

# THE NEW REXALL NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE PROGRAM



*~ Final Draft ~*

## **U12 COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW**

### **Introduction**

The following outlines plans in place to begin a weekly training and competitive program, working in conjunction with our provincial association partners, to support club leaders, coaches and parents to enrich the current training and competitive environment for top performing Ontario athletes in the system who are between the ages of 7-13.

We have enclosed a copy of the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) plan with this package as this document serves as a first rate guide to what needs to be accomplished at various stages of development. The plan was developed over a two year window with exhaustive efforts from many very important partners, Sport Canada and technical experts in the field. It is evident that the foundation laid in the first three stages of development (U12) is crucial to optimize long term high performance excellence.

### **Program Overview**

With this aim in mind, U8/U10/U12/U14 weekly training programs will be introduced this fall at the Rexall Centre to top performing Ontario-based athletes. These weekly programs are designed to support and assist selected athletes so they are able to implement quality training and competitive benchmarks outlined in the first four stages of development in the LTAD plan. In some cases, involvement with this program may be limited as the LTAD training and competitive guidelines may be met within the current club training environment. In other cases, involvement in the program may require more comprehensive support to meet these guidelines. Meetings will occur with club leaders, coaches and parents to communicate and agree on the needs to join this program if required. The LTAD and home training environment will help all involved effectively evaluate the needs of each player on a case-by-case basis.

### **Program Goals**

The goal of this supportive program is to work with club leaders and coaches to supplement current club training environments with the following few simple but crucial guiding principles and objectives:

1. Regroup the top players on a weekly basis so they help each other train with excellence and raise the bar for daily training on and off the court.
2. The program coaches will work in conjunction with personal coaches/parents to optimize annual planning and management of these athletes to help meet the LTAD plan training and match guidelines. This includes an understanding of the competencies required to meet the highest standard on the LTAD pathway: Living as a Pro or Top 50 world rankings.
3. Provide affordable access to sports science services that includes a strong focus on fitness development.
4. Reward clubs and coaches that continue to develop many top U12 players who are identified to participate in this program.

The following summarizes program details. More information and face-to-face meetings will occur as we approach the fall season.

## **Program Guidelines**

Each program will last 30-40 weeks, adhere to a 1:1, 1:2 or 1:3 coach:athlete ratio and work with club leaders/coaches to support the tennis and fitness development needs. The coaching and fitness staff will work with club leaders/coaches to develop and agree on annual training/competitive plans. In addition, all involved will also agree on individual roles and responsibilities, monitoring and management of each player. Planning meetings will occur during the first two weeks of the program to help ensure all involved are working well together, agree and sign off on the plans. Athletes, club coaches and Rexall Centre program staff will be accountable to deliver the plan. Club leaders/coaches will work with program staff to ensure competitions are attended to monitor the player's development. The days, times and total number of hours that the programs are offered will differ and will be based on individualized needs as noted above. The training schedule for the year will merge with major provincial, national and international events. The exact days each program will operate are in the process of being finalized and will be distributed in August. However, the following will highlight key program plans and selection criteria for the various age groups.

### **U8 Program**

- 30 wk program
- 2 hrs per week every Saturday

### **U10 Program**

- 30 wk program
- 4.5 hrs per week (one weekday and Saturdays)

Selection for participation in the U8 and U10 program will be based on an evaluation of the player's competencies (tactical/physical/technical/psychological and competitive) in combination with a player's physical profile.

### **U12 Program**

- 40+ wk program
- Maximum of 3 days a week (unless determined by High Performance staff)
- Training program will be individualized for each child

### **U14 Program**

- 40+ wk program
- Maximum of 4 days a week (unless determined by High Performance staff)
- Training program will be individualized for each child

Selection for participation in the U12 and U14 program will be based on an evaluation of the player's competencies (tactical/physical/technical/psychological and competitive) in combination with a player's physical profile. In addition, an evaluation of player's performance/results as measured by our U12 Performance levels or our U12 and U14 Performance Standards will strongly be considered. Selection to the program will occur in two phases. Phase one selections will be communicated by July 15; phase two selections will be communicated by September 7. The selection committee includes Tennis Canada's High Performance Consultant, U12 National Coach and Rexall National Training Centre Coach.

## **Partnership Accountability**

All partners (players, coaches, parents) involved will be required to work together to develop, agree and sign off on the annual plan, development priorities and program agreement outlining this commitment. All partners will also be accountable to deliver as agreed upon.

## **Cost**

Each program will be heavily subsidized to ensure support is provided to these deserving top Ontario-based athletes. In addition, financial support will also be directed to the home club programs to recognize their tremendous effort to develop players at the highest level. Details of the exact costs will be finalized in the near future and communicated to all partners.

## **Staffing**

The program will be lead by Bob Brett, Tennis Canada's High Performance Consultant and Program Director in conjunction with Louis Borfiga, Tennis Canada's Vice President of High Performance Development. In addition, Simon Bartram, Rexall National Training Centre Coach will lead the daily weekly trainings and management outlined above in conjunction with the club leaders/coaches. Simon will also be joined by a highly skilled coaching staff; details of all the coaches will be available soon. Dennis Lindsay, Ontario's Fitness Coach will lead the fitness and physical development of the athletes. Andre Labelle, National U12 leader, Ari Novick, Director Coaching Development and Debbie Kirkwood, Director, High Performance will also play significant roles to help support all partners involved.

Please feel free to contact myself or Simon Bartram at any time to discuss any questions.

Bob Brett  
High Performance Consultant  
Tennis Canada

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. Why is this program happening?

