



Sport Director Update April 12, 2019

The end of the winter season has either passed or is approaching quickly for all the clubs in Sweden. With the end of the winter comes, the end of my first winter season in Sweden as the Association's Sport Director. Many days have come and gone since I began this role in September 2018, and I have learned a great deal about sport and life in the country. One of my biggest roles for the year was to observe and analyse all aspects of the sport, both domestically and internationally and to bring an objective viewpoint to what I have seen. Having an objective viewpoint doesn't always translate into having a popular viewpoint.

This is my viewpoint: change is inevitable in all aspects of life. Sport is no different. Sport is evolving at a rapid pace. When I say sport is evolving, I mean all sport - not just figure skating. Options and opportunities in sport, throughout the world, are at an all-time high, and, as an association, we need to evolve to stay relevant.

Figure Skating is a tremendous sport. It can, and should, develop skills for its athletes inside and outside of the sporting arena. As an association, we need to focus on the whole athlete, the whole person, as we move forward in our evolution. Skating is one skill that we develop, but this sport is more than that. We teach perseverance, time management, goal setting, team work, community involvement, volunteerism and physical literacy, just to name a few. Everyone has their own podium in life, and we need to help our athletes reach that podium. This may seem very philosophical at this point, but I truly believe that we have an important role to play in the life of each athlete that enters our programs. Our role is not only to make them a figure skater, but to help them become a person who loves life and sport, is healthy both physically and mentally, is honest, is productive in society, and is truly comfortable in their own skin. Our role is to do our share of the work on the whole person.

We have entered the planning phase for the next 7 years in the organization. The idea of athletes as whole people will be a common focus within the plan. By helping develop the whole person and understanding that this needs to be an area of development, we will see more and more athletes reach their goals and continue in sport for life. Champions will most certainly rise within this system, but we will all benefit greatly by knowing we supported and helped guide all those involved within a healthy and positive environment.



My days, along with all the staff involved in sport, are now consumed with preparing and vetting the plan that we will use moving forward as an organization. We understand the responsibility we are taking on with this project and are fully prepared to complete the task on time. We will use a proper vetting process to critique the plan, and the rest of our work, to allow for the best possible outcome.

The timelines for delivering the Association plans will be as follows:

May 4-5, 2019- Present the plan to the Association Board of Directors, Committee members, Advisory board members, and District leaders.

June 3, 2019- Present the plan to RF and SOK

August 2019- Begin sessions with the clubs and districts throughout the country, both in person and through a webinar. These will be presentations that will include the planning information plus a question and answer period.

My first winter in Sweden has been interesting, both personally and professionally. My goal is to move us forward in a positive and productive environment, while caring for all involved. Change will be inevitable, and all the emotions that are involved with change will appear throughout the process. We all need to be open-minded and positive as we move forward, because this is sport and it needs to be exciting and fun.

Scott Rachuk
Sport Director
Swedish Figure Skating Association