
Sport Environment Assessment: Gymnastics Canada Commitment Statement

Ottawa, ON (Oct. 29, 2024) – In collaboration with the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner and Abuse-Free Sport, Gymnastics Canada (GymCan) was recently the subject of a Sport Environment Assessment (SEA) to identify areas for improvement and ensure the highest standards of safety and integrity in our sport.

GymCan extends its sincere gratitude to the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC), Abuse-Free Sport, Shelina Neallani, and all participants who generously contributed their time and valuable insights to this Sport Environment Assessment. The input and feedback provided is instrumental in helping GymCan advance our efforts in safeguarding, governance, athlete engagement, and communication, ensuring we continue to grow and foster a positive environment for everyone involved in our sport.

The scope of GymCan's Sport Environment Assessment included a review of our work to address the recommendations outlined in the McLaren Report. It equally sought to assess GymCan's ability to prevent and address maltreatment, discrimination, and other prohibited behaviors. Particular attention was paid to determining whether any systemic issues are present in the sport environment. The SEA Report contains a series of recommendations that will support a safer and stronger gymnastics sport environment. GymCan is fully committed to integrating the recommendations outlined in this report into our ongoing safety plans – find our detailed response to the SEA Recommendations in Appendix A.

Earlier this year, GymCan announced the formation of a [National Safety Steering Committee](#) with a clear mandate to draw on safety and safeguarding best practices and stakeholder feedback to ensure we effectively address the recommendations from both the McLaren Report and the OSIC Sport Environment Assessment. The Committee is working closely with GymCan Safe Sport staff to develop and guide the implementation of a meaningful safety strategy focused on a safer and stronger gymnastics environment, one that strengthens our culture and increases safety for all participants from grassroots to high performance.

We know that this work will need to be informed by meaningful engagement, ensuring that the voices of athletes, parents, coaches, club owners, recreational gymnastics administrators, provincial

and territorial representatives, and other leaders within our sport community continue to be heard and incorporated.

Aligned with OSIC's dedication to the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS) and its core principles, GymCan is focused on improving communication and educational initiatives, and strengthening safeguarding and leadership within the organization. GymCan is also committed to enhancing resources, procedures, and practices that enable us to uphold our mission of creating a safe and supportive environment for all gymnastics participants, at every level of the sport.

For more information on the OSIC, please visit www.sportintegritycommissioner.ca.



Andrew Price
CEO, Gymnastics Canada



Dr. Kacey Neely
Director, Safe Sport, Gymnastics Canada



APPENDIX A: SEA Recommendations and GymCan Commitments

We have been working diligently to strengthen the culture and safety of gymnastics across all levels. That being said, we recognize that there is more to accomplish. The following table provides GymCan’s commitment pertaining to each recommendation contained in the SEA Report.

Communication

Recommendation 1. Increase opportunities for direct communication and collaboration between and with GymCan leaders, athletes, coaches, judges / officials, IST members, and other key stakeholders.

SEA Considerations	GymCan Commitment
a. Build in formal communication channels between coaches and athletes to encourage open and safe communication, especially for female athletes (on subjects such as coaching and communication needs and wants) and for both groups around positive coaching approaches.	GymCan will organize a cross-discipline welcome session as well as host townhalls with National Team athletes and coaches throughout the season. GymCan will create a “Welcome to the National Team” package with information on safe sport, policies, code of conduct, Game Plan, IST support, social media and resources that will be provided to them.
b. Several athletes described deep hurt and anger due to incidents where they felt they had been mistreated. Others had many suggestions on ways to improve the safe sport environment. Request the Director, Safe Sport send out to all athletes an invitation to meet and discuss personal past incidents and/or the safe sport environment in a confidential setting; if necessary, assist athletes who request it to find ways to move forward, potentially through healing, restorative facilitated conversations, and mediations, with GymCan providing these resources.	GymCan acknowledges that an apology for the maltreatment and abuse endured by athletes is long overdue, and the ongoing impact this has caused to survivors and their families. GymCan wants to take the appropriate, meaningful steps to apologize to the many athletes who were mistreated, harmed, and abused. GymCan is committed to engaging in a restorative process.
c. Invite coaches to meet with GymCan’s leaders to collaborate on ways that they can feel more supported as they incorporate positive coaching techniques, including handling “grey zone” areas.	GymCan will hold formal townhall engagement opportunities across all disciplines at 2025 National events. Information and feedback gathered will inform future strategic direction.
d. Invite judges / officials and athletes to attend facilitated dialogues hosted by GymCan to encourage respectful collaborations and communications	GymCan will support disciplines in planning and hosting safe sport conversations with stakeholders.



