



BIATHLON SASKATCHEWAN

Strategic Blueprint 2023 - 2027

October 2, 2023

Biathlon Saskatchewan Strategic Blueprint 2023 - 2027

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Goal 1 - Contribute actively to reconciliation in sport

Vision

Biathlon Saskatchewan will grow the sport of biathlon provincially by increasing sport awareness, enhancing athletes', coaches', and officials' skill and personal development while building safe, resilient and sustainable clubs.

Mission

Biathlon Saskatchewan's mission is to encourage all stages of the athlete development model by promoting, developing, supporting and supervising ideal conditions for success, in harmony with our clubs and partners.

At Biathlon Saskatchewan, we are committed to diverse and inclusive leadership in safe sport training¹. In this space we are committed to doing our part to advance Truth and Reconciliation. Together with Biathlon Canada, members and supporters, we are working to respond to the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action #87-91 in the sport of biathlon. Fourteen members voluntarily identified as Indigenous in 2022. Lack of equipment is one challenge to recruit and sustain Indigenous peoples' membership. While our past engagement with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and northern² peoples is limited, it has afforded us opportunities to engage with and learn from First Nations and Métis members, local communities and leadership. These respected leaders share meaningful, candid and extraordinary insight into Indigenous history and culture.

See [Goal - Create healthy and safe sport environments](#) for additional information.

Athlete Development Focus

Objective: Engage Indigenous families and athletes in the sport of biathlon

- Engage principals, teachers and Dream Brokers³ (or counterparts) in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and North Battleford inner city elementary schools and surrounding reserves to identify and support grade 3 to 8 Indigenous athletes interested to biathlon.

¹ Safe Sport is about creating a culture where all can thrive. It is a shared responsibility to make sport safe for everyone. The Safe Sport Training developed by the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) helps anyone involved in sport identify and

prevent situations of maltreatment and enjoy the right to safe and fair play.

² Northern Saskatchewan has a population of approximately 40,000 people, 85% identifying as Indigenous.

³ Dream Brokers, a program of [Give Kids a Chance Charity Inc.](#), connects inner city children and youth in Saskatchewan to existing sport, culture and recreation programs.

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- Award Ski Locker⁴, Biathlon Canada membership and rifle rental⁵ scholarships annually to grade 3 to 8 Indigenous biathletes, lowering entry costs for Indigenous families.
- After educating ourselves about Jordan's Principle, advocate with Indigenous parents to secure Jordan's Principle resources and supports for their child's participation in biathlon.

Capacity for Sport Focus

Objective: Implement relevant safe sport practices with volunteers⁶ to reduce stigma and increase cultural safety for Indigenous members.

- Engage Indigenous leaders to share knowledge of Indigenous histories, cultures and worldviews with biathlon volunteers and to educate us about the importance of cultural competency/literacy for reconciliation in sport.
- Engage an Indigenous leader⁷ to lead a review, development and adoption of biathlon's safe sport policies and practices, with a focus on reducing stigma and increasing cultural safety for Indigenous members.

Sport in Community Focus

Objective: Meaningful and respectful relations to support Indigenous community engagement

- Our approach to fostering respectful relations is to begin a dialogue with leadership within Indigenous communities, including school teachers and Dream Brokers in elementary schools.
- Support club engagement with Elders when opportunities arise for naming facilities, buildings, trails or awards.

Quotations from the May 2023 Member Survey

"Take biathletes around the province even where there is no biathlon club to demonstrate competitions"

coach, volunteer, official, supporter

"Great communication"

parent, coach, friend

"Biathlon Saskatchewan hired the right provincial coach. Doug knows the athlete and is flexible.

He is very organized and isn't over bearing.

He gains the respect of the athlete and parent.

He is a great communicator"

parent

⁴ Biathlon Saskatchewan's Ski Locker in North Battleford consists of 10 sets of skate skis, bindings, poles and skate boots in various sizes for youth who do not have access to ski equipment.

⁵ Biathlon Saskatchewan's Rifle Rental inventory consists of approximately 40 available biathlon rifles and assigned by the provincial coach to registered athletes for an annual low fee established by the Board.

