



FINAL REPORT OF THE SAFETY FIRST NATIONAL TASK FORCE

October 2020

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INTRODUCTION

This report compiled by the Wrestling Canada Lutte (WCL) Safety First National Task Force (SFNTF) of includes an overview of the work completed in relation to the *Report Concerning Independent Review of Coaching Culture for Wrestling Canada Lutte* prepared by David Bennett (the 'Report'). It also provides an overview of the actions that WCL has taken in response to the report.

A call for nominations to the SFNTF went out in December 2018. Following some delays in filling key positions, the group was formalized in April 2019. Between April 2019 and July 2020, the SFNTF has been working to address the recommendations in the report and are able to report on completed items as per the SFNTF Terms of Reference (Terms of Reference report below).

A brief timeline of activities since the previous update report of July 2019 can be seen below.

The recommendations of the report have been broken down into key areas of:

- Policy/Procedure
- Education and Training
- Complaint management

As this document serves as a final report, it should be read in conjunction with the 6 Month Update and Traffic Light Report submitted in July 2019.

The SFNTF members have been encouraged by the progress made in several areas, particularly in education and training. However, the SFNTF urges the leadership of WCL to maintain their course and implement the policy recommendations and the establishment of a clear 3rd Party Complaints process. There is no doubt that solutions are being developed across the wider sporting landscape, but it is vital that the focus of WCL remain on the wrestling specifics and how our sport is impacted.

As chair of the SFNTF I would like to put on record my sincere thanks to all who participated and contributed in this process and worked together to make our culture better. The word "culture" comes from the Latin, "cultus" which means to care. It has been clear from the level of engagement throughout that the community and the SFNTF care deeply for our sport.

The SFNTF members should be commended for their time, commitment and passion. Cultural change takes time and this is only the first step in a long journey for Canadian wrestling. A pathway has been outlined and it remains for all of us in wrestling to follow it.

SAFETY FIRST NATIONAL TASK FORCE

The Safety First National Task Force (SFNTF) was created to review the recommendations of the Report and strategize their potential implementation. An open call was shared with the wrestling community to identify those who wished to be involved. The call sought to obtain the following representatives across the various WCL stakeholder groups: a male and a female athlete, a male and a female coach, an official, WCL staff and a member of the public. No male athlete volunteered but two female athletes offered to represent the athlete demographic.

This table below provides a self-evaluation of the actions taken by the Safety First National Task Force. The first two columns are from the updated Terms of Reference (TOR) finalized on June 19, 2019 and subsequently posted on the WCL website. Bolding has been added to the original to highlight key actions required. The third column is an assessment of the work actions taken by the task force.

