



kakisiwew-ochapowace Nation

Sports and Recreation Strategic Plan

2026

20 Year Plan

wiyēyihcikēwin

The Act of Envisioning





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Introduction

On behalf of kakisiwew-ochapowace Nation Council, I am honoured to introduce this Sports and Recreation Strategic Plan.

This document reflects the collective work, care, and commitment of our staff, coaches, leadership, parents, athletes, and Nation members who came together to envision the future of sport and recreation in our Nation. We are grateful to everyone who gave their time, shared their experiences, and spoke honestly about both our strengths and our challenges. This plan is stronger because it was built together.

Council recognizes the vital role that sport and recreation play in the wellbeing of our people. These spaces bring families together, support physical and mental health, and create opportunities for our youth to grow with confidence, discipline, and pride. They are also places where healing happens - where movement, teamwork, and belonging help address intergenerational trauma and strengthen our collective spirit.

We are especially grateful to our Sports and Recreation staff for their dedication and hard work. Sports and Recreation continues to support our athletes and families with care and commitment. Their leadership and on-the-ground experience helped shape a plan that is both ambitious and grounded in reality.

This Strategic Plan affirms Council's responsibility to protect our inherent and treaty rights and to ensure our systems reflect the values and priorities of our people. Sport and recreation are part of that responsibility. Through clear direction, collaboration, and accountability, we commit to strengthening these programs in ways that honour our Nation, support our people, and build a healthier future.

This plan is not a final destination. It is a living document and a shared commitment. Council looks forward to working alongside staff, coaches, families, and nation members to carry this vision forward, together.

kinanaskomitin,

Headperson Tyler George
Sports, Recreation, Laws and Justice



Executive Summary

From June 6–8, 2025, kakisiwew-ochapowace Nation brought together its Sports and Recreation Department, Ad Hoc Committee, coaches, leadership, and key partners to lead the Strategic Planning and Coaches Retreat in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This three-day gathering served as a critical step forward in building a long-term, nation driven vision for Sports and Recreation that is rooted in the Nation’s traditions, wellness, and pride.

Guided by inclusive discussion, this strategic planning process centered on identifying the current strengths, challenges, and future possibilities for Sports and Recreation within kakisiwew-ochapowace. Through collaborative tools like the SWOT analysis, Knowledge Sharing sessions, and visioning exercises, participants explored how sports can build strong identities, keep youth safe and motivated, and help families thrive.

The resulting plan captures both the immediate actions needed in the coming year and bold aspirations for the next 5, 10, and 20+ years. Among the top priorities identified are enhancing youth engagement, supporting coaches, increasing parent involvement, expanding facilities, improving access for all citizens, and strengthening interdepartmental collaboration, especially with health, education, and prevention services.

Importantly, the plan calls for a clear organizational structure, sustainable staffing, and a nation-wide approach to creating safe, inclusive spaces. The vision statement and mission developed during the session reflect a shared commitment to empowering Nation citizens — especially youth — through culturally grounded, high-quality programming that supports miyo-pimatisiwin (a good life).

This strategic plan is a living roadmap, shaped by the voices of those who deliver, lead, and live the reality of Sports and Recreation. The kakisiwew-ochapowace Nation now moves forward with a collective vision, ready to implement, evaluate, and celebrate the success of its people — on the land, in sport, and in life.

Vision Statement

Strengthening spirit, building pride, and inspiring excellence through Sports and Recreation that honour our traditions and empower our people.