around safe sport (one item of discussion could be on how to give thoughtful feedback).	GymCan will consider 'Providing Feedback' as a specific topic in the Winning Well Safe Sport Speaker Series in 2025.
e. Invite IST members to meet with GymCan's leaders and head coaches to brainstorm about ways they could better collaborate and contribute as members of the National Team (one idea could be for them to be more involved in the training camps).	GymCan is considering a new staffing position to coordinate and engage IST across all disciplines. This role would be implemented in 2025-26.
f. Schedule exit interviews of retiring athletes with a GymCan leader representative.	In-progress 🟡 GymCan is providing retiring gymnasts the opportunity to engage in a conversation with a GymCan Leader (e.g., Director, Safe Sport, Program Director) upon retirement.
g. Organize an open, annual summit where participants (including parents and those outside of the GymCan community) can hear directly from GymCan's leaders about what they are doing, get clarity on the direction GymCan is taking, and be informed and educated about the role GymCan plays nationally and internationally.	In-progress 🟡 GymCan is in the process of planning a Gymnastics Community Summit/Conference which is being coordinated by a joint NSO/PTSO working group.

Recommendation 2. Continue finding ways to improve communication.

SEA Considerations	GymCan Commitment
a. Set clear requirements for early notice related to dates of competitions, training camps, and important events (that are within GymCan's control) and provide information directly to those who need it (such as athletes, coaches, and parents of young athletes); monitor, evaluate, and report on meeting these requirements at a minimum annually.	Completed August 2024 ✓ GymCan has created Gymformation , a monthly newsletter that offers exciting updates and opportunities to the gymnastics community. GymCan launched its new website (Phase 1, August 2024; Phase 2, December 2024). Phase 2 will contain a cross-discipline calendar with GymCan related events.
b. Provide training to all GymCan community members on conflict resolution techniques, and specifically on how to have difficult conversations.	In-progress 🟡 The November 2024 Winning Well Safe Sport Speaker Series topic will address compassionate and constructive communication with Gail Donohue. Communication strategies recommended will continue to be relevant safe sport topics for future Winning Well webinars in 2025.



c. Offer safe sport training tailored to judges / officials and IST members; during that training, focus on the importance of reporting unsafe behaviours.	In-progress 🔄 GymCan is currently reviewing the content of the recently launched Respect in Sport for Officials training module. This will likely become a requirement for judges / officials in 2025.
d. Build up GymCan’s online library with sport-related resources on direct conversation and conflict resolution techniques.	In-progress 🔄 GymCan has created a dedicated Safe Sport Resource page that will be launched during Phase 2 of the new website. Completed September 2024 ✓ GymCan hired a Communications Coordinator who will help with the development of infographics.
e. Create and post a preferred supplier list of dispute resolution professionals who understand the sport of gymnastics that GymCan’s community members can access.	In-progress 🔄 GymCan is providing a list of experts and guest speakers with contact information in various topic areas that will be posted on the website’s Safe Sport Resources.
f. Organize a communications campaign directed at highlighting IST contributions to the sport of gymnastics.	In-progress 🔄 GymCan is implementing a “Staff Spotlight” section in the Gymformation newsletter. Successes and highlights will be shared via GymCan’s different communication channels.
g. Create a policy that an IST member representative and a judge / official representative are to have a seat on relevant committees and decision-making bodies; monitor, evaluate, and report on that policy’s implementation.	GymCan will strive to ensure that there is more inclusive representation on committees throughout the organization.
h. Create a policy that requires judges / officials to communicate details on the selection of members of a judging panel; monitor, evaluate, and report on that policy’s implementation.	GymCan will strive to ensure that there is more inclusive representation on committees throughout the organization.

Build Trust

Recommendation 3. Improve governance, such as ensuring natural justice, due process, transparency, accountability, follow through, and compliance with policies and procedures, including the *Code of Ethics and Conduct*.

