

**CANADA**    
**ARTISTIC**  
**SWIMMING**

**2019**

**Technical Conference**



## 2019 Technical Conference Schedule

(Revised September 3, 2019 - subject to modifications)

Friday, September 20, 2019		
4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Registration	<b>Hotel Universel Montreal</b> 5000, Rue Sherbrooke Est, Montréal, QC H1V 1A1  <i>*Conference room TBA.</i>
6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Conference Welcome	
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	<b>Keynote Speaker – Danièle Sauvageau</b> It was Danièle’s passion, instincts and leadership that led Canada’s women’s hockey team to its historic win at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. As general manager and coach, she faced many challenges in achieving her own Olympic dream and that of her team.  Read more about Danièle Sauvageau here: <a href="http://www.danielesauvageau.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Bio_DSsauvageau-EN.pdf">http://www.danielesauvageau.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Bio_DSsauvageau-EN.pdf</a>	
8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Welcome Reception	

**\*All sessions Saturday and Sunday will take place at Institut National du Sport (INS) Québec (4141 Pierre-de Coubertin Ave, Montreal, QC H1V 3N7).**

Saturday, September 21, 2019		
8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	<b>Own the Podium: Introducing Canada Artistic Swimming’s Podium Pathway (Part 1)</b>  This interactive session which will be facilitated by Own the Podium (OTP) Podium Pathway Advisor Jodi Hawley will introduce coaches and officials to CAS’s podium pathway including the CAS gold medal profile which has been developed collaboratively with OTP. CAS OTP Advisor David Mirota will also be in attendance.	INSQ - Classroom
11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Break	

11:15 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	<b>Own the Podium: Introducing Canada Artistic Swimming's Podium Pathway (Part 2)</b>	INSQ – Classroom
12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch (on own)	
1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	<b>Assessing Athletes</b>  Working with CAS podium pathway/gold medal profile assessment tools, coaches and officials will work collaboratively with the Senior National Team athletes while using the assessment tools – testing their usability and giving feedback.	Pool
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<b>Senior National Team 2019 Training and Preparation Plan</b>  Senior National Team Head Coach Gabor Szauder and his staff will present the senior national team's training and preparation strategy for the 2019 competitive season that began in January 2019 and led them to the top of the podium at the Pan Am Games.	INSQ – Classroom
4:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	Break	
4:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.	<b>2019 International Review – Coaches and Judges Panel Discussion / Q&amp;A</b>  National Team Coaches and International Officials will review 2019 international competition performances, share key observations and information and answer questions from the floor.	INSQ – Classroom
5:15–6:15	<b>Development Strategy Brainstorm Session</b>  After processing Day 1 information – officials and coaches will have the opportunity to participate in a facilitated brainstorming session on national development strategy.	
6:15 p.m.	<b>End of Day 1 – Dinner on own</b>	

<b>Sunday, September 22, 2019</b>		
8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	<p><b>FINA Update with Lisa Schott</b></p> <p>FINA Technical Artistic Swimming Committee Chair Lisa Schott will update coaches and officials on key new and upcoming information from FINA for the 2019-20 season.</p>	INSQ - Classroom
9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	<p><b>CAS HP Update from Julie Healy</b></p> <p>CAS Chief Sport Officer Julie Healy will update coaches and officials on High Performance / National Team programming for the 2019-20 season and preliminary planning for 2020+</p>	INSQ - Classroom
9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	<p><b>Development update - AquaGO! &amp; CAS Coach Pathway</b></p> <p>Coaches and officials will get a development update from CAS staff on the AquaGO! program and the CAS Coach Pathway.</p>	INSQ - Classroom
10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	Break	
10:15 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	<p><b>Canada Artistic Swimming Concussion Policy</b></p> <p>Coaches and officials will be walked through the new Canada Artistic Swimming Concussion Policy and key stakeholder resources to support the health and safety of our athletes.</p>	INSQ - Classroom
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	<p><b>The psychology of effective feedback</b></p> <p>Senior National Team Mental Performance Consultant Dr. Véronique Richard will present on the psychology of effective feedback which will give coaches and officials key tools for delivering better feedback.</p>	INSQ - Classroom
12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Lunch (on own)	
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	<p><b>Make sure your music is as good as it can be!</b></p> <p>From selection, to technical design, to editing for harmony - music designer Hugo Chouinard will share his essential tips for making sure your music is as good as it can be! Find out more about Hugo here: <a href="https://sk8mix.pro/">https://sk8mix.pro/</a></p>	INSQ - Classroom

1:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	<p><b>The Choreographic Process</b></p> <p>Canada Artistic Swimming Coaches and Officials will be lead through a creative and innovative session by Mr. Lindsay Fischer of the National Ballet of Canada. Mr. Fischer is currently the Artistic Director of YOU dance, the National Ballet's outreach programme focused on introducing young people to the world of dance and ballet.</p> <p>Read more about Mr. Lindsay Fischer here:  <a href="https://national.ballet.ca/Meet/Backstage/Creative/Lindsay-Fischer">https://national.ballet.ca/Meet/Backstage/Creative/Lindsay-Fischer</a></p>	INSQ - Classroom
3:45-4:00 p.m.	<b>Conference Closing / Departure</b>	



## **Canada Artistic Swimming is thrilled to welcome the following guest experts to the 2019 Technical Conference** (listed in order of appearance at the conference)



### **Danièle Sauvageau – Keynote Speaker**

Danièle Sauvageau's passion, instinct and leadership were instrumental in the historic win by the Canadian women's hockey team at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. As general manager and coach, she transformed a fear of losing into an absolute desire for victory, a radical turnaround that enabled her players to achieve their Olympic dream.

Sauvageau has taken part in seven Olympic Games, as women's hockey coach, general manager and coaching consultant. She played a key role in her team's wins in seven consecutive world championships, and in the silver medal they won at the Nagano Olympics.

With her dedication, involvement in developing her sport and her winning record, she has become the undisputed guru of women's hockey in Canada.

For 24 years, Sauvageau has served with the RCMP and Montreal's police department, including the narcotics division. She is currently works as advisor to the strategic development department.

After completing a degree in social work, Sauvageau graduated from the RCMP academy. She obtained a master's certificate in coaching from the National Coaching Certification Program and a management certificate from the École des Hautes Études Commerciales.

Drawing on her expertise in human resources management, coaching, leadership, situation assessment, communication and the formation of winning teams, Sauvageau speaks on various topics related to performance.

For more information on Danièle please visit <http://www.danielesauvageau.com>.



### **Jodi Hawley – Own the Podium**

Jodi Hawley is a Podium Pathway Advisor with Own the Podium, as well as a sport physiologist, coach developer, and athlete development advisor.

In addition to her work as a Podium Pathway Advisor with Own the Podium, Jodi also works at the Canadian Sport Institute (CSI) Calgary as a Content Expert – Performance Planning for the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) – Advanced Coaching Diploma. She previously worked as a Sport Physiologist at CSI Calgary from 2005-2015.

As a coach and athlete development advisor, Jodi assists NSO's (Cross Country Canada, Biathlon Canada, Athletics Canada) with NCCP curriculum

development and creating sport-specific Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) guidelines.

Jodi holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Waterloo in Kinesiology and Exercise Science and a Master of Science in Exercise Physiology from the University of Calgary.



### **David Mirota – Own the Podium**

David Mirota is currently Canada Artistic Swimming's Own the Podium High Performance Advisor, and has been a High Performance Advisor for Summer Sports at Own The Podium since 2018. David has been involved in Freestyle Skiing for the past 25 years, as an athlete and coach, and was Technical leader and High Performance Director of Freestyle Canada from 2008-2018, and the Team Leader in Sochi 2014 and Pyeongchang 2018. David is a graduate of McGill University with a Bachelor of Education, Major in Kinesiology.



### **Gabor Szauder – Senior National Team Coach**

Gabor Szauder had been leading Canada's Senior National Team program since January 2019, and had a successful first season with Canada winning the inaugural FINA World Series Championship and claiming two gold medals at the 2019 Pan Am Games clinching an 2020 Olympic berth in duet and team.

Hailing from Budapest, Hungary, Szauder earned a Diploma from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences at Semmelweis University and also holds certification as a Master Coach in Synchronized Swimming. He has had leading roles in the international synchronized/artistic swimming circle since 1993.

Szauder has previously coached top-level athletes in three countries – Greece, Hungary and most recently Slovakia. He has coached at two different Olympic Games, always working closely with a team of experienced professionals.



### **Lisa Schott – FINA Technical Artistic Swimming Committee Chair**

Lisa Schott is the current FINA Technical Artistic Swimming Committee Chair, President of Aquatics Canada and is a Past President of Canada Artistic Swimming. Lisa has over 20 years of experience working with Canadian national sport organizations on both domestic and international issues.

Lisa is a creative and inspiring leader who leads by example, committing herself to the task-at-hand in a way that involves strategic planning and negotiation skills to drive new sport initiatives to a positive and successful conclusion.

Proficient in business, Lisa has worked in a variety of industries that demand a creative vision with a strong connection to what is necessary to affect

positive results. Lisa has a solid track record for managing change and transition in the sport community with a keen sense of being able to analyze the impact of change, identify a course of action and implement a strategy to achieve positive results.



### **Véronique Richard – Senior National Team Mental Performance Consultant**

With a Phd In sport sciences, Dr. Véronique Richard has been working with Canada Artistic Swimming since 2018. Véronique has been a mental performance consultant with INS Québec since 2015 and also has been working with Cirque du Soleil since 2016.

