

# SKATE AUSTRALIA



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## **JUNIOR SKATE POLICY**

### **BY-LAW NO. 23**

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**Effective from January 2011**

**Originally adopted**  
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Draft for circulation to branches for comment

## Introduction

The purpose of this junior skate policy is to assist in the provision of quality skating experiences for young people. It will encourage the provision of safe, enjoyable and accountable environments for everyone involved in junior skating.

As *duty of care* issues become increasingly important, junior skate providers must be familiar with, and put into practice, procedures to ensure young people have a positive experience in their chosen skating discipline. The health and welfare of junior participants must be central to all objectives which include providing:

- fun experiences
- safe and supportive environments
- skill development, challenge and the joy of achieving
- access for all to participate
- a clear pathway for improvement
- equal opportunities for all young people.

This policy contains guiding principles to assist in achieving objectives. They are provided in the following topics.

- **Long-term Involvement**
- **Getting Young People Involved**
- **Physical Growth and Maturation**
- **Sport Pathways**
- **Forming Links**
- People Making It Happen
- **Quality Coaching**
- Making Sport Safe
- The Law and Sport

Underpinning these principles will be a range of resources and programs to support all skate-holders to deliver quality experiences for young skaters.



# 1. Long-term Involvement

***Provide a safe, fun and challenging skating experience***

Getting **young people active** is important because it is an integral component of a healthy lifestyle. Skating assists in preventing lifestyle diseases (such as diabetes) and promotes physical, psychological and social well-being.

**Quality experiences** in junior sport provide the entry to a lifelong involvement in sport for;

- enjoyment and recreation with social involvement
- fulfilling individual potential through self discovery and self improvement
- developing self-esteem through taking on challenges, learning to fall over and get back up again.

An understanding of what young people look for in sport (eg participation drivers) helps us provide positive experiences that encourage young people to remain active participants throughout their lives.

Young people's motivations for sport are influenced by;

- the values their **community** places on achievements within their sport
- how 'skate-holders' (key skate stakeholders such as coaches/parents/peers) who are important to them value their involvement
- the opportunity to contribute, shape and define an inclusive skate culture

Skate-holders must be aware how their personal philosophy can affect young people. While skate-holders can potentially bring valuable life experiences, they also need to respect differences and accept that their philosophy is not consistent with every young skater.

## Strategies for Long Term Involvement

### 1.1 Ongoing participation

- Offer young people social participation and appropriate competitive opportunities (*see pathways charts*).
- Encourage skate-holders to have a flexible approach to support young people balance their lifestyle demands.

### 1.2 Presenting sport

- Accommodate individual differences by offering a broad range of options that include activities and competitive and non-competitive structures for a wide range of abilities
- Provide young people the opportunities to feel they have an active involvement in the skate culture.

### 1.3 Motivation

- Understand the variety of motivations that drive participation.
- Listening to the broad spectrum of views of youth.
- Incorporate the motivations and views of young skaters into the direction of their sport.

*"We get a significant number of children who come into our club lacking in self-confidence and trying sport for the first time. Club sport develops children in the areas of self-esteem and builds their confidence to tackle new things. They learn to work with others to achieve a result. They learn how to apply themselves. They learn how to win and they learn how to lose. The skills that they learn are life skills, not just sport related skills."*

***Chris Clough – President, Revolutions Roller Sports Club, Browns Plains, Queensland.***

## 2. Getting Young People Involved

### *Keeping skate appealing and accessible and for all young people*

Skate provides an opportunity to develop physical, social and emotional abilities and therefore should be accessible to all young people. A wide variety of skills and abilities developed in sport transfer to non-athletic careers and sport influences social factors such as community pride, identity, and leisure and promoting an active lifestyle.

Marginalisation still occurs on the basis of disability, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, geographical location, Indigenous background, social class and socio-economic status. Equity of opportunity is an ethical issue as well as an area of legal vulnerability for sport.

Skate-holders play an important role in eroding external negative stereotypes and reshaping internal stereotypes.

### **Impact areas for consideration**

#### **2.1 Ability**

It is important that all young people, despite their current ability level are given the opportunity to reach their potential. Some young people perceive they are not good enough to participate. Sport providers must take care they do not give out negative vibes about a young person's ability, to avoid discouraging them.

