

Ringette Canada Athletes' Council
TERMS OF REFERENCE - January 2026

Name	<i>Ringette Canada Athletes' Council (RCAC)</i>
Guiding Principles	<p>The RCAC operation, discussions, and recommendations will reflect Ringette Canada's "I CARE" values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Innovation – We try new things and take new approaches to achieve our goals while managing risks. ○ Community – We welcome diverse perspectives to enrich our experience. We consider the greater good. We purposefully create a safe and welcoming sport and work environment." ○ Accountability – We manage and lead with integrity. We operate with transparency and communicate proactively. We take responsibility for our actions and learn from our mistakes. ○ Respect – For the game. For the rules. For our heritage. For each other. ○ Excellence – We demand quality. We bring our best to each situation. We strive for continuous improvement. We deliver world leading programs and services. <p>The RCAC operation, discussions, and recommendations will be guided by True Sport Principles, as well as the following principles outlined by AthletesCAN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Responsible Voice - the RCAC will work with Ringette Canada to find solutions to obstacles facing ringette athletes. The RCAC should endeavor to be collaborative, proactive and respectful while working together to help both the organization and athletes succeed. ○ Inclusivity - these terms of reference will ensure all Ringette senior and junior national team athletes are well represented on the RCAC
Purpose	<p>The RCAC's purpose is to contribute to the development of a positive culture for all involved in National Team and National Ringette League (NRL) programming by representing and promoting athletes' views and interests to Ringette Canada Staff on all matters which directly or indirectly affect athletes in the National Team Program and provide a perspective from athletes in the National Ringette League. In practical terms, the RCAC directly connects the athletes to the staff, governance and leadership of Ringette Canada.</p> <p>The RCAC, as the collective National Team Program and a voice for National Ringette League Program, is to assist Ringette Canada in the fulfillment of its mission and the pursuit of its vision to provide lifelong opportunities in a safe, inclusive and challenging sport environment. The RCAC shall consistently provide the athletes' perspective through Ringette Canada supported reporting mechanisms.</p>

	<p>Specifically, the RCAC is to provide input and feedback to the Staff on behalf, and in the interest of the athletes regarding national team National Team athletes and a voice for matters related to the NRL athletes, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Ensuring athletes are included and participate in a constructive manner in the feedback and decision-making processes of Ringette Canada. B. Ensuring to the greatest extent possible, that Ringette Canada policies and programs meet the needs of the athletes. C. Advocating athlete-focused decision making to help Ringette Canada develop a culture where the rights of the athletes are respected at all times.
<p>Key Duties / Responsibilities</p>	<p>A. The general responsibilities of the RCAC members are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be a part of creating a more equitable, inclusive and psychologically safe sport system—a welcoming environment that values and supports girls and women to participate and lead. 2. To model the Ringette Canada I-CARE Values at all times. 3. To actively represent the interests of Ringette Canada's National Team and be one voice for the NRL / High Performance Program athletes by soliciting input and bringing forth program strengths, as well as issues with the intention of affecting change for the betterment of Ringette in Canada, through the appropriate individual within Ringette Canada regarding current or contemplated programs, policies and procedures. 4. Provide leadership, input and feedback on ways the athlete can contribute to the development of a positive culture for athletes, coaches, officials and staff. 5. Ensure athletes participate in a constructive and professional manner in the decision making and feedback process of Ringette Canada. 6. With the support of Ringette Canada staff, pursue the development and maintenance of systems that will define and secure athletes' rights. 7. Ensure to the greatest extent possible, that Ringette Canada policies and programs meet the needs of the athletes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Staying informed on current issues, policies and procedures including, but not limited to, National Team Selection Criteria, Code of Conduct Policy, anti-doping programs and regulations, IRF Rule Changes, Athlete Agreements, high performance plans, and the NRL Handbook, etc. b. Review, and provide feedback and input prior to approval on documents directly or indirectly affecting athletes. c. Providing athlete feedback to the staff representative for Operational Policy change considerations. d. Providing athlete feedback on governance policies to meet the needs of the athletes through Ringette Canada Sport Director. 8. To communicate issues of concern to the National Team athletes they represent, ensuring there is an effective communication network, with support from Ringette Canada, to and from the athletes on policies, programs and other athlete relevant issues. 9. To provide an annual RCAC Athlete Report and if requested, present at the Annual General Meeting. 10. To make their best efforts to participate in all RCAC meetings.