⁶ Including biathlon leadership, coaches, officials and parents/guardians

⁷ Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis athletes and coaches participate in North America Indigenous Games (NAIG). Indigenous Chef de Mission and coaches participating at NAIG and Tony Cote First Nations Games could offer great experience and insight.

“I love the community feel and inclusiveness, unlike other sports...”

parent

“Make a welcoming community”

athlete

“I have lived in Saskatchewan my whole life and this is the first year I had heard about Biathlon Saskatchewan”

athlete, parent

“Doug does an excellent job to be inclusive. I know his focus is the kids but he somehow has positive feedback for Masters”

athlete

Goal: Promote equitable participation and accessibility in sport

Sport participation contributes to healthy active citizens and teaches skills that last a lifetime. Success in retaining participation in a sport starts by engaging the entire family in the activity as something they can do together. Sadly, many do not have opportunities to participate in Biathlon. We recognize finances are tight for families and clubs. Saskatchewan’s growing population is the result of international immigration and net natural growth (births minus deaths). Publicly funded institutions, such as education and healthcare are under tremendous pressure to deliver high quality services to a growing population.

Biathlon is not a well-known sport and many people have little to no experience of it. A media awareness campaign targeting audiences such as youth athletes, master athletes, disabled athletes and athletes from diverse populations is needed. It can build upon and model successes of Team Saskatchewan athletes at regional, national and international competitions.

Available sport options in rural communities are fewer than in big urban centers. Rural communities generally have positive attitudes towards firearms and rural families are accustomed to driving longer distances to participate in community activities. While establishing a community sport is challenging for most communities, smaller rural communities within commuting distance to a big urban center have a better record establishing a sport club like biathlon.

Biathlon Saskatchewan has enjoyed success in establishing its Masters’ program. Continued focus on recruiting athletes who are parents over 30 years of age will encourage participation of their families in biathlon. As athletes transition from high school to post-secondary education and to the

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workforce, many exit the sport. One approach to retain athletes in biathlon is to assist them successfully transition to High Performance or Recreational biathlon pathways, coaching pathways and/or officiating pathways.

Athlete Development Focus

Objective: Create entry pathways for immigrant and rural families and athletes

- Teachers in publicly funded elementary and rural/reserve composite high schools provide an opportunity to promote Nordic skiing and biathlon to immigrant and rural athletes and families.
- Attract a sponsor to support HP and club youth biathletes' outreach to elementary schools to promote biathlon using:
 - Live streaming and in-school biathlon demonstrations using videos, four laser rifles, five introductory biathlon demonstration kits, make info on clubs available and provide signage for sport promotion in the school.

Objective: Strengthen master participation in biathlon

- Increase Master athletes in competitions by financially offsetting a Masters coach travel costs to out of province competitions.

Objective: Strengthen transition supports for youth athletes in biathlon

- Liaise with high schools in Regina and Saskatoon attended by HP biathletes to raise teacher awareness and support of students participating at provincial, regional and national biathlon training camps and competitions.
- Leverage support for HP athletes transitioning to coaching by matching club post-secondary scholarships to HP athletes.
- Provide scholarships for post grade 12 athletes to pursue biathlon at a HP level and for younger athletes to attend out of province HP summer camps.
- Strengthen Biathlon Saskatchewan's support of its camp-based Development Team, targeting athletes 14 years of age and younger.

"More athletes, especially recreational streams"
parent

"Having promotions in schools where kids can come try out shooting for a day at a range or hold fun events that can promote the sport more in local communities"
athlete

"It would be great for clubs to try to bring in older athletes from the other sporting communities"
supporter, friend

"The sport has helped develop my athlete into being a better person, a strong leader and recognize the value of respectful relationships and self-discipline"
athlete, parent, volunteer

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“The provincial coach (Doug) is amazing at supporting and putting athletes needs first”
athlete

“Support greater integration with Cross Country Saskatchewan”
parent, coach

“Find a way to communicate what the sport is and that it exists to the public”
athlete, parent, coach, volunteer, supporter

“Have a provincial marketing strategy”
parent

“Connect & invite the wide sport community to watch local events especially in Olympic years”
parent, coach, friend

Capacity for Sport Focus

Objective: Foster club development of facilities and coaches to improve participation of Para Nordic athletes in biathlon

- Support clubs’ improvements to facilities to improve access by Para athletes.
- There is a need for more qualified coaches in Para sport, at all levels. To fill this need, support coach training and development using 2022 resources developed by the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) and Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) and encourage more emphasis on Para sport coaching.

