



NOVEMBER 2022 REPORT

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Lindsay Duncan

Rise Up Management Committee Chair

Send us your feedback, support
& ideas at riseup@artisticswimming.ca

Over the past 18 months, CAS has worked diligently toward improving our culture. We have outlined our progress in previous Rise Up Reports and here we chronicle our achievements, ongoing work, and continuing challenges.

The first phase of the Rise Up project is almost complete so it will now enter a new phase of operation becoming embedded in strategic and operational plans in the short and longer terms.

As we have stated before, we know that culture change takes time. We know there is a lot of work still to do. We encourage our registrants and our stakeholders to keep learning and growing along with us, improving their knowledge in the key areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

As our emphasis on culture spreads to all levels of our organization, and more community members are invited to take part, we look forward to seeing the impact we will have.

CAS continues to work hard to achieve our objectives in inclusion and diversity and thanks all of our artistic swimming community members for their continued engagement and support.

INTRODUCTION

A year and a half ago, facing allegations of an unsafe environment at our Senior National Team and at a time when social and sporting worlds were calling for increased diversity, representation, inclusivity, and safety, CAS embarked on an ambitious plan to “do better” for our people and our organization.

This document highlights the categories in focus as well as the completed and upcoming steps in our action plan.

AN AMBITIOUS PLAN

- We first outlined several areas for critical review and change.
- We set to work finding collaborators to assist us.
- We made a commitment to regular reporting on our progress of milestones.
 - Hired Balboa Sport to assist us with getting the word out about our Rise Up initiatives across various channels.
 - Reported on the progress of Rise Up initiatives through quarterly reports on our website.
 - Provided updates to Members at presidents' meetings to share and discuss our progress and challenges.
 - Aspire to align our communications across levels in the organization – from national, to provincial, to club – by sharing more across levels in the organization.
- Separated actions into two categories and detailed as follows:
 - Safe and welcoming sport
 - Culture and performance

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SAFE AND WELCOMING SPORT



- Led by the Governance Committee, with support from Benoit Girardin of LBB Consultants, **we completed a review and revision of our safe sport policy suite**. The first policies of which were launched in 2018. A further review is now underway considering feedback from provincial partners, several athletes and ensuring the policies align with the evolving Office of the Sport Integrity Commission (OSIC), and the newly revised UCCMS.
- We **implemented the Alias Reporting mechanism** to provide a consistent, confidential and low-stress electronic access route to provide feedback or to make a conduct-related complaint in accordance with our Discipline and Complaints Policy and Procedure.
- We have **committed to joining the OSIC program**.
- We have **completed Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training** for the staff and board members and included EDI training in the competition introduction coach training.
- We **held a technical conference** centered around safe and inclusive sport.
- We **procured funding from FINA and the Canadian Olympic Committee** to enable us to work with diversity experts and collaborators from INclusion INcorporated (ININ) and partners from other aquatic sports, to build an EDI e-learning module that is relevant to the aquatic context, as a resource for all of our participants.
- Led by Ryan Gushulak, Senior Manager of Sport Safety and Athlete Services, we **developed a D&I action plan** that outlines and prioritizes our actions over the short and long-terms.

- We **released an inclusion index survey to CAS registrants** to assess the quality of their experience in the sport. This survey is being conducted by our INclusion INcorporated and Bingo Impact Management partners.
- We **outlined a roadmap with key actions and timelines to make artistic swimming more inclusive**. One tangible way our organization can do this is by supporting AquaGO! promotion and implementation as a larger community, a program that involves all children in our national entry-level program.

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CULTURE AND PERFORMANCE



- With direction from our Chief Sport Officer Kerri Morgan, we have been **working to prioritize health and well-being for all of our people** – in balance with performance goals at all levels.
- We **held audition camps across the country** that allowed participation from a wide variety of athletes – over 200. **Athlete surveys** indicated that 98% of athletes felt they were treated with respect at camp, and 98% of athletes felt they were provided with a safe space to participate. In the senior team selection camp that followed, 98% of athletes felt they were provided with a safe space to participate and over 90% of athletes added that they felt that athlete health and wellness was prioritized during camp.
- We **implemented an extensive onboarding process for new Senior National Team members**, which helped them adapt to a new life in Montreal as they adjusted to the realities of full-time training.
- We **continue to support the athletes inside and outside the pool** through the role of the ombudsperson to build a stronger cultural base.
- We **led the charge internationally on developing and implementing the new FINA judging and scoring system** which will measure and quantify athletic performances on the basis of their difficulty and quality of performance much more objectively than the current system does – therefore providing much more specific feedback to athletes on their performances and less emphasis on physical attributes.

