

Player Development Strategy Membership Presentation

July 2010

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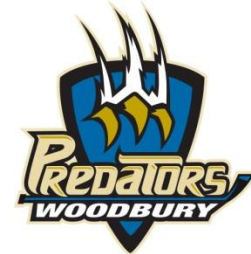
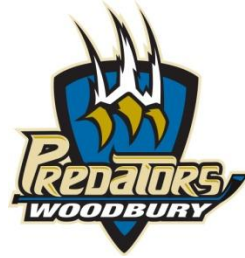


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Introduction



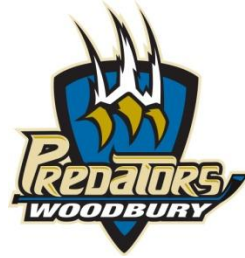
Background

- The Club has operated for years without a clear, well-defined set of objectives and execution plan for player development
- The Club now has almost 1,000 players and supports two public high school programs, a significant increase/contrast to prior years
- Any determination regarding the future and direction of Player Development requires a thorough assessment of how it should be approached, executed and measured over time

Approach

- A 6-member 'task force' chaired by – and including - the VP of Hockey Development (VP-HD) was initially assembled
- Selection to the task force was based upon an adequate balance of: i) hockey & youth athletic experience; ii) level-specific experience, and; iii) high-school alignment
- The VP-HD submitted nominations to the WAHC Board for final approval
- The task force shared their initial recommendations with a broader panel of club and high school personnel for general feedback and insight
- The task force leveraged the panel's feedback to construct a final recommendation to the Board for approval.
- **The Board formally reviewed and accepted the final, recommended strategy on July 21, 2010**

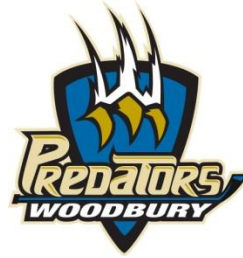
Introduction



Overview

- The “Player Development Strategy” (PDS) was collaboratively designed to establish the following critical elements of a successful, working plan to elevate and continuously improve player growth and development:
 1. *a mission statement and clear objective*
 2. *a prioritized set of goals and ‘success measures’*
 3. *a framework for player development*
 4. *an implementation/execution plan*
 5. *a suitable organizational structure*

Preliminary SWOT Review



Strengths

- Organic growth of the community has driven growth in the Club, fueling a higher degree of competitiveness, a deeper base of talent/ability and greater funding opportunities
- 'Equal Play Policy' has helped to ensure continued development at ALL levels
- Solid base of parent coaches slowly being enhanced with non-parent coaches
- The efforts of Wes Bolin and various Club coaches in recent years have helped to improve tactical/team-play elements of player development and coaching support for these elements
- Wes's 'on-ice' presence has also been a positive influence on players at all age levels

Weaknesses

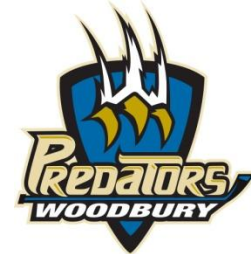
- Dryland training – both 'athletic' and 'hockey-specific' – is not yet engrained in our 'culture'
- Physical contact/checking aspects of the game are a clear deficiency across all levels; the kids need to be taught how to effectively "battle/compete"
- "High-end" skill development (ex. Scoring, complex skating) is also a 'need'; many parents/players look to the off-season for significant development/improvement
- There is no clear strategy/approach to player development, nor is there a mechanism to assess it's success/progress
- While the Club has experienced success at various levels, it is still a notch behind 'top-flight' programs such as Edina and Wayzata

Opportunities

- We currently spend \$90K per year on development – how do we best utilize that funding?
- There are considerably more kids in "Learn to Skate" than there are in Termites/Mites – how do we get them 'converted' to hockey?
- How do we grow the girls' program?
- To what extent should we offer spring/summer/pre-season training opportunities?
- There are many quality development resources within the metro area – should we leverage them as well, and if so, how should we do it?
- We have many knowledgeable and energetic club members – how do we get more of them involved in making the club bigger, better and stronger?