Sport in Community Focus

Objective: Strengthen collaboration with other sport and community groups.

- In collaboration with a suitable sport, community or corporate partner, purchase suitable timing chips with apps to increase real time engagement using multiple digital platforms and to introduce family and the public to exciting biathlon competitions. Athletes in competitive sports love getting real time results!

Objective: Increase the quantity and quality of Biathlon Saskatchewan communications with members, partners, sponsors and the public

- In collaboration with the Saskatchewan Ski Association (Saski) partners, develop a proposal for the promotion of Saski sports by jointly funding a shared Communications, Indigenous and Community Engagement Specialist that can support all clubs increase participation and membership.
- Establish “good to know” and “update” columns in the Biathlon Saskatchewan newsletter to promote Saski partners’ news and events and request reciprocal cross promotion of biathlon news and events in partners’ newsletters.
- Identify media representative(s) along with contact information for clubs, HP Team, Development Team, Out of Province HP Athletes, coaches and officials.
 - Recruit a corporate sponsor to establish bursaries for one HP, one

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- development team athlete and one out-of-province HP athlete to curate and produce biathlon athlete spotlights targeting a youth audience.
- Approach IBU athletes to promote Biathlon Saskatchewan on social media using the provincial biathlon tag.
- Establish a Biathlon Saskatchewan Instagram account for youth engagement, a provincial Biathlon tag, club pages and a media representative page on the Biathlon Saskatchewan website.
- Recruit a sponsor to establish a paid part-time Biathlon Saskatchewan media position and develop a job description responsible for:
 - Webpage support with 48-hour turnaround for uploading/changing website and Instagram content
 - Mapping a timeline/storyboard for the May to March biathlon season for media representatives and their productions
 - Design digital posters for Biathlon Saskatchewan events
 - Update Biathlon Saskatchewan sponsor logos with links on the website.
- Train media representatives annually in producing quality content for promotion on Biathlon Canada and Biathlon Saskatchewan websites and social media.
- Support live streaming of club competitions/events on social media.
- Post video highlights from streamed events on social media.
- Establish a YouTube Channel, linked to the website for sport promotion, athlete training and coaching resource materials.

Goal: Create healthy and safe sport environments

Honesty, courtesy and respect informs Biathlon Saskatchewan's engagement with the general public, its partners and members. True Sport, a program of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES), is designed to give people, communities and organizations the means to

"I wish we would advertise more... having a group Instagram account that athletes could post on to showcase what we do regularly... if we were more active on social media we could attract more people"
athlete

"Social media and trying to create awareness of the sport in communities through schools, pop-up booths"
supporter, friend

"I would like to see an attempt at more sponsorship to help grow the sport"
parent

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“Strong sense of community and good focus on mental health”

parent, coach, volunteer, official

“More team building events at the start of the season”

parent

“More online sessions where all athletes can join together... to build a stronger community”

athlete

“Clarifying the responsibilities and accountabilities of Biathlon Saskatchewan and the club and the process to hold one another accountable”

parent, coach, volunteer

leverage the benefits of sport from a platform of shared Canadian values and principles, such as fairness, excellence, inclusion and fun. It compliments CAC’s Safe Sport program. We believe that by respecting human rights in a principled and intentional way – on and off the field of play – will positively impact Saskatchewan sport culture.

See [Goal - Contribute actively to reconciliation in sport](#) for additional information.

Athlete Development Focus

Objective: Strengthen cultural safety and safe sport in biathlon

- We are curious about our athletes’ perspectives and feelings and we are committed to listening actively to them.
- We stand committed to changing our culture and policies in the sport of biathlon to support the safe disclosure of appeals and complaints. We strive to maintain one another’s humanity within the decision-making process to resolve complaints in a timely manner.