SEA Considerations	GymCan Commitment
a. Provide training to the GymCan community on issues such as conflicts of interest, confidentiality, and fairness, including the importance of not only real, but perceived, conflicts, and on all policies relevant to creating a safe sport environment (ensure the Rule of Two and	Completed June 2024 ✓ GymCan’s Board of Directors have approved two new safety policies – Whistleblower Policy and Positive Workplace Policy. In-progress 🔄



those pertaining to the consumption of alcohol are addressed).	GymCan is in the process of reviewing and updating Safe Sport policies. We will be strengthening policies on The Rule of Two and Recruitment and Screening. Policies will address alcohol consumption.
b. Review the system in place for athlete access to the services offered by IST members; make any changes required to ensure access is equitable and transparent.	GymCan will create a “Welcome to the National Team” package. In addition to information on safe sport, policies, code of conduct, etc., the IST services and supports provided to athletes will also be included. Game Plan , social media guidelines and resources that will be provided to them.
c. Improve the transparency of selection criteria for athletes to make the National Team by articulating the criteria in a timely, transparent, and acceptable manner; by sharing the research-based, objective (or other) criteria being applied; and by providing safe opportunities for feedback and review. Build in monitoring, evaluating, and reporting requirements.	In-progress ☺ GymCan’s HP leadership team is in the process of standardizing and aligning process across all disciplines. GymCan will communicate documents in both official languages simultaneously. GymCan’s HP leadership team will have conversations with stakeholders at the end of each quad to receive feedback and review processes.
d. Create self-evaluative processes for leaders to examine their actions in relation to governance issues.	In-progress ☺ GymCan leadership has implemented a Performance Management Review Process with all GymCan staff.
e. Provide in a publicly accessible annual report statistics on the nature and outcomes of complaints in a non-identifying anonymous way to build trust, educate, and demonstrate commitment to safe sport.	Director, Safe Sport will gather and share the available data on complaints in a yearly report.

Recommendation 4. Improve the process of hiring coaches by ensuring clear, collaborative, and transparent decisions with publicly accessible criteria.

SEA Considerations	GymCan Commitment
a. Post clear and consistent notices of the hiring process for each vacant coaching position.	Completed April 2024 - Present ✓ GymCan posts job vacancies publicly on relevant career boards and via SIRC.
b. Add ‘a positive coaching approach’ to the list of required competencies when hiring coaches.	In-progress ☺ GymCan is piloting an NCCP Comp 4 course which will integrate content related to positive coaching approaches. GymCan will create best practice guidelines and infographics for various Safe Sport and coaching



	topics to be shared with PTSO and published on the website.
c. Create a policy that the decision on who is invited to be a member of a hiring committee be transparent, and when relevant, the invitation list includes coaches, athletes, and other members	GymCan will ensure that human resource practices related to hiring are defined, transparent, and hiring committees are inclusive. Stakeholder input will be incorporated into the hiring process as appropriate.

Recommendation 5. Improve oversight of coaches by implementing more comprehensive monitoring and evaluation processes.

SEA Considerations	GymCan Commitment
a. Broaden those involved in performance management of coaches to include other coaches, athletes, stakeholders with relevant knowledge, and other members of the GymCan community, including parents.	The Director of Operations will incorporate stakeholder input into the annual Performance Management Process for national team coaches. There will be formalized 360-degree feedback to support professional development of HP staff.
b. Review the current oversight process in discussion with each coach and suggest improvements to the process in order to establish clear roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, and deliverables, and to ensure positive coaching approaches are evaluated and rewarded.	GymCan will further review and clarify the roles and responsibilities of HP staff as part of a holistic assessment of the HP staff functions and structure in 2025. GymCan will obtain third party expertise to support this work.
c. Review current HR processes related to coaches to identify shortcomings, and revise as necessary, such as the enforcement of probation periods and disciplinary measures, and the provision of individualized improvement plans.	Complete June 2024 ✓ GymCan has implemented a standard approach to performance management. The Director of Operations has accountability for human resource management and will ensure performance gaps are addressed appropriately.

Recommendation 6. Better understand each discipline’s context, issues, and needs around communication and trust building.

SEA Considerations	GymCan Commitment
a. Involve a third-party professional (such as a leadership and team building specialist or a mental health professional) to assist with communication and trust building of members within the individual disciplines; task the professional with assessing how and what would be helpful by engaging with	Completed September 2023 – June 2024 ✓ GymCan contracted Lauren Brett , a Leadership Coach with Sport Law, who facilitated Designing the Team Alliance with all Olympic disciplines. Lauren Brett also completed a pilot project called Leadership and Nova Integration Project with RG National Team coaches.



National Team members, and in particular, hearing from the athletes.	
--	--

Recommendation 7. Provide WAG with immediate professional help to manage the toxic, mistrustful, and abusive environment (initially identified in the McLaren Report), as it could escalate to more abuse without professional intervention.

