



2026 Skate Canada AGM Standing Committee Report

Standing Committee Name: External Relations Committee

Committee Chair and Members:

- Karen Butcher, Chair
- Debra Armstrong, CEO
- Andre Poje
- Tracy Wilson
- Shawn Winter
- Sabrina Wong

Committee Mandate Summary:

Provide policy leadership in the areas of:

- Engagement with international and national sport policy bodies that are affiliated with the objectives of Skate Canada.
- Policies for developing and enhancing Skate Canada's relationships and reputation among related domestic and international organizations.
- Policies to guide the strategies for enhancing the role and position of Skate Canada representatives to international and national sport organizations.
- Monitoring Skate Canada's external relations programs and services to ensure consistency with Skate Canada's strategic objectives.
- Assessing risk and making recommendations to the Board to mitigate risks that could impede or prohibit Skate Canada from achieving its objectives and/or strategies relating to external relations.
- Recommending certain appointments of individuals to external sport bodies (e.g. representatives at AthletesCAN, the COC, etc.).
- Recommendations regarding proposed changes to the International Skating Union ("ISU") technical and general rules of sport.

Committee Report:

The External Relations Committee began the season with a review of the committee's Terms of Reference and Workplan.

ISU Virtual Congress 2025: the committee discussed the newly created ISU Election Committee and recommended Jodi Abbott be nominated for election (Jodi was elected in September 2025).

ISU Congress 2026: the committee discussed the impact of ISU rule changes restricting ISU Technical Committee Members from officiating ISU events. The committee is thankful for Skate Canada volunteers willing to accept the restrictions and the committee recommended the following individuals be nominated for election:

Benoit Lavoie, Vice President/Council Member
Marie Bowness, Ice Dance Technical Committee Member
Jennifer Betts, Synchronized Skating Committee
Chair/Member



ISU Rule Changes App: after approval of the new ISU Constitution in June 2025, in December 2025 the ISU implemented a new platform for rule changes. The External Relations Committee working group reviewed proposals and noted areas of concern. The External Relations Committee discussed potential feedback and recommended the Skate Canada comments posted on the draft Competition and Event Regulations. The working group and committee continued to provide strategic advice for Skate Canada representatives as meetings and discussion on the proposals took place at various ISU Championship Events. Work will continue when the Sport Rules are posted in the app.

Grand Prix and Championship Events: the committee discussed proposed changes to the ISU events calendar. The ISU is considering date and format changes starting in 2027. The number of Grand Prix events could be increased, extending the Grand Prix series timeline. Skate Canada will continue bidding to host Skate Canada International. In addition, the External Relations Committee recommended Skate Canada indicate an interest to host the ISU World Championships in 2029.

Future of Sport in Canada Commission: the committee discussed and monitored progress of the Commission's work. The draft report was released and in September Skate Canada Representatives participated in a feedback session. The External Relations committee noted many positive recommendations in the report, the final version of which was published on March 24th. Skate Canada is hopeful the Government of Canada will soon signal changes in line with the recommendations.

Synchro 9: the committee continues to monitor the introduction of a new Synchronized Skating discipline. Synchro 9 has been accepted as a discipline in the 2028 Youth Olympic Games. Skate Canada will continue to make strategic decisions with respect to implementation of Synchro 9 in Canada.

Canadian Olympic Committee (COC): the committee regularly reviewed information from the COC and was pleased to see their new 10-year strategic plan has a focus on grassroots funding.

Miscellaneous: the committee monitored and discussed as required any risks resulting from negative media attention.

Thank you to the committee members expertise and guidance throughout the season.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Butcher