Threats

- With no defined strategy or foundation for player development (PD) in place, the Club risks:
 - Confusion and/or misinterpretation of PD direction/philosophy
 - Constant change in direction/philosophy
- The fact that the Club feeds 2 HS programs generates the constant threat of the club splitting in two. It virtually mandates that any relationship with HS coaches be equal in opportunity.
- Poor attitudes and inappropriate behavior of players have been more evident at various times and levels. How do we establish a culture of "hard work and good sportsmanship" with our players?
- The 'Equal Play Policy' has come under fire at times by coaches who believe it undermines their ability to coach/win – how should this challenge be addressed?



Mission Statement & Objective

- The Player Development Strategy's 'mission' is to specifically address the relevant elements (underlined below) of the Club's overall mission statement:
 - **The Woodbury Area Hockey Club aims to provide the most gratifying and rewarding youth hockey experience for players, parents and coaches seeking either the best competitive or recreational athletic experience in a positive, developmental environment at a reasonable expense.**
- 'Development/improvement' – including the ability to effectively 'compete' - is more important than 'winning'
- General 'youth athletic experience' is more important than focusing primarily on upper-level teams/players

NOTE: If we excel at development/improvement and experience then 'winning' and successful HS teams will be a natural by-product

- We will seek to establish a distinct 'culture' and a sense of 'tradition' that highlights our development approach and success
- **Final Objective Statement:**
 - The Player Development Strategy will establish a well-defined plan and set of guidelines to drive:**
 - continuous improvement of hockey and life skills
 - a rewarding and enjoyable athletic experience
 - a high-level of competitive performance
 - in a positive, disciplined environment for ALL players at ALL levels.**

Prioritized Goals



- **Prioritized goals will be categorized to ensure appropriate emphasis and assessment of the key components of our stated objective:**
 - Continuous Improvement (Ex.: Parent/Player feedback favorability; 1st half vs. 2nd half results, etc.)
 - Rewarding Experience (Ex.: Retention goals; Parent/Player feedback favorability, etc.)
 - Highly Competitive Performance (Ex.: Overall wins/losses; Region/State tourney appearances, etc.)

NOTE: Limit of 2-5 goals for each category

- **The review of goals – and the specific results - at the end of the season will form the basis for the “Development Action Plan” that is created before the start of the next season**
- The desire is to have ‘baseline metrics’ remain constant over time, but periodic review of these metrics will be conducted to assess potential opportunities for improved measurement
- While “Prioritized Goals” will form the primary measure of success for the Club’s overall strategy, we will not limit our measurement efforts to only those metrics, but instead seek to develop additional metrics that shed further light on Club successes and opportunities
- Where possible and/or appropriate, the Club should tag ALL measures/metrics with critical attributes such as level, timeframe, position, game-type, etc.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director of each committee will collaborate with the Club Administrative Assistant to electronically capture and store all metrics for a given year