With a Master's degree in Sport Sciences (performance psychology) and a Phd, Sport Sciences both from the Université de Montréal, Véronique's applied expertise is in performance psychology where she designs risk friendly environments to encourage people to navigate through discomfort and grow psychologically from it. She uses movement improvisation as a method to stimulate creative mindset and set the stage for creative problem solving, creative ideation and creative performance.



### **Hugo Chouinard – Music technician / designer**

Pierre-Hugues "Hugo" Chouinard is the man behind the musical arrangements of many of the world's top figure skating competitors. He also prepares music for Skate Canada's national and international events, as well as the Thank You Canada Tour, Stars on Ice and All that Skate.

Former member of the Canadian National Team in Ice Dance, and a former Ice Dance and Synchronized Skating coach/choreographer, Hugo has created over 45,000 programs in 25 years. Hugo founded his studio in 1993 and was one of the first skating music designers to create computer-generated mixes.

In 2003, Hugo started collaborating with choreographer David Wilson, who taught him a lot about vision of the movement in relation to music and the way of telling a story on the ice. He trusted Hugo to create programs for Jeffrey Buttle, Joannie Rochette, Marie-France Dubreuil and Patrice Lauzon and Yuna Kim and opened the door for Hugo on the international figure skating scene.

From the ice to the pool, Hugo has also been creating and editing music for artistic swimming for many years, as well as for roller skating and gymnastics. Also an event technician and DJ at national and international figure skating events, Hugo is an expert at venue acoustics.

To learn even more about Hugo Chouinard, visit his website at [www.sk8mix.pro](http://www.sk8mix.pro).



## **Lindsay Fischer – National Ballet of Canada**

Born in New York City, Lindsay Fischer came to Toronto in 1974 to study at Canada's National Ballet School. After graduating in 1978, he went to Europe, joining the Companhia Nacional de Bailado in Lisbon and then the Dutch National Ballet where he was a Principal Dancer. In 1987, he returned to North America to join New York City Ballet as a Principal Dancer. He performed as a guest artist with some of the most eminent ballerinas of the era, including Margaret Barbieri, Cynthia Gregory and Evelyn Hart.

After retiring from the stage, Mr. Fischer joined Canada's National Ballet School where, in addition to teaching, he developed a structure to guide the school's graduates through the transition from school and graduation to professional employment. This led to the creation of the Post-Secondary and the Dancer Career Planning Programmes at the school, both of which Mr. Fischer managed until 2007. In 2008, Mr. Fischer was appointed Director of the Professional Summer Dance Program at The Banff Centre in Alberta.

Mr. Fischer has created works for Canada's National Ballet School students and has overseen the production of works by such notable choreographers as George Balanchine, Rudi van Dantzig, James Kudelka, Peggy Baker, Christopher House and Toer van Schayk. As well, he has staged works for and been a Guest Ballet Master with companies in Canada and abroad. He was a Guest Répétiteur for The National Ballet of Canada from 1997 to 2007 and was appointed Ballet Master with the company in 2007. In 2011, he restaged Don Quixote for the National Ballet. Mr. Fischer is currently the Artistic Director of YOU dance, the National Ballet's outreach programme focused on introducing young people to the world of dance and ballet.

# ONTARIO ARTISTIC SWIMMING

## OAS Coaches Reports

## **2019 Canada Artistic Swimming Technical Conference Taking a New Look at the Sport!**

Ruth Belcher

When over 55 coaches and officials from across the country gathered in September for the 2019 CAS Technical Conference – they left challenged to shake up their thinking about the sport!

Over the three days they heard from a number of speakers from both inside and outside artistic swimming, who provided fresh perspectives to challenge conventional thinking with new ideas and concepts coming from hockey to ballet!

The keynote presentation on Friday night at the hotel Universel in Montreal featured Danièle Sauvageau, the general manager and coach of Canada's 2002 Olympic Champion Women's Hockey Team. She gave an inspirational address which highlighted many of the learnings from her experiences, including the 'need to do things differently if you want different results.'

The participants also had the opportunity to pay tribute to our highly successful Senior National Team, as Championship Banners were presented to them as the 2019 FINA World Series Champions and the 2019 Pan American Games Champions. These banners will be hung proudly at INS Quebec.

Saturday's program at the Institut National du Sport (INS) Quebec, focused on the 'objective' side of our sport. It began with detailed technical discussions, particularly engaging the coaches, as Own the Podium (OTP) Podium Pathway Advisor Jodi Hawley presented the new CAS Gold Medal Profile (GMP). Our podium pathway includes performance targets, winning style of performance and our Gold Medal Profile. Jodi identified that using performance metrics and statistical information allows for better identification of true gaps and to measure progression. This reinforced the need to objectively track all assessment areas and the importance of this disciplined approach for our funding partners at all levels.

