



# ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

## MISSION AND VISION

At Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club, we believe in the fundamental value of sport for the individual and our society. Our mission is to create champions on and off the mountain by developing life skills and personal growth through sports. Our vision is to be the nation's model community youth sports organization, inspiring every individual to achieve their highest level of personal and athletic potential. The athletic philosophy of SSWSC is based on values, principles, and firmly held beliefs.

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SPORT

### TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHING

Every athlete should be coached to achieve their unique, individual potential, with the long-term well-being and personal development of each athlete as the top priority. We seek to deliver this through transformational coaching, where coaches provide the positive influence, motivation, autonomy, and individualization to develop each athlete's competence, confidence, connection, and character.

### PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE

Participation is the foundation of performance, and performance drives and enhances participation. Enjoyment of the sport and commitment are necessary to achieve high levels of performance, and the pursuit of goals fosters the achievement, progression, and enjoyment that leads to lifelong participation.

### BALANCE

We intentionally choose an approach where balance and well-being are emphasized, positive team culture is developed and teamwork is expected; and coaches are trained to support individual needs. Our goal is an environment where the pursuit of one's potential forms a symbiotic relationship with personal development. We emphasize long-term development over short-term results, and a person-centered perspective is used to make athletic, athlete management, and programmatic decisions. In our programs, athletes develop the competencies to excel in their sport and at the same time learn through sport valuable skills they will apply to all areas of life.

### LIFELONG SPORTS

Our sports are life-long endeavors, meant to be enjoyed with family and friends. Sport should be a source of joy, connection, as well as physical and mental health. Sport provides lifelong benefits, including goal-setting, resilience, perseverance, teamwork, and fosters self-esteem. Each athlete's time in the SSWSC should help form the foundation for lifelong enjoyment of sport, where they continue to accrue these benefits.

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## LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MODEL

SSWSC programs are designed to achieve exceptional athlete-centered outcomes by combining the most current best-practices for long-term athlete development with the unique knowledge, environment, venues, and other resources in Steamboat. This approach delivers an experience that meets athletes' needs at each stage of development and propels them toward learning and success at the highest level they choose. First, we focus on fostering a love for sport; next the emphasis is on learning how to train properly; and then the focus moves to preparing to maximize individual performance.

### EARLY ENGAGEMENT, NOT EARLY SPECIALIZATION

Participation in multiple sports forms the foundation of optimal development in snowsports. Specialization in one sport should start only after age 15, and participation in other sports can continue through the elite level. Athletes who aspire to compete at the highest level can concentrate on and prioritize one primary sport at a younger age, but they should continue to learn and play multiple sports to develop fundamental physical literacy.

### MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The Steamboat multilateral sport development model provides the opportunity for each athlete to develop a deeper and broader foundation of skills through participation in diverse sports, and to choose those that they are most passionate about, providing the both foundation for success across sports and for lifelong participation. This model involves sampling multiple snowsports in winter and a wide variety of sports in spring, summer, and fall for physical literacy and enjoyment, giving kids the opportunity to find their own passion.

### CELEBRATING RESULTS

We do not set competition performance goals or emphasize competition outcomes through the U14 ages for a number of developmental reasons. This does not mean that we don't celebrate successes, nor does it mean we don't support competing. Many kids thrive on competition, but developing intrinsic motivation and a passion for the sport through participation is our priority at the younger ages. As a club, we only publicize athlete results above the U14 level.

**Consistent with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee American Development Model, our stages of long-term athlete development follow the below progression:**

**Discover, Learn, and Play (Age 0-12):** Cultivate passion for sport, encourage deliberate play, learn foundational movements, provide multi-sport participation, and have fun!

**Develop and Challenge (Age 10-16):** Master fundamental movements, compete in local/regional competitions, introduce strength and conditioning, develop teamwork and interpersonal skills, and emphasize skill development.

**Train and Compete (Age 13-19):** Focus on one primary winter sport, refine technical and tactical awareness, begin to periodize training throughout the year, develop high-performance teams, introduce mindset skills, and increase sport-specific training.

**Excel for High Performance (Age 15+):** Commit to year-round training, focus on a primary sport, maximize individual potential, develop a high performance mindset, pursue national and international competition. Thrive and Mentor (for life): Maintain a physically active lifestyle, become a coach or mentor, pursue recreational competitions, and stay fit for life!

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## COMMUNITY SERVICE, OLYMPISM, AND OUR STAFF

### COMMUNITY FIRST

We focus on our community first. We believe in the value of sport to the individual and to our society, and our goal is to continue to serve our community through world-class, accessible sport programs that reflect the needs and interests of our community and play a vital role in the personal development, health, and wellness of our youth.

### OLYMPISM AND CELEBRATING STEAMBOAT OLYMPIANS

Olympism embodies the values and ideals of the Olympic movement. It encompasses the spirit of sportsmanship, fair play, friendship, and respect. At SSWSC, we support the Olympic movement and the power of sport to make the world a better place. We also know how rare the achievement is and how much work it took to get there, both from the athlete and from all those who supported the athlete. These Olympians inspire many in our community to pursue their dreams and challenge themselves to be the best they can be. We currently, and typically, have several former Olympic athletes on staff representing their dedication not only to personal achievement, but also a life-long commitment to developing young athletes and their community.

### COACHES AND STAFF

SSWSC staff includes coaches with backgrounds competing and coaching at the Olympic, World Championship, World Cup, and NCAA levels of their sport; who have been recognized regionally, nationally, and internationally for the quality of their coaching and achievements; and who apply their diverse backgrounds and experiences to achieve the common goal of athlete-centered, transformational coaching. Together, these coaches are bound by a shared commitment to continuous improvement, delivering coaching that is grounded in the current best practices for long-term personal and athletic development through sport. Together, we strive to create an environment where each individual is inspired to reach their highest potential while developing a lifelong love of sport.

### QUESTIONS & COMMENTS?

We welcome your feedback and questions!

Please send your thoughts to SSWSC Athletic Director Dave Stewart at [dstewart@sswsc.org](mailto:dstewart@sswsc.org).