Development Framework



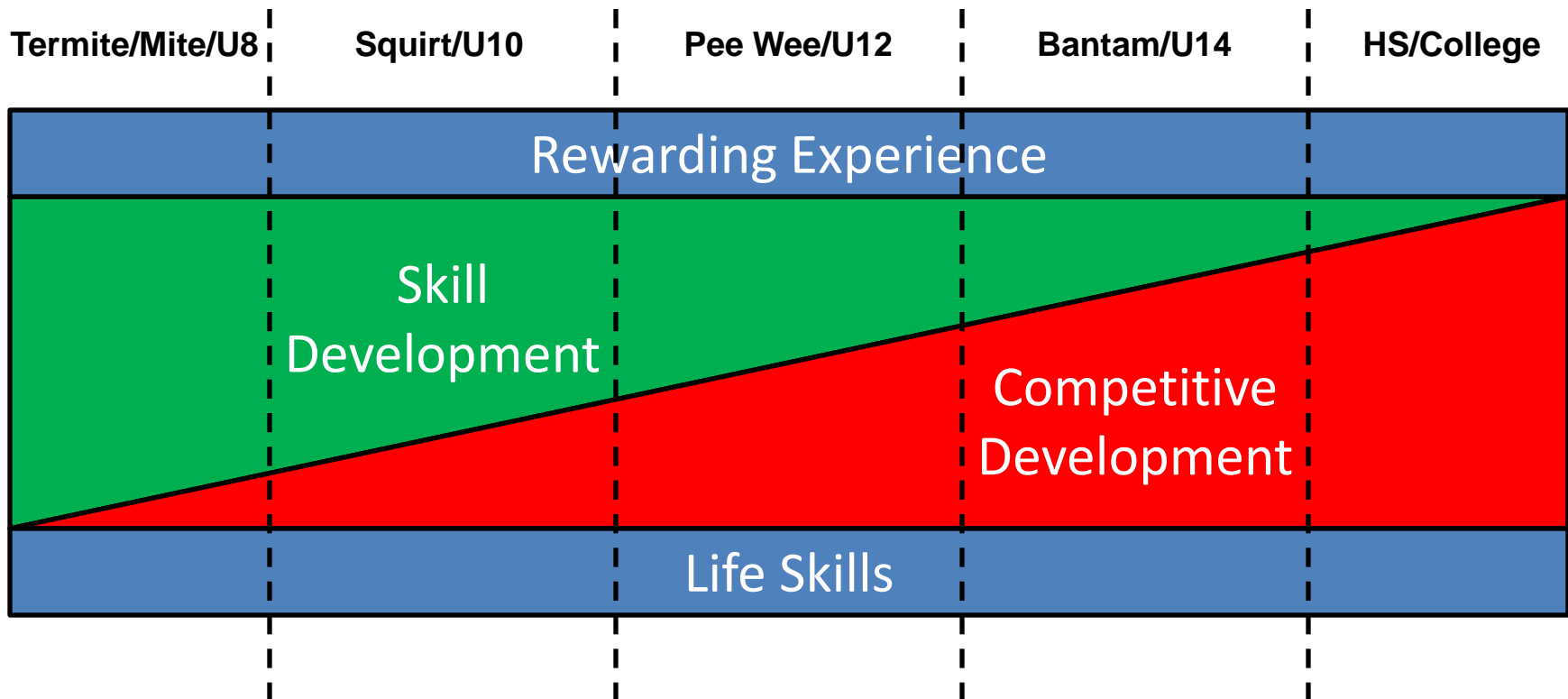
- **The Club will construct and maintain a framework for player development that highlights our approach and provides the following benefits:**
 - Helps communicate an approach/direction for the development process
 - Useful guide for coaches, players and parents to understand level-specific priorities
 - Aligns the Club with key governing bodies (ex. MN & USA Hockey) and industry-leading research
 - The model will leverage and align with USA Hockey’s “American Development Model” (ADM - <http://www.admkids.com/>) and other renowned reference points (Ex. Hockey Canada - http://www.hockeycanada.ca/index.php/ci_id/22107/la_id/1.htm)
 - Framework will be ‘directional’ in nature and incorporated into the Execution plan
 - **Primary focus by level:**
 - “Development” at the Squirt/U10 and under levels
 - “Competition” at the Bantam/U14 levels
 - Balance of both “Development” and “Competition” at the Pee Wee/U12 levels
- *See next slide for graphic depiction*