The coaches and officials then worked together with our Senior National Team athletes to test the Assessment Tools that are being developed to measure the pathway components on a go-forward basis.

That session was followed by a presentation by our Senior National Team Coach, Gabor Szauder, giving an overview of the team's training and preparation strategy that began in January 2019 and led them to the top of the podium at the Pan American Games in August. The discussion then moved into a 2019 International Review, with a panel of our National Team Coaches and International Officials sharing their observations. Everyone was engaged, adding ideas, as well as asking the panel many questions.

The final session of the day was a Development Strategy Brainstorm Session, facilitated by Benoit Girardin, President of the strategic planning firm, LBB Strategies. The goal was to process all the information received during the day and to have coaches and officials working together to elevate Canada's potential to win.

As a result of the discussions, there was consensus that to win:

- athletes need to learn critical technical skills at optimum ages – following our LTAD model.
- there needs to be more standardization of skill development at each age and stage – emphasizing key periods of trainability.
- we need attention to detail in our athlete development from club level up all the time
- we need to deliver meaningful competitions based on standardized LTAD blocks and that we standardize our competition calendar and events, and content of events across the country
- we work together as a team across the country

The group also had an opportunity to discuss some specific programming steps that need to be undertaken, as they answered the question “What strategic actions do we need to agree on and deploy, as a community, to create a leading national development system?”

- be consistent across Canada in coaching technique and athlete development techniques
- commit uniformly to AquaGO! and programs after it – especially aimed at 12 and under aged athletes
- Coaching – coaches need to be coached at all levels – to help them understand their important role in talent identification and development
- introduce standardized testing – everything else is standardized
- establish and maintain a positive training environment – live the conduct expectations at all levels
- Get Boys! Clubs market specifically and directly to boys – first in AquaGO! then at higher levels actively recruit them into programs (CAS and PTSOs to support)

Sunday's sessions were focused on the 'subjective' side of our sport. FINA Technical Artistic Swimming Committee Chair Lisa Schott updated the group on new/upcoming information from FINA for the season ahead. Julie Healy, Chief Sport Officer, CAS described the plan moving forward for the 13-15 age group and Junior National Teams including a standardized annual calendar; and outlined preliminary planning for the next quadrennial. Kara Heald, Artistic Swimming Program Manager, Jennifer Langlois, IST Program Lead and Sherry Robertson, NCCP Consultant, provided updates on AquaGO! CAS Concussion Policy Protocol and the CAS Coaching Certification Pathway respectively.

The Senior National team Mental Performance Consultant, Dr. Véronique Richard, educated everyone on the psychology of effective feedback, both how we process

information and how best to deliver it. She introduced new tools for delivering feedback and encouraged everyone to “stretch” in this area.

Pierre-Hugues (Hugo) Chouinard, the renowned musical designer for athletes from several artistic sports, led an engaging and humorous session that included the importance of music selection and the quality of music production. He shared essential information about choosing, editing and finalizing music for routines.

The final session of the conference featured Lindsay Fischer, the Artistic Director of YOU dance, the National Ballet of Canada’s outreach program focused on introducing young people to the world of dance and ballet. He illustrated the similarities between CAS and the National Ballet’s pathway, including a focus on diversity and inclusivity. He encouraged CAS to look at its membership differently in the future giving as encouragement that the National Ballet’s 2020 graduating class will include 16 males and 13 females.

As the 2019 Technical Conference concluded, there was a genuine spirit of camaraderie in the group and a shared commitment to push the organization forward in key areas of athlete and coach development. According to CAS President Judi Enns Bradette, “this weekend provided an opportunity for coaches and officials to share and contribute to our path going forward and also to learn more about CAS’s commitment to build strong HP and Development programs in Canada.” And she added that by hearing new ideas, some from outside the sport, “coaches and officials were given an opportunity to get out of their comfort zones and are challenged to do things differently this season.”

This key group of technical experts left Montreal energized and ready to tackle the new season. Canada Artistic Swimming intends to hold a technical conference every two years, and supplement them with an on-going webinar series and topic specific sessions to be held at national events during the season.

# CAS Technical Conference

Courtney Durand

## Senior National Team 2019 Training & Prep Plan

- No key plans were given during the tech conference.. my best guess is that because their were some internationally affiliated coaches present they were hesitant to do a full plan
- Gabor broke his observations of Canada artistic swimming down into 3 key components

## Science

- 28 days is the human body period/ biological rhythm forming the plan to match and train their body for key competition moments... aka if competition is on X day of the month -match training to have peak moments 28 days before that and continue that cycle.

