



**ONE SQUAD**



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2027 & Beyond





I am honoured and excited to introduce you to Rugby Canada’s strategic plan for the next four years and beyond. It reflects our commitment to govern the sport of rugby in Canada with determination, courage and innovative thinking, and deliver meaningful cultural and systemic change.

It is bold; it is clear; it contains ambitious but achievable goals. It clarifies the role and commitments of Rugby Canada and specifies clear outcomes, drivers and strategies to achieve those outcomes. We have acknowledged that Rugby Canada cannot successfully be all things to all people, so some tough decisions have been made.

The thread that binds the plan is the mindset of One Squad. I believe that this approach has the potential to change the game of rugby as we know it in Canada. By unifying and aligning the rugby ecosystem we will be better positioned to attract, engage and retain participants - not just players, but coaches, match officials, financial supporters, administrators and fans.

Don’t get me wrong: this plan won’t ‘fix’ rugby in Canada overnight; we are not that naive. However, it provides a credible formula for doing so over a realistic timeframe and sets us on an evolutionary course that will be transformational.

We have already implemented many changes to build our resilience in the face of multiple threats to our game. But significant challenges lie ahead that require our urgent attention, including competition from other sports for our athletes and fans, increasing commercialisation of the game, pressure on funding from governments, sponsors and others, ongoing concerns for player safety and wellbeing, and our very status as a credible rugby nation. I believe that implementation of this plan will equip us well to tackle those challenges.

When implemented, the plan will solidify the foundation of rugby in Canada, restore the confidence of the rugby community and its supporters, and re-awaken our players’ pride in wearing the jersey. Together, as One Squad, One Canada, we will be able to celebrate Canada as a rugby nation that is respected as a leader both on and off the field.

The plan is the result of an enormous amount of work, performed on an aggressive timeline, by our strategic planning advisory group. This comprised Nathan Bombrys (CEO), Kathleen McGinn (director), Karen Paquin (director and national player), Jeff Hassler (former national player), Jerry Marriott (director of Canadian Rugby Foundation), Toby Shannon (prominent entrepreneur) and the indefatigable Sean Hofstetter, and facilitated by Peter John McFarlane. Each of them donated hours and hours of their time and the benefit of their expertise to this process. We owe them our sincere thanks for their commitment and dedication.

The plan is also the product of extensive, open and inclusive consultation, including with players, coaches, provincial unions, government agencies, funding partners, and others. As we work to implement the plan, we will hold ourselves accountable to these same stakeholders.

Rugby Canada’s board and staff are embracing the challenge. With the support of our stakeholders, thinking and acting as One Squad, I believe the priorities set out in the plan can be achieved. Now the hard work begins.

Sally Dennis  
Chair, Rugby Canada Board of Directors



# ONE SQUAD

# THE ETHOS OF ONE SQUAD

In Canada, we play rugby together, learn together, build together, win together, and fail together. We celebrate each other's successes and support each other through our defeats. Across this country, everyone has a role to play in achieving success for our national team.

## OUR AMBITION

**RUGBY CANADA IS RECOGNIZED AND RESPECTED WORLDWIDE AS A TOP 12 RUGBY NATION ON AND OFF THE FIELD.**

## OUR PURPOSE

**TO INSPIRE THE NATION ON THE GLOBAL STAGE AND TO LEAD, GOVERN AND SUPPORT THE GAME OF RUGBY ACROSS CANADA.**



# OUR ROLE

In service of inspiring, leading, governing and supporting the game across the country Rugby Canada will play two major roles:

## 01.

**BUILD HIGH PERFORMING NATIONAL TEAMS AND PROVIDE TRAINING ENVIRONMENTS THAT ACHIEVE SUCCESS.**

## 02.

**BE AN EXCEPTIONAL NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY:**

→ With a consistent approach to high performance rugby standards and technical blueprint

→ That provides centralized services: administration, and safe sport policies and practice

→ With a consistent approach to high performance player, coach and referee development

→ That nurtures the connectivity of our communities to each other, and to our national teams





**OUR VALUES ARE  
OUR CANADIAN  
RUGBY DNA  
AND SHOW THE  
WORLD WHAT  
WE STAND FOR.**

# OUR VALUES

These values are our Canadian rugby DNA and show the world what we stand for. They represent the core beliefs on which we will build this next chapter of Rugby Canada's future.

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## COURAGE

In Canada, we play with courage, and we act courageously. On and off the field.

