This allows the meeting time to be used for meaningful discussion rather than just providing updates.
- **Maintain a History:** Written reports create a permanent record of the board's work. This historical data is incredibly valuable when new volunteers step in, as it helps them understand past decisions and pick up where others left off.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

It is best practice to make decisions with a clear mind, free from personal gain. However, in close-knit communities, conflicts happen. For example, a board member might have a daughter trying out for a team that the board is discussing.

- **Create an Open Environment:** Aim for a culture where it is safe to say, "I might have a conflict here." This isn't an accusation of wrongdoing; it's just a reality.
- **Disclose and Excuse:** If a member might personally benefit from a decision, they should disclose the conflict and excuse themselves from that specific discussion. This protects the individual and the organization.
- **Record It:** Any conflict disclosure and the resulting action (like leaving the room) should be noted in the meeting minutes. This ensures there is an official record of openness and how the situation was handled.

Organization and Efficiency

A well-organized board respects everyone's time and ensures that the club's valuable history and hard work are never lost.

- **Neutral Storage:** Find a secure, neutral place (like a cloud drive or a filing cabinet in an office) to keep paperwork and historical financial documents. This ensures nothing gets lost if a volunteer leaves.
- **Committees and Workgroups:** Form committees to tackle specific work. This allows the main board to focus on the overall management of the club without getting bogged down in every detail.

Affordable Tech Solutions

Did you know that major technology companies often support non-profits? Programs like **Google for Nonprofits** and **Microsoft 365 for Nonprofits** offer free or significantly discounted access to professional tools, including email addresses and secure cloud storage. This is an excellent, low-cost way to establish a central, neutral place for your club's documents that stays with the organization even as board members change.

Part 4: People Power

People are the life of your initiative. Harnessing their passion is key to success.

Building Champions

You can "build champions" by sharing your passion and inviting others to join you. A champion speaks up for your program and invites others to get involved.

Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteers are the lifeblood of amateur sport. To find them, you need to look in new places:

- **Within Your Club:** Parents, older participants and former participants are your best resource. They already love the sport!
- **Service Groups:** Local groups like the Kinsmen, Kinettes, Lions or Rotary Club are often looking for ways to serve their community.
- **High Schools:** Students often need volunteer hours for graduation credits.
- **Corporate Programs:** Many businesses encourage employees to volunteer and may even provide grants to the organizations where their employees volunteer.¹⁶

- **Seniors Groups:** Older adults often have time, wisdom and valuable skills to help manage the organization.
- **Partner with Other Sports:** Reach out to clubs in different sports to see if you can share the load. You might be able to “trade” volunteers for big events (Ex. “We’ll help at your tournament if you help at ours”) or find officials who enjoy officiating year-round across different sports.²³



Finding & Keeping Help

To find, train, and keep the volunteers your club relies on, consult [Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers](#) from Sport for Life for key information and strategies.

Utilize the Volunteer Life Cycle

- **Be Clear:** Write clear role descriptions. People are more likely to say “yes” if they know exactly what they are signing up for (Ex. the time commitment and specific duties).²⁰
- **Screen:** Background checks and police records checks are essential. This ensures only safe adults are working with youth and vulnerable populations.⁵ Ensure you store these documents in a secure, private location to protect personal information.
- **Onboard:** Don’t just throw them in. Train them on your mission and safety rules so they feel confident.⁵
- **Manage with Care:** Assign a specific “go-to” person for your volunteers. They will feel more confident and supported if they know exactly who to call when they have a question, a concern or just need to talk.
- **Recognize:** Say thank you! Rewards like branded gear, social events, or just a personal note go a long way in making volunteers feel valued.²³

Accessible Volunteering

Make volunteering easy for everyone.

- **Virtual Roles:** Can someone help with social media or emails from home?
- **Flexible Shifts:** Offer short shifts rather than a full-day commitment.
- **Family-Friendly:** Allow parents to bring their kids while they volunteer or invite families to volunteer together.²³

Succession Planning

Great organizations are built to last longer than one leader. Succession planning is about preparing for the future so your program continues to thrive even when key people move on.

- **Identify Future Leaders:** Look for volunteers who have potential and help them grow.¹¹
- **Cross-Train:** Make sure more than one person knows how to do key tasks (like running the website or managing the bank account).
- **Document Everything:** Keep a “how-to” manual for roles so new volunteers don’t have to start from scratch.²⁵

Part 5: Ensuring Long-Term Sustainability

Sustainability means building a program that lasts beyond the current season. This involves knowing where to find help and how to build lasting relationships.