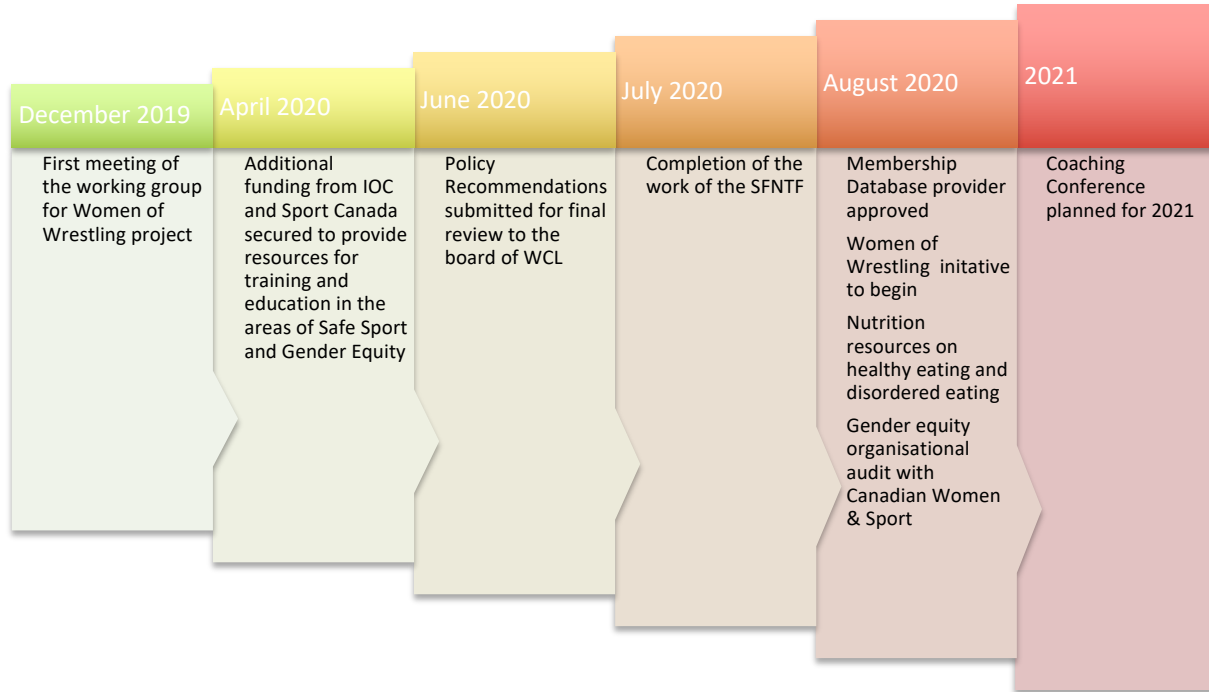
| Terms of Reference | | Actions taken by the Task Force |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Mandate | <p>Stemming from the release of the “Report Concerning Independent Review of Coaching Culture for WCL” or “Report”, the WCL BOD committed to striking a “Safety First Task Force” to assess and evaluate the recommendations and to develop an action plan, prioritizing and implementing the most critical initiatives in order to advance safe sport at WCL.</p> <p>Primary consideration will be given to an implementation plan at the NSO level. Additional consideration may be given to implementation at the PTSO and club level.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The recommendations in the report were reviewed with most being accepted and some not accepted as written. - The recommendations were prioritized and it was noted what recommendations could be advanced by the task force and what recommendations would best be worked on by others. - A plan for task force actions was created. Task force members had input to the action plan by others and were kept up to date on progress. - Primary consideration was given to implementation at the NSO level. - In addition, task force members regularly considered implementation at the PTSO and club level along with implementation with officials. |

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| <p>Key Duties / Responsibilities</p> | <p>The task force will be focused primarily on the recommendations arising from the “Report”. In developing an action plan, the task force’s objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examine, establish and provide feedback on priorities among the recommendations - Recommend implementation of recommendations to appropriate parties (eg. legal counsel, system experts, athletes, etc.) - Liaise directly with the Athlete Council and broader athlete community - Be Champions of Safe Sport - The BOD may extend the mandate and duties of the task force <p>Duties of the Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has ultimate accountability - Responsible for management of task force, including scheduling meetings, preparing the agenda (in consultation with the Executive Director) and presiding over meetings - Ensures that the views of all participating members are considered - Supports an open, transparent and inclusive communication through the project - Renders decisions taken (consensus basis) - Conveys task force recommendations and advice to the BOD through written reports - Provides reports and updates at each task force meeting and will bring forward any issues requiring resolution or decision. | <p>The task force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helped prioritize the recommendations. - Inputted to how recommendations could be implemented by other parties and worked with some of these parties on the details (e.g. the Sport Law & Strategy Group, Dr. Amanda Stanec and Siobhan Richardson). - Task force members liaised with the Athlete Council. - In addition, task force members liaised with the Coaches Council and the Canadian Association of Wrestling Officials. - Task force members are champions of Safe Sport. <p>The Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensured that views of all were considered and that there was open and inclusive communication. - A consensus-based decision process was in place. - Task force recommendations and advice were conveyed to the BOD through written reports. - In addition, written updates to the broader wrestling community were shared. - Provided updates at each task force meeting and brought forward issues requiring resolution or decision. |
| <p>Authority</p> | <p>The SFNTF is a collaborative group, which will produce final recommendations to the BOD.</p> <p>May from time to time invite to its meetings such other individuals as it deems can contribute to the work of the council (eg. consultants).</p> <p>Can schedule meetings and other activities to facilitate consensus on recommendations.</p> | |