#### **2.2 Ethnicity & Race**

Stereotyping of different ethnicity & race groups can also influence sporting opportunities. Young people from some cultural backgrounds have low rates of participation in sporting activities due to real or perceived differences in opportunities.

Skate providers should have a greater awareness of the different needs of different backgrounds when implementing strategies to encourage participation of young people from all backgrounds in a wide variety of skate experiences.

#### **2.3 Body Shape**

A whole range of body shapes is needed for different skate sports. Some young people have a negative body image because of how they perceive their body shape and size. Young people sensitive about their appearance can be discouraged by popular stereotypes of the images of elite athletes and other young people in the media.

Skate-holders have a responsibility of providing young people with a sporting opportunity regardless of body shape or their perceptions of their shape.

#### **2.4 Gender and Sexuality**

Skate offers a range of inclusive opportunities for all genders and backgrounds through its variety of disciplines. However, some young people avoid sporting situations because they perceive they do not conform to the gender & sexuality stereotype associated with the sport. This has resulted in some girls and boys leaving sport.

To encourage young people to stay in sport they should feel they are welcome and valued and all contributions are equally valid regardless of gender and sexuality.

#### **2.5 Socio-economic Status**

Skate-holders need to appreciate the connection between socio-economic status and sporting opportunities.

## 2.6 Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities have the same need to feel competent as their able bodied counterparts. Inclusion, integrating those with a disability into same sport experiences as their able bodied peers is beneficial to those with disabilities their able bodied counterparts and other skate-holders.

*"I really like inline hockey because it's fast paced and exciting and you can never predict what is going to happen next".*

*"I just have to keep my head up and see where the puck is, where it is going and where the other players are".*

**Shaylah Stritthof, fourteen year-old Victorian who has been deaf since birth and was recently selected to represent Australia in the junior ladies division at the Oceania championships.**



13 & Under Queensland Team at 2008 Nationals in Adelaide



Participant at SbA Break n Enter Program Lismore



Star Class students Claire Byfield & Taylah Seward

### 3. Physical Growth and Maturation

***Provide appropriate skate experiences at the appropriate time  
to encourage  
healthy body, spirit & mind.***

Physical activity is needed for normal growth and development, and for young people to reach their potential in muscle and bone development. Sport is an ideal way to provide this necessary activity, as it also brings psychological and social benefits to young people. For the best physical and skill development, consideration must be given to factors related to growth and maturation to help with decisions about grouping young people for participation.

The uneven spread in growth and maturation in young people of the same age makes chronological age of limited value in determining the developmental status of a young person. This creates challenges related to opportunity, training and competition..

#### **Impact areas for consideration**

##### **3.1 Accommodating Physical Growth and Maturation – Training/Practice**

- For the most part, training and sports activity leads to the best possible physical growth and development for young people. However, it is important to remember that young people differ from adults in the quality of their tissues and are not able to take the same stresses. Consequently, training must be conducted differently for young people, particularly if they are specialising and involved in a narrow range of activities.
- Coaches, particularly of high performance young skater/participants need to be well versed in understanding how they can exert young skaters/participants.

##### **3.2 Accommodating Physical Growth and Maturation – Competition**

Competition is an important part of sport because it provides challenge in applying testing and developing skills. However, the great variation in children of the same age in physical aspects (such as height, weight & strength) results in the risk of injury and psychological distress when young people are unevenly matched. It may be necessary to consider groupings based on criteria other than age to favour a positive environment for young people continuing in skating.

Handicapping is a way of allowing the participation in open competition of young people with disabilities, or who are smaller and/or not as strong as others.

##### **3.3 Talent Development**

- Young people should be encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities requiring a variety of motor skills before beginning to specialise. To achieve this, it is important that less attention is placed on early identification of athletic talent and early specialisation and more attention directed to providing a variety of opportunities to experience different skill sets which often have a complimentary effect of building other motor skills.
- While achieving and responding to challenges, young people must also have fun. It is not their best interest to have them concerned at an early age about whether they are going to make the elite ranks. This concern could manifest in overdoing training, instead of enjoying progressing through pathways of success. A young person's success should be measured by level of enjoyment, social interaction with their peers and achievement of personal goals. It's not always about winning.
- Policies which stipulate appropriate ages to commence national competition varies from discipline to discipline. However, within a results driven competition structure (ie representative pathways) where the potential of negative impact of performance scrutiny and selection failures are more prominent, coach & parent expectation management is a particularly important consideration to best manage a child's positive experience and long term involvement.