Accessing Resources

You do not have to do this alone. There is a wealth of support available to you:

- **Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs):** They provide sport-specific rules, training and insurance.
- **Districts for Sport, Culture, and Recreation:** These regional hubs connect communities with grants and resources.
- **Sport Medicine & Science Council of Saskatchewan:** Experts in sport science and training.
- **Coaches Association of Saskatchewan:** Support for coach development.
- **Coaching Association of Canada:** National training standards and resources.

Potential Partners

Look for partners who align with your values in your local area:

- **Schools:** For facilities and reaching youth.
- **Municipalities:** For facilities, partnerships and promotion.
- **Indigenous Communities and Organizations:** For collaboration, developing partnerships and programming.
- **Local Businesses:** For sponsorships and mentorship.
- **Clubs in Neighbouring Communities:** To share resources or coordinate schedules.
- **Other Sport Organizations:** To create multi-sport opportunities.
- **Newcomer and Settlement Organizations:** To welcome new Canadians into sport.
- **Special Olympics Saskatchewan:** For partnerships and inclusive programming expertise.
- **Senior Citizen Clubs and Organizations:** For programming, partnerships, and recruiting experienced volunteers.

Building Strong Partnerships

Partnerships should be more than just a one-time deal. Lead with building a mutually rewarding teamwork.

- **Find Shared Interests:** Take the time to understand your partner's motivations. Match your "ask" to their interests.¹
- **Go Beyond the Transaction:** Don't just ask for money; invite them to see the program in action. Building a real relationship makes their support more meaningful and personal.¹
- **Promote the Partnership:** Start your partnership through shared promotion and outreach. Tag your partners on social media and encourage them to share your posts. It helps you reach their network at no cost.
- **Joint Events:** Collaborate on "Try-It" events. A partner might provide the venue or the snacks, creating a low-pressure environment for new girls to try the sport.
- **Share the Impact:** Partners want to know that their contribution made a difference. Make an effort to share the results thoughtfully—whether that is a quick report on how many new girls joined the program or a stack of handmade thank-you cards from the participants.

- **Evaluate the Fit:** Regularly check in with your partner. Is the relationship still working for both of you? An annual review ensures that the partnership remains a good fit as your organization grows and changes.

Conclusion: A Commitment to Lasting Change

Building an organization that truly serves girls and women is a journey. It requires planning, patience, and a lot of heart. By laying a strong foundation—from your legal structure to your volunteer culture—you are building more than just a sports program. You are building a community where girls and women feel safe, valued, and empowered to move.

Take these strategies one step at a time. Reach out to your partners, listen to your participants, and remember that every small step you take helps build a stronger sport system for everyone in Saskatchewan.

Feature 1:

Battleford Orcas Swim Club: Turning the Tide with Transferable Skills

Four years ago, the Battleford Orcas Swim Club was struggling to stay afloat. The club lacked consistency, was losing coaches, and missing a clear direction. The board wanted to support the swimmers but didn't fully understand what a competitive swim program required to succeed.

Lyne de Montarnal, a local gym owner and personal trainer, saw a need. She wasn't a career swim coach, but she had something just as valuable: transferable skills. With a background in business, finance and fitness instruction, she knew how to organize a vision and manage people. She decided to step up as Head Coach, believing that her skills outside the pool could fix the problems inside the pool.

Lyne started by building a strong operational foundation. She worked with the board to define the club's goals and implemented a "tiered" training schedule. This new system allowed the club to ask for a full-time commitment while remaining flexible. Athletes could still participate in other activities, like skiing, which kept them engaged in sport without burning out. Implementing this structure wasn't always easy; Lyne had to navigate challenges with facility management and educate parents on why a competitive club operates differently than recreational swimming.

As a female leader, Lyne also focused heavily on the club's culture. Drawing on her experience training women, she realized that many girls and women don't believe they are strong or capable. She made it her mission to change that mindset. She created a safe environment with zero tolerance for bullying, ensuring every athlete feels loved and appreciated. Her coaching philosophy goes beyond winning; she wants to prove to her swimmers that they are stronger than they realize.

The results of this reorganization were significant. The club grew from relying on a single coach to having a full staff, including assistant and junior coaches. Today, the Orcas have a thriving community of over 45 swimmers across competitive, junior, and masters levels. By applying business structure to a sport organization, Lyne proved that you don't need to be an expert in the sport to lead a successful turnaround; you just need a plan and the courage to build it.



Photo Credits: Lyne de Montarnal

Digging Deeper: Resources

The following resources can help you continue learning.

Governance, Policy, and Organizational Foundations

[Effective Board Governance](#) – Sport for Life - An eLearning course for volunteers on how to follow effective governance practices.

[Governance Toolkit and Best Practices](#) – viaSport British Columbia - Tools and templates to help organizations understand governance better.

[Gender Equity Policy Template](#) – Canadian Women & Sport - A guide and template to help you write a custom gender equity policy for your organization.

