



Synchro Canada will put in place a new competition structure for the 2010-2011 season.

Why?

The decision has been made to have a significantly higher proportion of Canadians involved in Synchro Canada programs by 2012/2016 – First Core Business Area in our 2008-2012 Strategic Plan, Domestic Programs – and because Sport Canada mandated that all sports review their competition structures to ensure they have the best pathway for the development of their athletes across Canada while aligning with the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) plan.

With this new plan, Synchro Canada believes that its competition structure will better fulfill the top priorities of the Domestic programs (developing talent across Canada, athlete retention and making our National Championships a platform for excellence and not a participation event). This will be achieved by:

- being the best system to reach optimal performance at the Training to Perform stage of LTAD (18+)
- increasing athlete retention
- recognizing and rewarding athletes at all levels
- ensuring athletes meet their competition as often as possible within the recommended LTAD numbers
- fostering cross over between the two competition streams at appropriate times

This way, Synchro Canada believes that it will address current issues in synchronized swimming in Canada:

- Tier levels vs. Age Groups
- Whether the Divisional Championships provide all athletes with meaningful competition (ie do athletes meet their competitors as much as possible within recommended LTAD numbers of competitions)
- Whether the types of competitions at all levels align with the recommendations of our LTAD Model and Matrix
- Losing swimmers at a certain age (15+)
- Small and declining numbers in Junior & Senior Categories

What?

Here are the immediate changes for the 2010-2011 season which were voted on by the provinces on our Rule change call June 17, 2010. All provinces were represented on this call with the exception of Nova Scotia. All rule changes were unanimously approved.

Change #1

Age Group Implementation in National Stream of Competition:

Synchro Canada has adopted the Age Group model, to align with FINA as much as possible.

Rationale:

- The age group system ensures that athletes are training and competing within the LTAD stages; it respects their chronological and developmental age.
- The age group system will encourage athlete progression because of their age. It provides incentives and boundaries for moving through the system.
- In LTAD stages where the age range is quite wide (ex. Training to Train), stages are divided into two or more age groups to ensure athletes are having positive psychological and social interactions with peers of a similar developmental age. In the Tier system, athletes were sometimes training with athlete 5 years older (a common example was a 9 year old training with 15 year olds).
- The age group system aligns with our international sport body, FINA, to ensure smooth transitioning to international competitions.

[Note: Under the current recommendations, provinces would still be able to decide the ideal competition situation for their province \(within their provincial stream of competition\).](#)
[Also note: There will no longer be a Star requirement to compete at Nationals.](#)

Change #2

2 Competition Streams for Athlete Development

Synchro in Canada will be comprised of two competition streams for athletes: National Champions and Provincial Champions.

The National Champion Stream is focused on the pursuit of excellence and athletes within this stream have the opportunity to compete at a National Championships. The Provincial Champion Stream is focused on achieving personal bests and these athletes stay within the provincial competition structure. There must be appropriate cross over between the 2 streams.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS STREAM

The National Champions Stream will follow an age group system almost identical to FINA. Athletes swimming in this stream will compete using FINA rules, including the designated FINA figure groups for each age group.

PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONS STREAM

Synchro Canada recommends Provincial Stream athletes compete FINA figures and follow FINA rules, however it will be at the discretion of the Province to decide what is best for their membership.

Synchro Canada Age Groups
(Implemented June 2010)

National Champions (Pursuing Excellence-may compete at Espoir and/ or Canadian Open)	Provincial Champions (Achieving Personal Bests) Compete Provincially and Inter-provincially
	10 & under
	12 & under
13-15	13-15
Junior (15-18)	Junior (15-18)
16-18	16 & over
Senior (18+)	Senior (18+)

Synchro Canada will recommend 10 & Under figures for 2010-2013. These will be communicated by August 2010.

Routine Time Limits will be as stated in the Fina Rules.

Change #3)

National Stream 16 & over athletes will swim 16-18 FINA Figures, and compete in a separate 16-18 category for figures, solo, duet and team at the Canadian Open starting in 2011.

Note: There will no longer be a 16 & over category at Espoir Championship.

Rationale:

- Increase technical ability of these athletes and overall caliber within Canada
- Create bridges with Junior/Senior Categories (swimming with athletes of similar age at the Canadian Open-more possibility for cross over)
- Balances participation numbers at the Canadian Open
- Increases potential for retention of athletes aged 16 + (with them having success in their own category at the Canadian Open for 2011)
- Built in progression (before there was a ceiling on the 16 & over category).
- Rationale for all 16 + athletes to swim 16-18 figures: Efficiency and increased potential of transfer between the two streams.

