**Competition Review – Phase 2**

**Attendance**

**Provinces:**

BC – Sian Blyth & Simon Cass

AB – Joe Sask

SK – Andrea Muir

MB – Cameron Bell

ON – Laura Wilson

QC – Marc Antoine Ducharme

NB – Barry Wishart

NS – Ben Marston

PEI – Tracy Stevenson

**Board of Directors:**

President – Steve Bach

Vice President Marketing – Kathy Newman

Vice President Technical – Trevor Kerr

Vice President Finance – Donald Royer

Vice President Domestic – Christina Jones

Vice President High Performance – Sharron St. Croix

**Wheelchair Basketball Canada Staff:**

Executive Director – Wendy Gittens

High Performance & National Academy Director – Mike Frogley

High Performance Manager – Paul Zachau

High Performance Coordinator – Murray McCullough

Communications and Marketing Manager – Courtney Pollock

Program Coordinator – Ryan Lauzon

**Executive Summary**

This report provides an analysis and evaluation of the current structure of competitions being offered by Wheelchair Basketball Canada. The main method of analysis was completed by conducting surveys outlining discussion topics such as age criteria, rules of the game and existing types of competitions. The meeting held on September 19, 2015 included the Provincial Associations, Board Members, and Wheelchair Basketball Staff who collectively discussed the topics at hand in order to come to a consensus and provide solutions moving forward. Results of the discussion were valuable in order to strengthen the LTAD pathway and develop Wheelchair Basketball Canada’s competitions.

It is recommended that:

* A longer shot clock should be considered for the non-competitive division at the Junior Regional Championships in order to provide room for development;
* The age restrictions for the Canada Games should not be changed;
* There be an opportunity to hold a 3 v 3 women’s tournament in the early season coached by our National Team Coaches for increased development;
* The CWBL Women’s National Championship should stay structured at 17 points and other implementations as to players on the court should be discussed further;
* The CWBL Women’s National Championship will remain as a stand-alone event for this year (2016);
* Moving forward there should be an elite competition, in whatever form it may take, each year from 2017 onward, in a stand-alone format;
* Teams competing in the 2016 CWBL National Championships will be tiered in hopes of promoting maximum participation in the tournament and having meaningful competition for every participant;
* Provinces within proximity to each other will be able to “share” athletes in order to field a team in the 2017 Elite Competition.

The report finds that in its current state, the competitions are adequately run, however with some small modifications, they could be more effective.

**Overview**

On September 19, 2015, representatives from 9 provinces came together before Wheelchair Basketball Canada’s Annual General Meeting to complete Phase 2 of the Competition Review. Phase 1 consisted of quantitative data being collected in the form of an online survey as well as qualitative data in the form of interviews with each of the provinces that were in attendance for Phase 2. From the Phase 1 data, a report was written highlighting common themes within the provinces which formed the discussion points for Phase 2. Over the course of the day, the provinces were broken up into smaller groups to discuss these topics and work toward a consensus. At the end of the day, each of the smaller groups’ thoughts were shared with everyone present and, if necessary, more discussion followed.

The topics of discussion are below in bold, followed by a summary of the provinces’ thoughts as a whole. The ‘Consensus Statement’ that follows aims to accurately represent the views of everyone at the meeting and is based on the final discussion had by everyone in attendance.

**Junior Competitions**

1. **There needs to be a consensus as to how long the shot clock will be.**

It was noted that the 18 second shot clock was difficult for most teams to play within at the first two Junior Regional competitions. Many of the shots that were being taken were just being thrown at the basket. The proposition to elongate the shot clock in order to allow for more development was mentioned in all three small groups. Two of the groups suggested having a 24 second shot clock for our development division (Open) and an 18 second shot clock for our competitive division (9 point).

**Consensus Statement**: A longer shot clock will allow for more development at the junior level and should be considered for our non-competitive division at Junior Regional Championships. The 18 second shot clock seems to be appropriate for our current 9 point competitive division.

1. **The regional tournaments have run with both an open division and a 9 point division in the past. Should there be a change in the points in either or both of these division and what is the overall goal of having two separate divisions and how can this be done?**

The 9 point division allows for only one 4.5 to be on the court and the groups felt this was appropriate for the ‘competitive’ division. During the discussions, there were challenges noted surrounding the 9 point division. The challenges lie within some provinces not being able to field teams due to the lack of availability of athletes that would fit into this point system. One suggestion was to have all of the athletes who wish to participate centralize in one area and have coaches draft teams that fit into the 9 point system. Another suggestion was to combine players from different provinces, before the tournament begins, in order to create teams that fit into this point system. Each small group discussed creating guidelines and having clear communication between the provinces, before the tournament, to define the level of competition for each division. This way there will be meaningful competition for everyone involved.

**Consensus Statement:** Before the Jr. Regional Championships begin, guidelines need to be set as to which athletes, from a skill level perspective, are able to participate in the ‘Open’ or ‘Non-Competitive’ division. There should also be communication amongst coaches leading up to the competition regarding the teams they are entering into each division and the challenges they face in doing so. This would allow for potential collaboration of provinces resulting in maximum participation and meaningful competition.

1. **Are we prepared to lower the age heading into Canada Games 2019?**

It was noted that if the Canada Games Age were to change, there would be athletes effected in every province across the country. It would affect some teams to the point where they would not be able to compete in the 2019 Games. If the age were to be lowered, it would also lower the level of competition and take away leadership opportunities from the veterans on the team. The reason for the suggested age change, for men only, would be to align the age with the Junior Men’s World Championship fitting into our Long Term Athlete Development plan, specifically with our High Performance Athlete Pathway. As a group, it was determined that the Canada Games tournament is primarily used to gain funding for wheelchair basketball within the provinces and give the opportunity to have a ‘Games time’ experience while representing your province.

