

## COACHING AND ATHLETE PROGRESSION IN CANADA

*Submitted by Elan Paluck, CBTF Technical Chair*

### **The Four Current Levels of Coaching in Canada**

#### **a) Instructor**

- An instructor is an individual teaching baton twirling at a recreational level, who has not received any formal training through the Canadian Baton Twirling Federation (CBTF).
- The "*Ready, Set, Twirl*" program will be used to begin training new-to-the-sport instructors with virtually no previous experience with baton twirling. The program brochure is in the final stages of revision - I will post, or bring a copy with me to our meeting in January.

#### **b) Level 1 Certified Coach:**

- Has successfully completed an 8-hour CBTF training program on "how" to coach beginner twirlers.
- The coaching workshop prepares coaches to provide instruction in the first 5 levels of our *Skills Development Program (SDP)* – White Ribbon, Yellow Badge, Orange Badge, Red Badge, Maroon Badge.
- Coaches at this level are not allowed to enter their athletes into sanctioned competitions.

#### **c) Level 2 Certified Coach**

- Must complete a 15-hour training program through CBTF
- The course prepares them to coach athletes in the *Pre Competitive Program*.
- In addition to the "baton specific" training, coaches are required to complete an 12-hour general coaching theory workshop administered by our country's *National Coaching Certification Program*
- It is currently the only level of certification required to enter athletes into competition in Canada.

#### **d) Level 3 Certified Coach**

- Program is under development
- When it is complete, it will focus on preparing athletes for competition
- Our current Level 3 coaches have been "grand-fathered" in with this status based upon the competitive achievements of their athletes.

## **The Two Developmental Athlete Programs Used in Canada**

### **a) Skills Development Program (SDP) (see our video demonstration of the first 5 levels)**

The SDP offers the recreational athlete an incentive to continue in his/her own personal growth within the sport. The SDP also offers an opportunity to advance and eventually learn and perform elements similar to the world level athlete. Each level consists of two parts - Baton Technique and Body Technique. As skills are acquired, the athletes can be “tested” and awarded a badge upon successful completion.

The SDP consists of 19 different badges/skill levels:

- 1) White Ribbon, 2) Yellow Badge, 3) Orange Badge, 4) Red Badge, 5) Maroon Badge
- 6) Bronze Rolls, 7) Bronze 2-Baton, 8) Bronze Pin, 9) Grey Badge, 10) Green Badge
- 11) Silver Rolls, 12) Silver 2-Baton, 13) Silver Pin, 14) Turquoise Badge, 15) Pink Badge
- 16) Gold Rolls, 17) Gold 2-Baton, 18) Gold Pin
- 19) Diamond Pin.

On average, it requires 8 or more years to complete the SDP program.

### **b) Pre Competitive Program (see our video demonstration of the 6 standardized routines)**

These events are the entry level to competition. The *Pre-Competitive Program* routines are standardized to provide simplicity, proper progression and promote proper baton and body technique. This assists in the development of athletes, coaches and judges.

The Program is intended for athletes in their 2nd or 3rd year of training (approximate age = 6-10 years). It is strongly recommended that athletes remain in the *Pre-Competitive Program* for a minimum of one year to build skill, correct baton and body technique, gain confidence and improve performance skills.

The Pre Competitive events incorporate the baton and body skills learned in the White, Yellow, Orange, Red and Maroon levels of the SDP. Depending on age, ability, and number of hours of training per week. the *Pre Competitive Program* typically requires 2 years to complete.

The Program consists of 6 standard routines that athletes perform individually and are graded upon at local competitions. The evaluation scale consists of: :

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Needs Improvement

There is also a group event.