## "Non-negotiables"

- We are training good artistic swimmers not athletes
- Running, weight training & Speed swimming need to be trained
- Rest/recovery & nutrition need to be instilled at a young age

## TAA

- Toughness
- Awareness
- Accountability
- Key behavioural traits we are not enforcing and promoting enough

Gabor also noted some key differences in Canada vs other more successful countries

- Uniform teams/duets.... selected by body type then skill worked on. Lots of twin duets
- Selection for high performance at 6-10 years old
- Centralised after 13 years old
- Flyers are trained differently and picked early
- Canada is excellent on measurable fields.. height, execution but weak on the subjective things i.e matched body types, skin colours etc.
- He noted that these things are not in rulebook however very apparent in our sport

Gabor was presenting the reality of team selection in numerous international countries including the top competitors. The processes described do not however in any way support or imply that Canada should do the same. Jackie is a very strong leader who believes in the CAS mandate of "Forging Unity Through Diversity" and submits that "CAS understands its Head Coach's observations of the perceptions and limitations internationally and is working hard to integrate the Canadian brand, values, and culture into the sport at all levels."

## 2019 International Review

- Panel type discussion that responded to questions - not a structured presentation Key takeaways
- We are way behind other countries in the under Senior category
- 13-15s are centralising everywhere else for much longer
- Mixed duets are going to be bigger and bigger... we must get boys in the sport early. Highlight Teams and teams may/will also have a male component at some point
- Canada has a great buzz about it now with the improvement from the Senior team our country needs to capitalize on this to keep making an impact in the sport

# CAS Technical Conference

Genevieve Beauregard

## **The choreography a Process**

*By: Mr Lindsay Fisher , Artistic director of YOU dance, the National Ballet outreach program*

DO:

- TELL A STORY
- Facial expression that are more natural and align with the story that we tell
- Choose themes that allows a greater variety of movement
- Don't separate the Technic from the message you want to convey through your routine
- Priorities Pattern changes that are Natural and fluids
- Build Transitions in Routine that are Natural and Fluids
- High light: Clean and clear entry in the water

## **Make sure your Music is as good as it can be**

*By: Hugo Chouinard, Music designer*

- Tell a story with your Music
- Music is the canvas of your Routine, spend time on research and think outside of the box
- Try to avoid to just use an Epic music and defined the theme by just adding sound effects
- Purchasing music leads to better quality sound

# CAS Technical Conference 2019

Elly Van Fleet

This conference was a lot about sharing thoughts, ideas, and listening to inspiring and passionate people talk about our sport and where we can all take it, so the notes are quite sparse, as it was more of an experience than a note taking endeavour. But here were some key messages and items from each of the sessions.

## **Friday**

### **Keynote – Daniele Savegeua**

- Daniele Sauvageua – Canada’s Women Hockey team coach in 2002 Winter Olympics as well as other Olympic and national team coaches and manger positions
- Her talk was good, but a little bit all over the place, she couldn’t seem to keep a common theme or thread to her talk, but she was passionate and wonderful to listen to.
- Her talk centered a lot about being told no over the years and learning to work through those moments into new pathways and success.

### **Social**

- We had an opportunity to mingle and chat with judges and coaches from Ontario and Canada

## **Saturday**

### **Own The Podium: Introducing Canada Artistic Swimming’s Podium Pathway – with Jodi Hawley**

- I loved Jodi’s energy and passion, she is not from Artistic Swimming but from Own the Podium and she explained the 6 month process they are currently in the middle of with Artistic Swimming. (CAS)
- Own the Podium is a Canadian not-for-profit organization which was created in 2010 to prepare Canadian Athletes to reach medal finishes in the Olympic Games. They provide technical leadership and guidance to NSO’s with the aim of more Olympic medals. They make funding recommendations though prioritized investment strategies using an evidence informed, expert driven, targeted and collaborative approach.
- These two session involved a lot of top secret info that we were not allowed to share as it impacts the programming and process of the Canadian Senior team and it’s road to the Olympics. Their website has some information on their organization if you are interested: <https://www.ownthepodium.org/About-OTP>
- Basically we were presented with a lot of stats, (which I loved!) Stats on where Canada is in the overall results, breakdown marks of both routines etc. Lots and lots of charts. Basically, Canada is currently ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the world and there are clearly two groupings of marks from ranking 1-4, and then ranking 5-7. In order to get to the top of our grouping and move to 5<sup>th</sup> we need to close an expected 1.5 gap by 2020 in Tokyo, it is a 4 pt gap to the medals. So they are now in the process of evaluating their goals for 2020 and 2024 Olympics based on the projections of scores and background information on the scores. They are also now working on the “how” of

closing the gaps with the top countries. Our Senior National team just went through 6 months of competing in the lead to winning Pan Am Games and earning their Olympic continental spot, and competed 60 times with only 3 disappointing performances. Their marks had a steady increase and that is all reflected and used in part of the stats and matrix's going forward. It was a very interesting 2 sessions with a lot of perspectives, from Olympic judges, to Olympics coaches, to National coaches to FINA representation. Our new National program is doing well, much better than it has in the past few years, but we still have a long way to go. We are categorized with OTP based on our medal expectations, which they believe are further out and closer to 2024 at this time, but it is exciting to hear all of the information that goes into all of these decisions. It was a lot of talk of finding the gaps, closing them and then building on what we do well.