**Consensus Statement:** There is no need to lower the Canada Games age.

**CWBL Women’s National Championship**

1. **For maximum participation, could there be a 3 vs. 3 component to the tournament or even a camp afterward where the women could be coached by our National Team Coaches?**

A common theme that emerged from this topic was that there was interest in having a 3 vs. 3 component implemented for the development of the women’s game, but it would be very difficult to do during the CWBL Women’s National Championship. It was suggested that perhaps this gap could be filled by having a 3 vs. 3 tournament or jamboree at the Academy early on in the season (September, October or November). It was also mentioned that having a ‘Future Stars’ 3 vs. 3 demo at some point during the CWBL Women’s National Championship is a good way to keep our upcoming women engaged and showcase the 3 vs. 3 game. Having a camp run by our National Team Coaches after the competition was a well-received idea, but the logistics of who would attend and how many additional days each athlete would have to be there was raised as an issue. The proposed 3 vs. 3 tournament or jamboree at the Academy could involve our National Team coaches and fill this gap.

**Consensus Statement:** It would likely be too complicated to run a 3 vs. 3 component or camp coached by our National Team coaches in conjunction with the CWBL Women’s National Championship, but there is an opportunity to fill both of these gaps with an early season 3 vs. 3 tournament or jamboree at the Academy.

1. **The point system is currently at 17, what is the ideal point structure for this tournament and what would the timeline be for implementing this?**

Currently the point system is at 17 to ensure provinces will be able to field teams. This is supported by a recent study conducted by Lisa Franks surrounding the women’s game. Keeping the points at 17 but only allowing two 4.5 class players on the court at a time was brought up as compromise. This would still encourage participation, but more closely mirror the international game where the point system is at 14.

**Consensus Statement:** The CWBL Women’s National Championship should stay at 17 points and further discussion should be had with the provinces as to putting limitations on how many players classified as 4.5 should be allowed on the court at a time.

1. **If an elite Men’s tournament was to be implemented in our competition structure, would the CWBL Women’s Nationals be held in conjunction with this or would it continue to be a stand-alone tournament.**

If we were to have the men’s Elite Competition and the CWBL Women’s National Championship on the same weekend, it could be more difficult for hosts to find suitable accommodations, venue and transportation with the volume of athletes coming in. On the other side, combining the two opens up another weekend when provinces are planning their competition schedule. It was also noted that it gives a better profile for the women to be independent and so far the stand-alone events have been extremely successful.

**Consensus Statement:** Since we will be having a CWBL National Championship and a CWBL Women’s National Championship in 2016, keep the CWBL Women’s National Championship as a stand-alone event for this year.

**CWBL National Championship / Elite Competition**

1. **Is there a need to have an elite men’s competition held again? Does that elite competition need to happen every year?**

A gap has been identified, especially in the larger provinces, for those who are not in the National Team program but past the Canada Games age to compete at a high level for their province. There has been discussion around having it every year to fill this gap and have the results for the provinces but also concern raised around the expense and capacity of building and sending teams. There was also discussion around what type of event this would be and who it would feature. Some of the ideas were to have an elite 3 vs. 3 tournament, an elite provincial men’s tournament and an elite men’s tournament featuring elite teams from Canada as well as international teams.

**Consensus Statement:** It is too early to implement this year, but moving forward there should be an elite competition, in whatever form it may take, each year from 2017 onward.

1. **Should the elite competition be part of the CWBL National Championships as its own division or should it be a stand-alone event?**

The challenge with this question was surrounding the fact that an Elite Competition is to be created for 2017, but the format for this competition has not yet been decided. If the format is conducive to fitting into our current CWBL National Championship structure, then there is potential to combine the two competitions. For example, there were suggestions of the Elite Competition involving other elite club teams from outside of Canada which could then simply be made into its own division. If the Elite Competition involves our provincial teams, which most provinces preferred in terms of filling the previously identified gap, then it would be better off as a stand-alone event.

**Consensus Statement:** The 2017 Elite Competition, in whatever form it may take, will be a stand-alone event.

1. **Should the CWBL club level competition be tiered to have an elite division, open division and / or 3 vs. 3?**

In each group, tiering was described as a way to increase maximum participation at our events while giving everyone meaningful competition. There were two ways of tiering the teams that were suggested. The first was to have the teams indicate which tier they wished to play in on their Letter of Intent. The second was to form a committee that would rank each club team participating nationwide at regular intervals during the season and use these rankings at the end of the season to tier the teams. It was felt that it would be difficult to have a 3 vs. 3 division when some teams are already struggling for numbers.

**Consensus Statement:** Teams competing in the 2016 CWBL National Championships will be tiered in hopes of promoting maximum participation in the tournament and having meaningful competition for every participant.

1. **In the elite competition, would we allow provinces to combine for maximum participation in the event? Would we allow the combining of provinces in the CWBL club level competition as well?**

For the Elite Competition, every group agreed that provinces within proximity of each other, who are unable to field a team on their own, would be able to ‘share’ athletes. Concerns were raised about how provinces would split the costs and capacity surrounding building and supporting these regional teams but it was agreed that having them would increase the level of competition and allow the opportunity for all those at the proper skill level to compete. It was voiced that at the CWBL level, the current player transfer rule is working sufficiently.

**Consensus Statement:** Provinces within proximity to each other will be able to ‘share’ athletes in order to field a team in the 2017 Elite Competition.