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| <p>Composition & Decision-Making</p> | <p>The SFTF shall be comprised of no less than five and up to seven members:</p> <p>CHAIR: The role of Chair will be determined by the WCL Management Team, following an open call for interest of qualified individuals.</p> <p>MEMBERS*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 Athlete representatives (appointed by the Athlete Council); 1 male and 1 female. If there are no applications by athletes of either gender then an additional athlete can be added regardless of gender. - 2 Coach representatives (open call); 1 male and 1 female. If there are no applications by coaches of either gender then an additional athlete can be added regardless of gender. - 1 official representative (appointed by CAWO) - Up to 2 representatives (appointed by the BOD), one of which is the Chair (appointed by the MT); 1 male and 1 female. If there are no applications by coaches of either gender then an additional athlete can be added regardless of gender. - 1 Wrestling Canada Lutte (WCL) staff member (appointed by WLC Management Team) <p>*Gender balance will be a key consideration.</p> <p>The following criteria were used to identify individuals as potential task force members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expert knowledge (facilitation, change management, policy & program development, relationship management, problem solving, strategic planning, etc.) - Knowledge of the organization’s key stakeholders - Good communication skills - Ability to be impartial and maintain confidentiality - Availability and willingness to serve - Ability to work with team members - Gender diversity <p>VOTING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision-making is by majority vote. Quorum shall be the majority of members. | <p>The members of the SFNTF are:</p> <p>Chair – Lúcas Ó’Ceallacháin (Chair) Member – Danielle Lappage (Athlete) Member – Jessica Brouillette (Athlete) Member – Laura Steffler (Coach) Member – Dave Collie (Coach) Member – Marcia Chiasson (Official) Member – Laura Jones-Summers (PSO executive) Member – Bill Bain (external)</p> |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each member will have one (1) vote. There are no proxy votes. | |
| Meetings | <p>The task force will meet, at a minimum, on a monthly basis, starting in April 2019 or until such time as the task force has tabled its final report. A draft report is to be presented to the BOD by end of June 2019.</p> <p>The demands of the project may require more frequent meetings as decided by the task force and approved by the chair.</p> <p>Meetings will be held by teleconference and videoconference wherever feasible.</p> | <p>Meetings were held in line with members availability and the timeline of the action plan. Given the complexity of the work, the nature of culture change and competing demands on task force members, the work took significantly longer than originally envisioned.</p> |
| Reporting | <p>Reporting through the Chair as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting minutes and notes will be maintained - Updates provided for BOD meetings - The Task Force will report to the Members at the Annual Meeting of Members in the form of a written report | <p>Meeting minutes, notes and other information are maintained on a Google Drive with shared access for members.</p> |
| Approval | <p>Terms of Reference were approved by the Management Team on December 18, 2018. They were updated in June 2019 by the Safety First National Task Force Members following their inaugural meeting in April 2019.</p> | |

TIMELINES



POLICY / PROCEDURE

This area has proven to be one of the most challenging. The SafeSport landscape is unfolding rapidly as Canadian sport seeks a unified approach to a common problem. This included the development of a Universal Code of Conduct and several statements concurrent with the SFNTF conducting its work.

The mandate of the SFNTF has always been to provide recommendations on policy as a result of the Bennett Report. A desktop review was conducted of existing policies along with a review of external resources such as the USA Wrestling SafeSport handbook. Feedback was gathered from USA Wrestling representatives including Tony Black and Director of Safe Sport Dan Prochnow.

We formed a small working group (Bill Bain, Jess Brouillette, Laura Steffler) internally that collaborated with Steven Indig from Sport Law Strategy Group. The Sport Law Strategy Group presented a draft set of policies and the sub-group worked to ensure these are applicable to the wrestling context including the realities of the sport and the approaches already being taken. The group also updated the policies to address recent changes such as the legalization of marijuana. An entire suite of policies was developed for WCL Board to consider in October 2019 and a final version was submitted to the board in June 2020.