B. Specific responsibilities of the RCAC include to:

1. Develop various forums and platforms including direct email, Google Forms, in which athletes can share and develop information or ideas as they relate to the development or well-being of athletes at all levels.
2. Be a resource to athletes for any reason whatsoever, including, without limitations, all matters relating to the performance and well-being of the athletes.
 - a. Develop a communications plan whereby athletes can contact their representative (i.e., via Google Form)
 - b. Determine what tools or solutions athletes require to assist them with challenges and identify opportunities.
 - c. Develop a reporting process whereby the athlete council communicates all athlete communication.
3. Represent the athletes as it relates to creating Safe and Welcoming Sport for athletes, staff and stakeholders.
4. Develop and build leadership succession and skills within the athlete community as a whole that can be measured by the number of athlete candidates that put their name forward for election.
 - a. Delegate tasks to council members and support them in task completion.
5. Regularly schedule council meetings to determine areas of opportunity and solutions to present to Ringette Canada staff.
6. Provide clarity and priority needs to the Ringette Canada staff regarding professional development areas of focus (resources or training) that would benefit teams and athletes to deliver safe and welcoming sport.
7. Recognizing and reflecting inclusivity and the diversity of the organization in its actions and decisions,
 - a. Analyze the make-up of the Ringette Canada athlete group, and draft suggestions to share with the Board addressing how we could attract a more diverse group of athletes & be more inclusive to our current and prospective athletes.
8. The RCAC must develop an annual calendar for meetings, events, and reports to present to the Sport Director at the beginning of each term (i.e. annually calendar weeks of the year - examples week 36, 50, 6, and 25 each season).
9. The Chair of the Council (or appointee) at the Senior and/or Junior level attends the AthletesCAN annual forum provided funding is available from AthletesCAN. Report back to the staff and Board about key learnings from the forum including, but not limited to, what the top priorities of AthletesCAN are, and what strategies Ringette Canada could implement to be aligned.
10. To name representatives as requested by Ringette Canada and other bodies for activities where athlete representation is an integral element.
11. Members of the RCAC shall not take stands on issues or represent themselves as members of the RCAC in areas of personal interest having no connection with official RCAC responsibilities; nor shall they falsely speak on behalf of the entire RCAC membership or reveal matters deemed confidential by the RCAC.

Authority	<p>The RCAC will exercise its authority in accordance with the bylaws, policies of Ringette Canada, in addition to the provisions set out in this Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The RCAC is established under the authority of the Ringette Canada Board of Directors and only has authority that is granted by the Board that retains sole power to grant that authority and is accountable to the Chief Executive Officer of Ringette Canada through the designates, the Sport Director and/or High Performance Coordinator.</p>
Composition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A minimum of five (5) and maximum of eight (8) athlete members are to form the RCAC. 2. At least two (2) and up to three (3) athletes are to be elected from each of the senior national team, and the current junior national team, up to two (2) positions may consist of next generation athletes that have graduated from the junior program and have not yet made the senior program. Consideration should be given for East/West representation and from a variety of NRL Teams. 3. Four (4) of the eight (8) athletes must be active members of the national team program. A maximum of two (2) officially retired (National Team Retirement Form has been submitted to Ringette Canada) athletes may be on the RCAC at one time, 4. At least one (1) bilingual (French-English) or French-speaking athlete is to be elected. 5. The Athletes' Council is committed to representing the voice and interests of the athletes. Therefore, when filling vacant positions on the Athletes' Council, every effort will be made to reflect diversity. <p>Eligibility for election to RCAC is limited to those athletes who are current members of the Senior or Junior National Team, or have been granted a medical exemption for the current National Team cycle, or those athletes who are <i>Eligible Alumni Members</i> who have been members of the National Team for any period within the six (6) years preceding the election as long as that individual is officially retired, and is still active in the sport of ringette.</p> <p>A. Non-voting members may be invited to attend Athletes' Council Meetings on a regular or ad hoc basis as agreed to by the Council Chair.</p> <p>"ELIGIBLE ALUMNI MEMBERS": <i>Alumni of the senior or junior national teams from within the last six years, who are not employed by Ringette Canada and/or actively coaching at the international level.</i></p>