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## UNITY

We are one country, one community and One Squad: men, women, 15s and 7s. Together we will build, and together we are strong.

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## FUN

We cherish the joy we get from the game of rugby in Canada. And we protect it.

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## RESPECT

We respect ourselves, each other, and our game. We honour and celebrate the legacy of those who have come before us.

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## INTEGRITY

We are defined by our actions, not our intentions. We hold ourselves and each other accountable.

# OUR COMMITMENTS

These commitments make clear the standard for behaviour, attitude and, most importantly, decision-making as we enter the new era of Rugby Canada.

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**FOCUS ON HIGH PERFORMANCE RUGBY SUCCESS**

×

**PRIORITIZE THE FINANCIAL STABILITY OF THE ORGANIZATION**

×

**EMBODY UNITY AND BE ONE SQUAD**

×

**FOSTER A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE WORKING, TRAINING AND PLAYING ENVIRONMENT**

×

**COMMUNICATE PROACTIVELY, CONSISTENTLY, THOUGHTFULLY**

×

**MAKE INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS EVERY DAY**

×

**BE A GREAT ORGANIZATION TO PARTNER WITH**

×

**MAKE THE TOUGH DECISION**

×

**BUILD ON WHAT CAME BEFORE US AND HONOUR RUGBY'S 150-YEAR HISTORY IN CANADA**

×

**CONNECT OUR COMMUNITIES TO EACH OTHER AND TO OUR NATIONAL TEAMS**

×

**PURSUE EXCELLENCE**



# THE PLAN TO WIN

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**OUR PRIORITIES  
FOCUS OUR  
PLAN, OUR  
RESOURCES,  
AND OUR  
EFFORTS.**

# THE PLAN TO WIN

Our Strategic Priorities

**SUPPORT  
OUR TEAMS  
TO WIN**



**ONE SQUAD**

**BE A LEADING  
SPORTS  
ORGANIZATION**

**EXPAND  
FINANCIAL  
CAPACITY**

**ONE SQUAD IS AT  
THE CENTRE OF  
EVERYTHING WE DO.**



# KEY OUTCOMES FOR EACH PRIORITY

## SUPPORT OUR TEAMS TO WIN

Women always in the top four and in contention to win Rugby World Cup 2025. Men qualify for Rugby World Cup 2027 and return to top 12. Men and women both compete in the Olympic Games 2024 and 2028.

## EXPAND FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Independent revenues and funding to invest in national teams and long-term systemic development.

## BE A LEADING SPORT ORGANIZATION

Continuous improvement of our people, processes and systems to build a winning culture.



# SUPPORT OUR TEAMS TO WIN

Strategies to achieve high performance success at the international level.

## CORE DRIVERS:

### 1.1 ONE SQUAD

Engage in purposeful collaboration, integration, and high-quality learning across our teams

### 1.2 INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

Determine International matches, scheduled years in advance

### 1.3 NATIONAL TECHNICAL BLUEPRINT

Devise a clear technical direction to support alignment with our provincial and national pathways

### 1.4 REGIONAL HIGH PERFORMANCE CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

Establish regional training and playing environments in Canadian cities to prepare players for international rugby

### 1.5 PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PROFESSIONAL GAME

Foster clearly defined partnerships with professional rugby that support our Canadian National Teams.

## KEY OUTCOMES:

**WOMEN ALWAYS IN THE TOP FOUR AND IN CONTENTION TO WIN RUGBY WORLD CUP 2025**

**MEN RETURN TO TOP TWELVE AND QUALIFY FOR RUGBY WORLD CUP 2027**

**MEN & WOMEN COMPETE IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES**

# STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT OUR TEAM TO WIN<sup>1</sup>:

## 1.1 ONE SQUAD

1.1.1 One Squad for women and men that provides players with the opportunity to compete in 15s and 7s. (ST)

1.1.2 Re-purpose 7s to develop players for 15s and compete in the Olympics. (ST)

1.1.3 Choose the best players to play in the best competitions at the right time. (ST)

1.1.4 Drive collaboration and learning with coaches and staff across all teams. (ST)

1.1.5 Set performance priorities based on opportunities for success. Align resources to these priorities. (ST)

## 1.2 INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

1.2.1 Play a leadership role with World Rugby and other unions to create the future international calendar for Canada. (ST)