## **PRE COMPETITIVE PROGRAM EVENT FOCUSES**

### **Basic March**

This introductory event to competitions teaches timing of baton and body to march

music, basic correct body technique, left and right corners, co-ordination of arm swing while marching, and the beginnings of performance skills

### **Forward Motion**

This basic routine builds correct body technique; “in step” on the first diagonal and “in time” on the second diagonal to march music, exhibiting baton and body co-ordination, basic baton handling, and building performance skills

### **Pre-Medley**

This event is all about the correctness of body technique to a standard piece of music exhibiting turn, kick, leap, lunge and spin in this sequential order.

### **Pre-Solo**

The purpose of this event is to connect the 3 Twirl Modes with transitional material to the Pre-Solo music as set – must perform standard routine. The primary focus is correct baton technique with secondary focus being body technique and coordination with baton in a standard routine

### **Pre-Solo Dance**

Using a pre-recorded piece of music, this routine has been created to promote the simultaneous use of body with baton WITH the music, moving. Introducing musicality – rhythms and tempos – time orientation at this level promotes proper progression for solo dance and freestyle

### **Pre-2-baton**

Connecting the 3 twirl modes, pre-2 baton is the introduction to continuous and simultaneous manipulations of 2 batons displaying proper baton and body technique, coordination, timing, dexterity, control and concentration

### **Pre-Group**

3 or more athletes will perform any type of routine to their own musical choice combining the use of body movements WITH ANY 1 APPARATUS (baton, pom poms, sticks, canes, etc.) WITH the music to a maximum of 2:30 min. This event provides the foundation for any competitive group – within skill level; working as a team; spatial formations; musicality; partner work and basic performance skills

## **COMPETITIVE EVENTS**

Once an athlete has successfully mastered the *Pre Competitive Program*, they will begin entering full length competitive events where they are scored using an Olympic scale. Athletes are able to participate in 1/2/3 baton, medley, solodance, duet, group and team. The minimum age to compete is 7 years. If the recommended athlete progression is adhered to, the twirlers are typically 8-9 years of age before they are ready to compete with full length routines.

Within our competitive event structure, we have developed 2 preparatory levels of

compulsory moves all scored using the WBTF role models. These include Level C and Level B compulsory moves. Level C compulsory moves (which are also the Silver Pin from the SDP) are performed alone. Once an athlete is ready for Level B compulsory moves, a Level B freestyle is prepared. Level B compulsory moves are the Gold Pin in the SDP and Level A compulsory moves are the Diamond Pin.

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ATHLETE PROGRESSION**

*\* Note the length of time it takes to complete each level varied based upon the athletes ability and number of training hours.*

| <b>Chronological Age</b> | <b>Years in an Athlete's Training Program</b> | <b>Program Description</b>  |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| 5-7                      | Year 1-2                                      | <b><u>Recreational-Participation</u></b><br>- Skills Development Program (SDP) (first 4 levels)<br>- Performances, Parades, Pom Pom   |
| 7-10                     | Year 2-4                                      | <b><u>Pre Competitive Program</u></b><br>- Year 1 – Basic March, Forward Motion, Pre Medley<br>- Year 2 – Add Pre Solo, Pre Two Baton<br>- Continued use of SDP   |
| 8-11                     | Year 3-5                                      | <b><u>Beginner and Novice Competition</u></b><br>- Athletes compete in single age divisions (e.g., age 7, 8 9, 10 etc)<br>- Events include 1 & 2 baton, solodance, medley, duet<br>- Level C compulsory moves<br>- Continued use of SDP                               |
| 9-14                     | Year 6-8                                      | <b><u>Intermediate Competition</u></b><br>- Athletes compete in "divisionals" (e.g., 9-11 yrs, 12-14 yrs, etc)<br>- events include 1/2/3 baton, solodance, medley, duet<br>- Level B Compulsories and Freestyle<br>- Continued use of SDP, if desired                 |
| 12+                      | Year 8+                                       | <b><u>Advanced competition</u></b><br>- Athletes continue to compete in all of the Intermediate events in age divisions.<br>- Level A Compulsory moves/Short program and freestyle/pair are added on (using WBTF age divisions)<br>- Continued use of SDP, if desired |