Capacity for Sport Focus

Objective: Frequent review of Biathlon Saskatchewan policies to create, strengthen and maintain cultural safety and safe sport in biathlon

- Conduct a policy review of following policies:
 - Code of Conduct
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Race Hosting
 - Discipline and Complaints
 - Appeals
 - Dispute Resolution
- Develop a Biathlon Saskatchewan safe sport curriculum, tracking tools and marketing resources for coaches to promote a maltreatment-free sport environment.

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Sport in Community Focus

Objective: Increase volunteer access to credible provincial and national safe sport resources

- Support volunteers to take safe sport training offered by CAC and the CCES.
- Provincial head coach demonstrating safe sport principles and practices to athletes, parents and volunteer coaches.
- Participate in Sask Sport volunteer awards.
- Encourage all volunteers to take advantage of additional training:
 - Indigenous-led anti-racism and cultural safety training.
 - CCES safe sport, inclusion and diversity, and bodysense training.

Goal: Foster effective governance and trustworthy leadership in sport

Volunteers are vital to the growth of sport in Saskatchewan, particularly in Biathlon. Athletes must be offered quality training plans and experiences both off and in season to excel during the winter competitive season. Coaches must be offered continued education to develop a higher skill set. Officials must also be developed in order to host higher level competitions and grow sport tourism potential. Leadership must also develop to provide effective governance and policies in support of biathlon's growth in the province.

As an elite outdoor sport, biathlon is subject to many risks. Changing climate, cold weather and lack of snow are examples of natural risks. Supply chains and inflation drive costs up for ammo, rifles, ski gear and travel. Biathlon facilities are hard to certify and access. It is difficult to replace competent and skilled coaches. Limited club champions and volunteers are at risk of burnout.

“Recruit and develop more coaches, work on succession planning”
parent, coach, volunteer, official

“Offering coach training every season”
parent, coach, volunteer

“Biathlon Saskatchewan can support in many ways by coach development and mentorships, race hosting or supplying provincial officials, providing incentives to clubs that meet long term athlete development standards”
parent, coach, volunteer, official

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“They [Biathlon Saskatchewan] provide multiple ways to cross train my body such as group biking, rollerskiing, hiking, strength training... camps and mental goal setting individually and on a group level. They provide a coach for me to race out of province who is always reminding us to focus on our personal best”
athlete

“I think that the role of delivering high performance programming and the role of sport development should be assigned to different individuals – assigning everything to one person stretches that person too thin”
parent, coach, volunteer,

Athlete Development Focus

Objective: Enhance quality of training and competition opportunities for athletes, coaches and officials

- Identify accessible summer training options for biathletes to increase performance during the winter biathlon season.
- Continued support for development and high-performance team biathletes to access local strength and conditioning programs. Continue our partnership with the Sports Medicine and Science Council of Saskatchewan to offer physical testing, and sessions on nutrition, sleep, goal setting and sport psychology to our HP team athletes.
- Biathlon Saskatchewan renew its Sask First - Strategic High-Performance Plan to promote excellence in the sport of Biathlon through focused, year-round training to committed athletes ages 14-22 with an emphasis on training athletes for the 2027 Canada Winter Games in Quebec City.
- Adopt Biathlon Alberta timing innovations where practical, improving event officiating, enhancing fairness, excellence and fun for all at competitions.
- Appoint and support a volunteer sport development coordinator:
 - In consultation with volunteers, they assist coaches and officials to develop plans to progress in their specific biathlon development pathway.
 - Coordinate and assist at HP coaching clinics for women and men to increase their skills, competency and confidence as coaches.
 - Support coaches and officials to progress in their specific biathlon development pathway starting by initial training, meeting requirements to be considered fully trained and completing evaluations to be certified.
- Mobilizing and leveraging limited resources requires good governance and effective leadership. Biathlon Saskatchewan will strengthen its collaboration with other sport and community groups to maximize resources to advance common interests.
- Plans to replace Doug Sylvester recently recognized with a Coach Dedication Award at the Saskatchewan Sports Awards. It will require discussions with Doug Sylvester and professional advice to develop a thoughtful plan to successfully recruit and onboard the next Biathlon Saskatchewan Provincial Head Coach.