1.2.2 Recreate an annual competition for men and women in partnership with USA Rugby. (MT)

## 1.3 NATIONAL TECHNICAL BLUEPRINT

1.3.1 Develop a common integrated technical framework and reference points for key technical staff, coaches, players and teams in the pathway. (ST)

1.3.2 Induct key national and provincial technical staff into the key components of the model. (ST)

1.3.3 Establish a rugby curriculum for each stage of the pathway. (MT)

1.3.4 Establish profiles and selection criteria for players within the pathway. (ST)

1.3.5 Establish a framework for evaluating and monitoring the quality of the game throughout the pathway. (MT)

1.3.6 Establish criteria for coach evaluation and appointments throughout the pathway. (ST)

1.3.7 Implement a framework for high performance coach development and continuous professional development. (ST)

1.3.8 Provide common reference points to facilitate the alignment of the key drivers in the pathway – Rugby Canada, provincial rugby sport organizations (PSOs), universities. (MT)

1.3.9 Apply the technical model to the coach education program to enhance the effectiveness of coaches throughout all stages of rugby. (MT)

<sup>1</sup> Short-term (ST), medium-term (MT), Long-term (LT)



## 1.4 REGIONAL HIGH-PERFORMANCE CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

1.4.1 Develop high performance rugby centres of excellence in different cities or regions across the country to address the training and competition gap in women's and men's high performance rugby ensuring quality alignment with Rugby Canada's national team strategic objectives. (MT)

1.4.2 Engage in formal partnerships with Universities, PSOs, CEGEPs, schools, city and provincial governments, sponsors and private donors to create sustainable models for each regional centre. (MT)

1.4.3 Establish a formal relationship between USport and Rugby Canada that recognizes university rugby as a valuable contributor to the player pathway and establishes a mutually beneficial link between universities and our regional high performance training centres. (MT)

1.4.4 Target four hubs by 2025 (MT); up to an additional four by 2029. (LT)

## 1.5 PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PROFESSIONAL GAME

1.5.1 Establish high quality partnerships with professional rugby teams and competitions that provide Canadian players and coaches with opportunities to play and coach the best possible rugby in preparation to play for Canada.

1.5.2 Provide clearly defined support to our professional rugby partners: contribution toward high performance rugby and commercial programs, access to Rugby Canada high performance staff and alignment to the national program calendar.

1.5.3 Develop sanctioning and licensing agreements and processes for our partners to operate professional rugby successfully within Canada.



# EXPAND FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Strategies to grow and diversify revenues, increase financial stability and create new opportunities.

## CORE DRIVERS:

### 2.1 PORTFOLIO OF MAJOR EVENTS

Generate independent revenue and make a positive impact on our communities

### 2.2 DEEPENED BROADCAST PARTNERSHIPS

Establish rugby as a sport to watch on TV and follow on social media

### 2.3 EXPANSION OF SPONSORSHIP FAMILY

Increase sponsorship support for Rugby Canada's teams and programs

### 2.4 TARGETED PHILANTHROPIC STRATEGY

Provide purposeful opportunities for our community to support us in improving our teams and programs

## KEY OUTCOME:

**SELF GENERATED REVENUES AND FUNDING TO INVEST IN NATIONAL TEAMS AND LONG-TERM SYSTEMIC DEVELOPMENT.**



# STRATEGIES THAT EXPAND FINANCIAL CAPACITY<sup>1</sup>:

## 2.1 PORTFOLIO OF MAJOR EVENTS

2.1.1 Host up to four major events each year that deliver significant economic and societal impact to Canadian cities and provinces and generate a net positive financial contribution to Rugby Canada. (ST-MT)

2.1.2 Support the success of major events through targeted community engagement with local clubs, communities and organizations. (ST-MT)

2.1.3 Engage World Rugby to retain the Canada 7s and innovate the event design. (ST)

2.1.4 Measure, understand and clearly articulate the net economic, societal and material benefits of major events. (MT)

2.1.5 Re-design the revenue model of events to increase the financial contribution to Rugby Canada. (ST)

## 2.2 DEEPENED BROADCAST PARTNERSHIPS

2.2.1 Leverage content partnerships, confirm the rugby calendar and adopt a 'reach over revenue' approach to drive investment in production and storytelling. (LT)

2.2.2 Consolidate Rugby Canada, World Rugby, other international competitions and Canadian domestic rights to deepen the rugby broadcast offering narrative. (MT)