Mission Statement

To deliver inclusive, high-quality, culturally grounded sports and recreation programs that build strong identities, healthy families, athletic and academic success by creating safe spaces through collaboration, respect, and Nation-wide support.



māmawatoskēwak

They Work as a Team

Core Values and Guiding Principles

The kakisiwew-ochapowace Nation Sports and Recreation Department is guided by the following values and principles, rooted in our traditions, culture, and the vision of our people:

1. **miyo-pimatisiwin (Living a Good Life)** - We believe sports and recreation play a powerful role in helping our people, especially our youth, to live healthy, balanced, and purposeful lives.
2. **Identity and Pride** - We are proud of who we are as kakisiwew-ochapowace people. Our programs promote strong personal and cultural identities.
3. **Tradition and Ceremony** - We honour our culture by integrating ceremony, language, kehte (elder) involvement, and traditional values in our programs and tournaments.
4. **Excellence and Dedication** - We encourage our athletes, coaches, and citizens to strive for excellence, whether in local games, provincial tournaments, or national championships.
5. **Inclusion and Belonging** - We are committed to creating safe and inclusive spaces for all, including girls and women, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and athletes of all abilities.
6. **Teamwork and Respect** - We teach and model sportsmanship, respect, discipline, and collaboration — on the court, on the ice, and in our Nation.
7. **Wellness and Prevention** - Sports and recreation are powerful tools to prevent harm, support mental health, and offer youth safe spaces to grow and heal.
8. **Youth Empowerment** - We invest in our young people, their leadership, their passions, and their potential, knowing they will carry our Nation forward.
9. **Family and Community** - Healthy athletes come from healthy homes. We encourage parent involvement, recognize families as key supporters, and create opportunities for all age groups.
10. **Nation-Wide Collaboration** - Our success requires wraparound services and collaboration with Prevention, Health, Education, and Infrastructure. It takes a Nation to raise a child.

Participants:

Sports and Recreation Department:

Crystal Bear – Sports and Recreation Manager

Leland Wasacase – Sports Coordinator

Everette Bear - Hockey Coordinator

Leadership:

Headwoman Audrey Isaac – Health, Wellness and Culture Mandate

Headwoman Lynn Bear – Public Works and Infrastructure Mandate

Headperson Tyler George - Sports and Recreation, Laws and Justice Mandate

Senator Margaret Bear

Prevention:

Pam Belanger – Family Advocate, Prevention Department

Sports and Recreation Ad Hoc Committee Members:

Luke George

Geraldine Bear

Dustin Bear

Shaelynne George (Youth Representative)

Orval Bear SR (Elder Representative)

Melanie Watson

Jaymie Taypotat

Coaches:

Courage Bear

Shaya Watson-Delorme

Chris Delorme

Raven Brass

Ceejay Bear

Morley Watson

Kyanna Bear

Andrew Daniels

Cassandra Taypotat

Nydea Bird

Allison Bear

Karlee Bear

Rebecca Wasacase



Goals for Strategic Planning Session

The purpose of this strategic planning session was to create a clear, inclusive, and culturally grounded path forward for the Sports and Recreation Department of Kakisiwew-ochapowace Nation.

Sports and Recreation are more than physical activity; they are a vital part of living a good life, supporting the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being of our citizens.

This planning session was an opportunity to align our programs, policies, and priorities with the values and long-term vision of our people.

The strategic planning session was guided by the following goals:

- To develop a shared vision and mission for Sports and Recreation that reflects the needs of our youth, families, Elders, coaches, and citizens.
- To honour the voices of our coaches, staff, and Nation members and include them as leaders in building the future of sports and recreation in the Nation.
- To identify the strengths, gaps, and opportunities through tools like the SWOT analysis, Knowledge Sharing workshop, and group discussions.
- To map short, medium, and long-term priorities that are ambitious, achievable, and rooted in our values — including 1, 5, 10, and 20 year goals.
- To explore ways to bridge and collaborate between Sports and Recreation, Prevention, Health, Education, and other departments in support of holistic Nation wellbeing.

Goals for Strategic Planning Session Con't.

- To ensure that sports and recreation remain inclusive, safe, and empowering for all citizens.
- To guide the creation of supportive infrastructure, staffing, and policy that can sustain and expand our programs in the years ahead.