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- Biathlon Saskatchewan establish Board committees and recruit volunteers to self-organize, set agendas, make recommendations and report on:
 - Media
 - Events
 - Sport Development
 - Fundraising
 - Inclusion, Diversity and Reconciliation
- In its annual planning process, leadership conducts annual gap and risk assessments in reviewing its strategic plan and finalizing annual plans and budgets.
- Leadership will publish a summary of its annual report, including financial information on its website and provide detailed information upon request by members.
- Together with QVN⁸, Biathlon Saskatchewan and Sask Sports will submit a competitive proposal to host 2025 Western Biathlon Championships to Biathlon Canada by Fall 2024.
- Biathlon Saskatchewan will develop a committee to submit an application to the Saskatchewan Games Council for the inclusion of biathlon in the 2026 Saskatchewan Winter Games.
- Biathlon Saskatchewan will develop a committee to select athletes for the 2027 Canada Winter Games hosted by Quebec City.

Objective: Maintain Team Saskatchewan performance at national and Canada Winter Games competitions

- Over the next 4 years our biathletes will maintain presence/participation at national events, maintain a fourth or better place finish in the overall placings at events, and increase the number of athletes placing in the top 10 in races.
- Team Saskatchewan biathletes will compete in two regional competitions annually.

“Growth in clubs, officials and athletes in the province to provide meaningful competitions. Coaching supports to encourage and support volunteers in coaching to establish club programs that meet sport and Biathlon Canada long term athlete development benchmarks that encourages excellence and satisfaction in skills to stay in the sport”
parent, coach, volunteer, official

“Athletes and provincial team are well supported financially”
athlete

“Very strong team spirit. Medals at Canada Games”
athlete

⁸ Qu’Appelle Valley Nordic Ski Club (QVN) is a biathlon center of excellence in southern Saskatchewan. Its facilities include a clubhouse, bathrooms, 30 lane biathlon range, snow making and over 6 kilometers of groomed ski trails.

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“Would Biathlon Saskatchewan have enough equipment and qualified coaches to deliver quality programming to more participants?”

parent, coach, volunteer,

“An ammo discount for a sponsored company”
athlete, supporter, friend

Capacity for Sport Focus

Objective: To grow biathlon in Saskatchewan, procure and increase new rifles for Saskatchewan’s rental rifle program⁹ and establish a regular maintenance program for its existing inventory.

- Incentivize annual buy back for graduating grade 12 athletes to purchase and personalize “their” good competition rental rifle.
- Over four years, incrementally increase rifle rental fees to market rates for graduating and older athletes.
- Stagger regular maintenance and repair of rifles using annual rental fees.
- Reinvest proceeds from the incentive buyback program, annual rifle rental fees and fundraising to purchase new and certified used rifles.
- Apply for a grant/scholarship from Safari Club International¹⁰ for the purchase of new firearms.

Sport in Community Focus

Objective: Establish meaningful First Nations and Métis land acknowledgements that recognize the importance of treaty lands on which biathletes train and compete

- Revise race hosting policies and practices for club engagement with a local Indigenous leader to welcome members and spectators to traditional lands, or to deliver a land acknowledgement honouring local Indigenous peoples.
- In consultation with Indigenous leaders, recommend relevant and appropriate key messages for use by Biathlon Saskatchewan in marketing biathlon, e.g.:
 - We are all treaty people
 - We reaffirm and honour our treaty relations
 - All of Saskatchewan land is treaty land¹¹

⁹ Biathlon Saskatchewan is the only provincial biathlon organization providing a rental rifle program. Rifles are expensive and difficult to procure at times. Provincial inventory (40 .22 rifles - 10

good condition, 15 decent condition, 15 not as good) is close to what we need but more is needed for growth.

¹⁰ Safari Club International provides funds to community sports and recreational organization for the purchase of firearms to promote their sports.

¹¹ Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 cover all lands in the Province of Saskatchewan

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Objective: Increase memberships to grow biathlon in Saskatchewan

- Encourage clubs to hold at least one OPEN HOUSE per year with range and programming open to community members to “Give it a Shot”.
- Support mentorship by matching emerging and developing clubs with established clubs and past leaders/members to develop capacity to host training and competitions that benefits biathlon in the province.
- Support club’s leadership volunteers to take governance and risk management training offered by CCES or other reputable sport governance organizations.
- Re-engage past members to identify skills and expertise and to offer new opportunities/benefits to grow and advance biathlon’s growth in Saskatchewan.