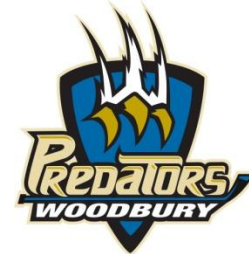
Development Framework: Focus



Primary Focus by Level

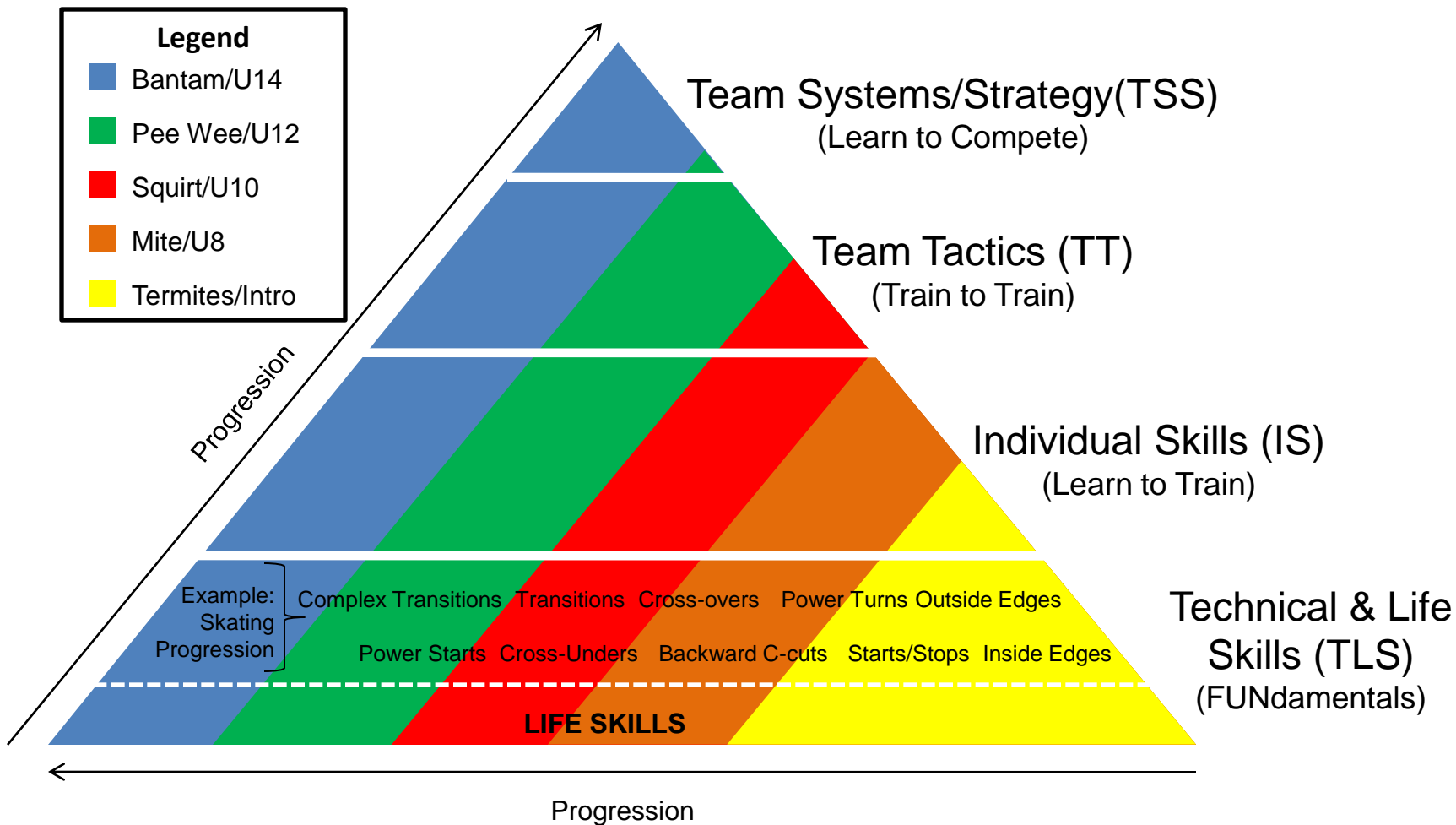
- *Skills are the predominant focus of early development, whereas emphasis begins to shift towards competition when players reach the Bantam/U14 level*