This plan is a product of collective leadership and shared responsibility. It is meant to be a living document; a tool for reflection, advocacy, decision-making, and continued growth.



miyo-kaskihcikēwin

Ability to Obtain a Positive Outcome

Knowledge Sharing Workshop

As part of the kakisiwew-ochapowace Nation Sports and Recreation Strategic Planning Session, Knowledge Sharing was conducted to create a space for rich dialogue, collective wisdom, and Nation-driven ideas.

Participants rotated through small group tables focused on key themes, recording their thoughts on flip charts and contributing to a shared vision for the future of sports and recreation in our Nation.

Knowledge Sharing Topics & Highlights

1. Miyo-pimatisiwin – A Good Life Through Sport

- Sport teaches respect, leadership, and pride.
- Our youth stay connected to their identity and Nation through sport.
- Participation builds self-worth and keeps youth away from harmful paths like addiction, gangs, or violence.
- Sports journeys reflect our spirit: discipline, unity, and cultural strength.

2. Nation Needs and Interests

- Many sports beyond hockey and softball are in demand (volleyball, basketball, golf, boxing, lacrosse.)
- Some citizens want to explore recreational arts (e.g., piano, painting, dance).
- We need to survey all age groups — children, youth, adults, elders — to reflect their interests.
- A stronger organizational structure is needed to support the diversity of programs.

3. Parent Involvement and Volunteerism

- Parents need orientation, training, and support to volunteer.
- Many athletes struggle because their families aren't involved.
- Nation-wide volunteer recognition and incentive programs were suggested.
- A motto to unify our program was recommended.

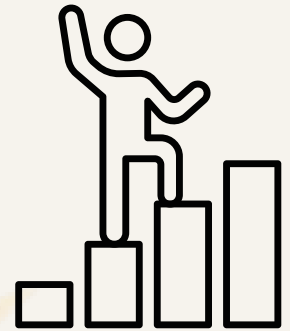
4. Collaboration and Wraparound Services

- We must work with prevention, justice, health, education, and housing.
- Sport is a protective factor for youth in care and mental health crises.
- Creating “safe spaces” includes mental health plans, mentorship, and trauma-informed coaching.
- Wrap around supports need to be embedded into our sport systems.

SWOT ANALYSIS

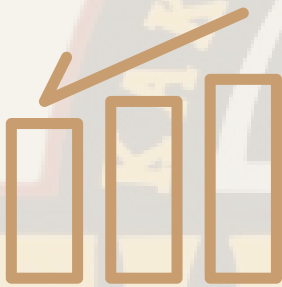
STRENGTHS

- **Dedicated Staff:** Sports and Recreation staff have been recognized for their commitment and hard work despite limited resources.
- **Strong Volunteer Base:** Coaches continue to give their time freely, with passion and care for athletes, often without compensation.
- **Nation Pride in Athletes:** The Nation celebrates its athletes who proudly represent kakisiwew-ochapowace locally, nationally and internationally.
- **Supportive Leadership:** Council, Coaches, Committee, and staff actively supports sports and recreation.
- **Strong Youth Participation:** Youth are participating in diverse sports including hockey, volleyball, softball, and more.
- **Recent Strategic Planning:** The June 2025 strategic planning retreat created momentum, vision, and clear direction.
- **Collaborative Cross-Departmental Engagement:** Prevention, Family Wellness, Justice, and Elders participated in planning.



