



RUGBY CANADA

**NATIONAL HIGHPERFORMANCE
TRAINING CENTRES
OVERVIEW**



RUGBY CANADA NATIONAL HIGH PERFORMANCE TRAINING CENTRES

Concept

To provide better domestic player development, a 'HUB' strategy has been discussed that would involve providing high performance training centres of excellence for current and aspiring Canadian international team players to train, improve and play rugby.

Background information

The HUB concept would aim to create lasting partnerships in targeted locations throughout Canada. The initial focus would be elite Canadian women's 15s players with a focus on providing opportunities for players outside of, post or as an alternate to USPORTS rugby programs. Young players who demonstrate higher potential while playing USPORTS rugby may concurrently be involved in the national training centre program while still attending University. Once established, the training centres may quickly evolve to provide the opportunities to elite men's players in the same way.

Over time, it is envisioned that training centres will provide support to national and provincial age-grade teams, elite 7s and other players in the high performance pathway. It would be Rugby Canada's desire that the elite players accessing the training centres are either qualified or on a pathway to qualify to represent Canada.

As part of the elite player and coach development pathway, the training centres will provide the opportunity to transition from the Development stage of University and club rugby, into the Development-Confirmation stage for high performance. Players who demonstrate the greatest potential in the 19yrs – 23yrs category will be considered for the training centres, where Rugby Canada can provide expert-fulltime rugby Technical, Physical, Mental and Lifestyle training and support, until a player is confirmed as a senior International/Professional standard player.

When considering training centres, Rugby Canada must focus on three key elements:

- **Contact:** needs to be regular with players in the programs
- **Control:** Rugby Canada needs to lead on the development of training centre programming (the players' "syllabus")
- **Highest Quality:** these programs must be delivered at a level that prepares players for professional and international standard

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The first goal will be to initiate up to 4 training centre ‘HUBs’ across the country in 2024. We will be flexible in our rollout/development, with a required focus being developing quality partnerships that can accommodate successful centres - we will not force ‘HUBs’ into locations where the appropriate partnerships are not firmly in place. Therefore, we are prepared to operate fewer training centres initially and can “build as we go.” If a partial initiation will leave us better off than current, we will consider all proposed models and not adopt an “all or none” frame of mind.

Training Centre Details

Requirements:

- Safe, supportive sporting environment
- Compliance with Safe Sport and OSIC regulations
- Formal agreements in place between any involved partners and Rugby Canada
- Capacity/availability to run a program throughout twelve months of the year
- Ability to accommodate up to 30 players in the training environment
- Development of a financially stable operational model

Facilities:

- Must be quality High Performance Rugby Facilities:
 - Training Pitch(es)
 - HP Gym
 - Recovery Pool

Staffing:

- Fulltime positions:
 - Rugby coaching
 - Strength & Conditioning coaching
 - Sports physiotherapy
 - Administrative and welfare manager
- Staffing notes:
 - Coaches must be qualified to deliver required training as instructed by Rugby Canada in alignment with Rugby Canada HP Strategy and National Technical Blueprint
 - Coaches will be contracted directly with Rugby Canada and will be accountable to the Rugby Canada High Performance Director.
 - Specialists for skill development may be involved at times
 - There will be a designated Rugby Canada contact for all training centre staff and programs.

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Additional resources that could be provided remotely or at a separate location:

- Player housing
- Medical support
- Employment assistance
- Career/education support and/or Further education opportunities
- Wellbeing Support
- Match Venue

Potential Partners

Rugby Canada is interested in discussions with any potential partners that see mutual value in a National High Performance Training Centre. Universities, given their ability to run performance sport programs and access top facilities, have been an early focus.

Important areas of interest for initial programs would be Ontario, Quebec and BC. However, Rugby Canada would be interested in discussion with any potential partner in any region of Canada, and may also consider more than one program in a city or region where there are multiple quality partnerships available (as well as evidence to suggest the rugby playing base could support).

In addition to Universities, other potential partner organizations (primary or complementary) include:

- Canadian Sport Institutes
- Provincial Rugby Unions and/or Rugby Clubs
- Corporate Sponsors
- Canadian Rugby Foundation and/or other Private Foundations
- Cities
- Provincial Governments
- Schools

The objectives of any partnership include:

- A financially stable operational model
- A mutually beneficial working agreement
- Support from the Provincial Rugby Union

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Benefits of National Training Centre partnership

1. Development of high performance rugby within the hosting institution, city and/or Province
2. Potential shared rugby resources with Rugby Canada
3. Investment and contribution to the local economy
4. Influx of skilled workers and players to the training centre region
5. Positive PR opportunity

Training Centre Calendar

Although the intent is for training centres to be able to activate twelve months of the year, it is anticipated that the programs will have two 'windows' of primary focus:

- February – April
- June – July

It is envisioned that the 'HUB' programs would train 2-3 times per week, with potential escalation towards the end of their key focus time together. Programming could be in the later afternoon and evening to allow players the opportunity to work.

Evolution of Training Centres

It is hoped that the training centre programs could evolve into teams/franchises, initially playing regional matches. Women's 15s regional team matches were held in Spring 2023, and it is hoped that the training centres could eventually support similar competitions in the future to bring up the overall quality. Higher performance competitions, including intra-centre matches, could further evolve over time.

Matches are seen as a crucial element to both aid in recruiting players to move to different cities, and also "test" the employed programs and systems. It is envisioned that training centre programming will play a significant role in pathway transitioning to Senior (Women's initially) National teams.

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Next Steps

Rugby Canada requests your feedback regarding the National High Performance Training Centre concept. Should you wish to have a more detailed discussion on the potential set-up of a training centre in your institution or region, we would welcome the opportunity to connect.

Key contacts:

- Jamie Levchuk: Managing Director, Operations & Game Development
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- Stephen Aboud: High Performance Director
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