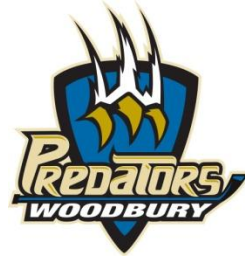


Development Framework: Model

NOTE: The Club will look to build out the model below over time



Implementation/Execution Plan



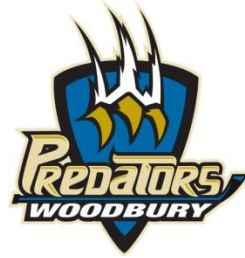
- Coaching guidelines – and mandates – will be necessary to insure successful development for ALL kids
 - The Club will seek to insure that reasonable, minimum levels of growth, development and positive experience are achieved in all settings. To that end, some critical components will be mandated and/or audited accordingly, as well as assessed/reviewed annually based on most recent performance and impact.
 - Guidelines and mandates will be aligned with the ‘Development Framework’ and more prevalent at the introductory levels – ex. Mites/Squirts – where there is a greater need for consistent execution
- **The Club will adopt a “Player Development Charter” consisting of the following policies:**
 - **Fair Play Policy**
 - A more refined version of the previous ‘Equal Play Policy’ that clarifies for coaches, players and parents the appropriate execution of fair play (ex. Rolling lines, goalie rotation, etc.)
 - **Positional Play Policy**
 - A policy that defines how players should be rotated across position at certain levels
 - **Event Frequency Policy**
 - A policy that defines how often players should be engaged in club-related hockey activities at various levels. This is to insure that time commitments at all levels are reasonable and support family, school and/or other activities
 - **Annual “Coaching Contract”**
 - A signed contract that emphasizes adherence to the above-mentioned policies and relevant guidelines
 - **“Code of Conduct” for each of Players and Parents**
 - Appropriate guidelines/rules for conduct specific to the primary club constituents

Implementation/Execution Plan



- The Club will strive to maintain strong working relationships with ALL high school coaches
 - As the primary incubator of high school talent, the Club will collaborate with high school coaches to provide access to and involvement in the execution of the Development Strategy. While the Club supports two public high schools and their respective teams, it should also be noted that “equal access” to the development process may not always be feasible or preferred for a variety of reasons including but not limited to: i) alignment with Club development objectives; ii) availability or coach preference; iii) performance assessments from previous years, etc.
- The Club will seek to leverage any/all financially-viable training resources – including private/outside providers – to achieve a high-value, development curriculum
 - Utilizing a variety of training options (ex. External experts, HS coaches, Club coaches, etc.) exposes the players and coaches to different training techniques and also gives the Club an opportunity to acquire feedback on the various trainers themselves. Over time, those that do well will be retained and perhaps expanded, while those who don’t perform well may be replaced.
- The Club will seek to elevate Dryland training - specifically “athletic training” - at ALL ages
 - Off-ice athletic training focused on balance, agility, ‘core’, power, speed, etc. enables the Club to develop foundational, athletic skills recommended in the “Long-Term Athlete Development” (LTAD) model – the primary basis for USA Hockey’s American Development Model
 - LINK: <http://www.admkids.com/longTermDevelopment.php>
 - The Club will work to secure convenient, sufficient space close to ice in an effort to address this key development component. This will enable the training to coincide with regular practice times and not add additional days/nights to an already-demanding schedule

Implementation/Execution Plan



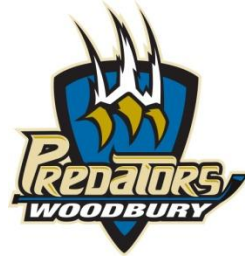
- The Club will seek to meet the significant demand for off-season training programs in an optional, measured approach that still promotes/supports the ‘multi-sport athlete’
 - The ‘Pre-Season Camp’ will be expanded to start in the mid/late August timeframe
 - A ‘Spring Camp’ focused on skill development and small games (ex. 3-on-3 variations) will be added to the early Spring timeframe (April/May)
 - The Club will avoid ice-related activities in the June/July/early-August timeframe, allowing players to focus on other sports or attend high school/private camps at their discretion. The Club may look to provide optional, off-ice athletic training options that benefit all sports during this period.
- We will strive to learn all we can from the successes – and failures – of other clubs
 - We will continually monitor the activities of top-performing clubs and seek to learn as much as possible