WEAKNESSES

- **Understaffing:** limited staff are responsible for all programming, coordination, and administration.
- **Lack of Structured Program Coordination:** Communication and consistency between programs (sports, prevention, etc.) needs improvement.
- **Limited Coach Support & Incentives:** Coaches are not yet compensated or consistently supported with training.
- **Data Gaps:** No central registry for athletes, no data tracking of participation, performance, or outcomes.
- **Outdated Policies:** The current sports & recreation policy is being revised but remains insufficient for current needs.
- **Limited Access to Facilities:** Multiplex needs modernization; limited access to equipment storage or recovery space.
- **Unclear Definition of "Recreation":** Recreation beyond sports (arts, leisure, culture) is not clearly defined or resourced.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Exploring Dedicated Sports Programs:** Opportunity to launch new beginner programs and plans for high-performance athletes.
- **World-Class Training Facility:** A long-term goal is to build a new sports & wellness centre.
- **Nutrition & Mental Health Supports:** Addressing wellness holistically through food, fitness, and emotional support.
- **Scholarship Programs:** Potential to develop Nation-specific scholarship and travel bursary programs.
- **Technology Integration:** Using tools like Google Forms, registration portals, and digital scoreboards at schools.
- **Partnerships:** Jays Care, Tim Hortons, Sask Sport, Hockey Canada, etc. can bring funding and training.
- **First Nation Sports Governance:** Political lobbying to influence FSIN, AFN, NAHC for FN-only leagues and policies.



THREATS

- **Racism in Sport:** The adult Thunder team has been excluded from leagues; youth also face discrimination.
- **Burnout:** Staff and volunteer burnout is a serious risk without proper supports and staffing increases.
- **Retention Issues:** Athletes may burn out, drop out, or lose connection when moving to urban centres.
- **Parent Involvement Gaps:** Parents may not have the motivation, resources or the support within their family to participate, creating barriers to athlete success.
- **Mental Health Struggles:** Youth need sports as a protective factor, but unaddressed trauma or substance abuse risks remain.
- **Funding Gaps:** Without sustainable funding increases, programs risk stagnation or collapse.
- **Lack of Certified Personnel:** Without trained referees, umpires, and coaches, game hosting and program growth is limited.



FUTURE MAPPING

Year 1 Priorities (2026–2027)

In the next year, kakisiwew-ochapowace Nation’s Sports and Recreation Department will focus on foundational growth, policy reform, and Nation engagement. Immediate goals include:

- Conducting a Nation-wide Sports & Recreation Survey to identify interests across all age groups.
- Launching a Club Volleyball Team and improving access to hockey for youth under 7 and under 18.
- Strengthening Parent Engagement, including hosting workshops, information nights, and developing a Code of Conduct to be signed by parents and athletes.
- Mental Health and Wellness Integration, through mental health planning and collaboration with schools, prevention, and health staff.
- Policy & Staffing Enhancements, such as updating the Sports and Recreation Policy, expanding staff positions, and clarifying an organizational structure.
- Elite Athlete Support, athlete celebration initiatives, and establishing a representative to support high-level athletes.
- Transportation and Access, through increased use of Nation vans, hiring drivers, and ensuring equitable access to programming.
- Coach and Volunteer Development, including recognition events and sport-specific training opportunities.
- Program Streamlining, such as launching digital registration processes, defining “sports” vs. “recreation,” and starting a nutritional program.

These steps are essential to address the immediate needs of athletes, coaches, staff, and families, while creating a system rooted in tradition, excellence, and wellness.



itasiwēwin

The Action of Planning

FUTURE MAPPING

5-Year Vision (2026–2031)

Over the next five years, the Nation aims to scale its operations and infrastructure. Strategic objectives include:

- Major Infrastructure Projects, including a new ballpark, a community field house, and modernization of the Chief Denton George Memorial Multiplex.
- Strengthening Competitive Edge, with the goal of placing in all events at Tony Cote Games and bringing back our summer/winter games.
- Creating First Nation-Specific Leagues across all major sports (hockey, softball, volleyball, basketball, etc.).
- Expanding Recreational Programs, such as youth rec centers with creative arts, painting, and carving stations.
- In-House Wellness Experts, including hiring trainers, nutritionists, and mental health support specialists.
- Elevating Visibility, through a Sports and Recreation media stream (radio, newsletter, or video updates) and showcasing athletes on digital screens in schools and at events.
- Policy Advocacy, including lobbying FSIN and AFN for national First Nations-only tournaments and changes to the FSIN SCRYB policy.