### **Assessing Athletes Session**

- This session was spent using a possible new assessment tool for CAS in their National team camps and possible selection process. It was an in-depth discussion in groups and then with National team athletes in one of the Amazing Olympic park pools about assessment, the tool, the purpose, the result, the communication of assessment with athletes and coaches afterwards. It was a very working group driven session where we were all pre assigned groups with judges and coaches mixed. It was working through a spreadsheet with the athletes and giving our feedback to the group putting it together on it as an assessment tool, and usage for communication with athletes.

### **Senior National team 2019 Training and Preparation Plan – with head coach Gabor from CAS**

- This session did not talk at all about the advertised topic, but it was so interesting and exciting to hear the new head coach speak about our sport and our team. Gabor had an interesting mix of confidence, calm and passion. He definitely had some controversial topics discussed a bit, but it was so interesting to hear his view and his already undying support and belief in this team.
- Gabor talked a lot about the objective and subjective things in our sport, and a big part of the discussion was the extreme cultural differences between Canada and the top countries. They do things we could never, ever do based on our culture alone. He talked of things like picking teams based on skin colour, height, leg and feet look. Top teams look as identical as possible before they even step in the pool. In top countries if you don't fit the mold you are told to find a new sport at as young as 6 years old. This is what Canada is up against.

Gabor was presenting the reality of team selection in numerous international countries including the top competitors. The processes described do not however in any way support or imply that Canada should do the same. Jackie is a very strong leader who believes in the CAS mandate of "Forging Unity Through Diversity" and submits that "CAS understands its Head Coach's observations of the perceptions and limitations internationally and is working hard to integrate the Canadian brand, values, and culture into the sport at all levels."

- He also talked of how top countries like Russia and Japan take athletes by age of 10 and remove them from families into training centres to focus on their sport, or how he witnessed a selection process in which 3000 kids between ages 4 and 6 were in a room holding ballet first position and were chosen down to 30 to train in the training camps for Artistic Swimming.
- He also talked a lot about the bias' that happen in International judging, he told stories of judges telling him straight out that they just don't like Jacquie, or having a judge argue with him that the Spanish duet is just stronger than ours because of Ona swimming, when Ona didn't compete in competition that day. He is passionate about helping the judging of this sport become more subjective and less objective.

- He talked a lot about training, and how important it is, 60% land training to develop athletes, and how he sees our sport as an athletic sport. About how out of shape the National team athletes were when he got there, and how hard they have worked on trying to change that.
- He talked of our athleticism being one of the best in the world, that FINA has been doing testing of new things and we have found out that Canada has the highest highlights in the world, that a GPS chip was put on the athletes at an Internationally competition and Canada moves the most and covers the most amount of the pool.
- He spoke about knowing your place, and growing teams with the help of using the appropriate people, for example he hired a choreographer to choreograph the routines as she was stronger than him at it to give the best routine possible.
- He spoke of proper training, rest and nutrition and how this changed for the National team this year.
- He also spoke to concussions and how he believes things have gone too far, and that swimmers are so afraid of them they confuse other symptoms and factors as concussion symptoms.

### **2019 International review – Coaches and Judges panel Discussion**

- This was an interesting session, it was just all of the National team coaches and Judges from those events from Canada. It was a great question and answer period of stories and thoughts. Not really sure what to share here specifically, but it was a great session as well.

### **Development Strategy brainstorm Session**

- This was the end of the day wrap up where we broke off into groups with suggestions to CAS from our learning from the day. A lot came up about working together as a Country, that we are all in this together, standardizing competitions, skills, expectations across Country etc. Everything was discussed and written, so we are hopeful that it gets compiled and something is done with the information.

## **Sunday**

### **Fina Update with Lisa Schott**

- She is the Fina Technical Artistic Swimming Committee Chair and is from Canada.
- Her presentation ran double the time, and was extremely unorganized and disjointed and did not really speak to anything that the debrief said it would.
- Out of her presentation a few things – they are working on changing the judging for the next quad in 2021. Talk of actually counting synchronization errors by judges and a mark being reflected, talk of judging difficulty in new ways.
- Really pushing hard for boys in programming, looks like internationally new categories are going to come out and for some events there may be a ratio of men to women at international level at events like worlds and Olympics.
- They are now starting up discussions at FINA level for new rules in new Quad.
- This presentation did not bring much information which was disappointing.