RCAC Executive	<p>The Executive for the RCAC will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Chairperson b. Vice-Chair c. Secretary <p>A. Specific responsibilities of the RCAC Chairperson:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize and prepare the agenda for RCAC meetings. 2. Chair all RCAC formal meetings. 3. Ensure proper representation at all other related Athletes' Council meetings (ie. AthletesCAN) 4. Communicate with Ringette Canada's Sport Director or designate High Performance Coordinator 5. Delegate tasks to council members and support them in task completion. 6. Be the main point of contact for the Athlete Director to disseminate pertinent information from the Board back to the members of the Athletes' Council, National Team Program Athletes and the NRL Athletes where applicable. 7. Work with Ringette Canada staff to prepare an annual budget for the RCAC. <p>B. Specific Responsibilities of the RCAC Vice-Chair:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Serve as the alternate for the Chairperson when required. 2. Work with Ringette Canada staff to conduct a bi-annual and where possible an annual survey of athletes. <p>C. Specific Responsibilities of the RCAC Secretary:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Serve as the alternate for the Chairperson / Vice-Chair if ever required. 2. Record meeting minutes and ensure action items from each meeting of the RCAC are prepared and distributed to Ringette Canada staff designate and the National Team Program Athletes. 3. Training will be provided by Ringette Canada as requested or necessary.
RCAC Nomination and Election Procedures	<p>Nomination and Voting Eligibility</p> <p>To be nominated, prospective members must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Athletes who are current members of the Senior or Junior National Team, or have been granted a medical exemption for the current National Team cycle, or those athletes who are <i>Eligible Alumni Members</i> who have been members of the National Team for any period within the six (6) years preceding the election as long as that individual is officially retired, and is still active in the sport of ringette. 2. Be a registered athlete with a Member (provincial ringette association) of Ringette Canada at the time of their appointment or was a member in good standing when retired; and 3. Be in good standing with a Member (provincial ringette association) of Ringette Canada; and 4. Have not previously served the maximum of three consecutive terms. The Chair can serve a maximum of a fourth term. 5. Meet the minimum age requirement of 18 years old; and 6. Be able to attend the initial meeting of the RCAC. (Date TBD)

	<p>Election to the Ringette Canada Athletes' Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An electronic election will be held with the names of the eligible nominee(s) that have accepted their nominations. 2. Elections for a two-year term will be held every year using a staggered approach where at least half of the positions on the RCAC are elected in any given year. 3. Eligible members (current Junior and Senior National Team roster athletes, athletes granted an exemption for the current cycle, and athletes who have retired from the <u>previous</u> Senior or Junior National Team) or more recently hold one (1) vote each. 4. Eligible members and/or eligible alumni members who receive the most votes will be appointed to the available Athletes' Council position(s). 5. RCAC elections are to be held before the Ringette Canada AGM to have a full complement of members to start the season.
<p>Term</p>	<p>Athletes' Council members shall be elected for a two (2) year term in length with a maximum of to be three (3) terms for any one individual.</p> <p>Should a vacancy or removal occur on the RCAC in a given year, the Chairperson has the discretion in coordination/agreement with the rest of the Athletes' Council to appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term from the respective team, or wait until the next RCAC election to fill the vacancy.</p> <p>Election of RCAC Executive Positions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the first meeting of the RCAC following their election, vacant Executive positions will be elected by the members of the RCAC. 2. The Chairperson will be elected for a two-year term while the Vice-Chair and Secretary will be elected for one-year terms with election to these positions occurring on an annual basis.
<p>Removal From the RCAC</p>	<p>Non-compliance:</p> <p>If a Council's member fails to be actively engaged with the Council or for other reasons as defined within the Terms of Reference, such member may be removed or replaced at any time by the RCAC. The RCAC may fill any vacancy as it deems appropriate until the next Athletes' Council election. If and when a vacancy exists, the remaining members may exercise all its powers so long as a quorum remains.</p> <p>In addition, Members of the RCAC can be removed from the RCAC in one (1) of five (5) ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Violation of Ringette Canada's Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy. 2. An Individual misses 2 consecutive meetings without communication or rationale to the Chair. 3. A vote of non-confidence supported by at least three-quarters of the RCAC members. 4. Resignation. 5. The athlete no longer meets the eligibility requirements.