## 4. SPORT PATHWAYS

*Provide quality skate experiences by supporting learning & engagement and removing barriers that inhibit participation*

### Example

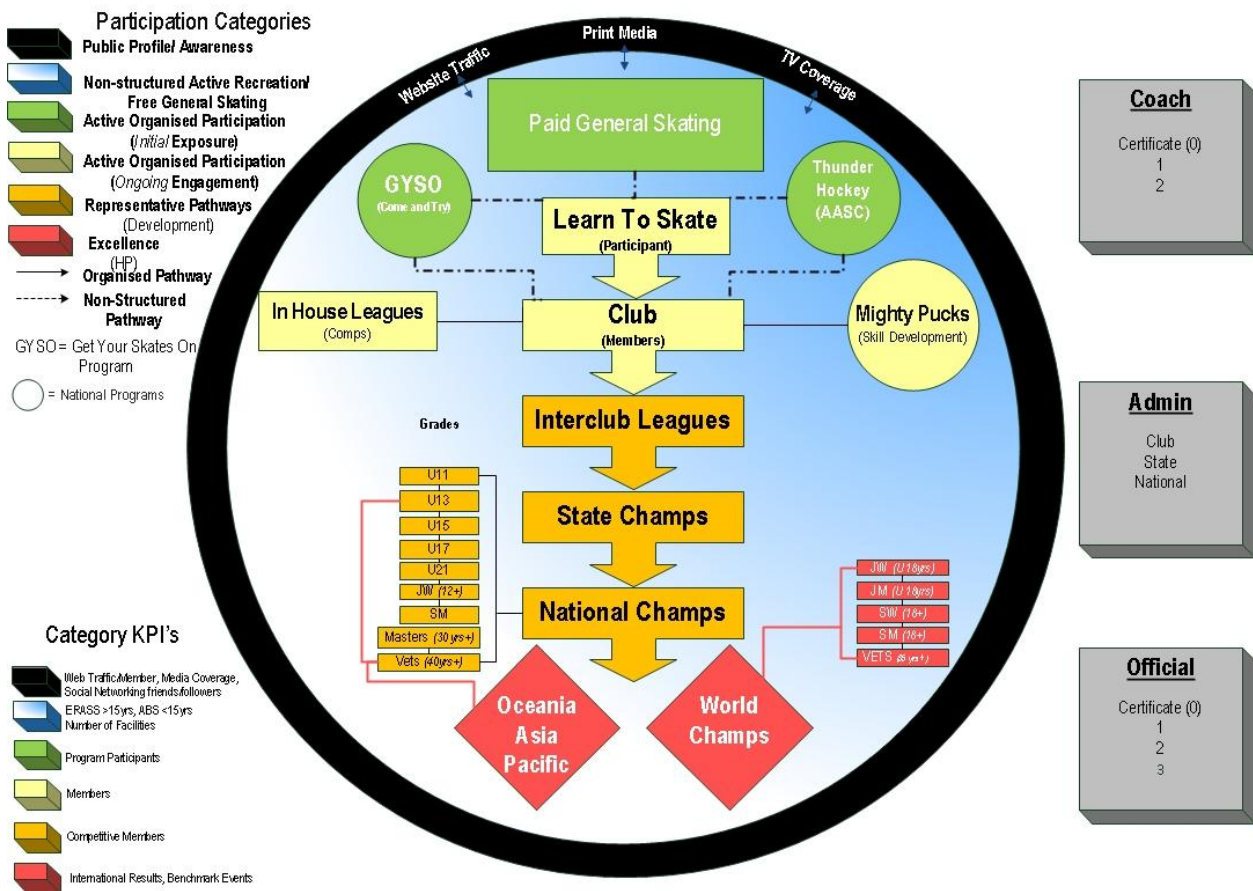
Years 5 to 17 are a time of tremendous development for young people on all levels - physically, psychologically, emotionally and socially. Planning for the progressive development of sports skills in young people requires consideration of

- identifiable stages of development
- different levels of ability
- different rates in gaining sports skills
- different interests of young people in sport.