Extensive consultation took place between the SFNTF and athletes, coaches, officials and staff. It was important to the group to fairly represent the views of our sport. While we appreciate the significant challenge WCL faces to implement the policies for all members in all jurisdictions, this is the commitment that was given at the Annual Meeting in 2019. The policy audit and implementation of changes affect most of the recommendations of the report and remain the priority. It is also important to note that task force members received a range of opinions from the stakeholder groups and there is no consensus on issues such as relations within the wrestling community and the consumption of alcohol. That said, the task force heard all the opinions and took these competing views into account when ultimately recommending a path forward.

While the SFNTF understand that the approval/implementation process for policy still has formal steps for ratification, our role is complete in providing the recommendations. To ensure the common perspective of the work of the SFNTF is presented we would recommend that task force members be invited to any further meetings or discussions on the policy suite.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

WCL held important workshops with athletes (December 2018) and coaches (July 2019) facilitated by Dr. Amanda Stanec to try and get to the core of the issues. Additional workshops were held with Dina Bell Larocche and Siobhan Richardson on Respectful Interactions. We are grateful to the Respect Group and Wayne McNeil in particular for their support of this unique initiative.

A range of online training modules have been added as requirements for participants in WCL activities:

- Respect in Sport
- Making Headway Concussion (CAC)
- Making Ethical Decisions (CAC)
- SafeSport (CAC)

In April 2020, WCL included the Safe Sport module of the CAC/NCCP as part of the athlete agreement to ensure a common language for wrestling in approaching Safe Sport. It was encouraging to see wrestling represented in the resource by Olympic Champion Erica Wiebe and her coach Paul Ragusa.

Additionally, WCL is part of the Responsible Coaching Movement and introduced recommendations for Open and Observable Environments connected to the Rule of Two. In addition, detailed police and background checks are now in place for all WCL activities for all participants.

WCL successfully applied for funding from Sport Canada and the IOC for support in the areas of Women in Sport and Safe Sport. The actions from these funds have been slightly delayed due to the hosting of the Pan Am Olympic Qualification events and the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. An initial meeting of the working group was held in December 2019 and the next session is scheduled for July 2020.

A number of exciting initiatives are in the early planning stages including work on strategy and policy with the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport and the launch of the WOW (Women of Wrestling) program with a Coaches Conference and a Wrestle Like a Girl Camp for Cadet/Junior female athletes.

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

There is still a lack of clarity on how Independent 3rd Party Complaints will be managed by WCL. The policy suite will have an impact on this. The SFNTF understands that WCL is currently reviewing this process and an update to the community would be most welcome.

The SFNTF highly recommends that all complaints results (Appeals, SDRCC, Complaints) be published by WCL on their website to ensure transparency. The information should include the parties involved, the date the process began and the final decision.

Updates on ongoing complaints are problematic as confidentiality must be maintained throughout the process. However, the SFNTF suggests that more could be done to provide updates in terms of expected timelines, which processes are currently engaged in, etc. while still adhering to confidentiality.

OTHER

The SFNTF notes and welcomes the recent WCL request for proposal (RFP) for a Membership Database which will support the oversight of tracking policy implementation.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES RELATIVE TO THE REPORT

- Green – complete
- Yellow – ongoing
- White – no progress

Of the 52 recommendations, 15 are complete, 34 are ongoing and 3 are no progress. An additional 12 of the ongoing recommendations will be complete upon approval of the policy recommendations.

| Recommendation Number | Description | Pillar | Notes |
|-----------------------|--|--------|---|
| 1 | A prohibition on sexual relationships between national team coaches and athletes (p 12) | Policy | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 2 | A prohibition on sexual relationships between national team coaches and other coaches (p 12) | Policy | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 3 | A prohibition on sexual relationships between national team coaches and WCL staff (p 12) | Policy | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 4 | A prohibition on sexual relationships between staff and staff (p 12) | Policy | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 5 | A prohibition on sexual relationships between staff and athletes (p 12) | Policy | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 6 | Mandatory Vulnerable Sector Check for all WCL staff and coaches (p 13) | Policy | In place. |
| 7 | Mandatory Vulnerable Sector Check for all provincial staff and coaches (p 13) | Policy | In place – review with PTSOs. New membership database will support tracking this information. |
| 8 | Creation of a coach and athlete database to ensure they have met the requirements to be licensed, including the completion of a background screen, signature of the coaching Code of Conduct and the identification of coaches who have breached the coaching Code of Conduct (p 13) | Other | Database work underway in partnership with Interpodia. |