Objective: Engage partners to identify a club for development of a second biathlon training center of excellence¹² in central Saskatchewan

- Provide guidance, connections, equipment, technical expertise/knowledge of land use agreements and facilities grants to clubs planning to improve or develop its facilities.
- Explore strategic partnerships with provincial parks and municipalities¹³ to leverage long-term access to crown lands, existing infrastructure, paid employees and federal or provincial funding for developing biathlon facilities.
- Support grassroots development, identify and mentor an interested and available local champion to take the lead in promoting the development of biathlon in the local community.

“Biathlon Saskatchewan should consider building up clubs in addition to or rather than athletes”

parent, coach, volunteer, official

“QVN is a shining model of what excellence looks like...Pool resources as a province to setting up other regional hubs... we’ll have much greater success as a province”

parent, coach

“Good facilities and coaching”

athlete

¹² Qu’Appelle Valley Nordic Ski Club’s “*vision is to grow a club that operates from a premier Nordic facility that can be home to recreational and competitive athletes, that provides all-season training options, and that will draw athletes from Saskatchewan and western Canada*”.

¹³ Table Mountain Provincial Park, North Battleford Battleford Flats, Buffalo Pound Provincial Park and the Saskatoon Snowboard Hill were identified as potential partners.

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2023 - 2027 Biathlon Saskatchewan Strategic Blueprint Poster

<p>VISION - Biathlon Saskatchewan will grow the sport of biathlon provincially by increasing sport awareness, enhancing athletes', coaches', and officials' skill and personal development while building safe, resilient and sustainable clubs.</p>			
<p>MISSION - Biathlon Saskatchewan's mission is to encourage all stages of the athlete development model by promoting, developing, supporting and supervising ideal conditions for success, in harmony with our clubs and partners.</p>			
<p>SUCCESS FACTORS & GUIDING PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>FOCUS AREAS</p>		
	<p>Athlete Development</p>	<p>Capacity for Sport</p>	<p>Sport in Community</p>
<p>Contribute actively to reconciliation in sport</p>	<p>Engage Indigenous families and athletes in the sport of biathlon.</p>	<p>Implement relevant safe sport practices with volunteers to reduce stigma and increase cultural safety for Indigenous members.</p>	<p>Meaningful and respectful relations to support Indigenous community engagement.</p>
<p>Promote equitable participation and accessibility in sport</p>	<p>Create entry pathways for immigrant and rural families and athletes.</p> <p>Strengthen master athlete participation in biathlon.</p> <p>Strengthen transition supports for youth athletes in biathlon.</p>	<p>Foster club development of facilities and coaches to improve participation of Para Nordic athletes in biathlon.</p>	<p>Strengthen collaboration with other sport and community groups.</p> <p>Increase the quantity and quality of Biathlon Saskatchewan communications with members, partners, sponsors and the public.</p>
<p>Create healthy and safe sport environments</p>	<p>Strengthen cultural safety and safe sport in biathlon.</p>	<p>Frequent review of Biathlon Saskatchewan policies to create, strengthen and maintain cultural safety and safe sport in biathlon.</p>	<p>Increase volunteer access to credible provincial and national safe sport resources.</p>
<p>Foster effective governance and trustworthy leadership in sport</p>	<p>Enhance quality of training and competition opportunities for athletes, coaches and officials.</p> <p>Maintain Team Saskatchewan performance at national and Canada Winter Games competitions.</p>	<p>To grow biathlon, procure and increase new rifles for Saskatchewan's rental rifle program and establish a regular maintenance program for existing inventory.</p>	<p>Establish meaningful First Nations and Metis land acknowledgements that recognize the importance of traditional lands on which biathletes train and compete.</p> <p>Increase memberships to grow biathlon in Saskatchewan.</p> <p>Engage partners to identify a club for development of a second biathlon training center of excellence in central Saskatchewan.</p>