



**Climbing Escalade Canada cancels the 2020-2021 Open National Competition Season;  
Remains hopeful for the 2020-2021 Youth National Competition Season**

**- PRESS RELEASE -**

**CALGARY, October 15, 2020** – Given the dynamic nature of the coronavirus pandemic, Climbing Escalade Canada (CEC) has been continually reviewing the feasibility of a 2020-2021 National Competition Season. In the past month, CEC has conducted a thorough [consultation process](#), and the Board of Directors has met on multiple occasions to discuss the ongoing situation. The CEC has determined it is not feasible to safely hold the 2020-2021 Open Competition Series however the CEC remains hopeful that a modified 2020-2021 Youth Competition Series can be held; more details regarding these decisions are set out below.

The CEC's mandate is to be a leader in the promotion and development of competition climbing in Canada. As such, these decisions were very difficult and not taken lightly. In addition to many other factors and considerations, athlete safety and the safety of all those involved in staging a competitive season were paramount in the decision-making process.

CEC has worked closely with the Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs) to define the best way forward. All climbing organizations in Canada are aligned with the goal of providing a safe and positive sport experience for our community. PSOs are currently defining their specific approach to the provincial events in accordance with this National plan. Please look to your PSOs website for more details.

- [Sport Climbing Association of BC](#) website and [Facebook page](#) (SCBC)
- [Alberta Climbing Association](#) (ACA)
- [Ontario Climbing Federation](#) (OCF)
- [Fédération québécoise de la montagne et de l'escalade](#) (FQME)

Given the fluid nature of the pandemic, CEC will be continuously monitoring the situation, reviewing our response and adjusting as required.

As always, please direct questions or comments to Christiane Marceau, the CEC Executive Director, at [cec.ed@climbingcanada.ca](mailto:cec.ed@climbingcanada.ca).

**2020-2021 Open National Competition Season – CANCELLED**

To adapt to the pandemic and the first year of the 2021-2024 Olympic Cycle, CEC had been planning for a modified [2020-2021 Open Competition Series](#) comprised of an Open Boulder and Lead National Championship in February 2021, and a Speed stand-alone event in March 2021. However, with the current state of the pandemic, the various and differing restrictions in place nationally, and the uncertainty of how the situation will evolve, the CEC concluded that it will not be able to hold the 2020-2021 Open Competition Series safely and in a way that is also practical for athletes and other stakeholders. We regret to officially announce the cancellation of the 2020-2021 Open Series.

**2021 High Performance Program – Open Athletes Selection – BEING FINALIZED**

CEC is committed to selecting athletes for the High-Performance Program in a fair and equitable manner. Despite not being able to safely host National Competitions for open athletes, CEC will work toward hosting a transparent

and objective [selection process for Open athletes](#), which will likely include a virtual application process and/or Selection Camps. Further details of the process will be announced by January 1, 2021.

#### **2021 International Events – UNDER REVIEW**

The International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) announced its [2021 Event Calendar](#). CEC is committed to [sending athletes to World Cups and World Championship events](#), provided it is safe to do so. Criteria for making the decision to send athletes will include, among other things, travel regulations set by the Government of Canada, and the capacity for the athletes to purchase international travel insurance. Our approach for making these safety determinations, along with any related logistical considerations, will be provided by January 1, 2021.

#### **2020-2021 Youth National Competition Season – UNDER REVIEW**

To adapt to the pandemic and the first year of the 2021-2024 Olympic Cycle, CEC had been planning for a modified [2020-2021 Youth Competition Series](#) comprised of a Speed stand-alone event in March 2021, and a Youth Boulder and Lead National Championship in May 2021. At this time, CEC remains hopeful that the May event will be feasible under the safety guidelines provided by Provincial and Federal Health Agencies and can be organized in a way that is practical while still meeting the needs of athletes and other CEC stakeholders. The CEC will continue to review the evolution of the pandemic, and make a decision on this event by February 1, 2021.

#### **Other Priorities**

At this time of year, the vast majority of the CEC staffs' effort would normally be consumed by planning for and running Regional and National events. Given that will not be the case this year, CEC staff plan to use this time to further develop sport climbing in Canada. The CEC employees will focus their time over the next months to create and implement [various development programs](#), including but not limited to National Coach Certification Programs (NCCP), Athlete Development Matrix (ADM), and the Gold Medal Profile (GMP). CEC is excited to share further details regarding these programs and other community value and initiatives through an Executive Report, which will be published on the CEC website by November 1, 2020.

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#### **About Climbing Escalade Canada**

Climbing Escalade Canada (CEC) is the National Sport Organization (NSO) for the sport of competitive climbing. The purpose of CEC is to be a leader in the promotion and development of competition climbing in Canada for athletes and the extended climbing community. We strive to enable athletes to achieve their high-performance potential in an ethical, equitable and equal competition environment.