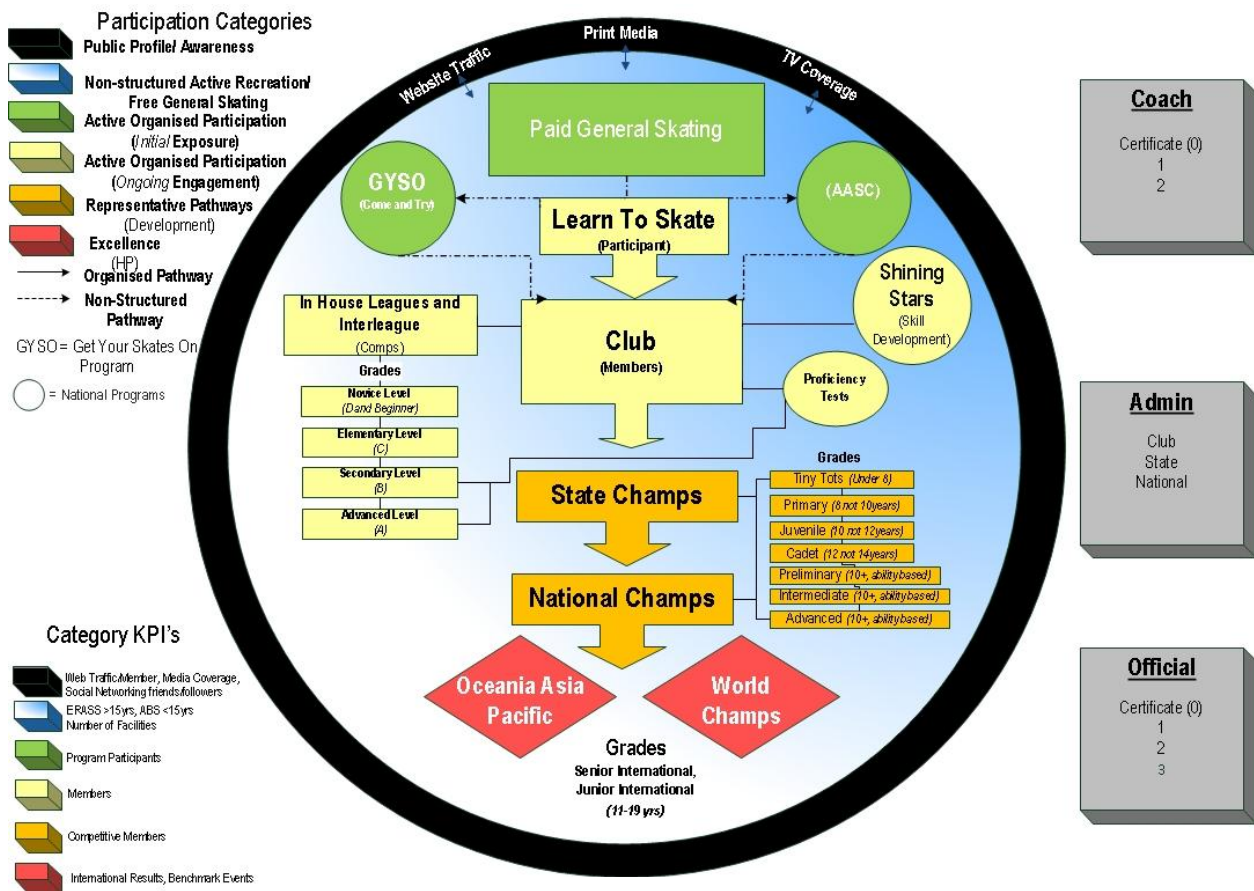
It is the responsibility of sport leaders to manage the experiences available to young people so that activities and challenges are offered in a planned and sequential manner.