SEA Considerations	GymCan Commitment
a. Engage a third-party professional to work with the WAG community to help eliminate its toxic, mistrustful, and abusive environment.	Completed March - October 2024 ✓ GymCan contracted Lauren Brett , a Leadership Coach with Sport Law, to engage with coaches and support staff as part of the WAG Olympic Team Leadership Project. This work involved supporting the Olympic preparation and attending pre-departure camp, personal Nova psychometric assessment, 1:1 coaching, and a Nova Integration Group Session.
b. Provide a variety of resources for mental health support, such as individual counselling, to help with healing and restorative processes for WAG in particular (and other disciplines if needed).	In-progress 🔄 GymCan partnered with Headversity , a proactive mental health support platform. The implementation plan is being developed by the Director, Safe Sport, and will be communicated to the National Team programs in late 2024. GymCan is working with organizations such as Working with Parents in Sport , You Can Play , and Dare to Care to provide psycho-education to the gymnastics community.
c. Facilitate a community-wide town hall virtual discussion on how a reset / improvement is possible within the WAG community.	In-progress 🔄 GymCan is planning to work with an external third party to hold constructive conversations to improve the overall culture within the WAG community.



Strengthening Leadership in the Disciplines




Recommendation 8. Provide resources to improve leadership skills of leaders in each discipline.

SEA Considerations	GymCan Commitment
<p>a. Provide internal and external leadership coaching and mentorship tailored for each discipline and designed to be cross-disciplinary.</p>	<p>In-progress 🔄 GymCan contracted Lauren Brett who completed Leadership Coaching projects with the Rhythmic Gymnastics National Team Coaches and the WAG National Team program.</p> <p>GymCan plans to engage with the MAG and TG National Team programs in 2025.</p> <p>GymCan plans to provide ongoing leadership coaching and support to the HP staff in 2025.</p>
<p>b. Provide tailored resources to assist leaders with team building within the disciplines.</p>	<p>In-progress 🔄 GymCan is gathering athlete feedback from Senior National Team members, to better understand what topics need to be addressed within each discipline. GymCan is looking at unique ways to gather feedback as we recognize survey fatigue within the National Team environment.</p> <p>Lauren Brett is currently engaging in conversation with MAG and WAG athletes post-Olympic Games.</p> <p>GymCan is currently engaged in the Culture of Excellence Project which seeks to improve the overall culture within the HP environment. Information gathered through the Culture Assessment and Audit Tool (CAAT) will inform an action plan to help guide future strategic direction.</p>
<p>c. Organize a facilitated team building session in conjunction with each discipline's leaders during which the participants create team charters.</p>	<p>Completed (September 2023 – June 2024) ✓ GymCan contracted Lauren Brett who facilitated the Designing the Team Alliance workshops with each Olympic discipline.</p>



Improving Educational Opportunities

Recommendation 9. Provide more support and psycho-educational resources to build resiliency and strengthen well-being.

SEA Considerations	GymCan Commitment
<p>a. Offer more internal and external resources for coaches, including counselling resources, and opportunities for coaches to “self-report” or learn in an anonymous, safe way about ‘grey zone’ concerns, such as an anonymous helpline where coaches could explore different approaches.</p>	<p>In-progress </p> <p>GymCan acknowledges that it can improve the support and resources available to coaches. GymCan is in the process of developing Phase 2 of the new website which includes an updated Safe Sport Resources page. The Resources page is separated by topic such as Safe Sport Learning and Training, Abuse Prevention & Response Resources, Equity & Inclusion Resources and Mental Health & Wellbeing Resources.</p> <p>As part of the monthly Gymformation newsletter, GymCan includes external learning and training opportunities for coaches and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Communications Coordinator will create infographics from speaker series topics to be shared publicly.</p>
<p>b. Provide more internal and external educational supports for athletes to build their resiliency. This should also extend to retired athletes for help transitioning to retired life and for some, healing.</p>	<p>In-progress </p> <p>GymCan will create a “Welcome to the National Team” package which will include resources for athletes. One of these resources is GamePlan which provides tools and support to athletes transitioning out of sport.</p> <p>GymCan will communicate and implement Headversity with the National team in late 2024.</p> <p>GymCan is developing a process to include educational workshops during training camps across national levels.</p>
<p>c. Offer cross-discipline coaching and mentoring to coaches so they can learn and exchange ideas more openly and build on positive features of culture in some disciplines and identify negative ones in others.</p>	<p>In-progress </p> <p>GymCan is piloting a Coach-to-Coach Mentorship Project.</p> <p>GymCan is in the process of planning the Gymnastics Community Summit/Conference which is being coordinated by a joint NSO/PTSO working group. Presentations will include education on mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>GymCan is piloting an NCCP Comp 4 course which will integrate cross-discipline content through</p>