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| 9 | Rule of Two policy implemented for athletes under eighteen (p 13) | Policy Education/ Training | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. WCL has guidelines on Open & Observable Environments: https://wrestling.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Open-Observable-Environments_v2.pdf |
| 10 | There should be an annual review of all safety policies (p 13) | Policy | Ongoing process which should be undertaken by the Safe Sport group. |
| 11 | There should be an independent review of the allegations made by the two anonymous parties to OTP, the Minister of Sport and WCL (p 13) | Policy 3rd Party Reporting | Ongoing process. Recommendations that any decisions from complaints, appeals, SDRCC, etc. be published and communicated for transparency. |
| 12 | Mandatory training for all coaches who participate internationally, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to deal with the modern athlete • Coaching the female athlete (Coaching males and females differently) • Psychological motivation • How to communicate with the modern athlete • How to motivate an athlete: What is the difference between motivating and bullying • Nutrition • Weight cutting • Training about the ways the body and mind can react to stress • Training about how to spot eating disorders and disordered eating • Sexual harassment • Ethics and conduct (representing Canada) (p 19) | Policy Education/ Training | Proposal to deliver Coach Education as a priority to the High Performance Coaches has been submitted. Aiming to build a series of webinars with Coaches Council and bring this together at the national conference. Webinars are currently being developed with relevant IST leads. |
| 13 | There should be no physical contact between coaches and athletes (p 20) | Other | Specific work completed with Siobhan Richardson during the Canada Cup with our HP Coaches and Athletes. This work will be further supported by the adoption of the Athlete Protection Policy. |
| 14 | Verbal abuse, including swearing, yelling, using pejorative language (slut, lazy, fat, useless) should be prohibited by the Code of Conduct (p 20) | Policy Education/ Training Other | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 15 | Coaches should not be pushing their athletes physically until they vomit or are on the mat in tears from exhaustion (p 20) | Education/ Training Other | Universal code and policies deal with this aspect, however the messaging will be reinforced through coach education. |

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| 16 | Coaches and staff need to be reminded that they are there for the athletes and not the other way around (p 20) | Other | Currently in place; ongoing messaging from WCL to support this. |
| 17 | There needs to be more opportunities for new and young coaches (p 20) | Other | WOW (Women of Wrestling) proposal was submitted to the COC and Sport Canada. The proposal was approved and actions will focus on creating opportunities for more women in wrestling, including young coaches. The coaching conference will also target emerging young coaches. |
| 18 | There needs to be the development and promotion of more women coaches (p 20) | Other | |
| 19 | Protocol around contacting athletes (p 20) | Education/ Training Other | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 20 | Discontinue the practice of "Birthday Beats" (p 20) | Other | This has never been a practice of WCL, however, this will be emphasized in training and education. |
| 21 | Prohibit drinking between coaches and athletes (p 22) | Policy | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 22 | Develop a policy concerning alcohol consumption (p 22) | Policy | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 23 | Develop a policy on cannabis for coaches and staff members (p 23) | Policy | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 24 | There should be mandatory education for all coaches and athletes around concussions (p 25) | Education/ Training | Making Headway in Sport concussion education in place for coaches, and medical staff. Athletes are provided information and education via information sheets from Parachute Canada as part of their athlete agreement. WCL committed to hosting a webinar on this topic in fall 2020. |
| 25 | If an athlete is funded by WCL then they should use WCL's medical treatment for concussions and other major injuries (p 25) | Education/ Training | Athlete Handbook and Athlete Agreements state this but it will be communicated more overtly to the groups concerned. |
| 26 | There needs to be a formalized written medical clearance before an athlete can go back to practice or competition (p 25) | Other | WCL is currently developing the Physical Preparedness Exam (PPE) policy for athletes to ensure athletes are competition ready or receiving the necessary treatment. |
| 27 | It should be mandatory that coaches receive training on healthy eating, dieting, weight loss, disordered eating and eating disorders (p 27) | Education/ Training | Proposal to deliver Coach Education as a priority to the High Performance Coaches has been submitted. Aiming to build a series of webinars with Coaches Council and bring this together at the national coaching conference. Webinars are currently being developed with our relevant IST Leads. |