Organizational Structure

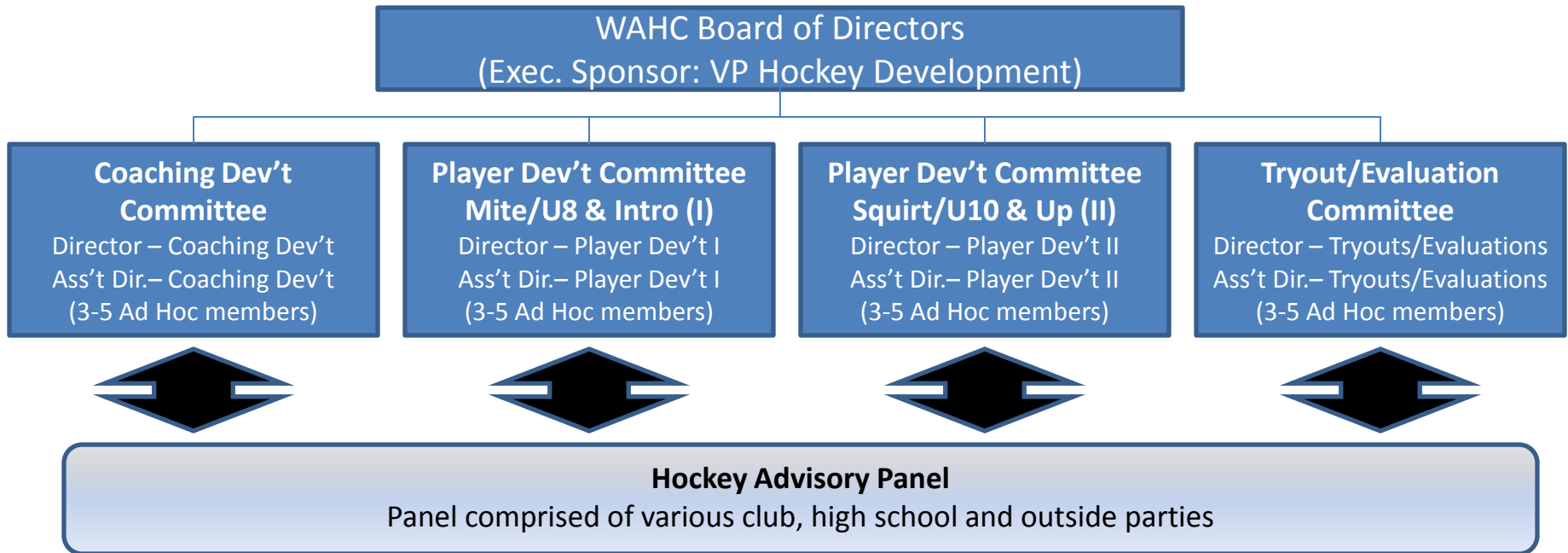


- **The Player Development Strategy will be:**
 - supported by a structure that incorporates a diverse set of hockey-related ideas and experiences
 - enables the objectives and goals of the strategy to be met, and...
 - ensures accountability for measurement, feedback and continuous improvement
- In addition to hockey-related experience (playing, coaching, etc.), the Club will also seek out the following traits when considering candidates for key roles:
 - Advanced and/or youth coaching experience in any/all sports
 - Teaching and/or other youth development expertise
 - A creative and collaborative approach to leadership
- The Club will seek to adopt a more open and thorough application/selection process for key roles but, where/when necessary, recruit capable members and confirm via Board approval
- **Key committees will consist of roughly 5-7 members to support varied opinion while also enabling reasonable ratification of recommendations**
 - Directors and/or Assistant Directors will set agendas and drive progress, but their opinions/suggestions will carry the same weight as other committee members
 - The committees are directly responsible for the collection and analysis of any/all metrics that speak specifically to that committee's goals/objectives
- **A "Hockey Advisory Panel" consisting of Club/HS coaches and other external experts will meet periodically to review committee recommendations and provide insight/opinion**

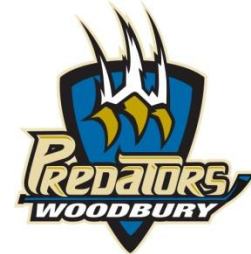
Organizational Structure



Hockey Development Organizational Structure



- Process
 - Directors facilitate committees; committees develop plans and obtain feedback from advisory panel; committees present recommendations to board for approval



Next Steps

While this approved strategy document establishes the foundation for Player Development moving forward, additional work is necessary to insure successful implementation and future progress. This work includes – but is not limited to – the following steps:

- Communicate the “Player Development Strategy” to the general membership
- Recruit for key roles and committee positions to erect approved organizational structure
- Educate and train coaches and players on the key policies, guidelines, etc.
- Finalization of the ‘Prioritized Goals’
- Continued development of the ‘Development Framework” at each level
- Completion of the development plan for the upcoming season