### **CAS HP Update from Julie Healy**

- Julie Healy is the CAS Chief Sport officer
- Her presentation talked a lot about dates, fees, talent ID process for 13-15, Junior and Senior National teams.
- It looks like they are going to run Junior and 13-15 national teams in alternating years based on the competition schedule they will attend.
- Canada has now been moved from the Canada Winter Games to the Canada Summer Games, but because of this move we will not have a team attend until 2025 and at that time we will need to have a male member in the team if we want to bring 10 athletes. 9 +1 male, and out of the two duets, one must be mixed.
- A lot of the information she presented wasn't new, just explaining again.

### **Development update Aqua Go and CAS Coach Pathway**

- Due to the FINA presentation going double the time, this one was cut to 20 mins so was extremely brief.
- CAS Coach Pathway – there are some changes coming here, one of the biggest is that as of 2020 in order for a coach to register for the Comp Intro course, they must have first taken the Aqua Go Instructor course. They do not need to be fully certified in Aqua Go, but must have taken the course.

### **Canada Artistic Swimming Concussion Policy**

- This was also impacted by the day running long, so wasn't very long. They are going to be setting up a webinar about it as there is talk of requiring to report to CAS and having medial releases etc.

### **The Psychology of Effective Feedback**

- This was with Dr. Veronique Richard
- She was incredible! We all LOVED her! Energetic, positive, amazing!! Great session!
- She talked a lot about learning to use different forms of feedback and helping athletes to learn how to apply self feedback and learning who the athletes are. If you have an athlete who thinks they do everything wrong, telling them they are doing it wrong over and over will only expedite the problem.
- Giving athletes time to learn from experience, giving them time to choose whether or not they want to receive feedback and how.
- Celebrating consistency
- Being the Rational brain in the competitive environment for athletes
- Learning that you don't always have to talk so much as a coach, it can be overwhelming to the athletes.

### **Make your music as good as it can be!**

- This was with Hugo Chouinard. <https://sk8mix.pro/>
- He has done a lot of Artistic Swimming music as well as Figure skating (He did all of Tessa and Scott's music)

- He was incredible and very interesting. He talked a lot about using quality music, purchasing music, keeping aware of the temp of music and using music for the athletes, judges and audience. Over and over throughout many of the sessions comments were made about themes that were aggressive or mad, and how that doesn't tend to be successful all the time.
- He talked about using beats per minute of at least 160 bpm and working with athletes before selecting music on seeing what bpm they can handle before using it. He suggested using metronome app or tap tempo app
- He also suggested apps like Shazam and Sound Hound to find music when you hear it somewhere.
- He also mentioned that using Spotify is great, but when trying to find the music to purchase try google play if you can't find it on itunes, as it often has a lot of Spotify music.

### **The Choreographic Process**

- This session was with Lindsay Fischer – the artistic Director from the National Ballet of Canada
- This was another session that was lead by an incredible person, with such amazing passion for artistry and movement, but didn't actually speak to the topic title of the Choreographic Process.
- He was a privilege to listen to, and was such a moving speaker. We all thoroughly enjoyed his ideas on our sport, his excitement and passion for his artform of dance and his talk of welcoming all as equals and helping society to see it as well.
- He talked about a culture of growth, one built on respect with all involved and shared stories of such growth and change.
- He talked about failure and how it is the best learning tool, that success does not really teach us anything and isn't of much use in comparison to failure. Success is nice for the moment but it is fleeting and quickly moves to the past, where failure teaches us and helps us grow and move forward.
- He talked of not being afraid of change and that growth is hard but to keep with it

### **Overall thoughts – impressions:**

- This conference exceeded our expectations, especially the Saturday sessions. We were not really looking forward to them on Saturday and we were very surprised and excited to have been a part of it all. Sunday was wonderful.
- Many hours were spent after each day discussing, debating, and learning how we can implement things at the club level. It was long and a lot of information that sometimes felt overwhelming, but well worth the time and money.
- It was great to have us all there as we all had slightly different take aways and views and it sparked some very interesting conversations over dinners, and in airports. It would have been nice if there had been a discount for multiple registrations from one club.
- It was amazing to sit in a room with such high calibre coaches and judges, it was a bit intimidating, but we all made sure to branch out and talk and participate so we could all learn from this experience. It personally gave me a lot of motivation to attend more, and find more learning opportunities for myself.

# CAS Technical Conference

John Ortiz

## Become A Performance Designer

Our job as coaches is to become performance designers of each individual athlete. Every day we walk onto the pool deck and have a plan to train everyone the same but is that their actual prescription to becoming the performer they desire to be. Ask yourself, are you coaching the person first, or are you coaching the athlete first?

As a performance designer, you learn how to coach the person first which makes up the athlete you want them to become. The biggest enemy of your feedback is self-worth.

## Build self-controlled feedback to foster Intrinsic Motivation

Design a learning activity where the athletes can choose **IF** and **WHEN** they receive selected types of feedback assistance:

Let the athletes know what type of feedback they can access from you:

- Instructional
- Knowledge of performance
- Knowledge of results
- Video

Respect their choice and learn from their needs.