This Assistance Program is being offered to select Ontario players as a supplement to their home training environment where necessary, to help ensure that a world class, training and competitive environment is available to families looking to have their child perform at the highest levels internationally. The optimal training and competitive guidelines are highlighted in the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model. The foundation laid during the first three stages of development is critical to optimize long term high performance excellence. For parents, coaches, and athletes aspiring to compete successfully at the international level, access to a high quality daily training environment during these stages of development is essential.

### 2. What is Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) and its significance to this program?

Long Term Athlete Development is a systematic approach being adopted by Tennis Canada to maximize potential and increase the enjoyment of participant and athletes in our sport. It outlines an optimal development plan based on growth, development and maturation for all individuals to participate in tennis. It provides a stage-by-stage details that will apply to the development of a tennis player. Experts from the Canadian Olympic Committee and Sport Canada joined with our provincial and national leadership to help design the content for the sport of tennis.

The LTAD model will provide the frame for discussions with coaches, and parents as it relates to each player's current competencies (physical, tactical, technical, psychological), their current training environment and their annual competitive plan, which will lead to crafting an individualize program plan that will best assist the athlete to achieve their potential.

### 3. What makes this program special?

Each player will have access to top level coaching utilizing a strong individualized approach. The training environment will include a low coach to player ratio that varies from 1:1 to 1:3. Players will have the chance to be regrouped with other highly motivated, committed peers on a regular basis, fostering a great learning and training environment. Each practice will have a strong tactical orientation. The drills utilized by the staff will help to ensure the agreed-upon competencies required to meet the end objectives of the program are developed and individualized to meet the specific needs for each child.

Where required, parents and personal coaches will be able to access quality guidance and assistance with the development of annual training and competitive plans, as well as valuable technical support critical in helping to determine the competencies that should be incorporated in a 4 year developmental plan. In addition, program coaches will be observing the players in competition on a monthly basis to ensure that practice objectives are being met in a competitive environment and to help them get a full understanding of the player's game.

Finally, the physical competencies acquired during these three or four stages are essential. Dennis Lindsey, a top level consultant will lead this area, and assist personal coaches, parents and players in this vital area.

### 3. How does this fit in with the Provincial Tennis Association (PTA) structure?

Ontario has a long history of developing top National and International level juniors. This program has been designed to complement, work in conjunction with, and enrich the current provincial NTC structure. As a result, it will help to ensure a comprehensive training and competitive structure is available to all select Ontario players from ages 7 to 14.

**4. Who is eligible to be invited to participate in this program?**

The program will be offered to Ontario children aged 7-12 (girls) and 8-14 (boys) demonstrating the potential to reach the competencies outlined in our LTAD model for the Consolidating Stage of Development, and our published performance benchmarks for girls 2<sup>nd</sup> year U12 and boys 2<sup>nd</sup> year U14. Tennis Canada is looking to identify and help supplement these players training environments where required.

**5. Who will be responsible for selections?**

The following individuals will be responsible for selecting the participants in this program annually in consultation with Tennis Ontario Provincial coach and staff:

- Bob Brett: Tennis Canada's High Performance Consultant
- Andre Labelle: U12 National Coach
- Simon Bartram: Toronto National Training Centre Coach
- Dennis Lindsey: Regional Fitness Coach (ON)
- Debbie Kirkwood: Director, High Performance

**6. When will selections occur?**

Given how quickly children of this age progress, selections to the program will occur in two phases. Phase one selections will be made in June and communicated by July 15. Phase two selections will be made in August (following the conclusion of the Jr. Outdoor Nationals) and communicated to all partners by September 7. Having this two step process provides an appropriate window of identifying the best Ontario prospects.

**7. Who is responsible for the player's development?**

This assistance program has been designed as a supplement to the player's home training environment. The player's personal coach, will be the individual responsible for the design of the player's annual training and competitive plan. Tennis Canada will work with the personal coach, to help insure all the athletes needs are met, and to evaluate progress relative to the LTAD competencies and performance Standards. All involved will agree to these standards and all involved will be accountable to deliver these results.

**8. Who is responsible for the program?**

Tennis Canada and its staff will be responsible for all aspects related to the design and operation of the program

**9. How long is the program?**

This program will be offered as follows:

- U8: 30 weeks (1 day/week)
- U10: 30 weeks (2 days/week)
- U12: 40 weeks (maximum 3 days/week)
- U14: maximum 3 days/week

The above respects the principles rest and regeneration guidelines outlined in the LTAD and are integrated with the national and provincial partners' schedules.

**10. Cost of the Program**

Tennis Canada understands that the costs associated with training a player aspiring to compete at the international level increase as the child's commitment level escalates. Thus the program will be heavily subsidized by Tennis Canada as follows:

- U8: TBD
- U10: TBD
- U12: TBD
- U14: TBD

**11. How will players continue to be enrolled in the program?**

Continued participation in the program will be evaluated annually by staff, and will be based on an evaluation of how the child has progressed relative to the competencies outlined in the LTAD model for girls aged 7-12, and boys 8-14. In addition, an evaluation of the child's performances relative to Tennis Canada's published performance benchmarks for players U12 (girls) and U12 and U14 (boys) will also be used to determine year two program participation.

**12. What options are available to players after this program concludes?**

Graduation from this program occurs when a girl reaches 12, and a boy reaches 14. Tennis Canada staff will work closely with the player's parents and personal coaches to help select the program that best fits their next stage of development, as shown by the player's current competency level and their results.

**13. How will clubs who have players selected to participate in the program be recognized?**

The work done by our clubs and personal coaches are the foundation of our system. As a result we want to ensure the efforts of these facilities and individuals are recognized. For each player a club has selected to participate in this program, Tennis Canada will provide a grant in recognition for the work they have done in junior development, and promote this program via the various promotional avenues available to Tennis Canada.