Rationale for separate Junior and 16-18 Figure events at Canadian Open 2011:

- Less stressful competition experience for current 16 & overs (who are increasing their technical level from 13-15 figs to 16-18 figs and now swimming at the Canadian Open as opposed to Espoir)
- Opportunity for 16-18's to compete more directly with other 16-18's in their own category.
- More cohesive groups for comparison for judging purposes
- Time for events; with current numbers, if the 16-18's were combined with the Juniors the figure event could feasibly last 9 hours (which is too long for all involved)

Change #4

Exception to Team Age: Athletes may swim up 1 age category in the team event (Note: extra exception in 16-18 Team Category-see change #5)

To help clubs form teams, coaches will have the flexibility of swimming athletes up one age level to complete a full Team of 8 athletes. If an athlete swims out of their age group, they will be required to swim the figures of that age group to contribute to the team's final score. For example, a 13-15 age athlete who swims 13-15 solo and Junior team, will be required to swim 13-15 figures for her solo combined score and Junior figures for the Junior team combined score. Also, a 16 - 18 athlete swimming AG 16 -18 for solo and duet but swimming on a Junior FINA team must compete in both AG 16 - 18 figures and Junior FINA figures.

Change #5

Exception to team age - Age Group 16 - 18 - A team in Age Group 16 - 18 may have athletes nineteen years of age or older as members but the team age must average to less than but not equal to 18.500 (including alternates). This exception will be in place for the 2010-2011 season only. Those older age athletes will compete in AG 16 - 18 figures but there will be no ranking or awards issued.

Rationale:

- Retention of athletes thru transition period from Tiers to Age Groups

Change #6

Combo event:

The COSSC combo can be any age: 16 - 18/Junior/Senior - plus any younger athletes as they can swim up an age category.

Note: The Espoir combo is 15 & under (13 - 15 with 12 & unders swimming up an age category)

Rationale:

- To aid clubs in forming complete combos

Change #7

Additional Ribbons for top age athletes in figures and solo (At Divisionals, Espoir and Canadian Open).

i.e. top 12 year old, 13 year old, top 14 year old, top 15 year old etc.

And addition of Top 5 aggregate individualists named at Espoir Championship and Canadian Open.

Rationale:

- Increases number of athletes receiving recognition
- Increased motivation

Long Term Goals:

Synchro Canada's long term goal is to have a competition structure that achieves the goals outlined at the start of this document. We aim to implement this structure with the feedback and ideas of our stakeholders, over a timeline that facilitates a smooth transition and maximum retention and development of our athletes.

Still under discussion:

1) Changing our Qualification system from Divisionals to 1 or 2 National Qualifying Events.

Rationale:

- Aligns with Age Group System
- Provides an additional opportunity for exposure to competition across the country
- Our National Championship becomes a prestigious event for athletes to strive for, instead of a competition they can automatically enter.

2) Addition of a 12 & Under Category at Espoir Championships.

Rationale:

- Aligns with Fina age group
- Increase Competition Opportunities for top athletes in this age group
- Allows us to see of the best in Canada
- Talent identification for potential international opportunities
- Talent identification of individuals for future National Teams.
- Top team can represent Canada at UANA competition, eliminating need of creating Provincial 12& Under teams.

Issues to consider:

- Does this align with LTAD?
- Will there be an extra figure competition added? Or will the duets and solos swim 13-15 figures?
- How will these athletes qualify for Espoir if they are not already on a 13-15 team that is entered?

For 2010/2011 we will separate out 12 & Under results, for athletes who are 12 & under and are swimming on a 13-15 team at the Espoir Nationals.

3) Synchro Canada Competitions being assigned rather than the current bidding process.

Rationale:

- To alleviate the problem of attaining bids for the competitions.
- To give provinces and clubs more time to plan for hosting competitions.

How?

The immediate changes for the 2010-2011 season presented here in this document and summarized in the Rule Change document (on the web), were voted on by the Provinces on our Rule change call June 17, 2010. All provinces were represented on this call with the exception of Nova Scotia. All rule changes were unanimously approved.

A competition Structure committee was formed in Feb 2009. The committee members included Bryan Cook (Synchro Canada Domestic Development Manager), Charles Cardinal (LTAD Expert and Consultant), Chris Hampshire (Synchro Canada Competitions Chair), Jadine Cleary (Synchro Canada Domestic Technical Director), Janet Herman (Synchro Ontario Programs Coordinator), Kristen Brawley (Synchro Canada High Performance

Manager), Laurie Wachs (Synchro Saskatchewan High Performance Director and Saskatoon Aquatics Head Coach), Sarah-Eve Pelletier (Synchro Canada Athlete Council Chair), and Vivianne Slade (Synchro Canada Projects and Events Manager).

The recommendations from the committee were first presented to the Synchro Community at the AGM in 2009. Feedback was gathered from the PSO's at this time. The same presentation was made to the coaches at the High Performance Summit in 2009. Feedback was gathered from the coaching community at this time.

The Domestic Technical Director also solicited feedback from the coaching community at each Divisional competition and National competition in 2009 and 2010.

Monthly update and feedback sessions have been held with the PSO's since January 2010.

The proposed changes have been posted on the website since Feb 2010.

Who?

If you have any questions please contact Jadine Cleary, Synchro Canada Domestic Technical Director, at jadine@synchro.ca.

Please also refer to the summary of the rule changes for the 2010/2011 season which is on the website.