**Chart 1. Progression Pathways for Junior Skate Disciplines**

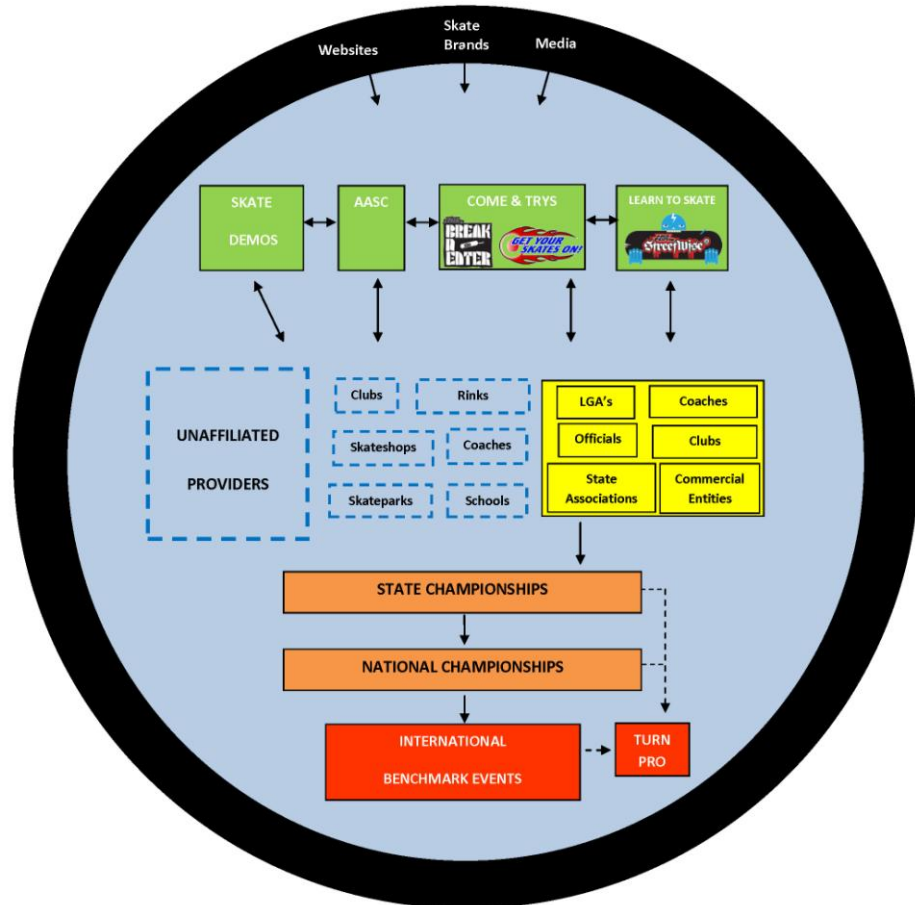
### 4.1 INLINE HOCKEY



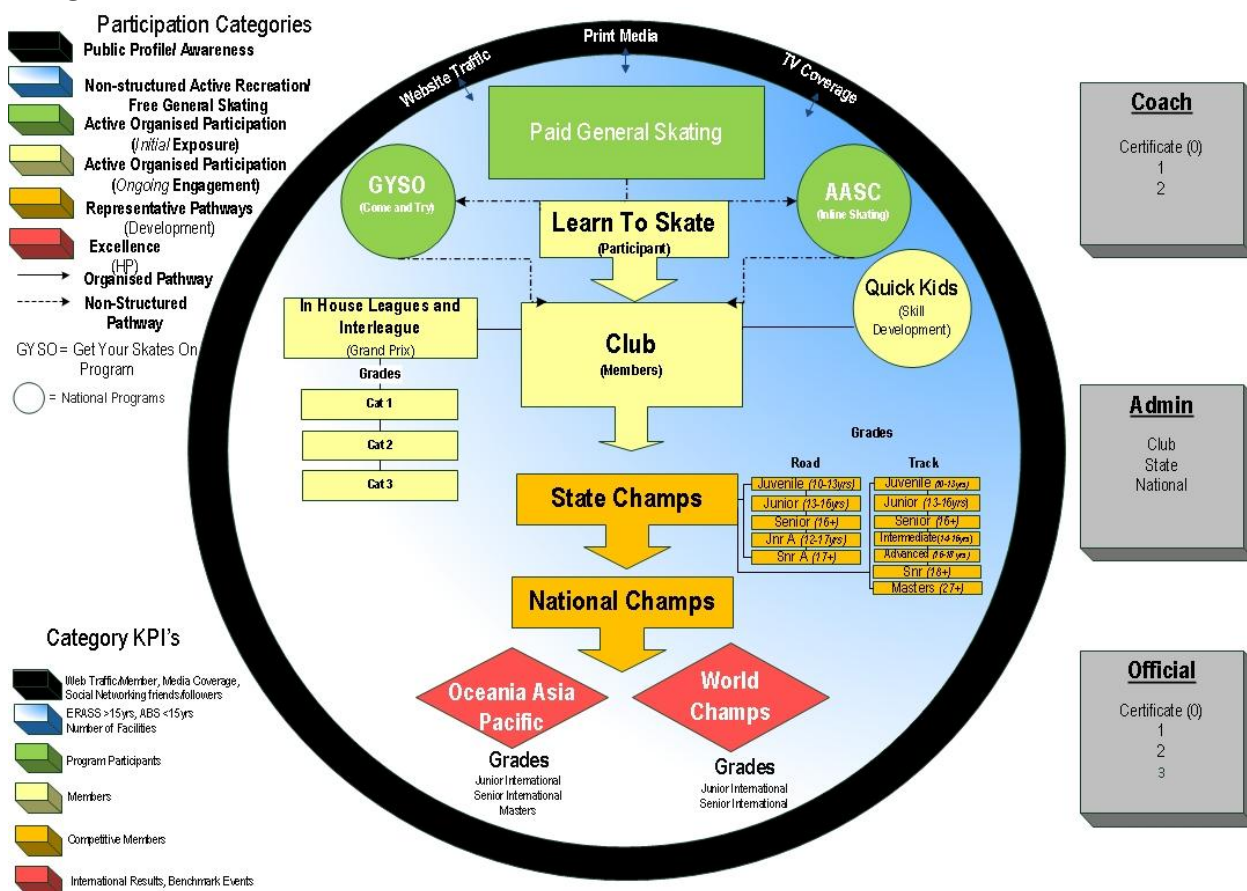
## 4.2 ARTISTIC



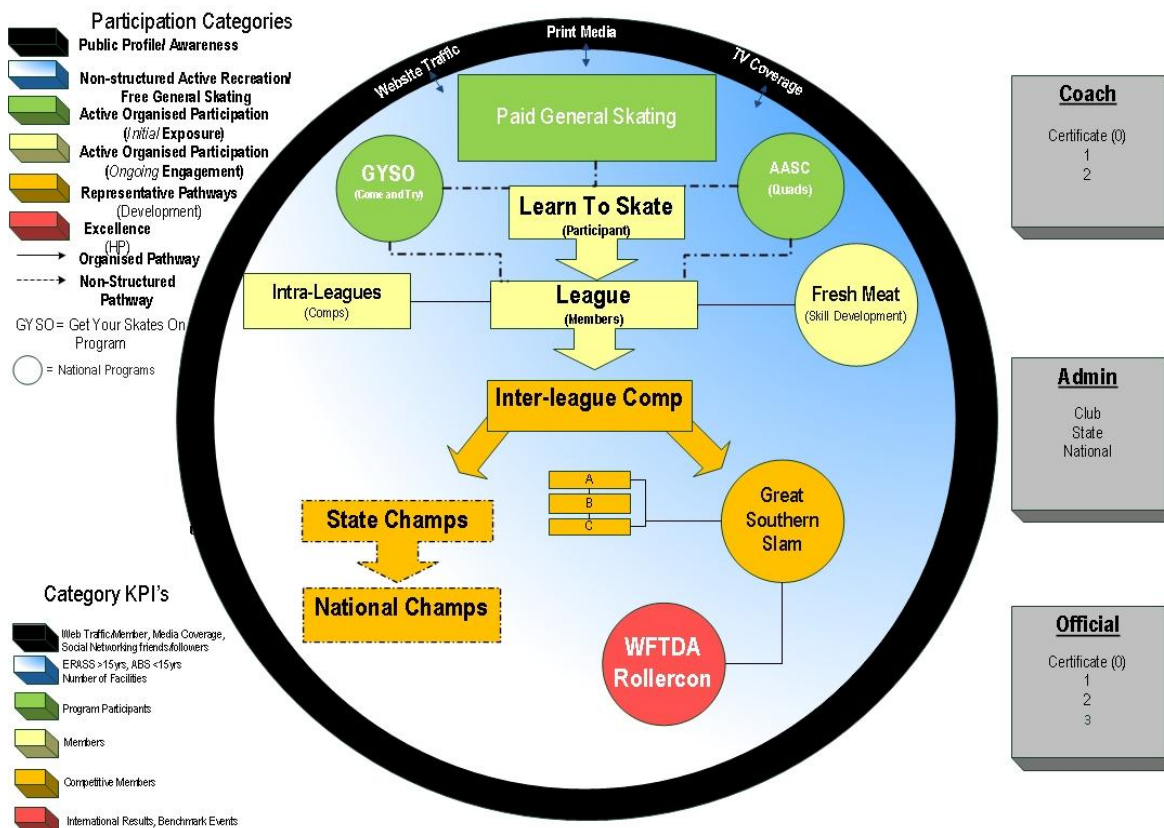
## 4.3 SKATEBOARD



## 4.4 SPEED



## 4.5 ROLLER DERBY



## 5. Forming Links

### *Developing partnerships for a consistent quality skate experience*

#### **Example**

Successful liaising amongst existing partners and potential partners supports the long-term participation of young skaters through the pathways and the opportunities it provides. Planning, delivery and sustainability are three important phases in building successful links with partners. Each poses a number of challenges and considerations for skate-holders. Each relies on effective communication, well-trained and prepared sporting representatives and quality programs and resources.

Consultation and co-operation are essential for effective and efficient junior skate participation. A number of agencies have responsibilities for organising and conducting skating including sporting organisations, schools, commercial and non-profit providers, government (local, state and federal), and non-government agencies.

All of these are partners in junior skate and their cooperation and goodwill is vital to the successful delivery of junior skating experience. Consultation and cooperation provide many benefits including

- identifying gaps and overlaps in delivery and resolving cooperative approaches to them.
- consistency in the provision of junior sport with regard to age groupings, competition rules etc
- sharing sports resources.