Design an intrinsically motivating environment. It's the Learning Zone of a person which focus is the mind being under construction. Here the person is learning.

- Design Consistency – The What
- Design effective learning methods – The How
- Design an intrinsically motivating environment – The Why

The three basic needs are: Competence, Relatedness, and Autonomy.

The performance zone is:

- Design an adapted focus plan
- Design the emotional journey

## You don't always have to speak to teach...2 types of knowledge

### Explicit Knowledge

Made up of fact and rules (know what to do) Athlete is aware of what she knows  
Athlete can verbalize what she knows  
Requires more "mental" effort  
Sensitive to pressure  
Sensitive to fatigue

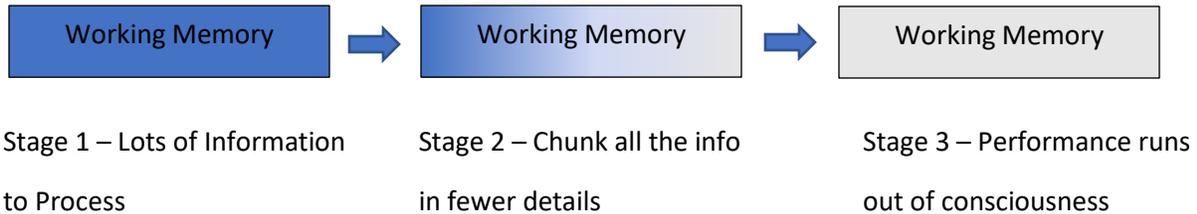
### Implicit Knowledge

Knows how to do  
Athlete knows, yet they are not aware Athlete cannot verbalize  
Requires few "mental" effort  
Resistant to pressure  
Resistant to fatigue

Create an environment that will do the talking for you.

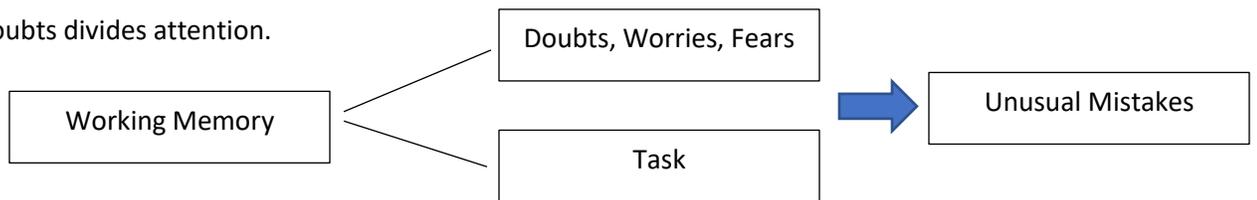
Limit the number of corrections you give an athlete. If you give them a lot of information, they are trying to perform all of that information at once to most likely please you as the coach. Instead, give them one correction with details they can repeat 10-20-30 times before giving them another correction.

### **Automaticity and Focus**

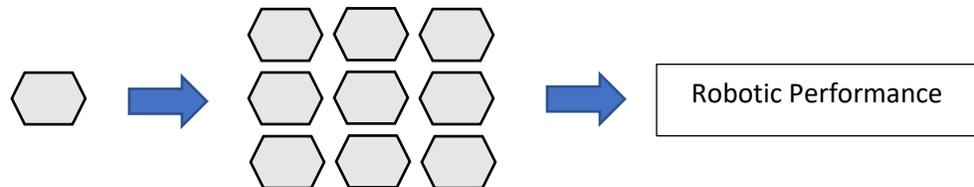


### **The Impact of Stress on Automaticity**

- Doubts divides attention.



- Reinvestment of knowledge



Solution: Adapt to the learning phase.

**Automaticity** - the ability to do things without occupying the mind with the low-level details required, allowing it to become an automatic response pattern or habit. It is usually the result of learning, repetition, and practice. Examples of tasks carried out by 'muscle memory' often involve some degree of automaticity.

### **Focus Strategizes – Performance Goals**

- Analogy – Image that is linked to the movements
- Shape of the movement (if you hold a position)
- External cues (something in the environment, partner, target...)
- Music/counts/rythme
- Breathing
- Feelings (light, tension, tall, powerful)

Try them and you will find what is best for you, and your athlete.

If you want greatness you will search for greatness. If you know there will be a mistake, you will search for the mistake. The last hour of feedback is POSITIVE. At competitions all you need to do is wake up the body, wake up the confidence, then get out and ready to go!

**Take Home Message**

- Allow athletes to choose to receive feedback or not.
- Let the environment talk for you.
- Celebrate consistency.
- Develop a focus plan oriented towards external attentional strategies.
- In competition, be the rational brain athletes need.