Governance	<p>Quorum for RCAC meetings shall be considered a simple majority, as in more than half of its voting members present at any given meeting.</p> <p>Voting at meetings of the RCAC:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The desired approach is to build consensus and obtain unanimous support among the members. In the absence of a unanimous vote, a decision will be made by a 'simple majority' vote, that is, more than half of the eligible votes, for or against. 2. Each elected RCAC member is allocated one (1) vote. 3. In the unlikely event of a tied vote, the Chairperson will carry the deciding vote.
Meetings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RCAC will strive to hold a minimum of four (4) official meetings annually, typically via tele conference or other electronic means. Where financially possible, it would be ideal that at least one (1) of the meetings be held face-to-face. 2. The Sport Director (or designate) High Performance Coordinator will be the main point of contact with the RCAC. 3. The Sport Director (or designate) High Performance Coordinator will be responsible for leading the budget process for the RCAC and coordinating meetings. 4. To ensure confidentiality of the athletes' views, in-camera sessions can be held during the meetings where only elected members are present. 5. The Sport Director and High Performance Coordinator will attend all RCAC meetings as an ex-officio member who has speaking rights. 6. Other ex-officio members, who may attend and have speaking rights include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ringette Canada Board Members, including the Athlete Director; b. Ringette Canada Chief Executive Officer; c. The Ringette Canada Safe Sport Officer d. Additional guests may be invited
Resources	<p>The Athletes' Council will be allocated the budgetary resources required to meet the key duties as outlined in this document.</p> <p>Ringette Canada will provide financial support to the RCAC for their participation in the following meetings on an annual basis:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For one (1) additional- individual to attend the AthletesCAN Forum (one is typically funded by AthletesCAN); and 2. For two (2) individuals to attend the Ringette Canada Annual General Meeting and Conference, if applicable and held in person.

Reporting	<p>The RCAC will report to the Sport Director of Ringette Canada..</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recording of Minutes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Minutes of the meetings will record time, date and participants of the meeting and any recommendations to be forwarded to the Sport Director and Designate. Respecting confidentiality and the potentially strategic and sensitive nature of the RCAC discussions, minutes will not record any of the discussion leading to these recommendations. b. Minutes will track action items which detail deliverables, status and the anticipated completion dates. <p>Via written communication the RCAC will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a report of minutes and action items to the Ringette Canada office following each RCAC meeting. The report shall be filed with the Sport Director (or designate) High Performance Coordinator. A status update on action items should be reported on at each meeting and carried forward until completed. 2. Advise National Team athletes on policy or program changes put forward by the Ringette Canada Board of Directors or Staff. 3. Bring forward athlete concerns to the attention of the Ringette Canada Sport Director and Athlete Director 4. As requested, provide and present a report to the Board, i.e. at Board Meetings and/or to the Members at the Ringette Canada Annual General Meeting
Approval	<p>These Terms of Reference were approved by the Ringette Canada Athletes' Council on January 26 , 2026</p>
Review	<p>These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.</p>