## 5. Strategies for Forming Links

#### **Planning**

Working together can prevent oversupply and duplication of activities and over commitment of talented skaters as a result of demands from more than one organisation. Consider what programs and resources you can access and offer; what information you need to know about the schools their programs and policies; how and when to make contact with schools; and how to involve teachers in the planning and delivery; identifying enthusiastic skate parents to help lobby locally at their school.

#### **Delivery**

Effective delivery can guarantee the future involvement of the school and its students and create a positive image of skating. In this phase, the qualities of the presenter and programs and the degree of participation by teachers and students are important considerations. The qualifications, accreditation and experience of presenters and the compatibility of programs with the school curriculum and student development goals are other major factors.

#### **Sustainability**

All organisations should develop a strategy for networking with others for mutual benefit. Bringing together the experience of all stakeholders will help find common solutions to common problems. It is important to consider what will happen after a program is completed. Follow up is essential to ensure that school-club links continue to be supported and is the best incentive for transition from school to community skating. Talk to other groups doing similar things and share ideas about what works better.

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## 6. Quality Coaching

***Develop quality coaches who support philosophies which encourage positive skate experiences for young people***

Coaches, administrators, parents and officials play important roles in developing junior skate experiences to young skaters. While the educator's role of the coach is primary, the coach fulfils various other roles in a skater's life.

Coaches have been described as teachers, leaders, psychologists, friends and role models for young people, it is important that coaches recognize the impact they have on young people's lives.

Coaches are in a position to influence more than just the development of young people in relation to skating. While coaches directly contribute to skill development, and the enjoyment of a young person's skate experience, effective coaches can enhance young people's pro-social behaviours and contribute to self-esteem.

Understanding the motivation of young people, how they learn and the developmental stages in this process are necessary for quality junior sport experiences. Young people have preferences for how they like to learn, and their preferences might change depending on the type of task and their prior experiences.

Some might like to watch, listen and experiment, and others may like to try an activity first and refine their learning through feedback.

Young people typically learn more than one thing at a time. In the process of learning physical skills, young people also learn what behaviour is expected, how to work with others, and what they are good at.

Recognizing that learning is multi-dimensional is important. It highlights the complexity of acquiring skills and how broader social aspects of life impact on young people as they learn physical skills.

Coaches and other people in leadership roles should be accredited and trained to ensure they are current with the best practice in the delivery of junior skate experiences.

## 7 Strategies for Quality Coaching

### 7.1 Coaching Sports Skills

### 7.2 Coaching Sports Behaviours

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