This phase emphasizes elevating kakisiwew-ochapowace’s reputation, improving access to elite pathways, and ensuring our community stays rooted in wellness, culture, and sportsmanship.



FUTURE MAPPING

10-Year Vision (2026–2036)

By year 10, kakisiwew-ochapowace aims to emerge as a national leader in First Nations sport and recreation. Key aspirations include:

- Hosting First Nations-Only Championships, across multiple disciplines (hockey, volleyball, lacrosse).
- Comprehensive Sports Development, with club programs, elite coaching, and certified trainers based within the Nation.
- Significant Capital Projects, including a swimming pool, indoor fieldhouse, and dedicated training and recovery facilities.
- Post-Secondary Athletic Success, with more kakisiwew-ochapowace youth in NCAA, USPORT, ACAC, and international circuits.
- Building Strong Pathways, such as AA-level hockey and softball teams based out of our Nation.
- Safe Spaces & Equipment Hubs, offering youth their own equipment rooms and safe facilities to grow and thrive.

This long-term vision will build resilient, accomplished youth who carry their teachings, culture, and excellence into every sport facility they enter.



FUTURE MAPPING

20+ Year Vision (2026 - Beyond 2035+)

In the long-term, kakisiwew-ochapowace Nation envisions a legacy rooted in sovereignty, self-sufficiency, and elite success:

- Creation of a First Nations Sports Academy, based in kakisiwew-ochapowace and welcoming elite First Nation/Indigenous athletes from across Turtle Island.
- On-Reserve Athlete Housing, with dormitories, hotel-style residences, or family lodges for travelling athletes.
- Professional Representation, with Nation athletes in the NHL, Olympics, professional leagues, and global sport platforms.
- Universal Inclusion, ensuring girls, women, boys, men, Two Spirit, and gender-diverse athletes have full access to elite sport.
- Certified Training & Coaching Standards, with in-Nation certification for coaches, trainers, officials, and wellness workers.
- Large-Scale Facilities, such as a full golf course, ski hill, and multi-sport performance centers that also cater to Special Olympics and para-athletes.

This generational vision centers our nehiyaw identity and teachings, aiming to build a community where sport uplifts the spirit and inspires every kakisiwew-ochapowace citizen.



Conclusion

This strategic plan is a living expression of who we are, where we come from, and where we are going as kakisiwēw-ochapowace Nation. Through every page, it echoes the voices of our youth, the wisdom of our kehte-ayak, and the collective vision of our coaches, leaders, families, and citizens.

We have built this plan together with open hearts, strong voices, and a shared understanding that sport and recreation are not just programs. They are sacred spaces. They are tools of healing, strength, and identity. They are where pride is built, where youth are empowered, and where our Nation's values come alive in motion, on the land, in the arena, and in the Nation.

We are reminded that:

Sport is ceremony — when done with intention and honour.

Recreation is resistance — when it uplifts our people and protects our wellness.

Planning is sovereignty — when it puts our future in our own hands.

From the rink to the round dance, from the weight room to the boardroom, we see the importance of reclaiming and designing our systems, not only for today's athletes, but for future generations yet to dream of their path.

The goals laid out from new infrastructure and mental wellness supports, to elite pathways and grassroots access are ambitious, but they are achievable because they come from us. They are grounded in who we are, in our values like miyo-pimātsiwin (living a good life), māmāwatoskēwak (they work as a team), and wičhihowin (helping one another).

This is an invitation to all kakisiwēw-ochapowace citizens to join the journey forward. To continue building safe spaces, strong programs, and a proud legacy that will endure for generations.

Together, we will build a future of strength, wellness, and excellence through sport and recreation.

Together, we will carry the thunder of our Nation forward.

Carrying This Plan Forward



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