



**Adapting to the changing
landscape in para-alpine**

Para-alpine in BC – history of success

- BC has consistently put athletes on the National Team
- Since 2010, 9 athletes from BC have been on the National Team
- 4 year average conversion rate from PD2 75%, and with 22% converting from PD1 and Can Dev
- BC Athletes won 4 of the 8 medals won at by the Canadian Para-alpine ski team at the 2014 Sochi Paralympic Winter Games
- BC has been hosting high level race development camps and recreational race series for a number of years

BC Program

- Following HP targeted funding, BC emerged as one of the leaders in para-alpine development in Canada
- Strengths have always been communication with Alpine Canada and alignment with their needs and structure
- Race development camps and race hosting has been a pillar in BC program
- These events acted as race development, race starts and identification process for BC Team
- Made adjustments to meet the funding requirements and benchmarks set up by National Team for identification and selection to the prospect program
- The BC team had a full time coach, centralized programming and followed the same calendar as Alpine Canada's prospect development program at the time with some overlap/parallel training and racing

BC Program

- After then 2014-2015 season, athletes started to move up the ranks, some got injured and others refocused their priorities
- This coincided with our coach leaving to pursue other opportunities and Alpine Canada restructuring their prospect program to a more traditional Next Gen Program
- The objectives and focus for developing athletes start to change along with access to competition within North America
- These changes didn't allow us to meet the Enhanced Excellence targets losing our funding last season

Para-alpine realities

- Since 2011 about 50% of BC targeted athletes have been male sit-skiers. This is the most competitive category at the international level
- It's started to become harder to convert these athletes since 2014
- No consistency in the program structures across Canada which means Alpine Canada does have to bridge the gaps
- Para-alpine skiers need to be more technically sound and competitive more than ever before
- Race points can no longer be the focus, skiers focus needs to be on dry-land conditioning and time on snow. This will make the difference, not the race starts.

New landscape – Adapting to change

- After the change in funding, I kept in touch with Alpine Canada and made sure I understood what their needs were and how we could still align and be leaders in para-alpine development
- Finding a balance between giving a passionate population of para-alpine skiers (especially the sit-skiers) a chance to be the best they can be and making sure those who have the potential can follow the development pathway
- Adapted and re-focused our priorities working a level down in the LTAD then where we operated before. Now we focus on targeted athletes at the Provincial Development Level. The key messages in Para-alpine right now are days on snow. No race starts, so we partnered with Rocky Mountain Adaptive to create a system in Western Canada to offer those opportunities.
- This partnership allows us to share resources and combines athletes giving them a chance to be amongst more peers.
- Alpine Canada recognizes both our programs as being leaders and offers support at camps throughout the season.

Adapting to change

- BC Adaptive Snowsports also has a mandate to allow all our participants a chance to develop as racers and this means skiers with cognitive disabilities.
- Our camps are designed to address everyone's needs and the format changed to half day gate training and half day free skiing. This has been shown to be just as effective in developing skills
- This format allows us to be more inclusive and give everyone a chance to participate. We retain more alumni from the BC program that don't move up to National team which act as great ambassadors for the sport moving forward
- Our January camp is set up to be the most attended since 2012

Best Practices

- Consistent and constant communication is key. From season to season, the level of competition, race access and training opportunities are always changing. By speaking to Alpine Canada and understanding their approach, we can better align and support our athletes provincially.
- Athletes are targeted for financial and coaching support based on guidance from Alpine Canada and we custom build programs to suit their needs.
- Partnerships: Alpine Canada, BC Alpine Coaches and Rocky mountain Adaptive to offer coaching and training opportunities on a case by case basis to meet specific needs of athletes
- We host race introduction and race skill development camps in BC and AB and ensure that Alpine Canada is connected and supported in BC to host their development and identification camps, Carving the Future
- Our landscape is too small to double up on programming and services so it's important to find the way we can best impact the athletes and make sure they don't get lost along the way
- Next year, it will likely be different and we will find the best way to adapt again