[How to Incorporate](#) – PLEA – A guide to registering a non-profit corporation in Saskatchewan, including forms and filing instructions.

[How to Run an Annual General Meeting](#) – SaskCulture – A guide on planning and conducting effective Annual General Meetings (AGMs) for non-profits.

Inclusive Hiring, Onboarding, and Workplace Culture

[Onboarding Guide for a Sport Organization](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – A plan to help new employees, volunteers, and board members settle into their roles.

[Respect and Inclusion in the Workplace](#) – Sport for Life - eLearning about acceptable workplace behaviors and how to support a respectful environment.

[Effective Communication](#) – Sport for Life - eLearning that looks at how we communicate and the role of digital communication in volunteer sectors.

[Diversity and Inclusion Training for Volunteers eLearning](#) – Sport for Life – Educates volunteers on respectful behavior and how to support a productive environment.

Financial Management

[Guide to Budget](#) – Queensland Government – A practical resource for sports clubs to understand and manage their budgeting processes.

[How to Read Financial Reports](#) – SaskCulture – Resources to help board members and staff understand non-profit financial statements and budgets.

Funding Opportunities

[Individual Child Grants](#) – Jumpstart - Funding to help families access sport and physical activity.

[Community Development Grants](#) – Jumpstart – Funding for organizations running programs for kids in financial need or youth with disabilities.

[Adaptive Sport Club Development Grants](#) – Sask Sport – Financial support for new or expanded sport programs for people with disabilities.

[Adaptive Sport Equipment Grant](#) – Sask Sport – Financial assistance for buying adaptive sport equipment.

[Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sport Accessibility Grant](#) – Sask Sport – Support for sport programming for

the deaf and hard of hearing community.

[Deaf and Hard of Hearing Athlete Assistance Grant](#) – Sask Sport – Assistance for deaf and hard of hearing athletes to compete at their desired level.

[Spark Ideas Grant](#) – Sask Sport - Supports ideas to increase capacity for inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility.

[Indigenous Sport Enhancement Program](#) – Sask Sport – Focuses on raising performance levels of Indigenous athletes and increasing coach capacity.

[Indigenous Community Sport Development Grant Program](#) – Northern District for Sport, Culture & Recreation – Supports the development of community sport programs.

[Next Generation Indigenous Athlete Assistance Grant](#) – Sask Sport – Financial assistance for Indigenous athletes to excel at elite levels.

[1989 Jeux du Canada Games Foundation](#) – Sask Sport – Annual funds to assist in the development of amateur sport in Saskatchewan.

[Spotlight Grant](#) – Canadian Women & Sport – Funding for programs supporting girls who typically lack access or support.

[Community Grant Program](#) – Community Initiatives Fund – Support for programs focused on child development, wellbeing, and leadership.

[CIF Summer Grant Program](#) – Community Initiatives Fund – Funding for summer recreation programs for children and youth.

[Kidsport](#) - Grants to cover enrolment costs for kids aged 5-18 in Saskatchewan.

[Grants and Funding Guide](#) - Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation – A list of over 200 grant and funding opportunities.

[Sport for Social Development in Indigenous Communities](#) – Sport Canada – Funding for Indigenous nations delivering sport and recreation.

[Six Rivers Fund](#) – Supports projects in the northern district focused on youth, sports, and wellness.

Specific Sport & Community Funding Opportunities

[National Safe Swimming Recover Program](#) – Canadian Parks and Recreation Association – Canadian Parks and Recreation Association – Funding to certify youth lifeguards and provide wage subsidies.

[Community Rink Affordability Grant](#) – Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association – Supports operating costs for indoor ice rinks.

[MLB-MLBPA Youth Development Foundation](#) – MLB and MLBPA – Supports improving amateur baseball and softball programs.

[Community Tennis Grants](#) – Tennis Canada – Opportunities to advance equity in tennis and support women and girls.

[Indigenous Community Sport Development Grant](#) – Districts for Sport, Culture & Recreation – Supports community sport programs for Aboriginal youth.

[Sask Lotteries Community Grant Program](#) – Districts for Sport, Culture & Recreation - Assists non-

profits in developing impactful local programs.

[Active Communities Grant](#) – Parkland Valley District for Sport, Culture & Recreation – Assists communities in bringing new recreation ideas to life.

[Volunteer Enhancement Grant](#) – Parkland Valley District for Sport, Culture & Recreation – Offsets training costs for local volunteers.

[Field of Dreams](#) – Jays Care – Funding to build or fix local baseball diamonds.

[Trail Accelerator Grants](#) – International Mountain Bicycling Association – Grants to help get trail projects started.

Grant Writing Resources

[Grant Preparation Toolkit](#) – Imagine Canada – A toolkit and worksheet to assist organizations in planning and writing compelling grant proposals.