2.2.3 Invest in high quality Canadian Rugby content to distribute through broadcast and digital media. (ST)

2.2.4 Grow Rugby Canada's proprietary channels through content focused on storytelling and by developing a direct engagement strategy with fans of the game. (MT)

## 2.3 EXPANSION OF SPONSORSHIP FAMILY

2.3.1 Design a clear sponsorship structure, supported by growth goals to be determined commensurate with our product and our opportunities. Preferred partners will have the capacity to grow with Rugby Canada, supporting the journey of our Union and our teams. (ST)

2.3.2 Professionalize the sponsorship apparatus by investing in relationship and account management capabilities. Monitor and quantify sponsorship dollar spend for value received, tracking information and data that can be provided to partners, and that articulate the benefits of sponsorship for future partners. (MT)

2.3.3 Focus on building Rugby Canada partnerships through the 2025 Women's World Cup and the 2027 Men's World Cup. (ST)

<sup>1</sup> Short-term (ST), medium-term (MT), Long-term (LT)



## 2.4 TARGETED PHILANTHROPIC STRATEGY

2.4.1 Invest in communicating the financial gap to our community members to demonstrate how philanthropic support will help our national teams achieve their highest potential. (ST)

2.4.2 Define the financial gap between the existing funding of National Team Programs and the resources required to operate our teams to achieve their highest potential. (ST)

2.4.3 Create a fundraising program for rugby philanthropists who share our passion for the game to generate annual donations. (MT)

2.4.4 Professionalize the philanthropy apparatus by investing in relationship and account management capabilities, systems and technologies to engage rugby philanthropists, monitor the use and measure the impact of donations, and meet expectations of donors to ensure positive lasting relationships with Rugby Canada. (LT)

2.4.5 Develop a strong partnership with the Canadian Rugby Foundation. (ST-LT)



# BE A LEADING SPORTS ORGANIZATION

Strategies that transform Rugby Canada into a strong, world class National Sports Organization.

## CORE DRIVERS:

### 3.1 UNIFIED NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL RUGBY SYSTEM

Establish clear roles and responsibilities between Rugby Canada and our member Provincial Sports Organizations

### 3.2 OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Run an accountable and credible organization with Governance best practice, financial stability and robust processes and systems

### 3.3 SAFE, TRUSTWORTHY AND HIGH PERFORMING CULTURE

Focus on the continuous improvement of our people and organization

## KEY OUTCOMES:

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF OUR PEOPLE, PROCESSES, AND SYSTEMS



# STRATEGIES THAT TRANSFORM THE ORGANIZATION:

## 3.1 UNIFIED NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL RUGBY SYSTEM

3.1.1 Establish clear roles and responsibilities for Rugby Canada and the PSOs. Harmonize policies and processes across the country. (ST)

3.1.2 Incorporate PSO technical staff into the national technical blueprint and provide common reference points to facilitate the alignment of the key drivers in the pathway. (ST)

3.1.3 Lead the PSOs in the creation of a national growth plan to grow participation reflecting the needs and opportunities within each province. Include promoting the game to non-traditional rugby communities and indigenous athletes. (ST-MT)

3.1.4 Establish a suite of centralized services utilizing technology, aligned systems, training and education, and best practices that provide additional value to the PSOs and free up their resources. (LT)

3.1.5 Develop an effective communication strategy to improve connectivity between Rugby Canada and the PSOs, clubs and individual participants. (MT-LT)

## 3.2 OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

3.2.1 Prioritize financial stability through sound budgeting and financial management practices, controls and reporting. (ST)

3.2.2 Attract and retain great people committed to contributing to the success of Rugby Canada and invest in their development. (MT)

3.2.3 Focus on innovation, accountability and execution, set clear performance expectations, and monitor and review performance. (ST-MT)

3.2.4 Ensure governance excellence across the sport. (ST-MT)

## 3.3 SAFE, TRUSTWORTHY, HIGH PERFORMING CULTURE

3.3.1 Focus on purposeful and meaningful trust-based capacity and capability building within the organization. (ST-LT)

3.3.2 Directly incentivize collaboration, cooperation, and reciprocal exchange among Rugby Canada staff, and any contractors. (ST-MT)

3.3.3 Realign the organizational structures and support mechanisms to leverage individual skills and capabilities in operationalizing this plan. (ST-MT)

3.3.4 Invest in developing our people with goal-oriented programs and opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. (ST-MT)





# ONE SQUAD