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| 28 | Athletes need to be given more resources for healthy eating (p 27) | Education/ Training | Resources available on the WCL Athlete Private Page. Will work on a webinar with Athlete Council on this as well as IST Lead |
| 29 | The nutritionist needs to be doing more to work with the athletes outside of Calgary (p 27) | Education/ Training | The nutritionist is the national lead and works with local nutritionists to provide this support regularly. During the Gold Medal Profile Camps, athletes get regular sessions and access to Kelly Drager (December in Vancouver, July in Calgary, October in Japan). |
| 30 | Develop and promote a national initiative that promotes healthy attitudes towards food (p 27) | Education/ Training | Currently developing with IST lead for the Coaches Conference. |
| 31 | It should be added into the Code of Conduct that coaches should not be asking athletes to cut weight (p 27) | Other | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 32 | Coaches should be given mandatory training on coaching the female athlete (p 29) | Education/ Training | Ongoing. Recommendation the IOC resources in the short-term. |
| 33 | There needs to be the development and promotion of more women coaches (p 29) | Other | WOW Proposal approved – actions to follow. |
| 34 | WCL should conduct a study of how women’s monthly cycles impact their weight and weight class (p 29) | Education/ Training | This is already in existence and was delivered to our HP Coaches previously. Going forward, it will form part of the Coach Education resources. |
| 35 | Coaches should be given access to childcare (p 29) | Other | Currently available. |
| 36 | Clarify Job Positions Among WCL Staff (p 32) | Other | HP Unit Restructure completed. Updates provided in Athlete Handbook and via webinar. |
| 37 | Have a More Professional Board of Directors Composed and Increased Gender Parity Among Board Members (p 32) | Other | BOD task. May also be supported by WOW initiative. Bylaws reflect language around gender parity. |
| 38 | Bring in more women to serve on the Board of Directors (p 33) | Other | BOD task. May also be supported by WOW initiative. Bylaws reflect language around gender parity. |
| 39 | Develop a Database of Athletes and Coaches (p 33) | Other | Linked to the membership database. |
| 40 | Create a harassment policy (p 33) | Policy | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |

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| 41 | Provide athletes training on the new sexual harassment policy (p 33) | Education/ Training | Once policy is approved by BOD information will be provided via webinar. |
| 42 | Create a reporting mechanism for sexual harassment claims and outline the process in the Code of Conduct (p 33) | Policy 3rd Party Reporting | Policy recommendations completed and provided to the BOD. |
| 43 | Investigate all future leaks of sensitive information and sanction those responsible (p 33) | Other | BOD operates under a set of Good Governance Principles and Norms. |
| 44 | Respond to athletes' and coaches' requests for information in a timely manner (p 34) | Other | Ongoing |
| 45 | Conduct exit interviews with all athletes and employees who leave (p 34) | Policy | |
| 46 | Review whether any board members of WCL are in a Conflict of Interest (p 34) | Other | Recommend that a bio of each BOD member and a signed COI form be published online. |
| 47 | Establish an independent Complaints Person (p 35) | 3rd Party Reporting | Complaints and Appeal Officer announced and in place. |
| 48 | Advise athletes of their rights to appeal a decision under the Appeal Policy and to the SDRCC (p 35) | Policy | Athlete Agreement webinar and handbook provides this information. |
| 49 | WCL should lobby with the other NSOs to create an ombudsman for sport (p 35) | 3rd Party Reporting | WCL should continue to lobby for an ombudsperson. |
| 50 | Coaches' salaries at the National Centers should be reviewed and a better compensation package should be paid (p 36) | Other | HP Unit Restructure completed and incorporates this. |
| 51 | Athletes should be involved in the implementation of the recommendations made in this report (p 37) | Other | Athlete engagement has increased greatly and should be maintained. |
| 52 | There should be an audit carried out after six months and a second audit after a year to evaluate whether the recommendations in this report have been implemented (p 37) | Other | Ongoing |