[Grant Writing 101](#) – Prairie Central District for Sport, Culture & Recreation – Tips for writing effective grant applications.

[Charity Resource Hub](#) – South Sask Community Foundation – A central hub providing Saskatchewan nonprofits with grant directories, templates, and fundraising resources.

[Grant Writing Tips](#) – Community Initiatives Fund – A presentation covering key strategies for preparing, planning, and writing successful grant applications.

[Funding Programs for Nonprofits Directory](#) – CharityVillage – A curated list of government, foundation, and corporate funding programs for Canadian nonprofits.

[Spark Ideas Grant Impact Guide](#) – Sask Sport - A step-by-step framework for planning, executing, and evaluating your project's success, to ensure your initiative creates meaningful, lasting change.

Strategic Planning, Operations, and Participant Experience

[Community Sport for Children and Youth Planning Toolkit](#) – Sask Sport – Helps communities determine and evaluate their sport program needs.

[Community Programming Toolkit](#) – Parkland Valley District for Sport, Culture & Recreation – A guide to help you start a new program in your community.

[Participant-Centered Design – Designing Sport Experiences for Participants, by Participants](#) – viaSport British Columbia - A guide to developing programs based on what participants actually want.

[Rural and Remote Programming Tips](#) – viaSport British Columbia - Strategies to overcome barriers in rural areas.

[Accessibility Audit Checklist](#) – viaSport British Columbia - A tool to check the accessibility of your current programming.

[Quality Sport for Communities and Clubs](#) – Sport for Life - Tools and resources to support quality sport at all levels.

[How to Run Inclusive Parent/Guardian Meetings](#) – Jumpstart – A guide to running thoughtful and organized meetings.

[Inclusive Registration Processes](#) – Jumpstart – Steps to ensure registration is inclusive for everyone.

[Inclusive Event Planning](#) – Women and Gender Equality Canada – A guide to planning accessible and diverse events.

[Making Documents Accessible](#) – Canada School of Public Service - A video on how to create documents that everyone can read.

[NCCP Manage a Sport Program](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – Training on budgeting, travel, and staff management.

[Anti-Spam Legislation](#) – Sask Sport – Information and resources on complying with Canada’s Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) for sport organizations.

[Personal Information and Protection of Electronic Documents Act](#) – Sask Sport – Policy details regarding the federal act (PIPEDA) governing the collection and use of personal information.

[Voluntary Self-Identification](#) – Sask Sport – Information and FAQs on voluntary self-identification practices to support inclusive environments in sport.

[Evaluate Your Programs in Six Easy Steps](#) – SaskCulture – A step-by-step guide to assessing the impact and efficiency of organizational programs.

Partnerships and Volunteer Management

[Building Meaningful Partnerships](#) – Jumpstart – A visual guide to building partnerships in sport organizations.

[Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers](#) – Sport for Life - Key information on how to find, train, and keep volunteers.

Safety and Risk Management

[Commit to Kids](#) – Canadian Centre for Child Protection – Training to help leaders protect children from sexual abuse.

[NCCP Prevention and Recovery](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – Strategies to prevent injury and improve performance.

[Risk Management in Sport](#) – Sport for Life – Explains why risk management is necessary and how to do it.

[Risk Management: Five Step Plan](#) – SaskCulture – A framework for identifying, analyzing, and managing risks within a non-profit organization.

[Support for Sport: Understanding Teen Dating Violence](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – Empowering coaches to recognize and act on unhealthy dating relationships.

[Support for Sport: Bystander Engagement](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – Activities to improve skills in being a helpful bystander.

[Bystander Intervention Trainings](#) – Right to Be – Virtual training on how to intervene safely during harassment or conflict.

[Safe Sport Manual for PSOs](#) – Sask Sport – A manual outlining safe sport policies, discipline procedures, and maltreatment reporting for Provincial Sport Organizations.

[Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol](#) – Sask Sport – Guidelines and protocols for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

[Travel Policy Guidelines](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – Guidelines for ensuring the safety of participants during team travel and overnight stays.

[Code of Conduct and Ethics](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – A template outlining expected behaviors and standards to prevent maltreatment in sport.

[Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Guidelines](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – Best practices for ensuring open and observable digital interactions between coaches and athletes.

[Screening Policy Template](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – A customizable template to help organizations establish comprehensive background screening procedures.

[Background Screening Policy and Process Considerations](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – detailed information on implementing effective screening processes, including reference checks and interviews.

[RCM Background Screening Infographic](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – A visual guide illustrating the steps and requirements for effective background screening.

[Background Screening Matrix](#) – Coaching Association of Canada – A tool to determine the appropriate level of screening based on the risk level of a role.

[Trauma Education Video Series](#) – Canadian Centre for Child Protection – Educational videos for survivors and supporters to understand trauma responses and healing.

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