	mentorship between coaches, IST, and other experts related to positive coaching approaches.
d. Provide more support, practice tools, and resources to coaches during this transition to using more modern and positive coaching approaches; include a guide on the practical application of the UCCMS to gymnastics.	<p>Completed May 2024 ✓ GymCan and True Sport have co-developed and launched a gymnastic-specific Value-Based coaching module.</p> <p>GymCan declared the 2024 Canadian Championships a True Sport event for the first time in organizational history.</p> <p>In-progress 🟡 GymCan will share and communicate tools developed by external organizations (e.g. CAC, True Sport, FIG) that reinforce positive coaching approaches. For example, the CAC offers modules including Bystander Empowerment, Intercultural Skills in Sport, Mental Health in Sport, Safe Sport Training, Modelling Healthy Relationships, Creating a Positive Sport Environment, and Understanding the Rule of Two.</p>
e. Create more capacity for safeguarding and safety through the hiring of staff to assist the work of the Director, Safe Sport and the Director of HR.	<p>Completed May 2024 ✓ GymCan hired a Project Manager, Safety and Safeguarding in May 2024 to support the Director, Safe sport.</p> <p>GymCan will continue to ensure that appropriate human resources are in place to support safety and human resource management efforts.</p>

Recommendation 10. Create an information campaign to help the gymnastics community, including parents, understand that they must do their part to ensure safety and inclusion and to positively contribute to a healthy environment by examining how to better achieve those goals within their own roles.

SEA Considerations	GymCan Commitment
a. Develop a resource to support complainants at the very beginning of the complaint process when they are deciding whether to proceed; resources should include information on when the respondent learns of the complaint, and at what point information in the process could become more public.	<p>In-progress 🟡 GymCan will share and communicate tools developed by external sources through their various communication channels.</p> <p>GymCan is creating an infographic and flow chart explaining the OSIC and ITP Sport complaint process that will be shared with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>With the Abuse Free Sport Program transitioning from SDRCC to the CCES in April 2025, GymCan will ensure that updates to the complains process will be clearly communicated in both official languages.</p>



	GymCan will hold webinars to explain the new Abuse Free Sport Program.
b. Develop a resource that outlines the options the complainant has to resolve an issue, from informal to formal resolution methods.	In-progress ✓ GymCan will create an infographic and flow chart explaining the complaint process. This will be available on GymCan's website and will be communicated and explained to all relevant stakeholders.
c. Provide focused training on the understanding and prevention of physical forms of maltreatment, abuse, and other prohibited behaviours as it helps all GymCan community members to understand what these are, and what behaviour is permissible and what is not; in particular, heighten awareness of what discrimination is, how to identify it, and how to prevent it.	In-progress ✓ GymCan is collaborating with various partners to develop educational tools and provide informative webinars on Safe Sport topics. GymCan will incorporate specific and relevant educational sessions during National Team training camps.
d. Offer annual education and information sessions specifically for parents new to the National Team environment to learn about safe sport expectations and to connect and collaborate with GymCan, as parents are a necessary and critical partner for safeguarding and inclusion.	In-progress ✓ GymCan has initiated their work with Working with Parents in Sport who will deliver a series of webinars tailored to parents of high-performance gymnasts. Parent specific resources will be available in the Working with Parents in Sport GymCan portal.
e. Continue to offer training and resources related to the <i>Code of Conduct and Ethics</i> and the UCCMS for those new to the sport environment at key times during the year, and refresher training, updates, and resources for those already in the sport environment on an annual basis. Ensure the training and resources are easily accessible, clear, and tailored to the stakeholder group, the discipline, and the role of those receiving the information; provide opportunities for users to evaluate the training and resources so that they are continually improved.	In-progress ✓ GymCan will share and communicate tools developed by external sources through their various communication channels. GymCan is creating an infographic and flow chart explaining the OSIC and ITP Sport complaint process that will be shared with relevant stakeholders. With the Abuse Free Sport Program transitioning from SDRCC to the CCES in April 2025, GymCan will ensure that updates to the complains process will be clearly communicated in both official languages. GymCan will continue to host webinars in collaboration with the new Abuse Free Sport Program.