#### **For media inquiries, please contact:**

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## FAQ

### **What consultation process did the CEC conduct prior to making this decision?**

One of our organizational values is Community, and we value the input of our various stakeholders and partners. Prior to making the decisions regarding the Open and Youth Competition Series, we consulted with:

- Sport Canada,
- Canadian Olympic Committee,
- Own the Podium,
- Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSO)
- Athlete Commission
- current National Team athletes
- potential hosting facilities

This consultation process was extremely valuable to gather a better understanding of the risk tolerance of our community and of the sport industry at large. We discovered that personal opinions vary largely, but one thing remains paramount: the safety of everyone involved must be at the center of our discussions.

### **How will CEC determine what the next National Open Series will look like, and why make changes?**

The year 2021 is the first year in the next Olympic cycle (2021-2024), leading to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. At this time, we know that the format used at these games will be different – Boulder and Lead will be combined, while Speed will be a stand-alone event. As such, CEC must adapt its calendar to best prepare athletes for this new competition format.

The IFSC will also be updating its schedule, most likely in time for the 2022 competition season. CEC's goal is to remain athlete-centered, and present a clear podium pathway to its athletes. A four-year plan is being developed to ensure athletes know what the pathway is to the podium. This plan will unfortunately be impacted by the evolution of the pandemic, and CEC will continue monitoring the situation.

Athletes should expect that, starting in the 2021-2022 Season, CEC will host a Boulder/Lead Combined series, including regional and national events. A stand-alone Speed National Series is also being created. This restructure is being prepared by the CEC High-Performance Director, the High-Performance Committee, and the Event Committee, as well as consulting with the Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSO) and the Athlete Commission. Details will be provided by April 1, 2021.

### **Should there be a 2021 IFSC season, how will athletes be selected if there are no nationals?**

Our High-Performance Team is closely monitoring the evolution of the pandemic, and has drafted multiple scenarios that could unfold. Most likely, we are aiming at hosting Selection Camps in March or April 2021, which may include a COVID-free bubble setting to protect athletes and High-Performance Staff. These camps would be invitation-only in order to keep the gathering size low. A thorough application process, as well as a Provincial Coaching Network, is being considered to enable CEC to collect the best and most accurate insights on all Canadian athletes.

### **Will CEC send a National Team to IFSC World Cups and World Championships in 2021?**

CEC has not yet officially committed to sending a team to any of the 2021 IFSC World Cups or World Championships. Our High-Performance Team will monitor the evolution of the pandemic, and determine specific safety thresholds that will guide our decisions, such as, but not limited to, the government of Canada lifting regulations on non-essential travel, and the ability of athletes to purchase international travel insurance at a reasonable cost. A detailed plan will be posted on the CEC website by January 1, 2021.

### **How will CEC determine what the next Youth Series will look like, and why make changes?**

Similar to the Open Competition Series, the Youth Competition Series will undergo a revision and a restructure to adapt to the new combined format, and prepare our athletes in the most meaningful way possible. The year 2021 is the first year in the next Olympic cycle (2021-2024), leading to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. At this time, we know that the format used at these games will be different – Boulder and Lead will be combined, while Speed will be a stand-alone event. As such, CEC must adapt its calendar to best prepare athletes for this new competition format. A detailed Athlete Pathway is being created to help guide athletes and their coaches through the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) stages of sport climbing.

#### **What other priorities will CEC be working on this year?**

As part of our partnership with Sport Canada, CEC has access to invaluable resources and expertise in sport management, grassroots development, and high-performance planning. We will focus our staff's energy toward the development of Sport Climbing resources for the Canadian community. Projects which would typically take much longer to complete in a non-pandemic environment will now be approved by the Board of Directors and delivered to the community in, what we hope to be, record time.

Sport development projects to be completed in this timeframe will be prioritized and will likely include some of the following:

- Development of Podium Pathway
- Review of 2021-2024 Cycle in terms of High Performance
- Revised High Performance Program, including new "Future Athletes" designation
- Gold Medal Profile
- Coach Selection & Network
- Athlete Development Matrix
- LTAD Curriculum
- Education Programs
  - o Judge Education Program
  - o National Coach Certification Program (Coach Education Program)
- Revised 2021-2024 Competition Plan
- Coaching requirements and Safe Sport Training
- Para-Climbing Program
- Development of a CEC Symposium in 2021
- Development of Policy Framework & Implementation of new Policies
- Implementation of a Concussion Protocol
- 2021-2024 Strategic Planning, including definition of roles NSO/PSO
- Development of Retail Online Store
- Review IT structure and Registration platform

Our priorities for this unprecedented time will be defined and posted on the CEC website through the Executive Report available by November 1, 2020.