- Working with the Mental Health Manager at GamePlan, Dr. Krista Van Slingerland, we **have developed a new best-practice Mental Health Emergency Action Plan** for implementation at the senior national team level with further application for other levels to follow. **Mental health resources are being made available on the CAS website** to educate all stakeholders on the importance of mental health and wellness at all levels.

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COMMITTEE AND COLLABORATORS



- We **solicited collaboration and feedback from members of the CAS community** with a diversity of vantage points on the strengths and weaknesses within the sport.
- We **convened meetings of a Rise Up Management Committee** that could help direct some early action and priorities.
- We **solicited more focused feedback and collaboration from individuals with relevant knowledge/expertise** to help us move forward.

We recognize and thank the following for their guidance and support:

- **Benoit Girardin** for safe and welcoming sport policy work
- INclusion INcorporated (**Andrea Carey & team**) for educational materials and EDI plans.
- **Bingo Impact Management** for Inclusion Index Survey.
- **Susan Cockle and Kyle Paquette** for culture groundwork at the Senior National Team level.
- The original **Rise Up Management Committee members**.
- **Biz Price** for our “Rise Together” initiative that brought club coaches of national team members together to help with visioning for the development of our athletes and our program going forward.
- **Joelle Carpentier and JP Richard** of the organization re-Root for their on-going work with representatives of the CAS Coaching Community to teach coaching leaders how to work in the autonomous coaching space effectively.

CHALLENGES

Communication

We are always looking to improve in this area so our messages get out to everyone in our community and so that we are hearing from those with feedback to share.

Athlete committee

- Faced with an on-going class action lawsuit means that recent alumni **may not be available to consult** with us.
- We are **seeking the athlete voice** from as many athletes as possible.
- We are revisiting the **terms of reference for the CAS Athlete Council** and exploring how to align the selection of athlete chair with the nomination of board members to improve the process and **ensure we get strong, experienced athlete leaders** collaborating within the organization.
- We are **encouraging provinces to share the names of athletes with an interest in safe sport, diversity, and inclusion** who may be willing to work with us and provide feedback when needed.

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NEXT STEPS

- **Release the EDI e-learning module** to all registrants later this year.
- **Execute our diversity and inclusion action plan** over the next five years.
- **Align the D&I plan with our next strategic plan** that will be developed in 2023 .
- **Release the new CAS Body Positive Guideline** to encourage self-confidence and appropriate body image for all artistic swimming athletes.
- **Collect and share the Inclusion Index** (formerly called Belonging Metric)
- **Complete the Re-root autonomous coach training** of 20 provincial coach leaders and NT coaches. (Underway)
- **Conduct ongoing culture audits and 360-degree reviews** for the various national teams annually.
- **Focus communications on our culture work** to keep the organization aware and engaged in our top priorities as a regular business practice.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, **we are proud of the work we have done and confident that we are moving in the right direction.** Our plan was aspirational, but we are bringing those aspirations to life with clear intentions, a defined roadmap and practical implementation.

As we see in this report, there is hard work happening at the national level, but **when it comes to safe sport, diversity and inclusion, we are humbled by the common efforts made at the provincial level.** Efforts by provincial organizations themselves but also at the club level from coaches, parents and athletes who are shaping the future of the sport.

We see that **people are committed to making a positive change** - We're really on a roll!
Thank you to everyone for the support and ongoing commitment.

THANK YOU

We welcome everyone to share their ideas and opinions to be able to create a better environment for our athletes. We are also seeking the support of organizations with the resources and expertise to work with us.

We invite feedback & support at
riseup@artisticswimming.ca

artisticswimming.ca/rise-up

