

Ontario Spring Coaches Debrief

Executive Director Address — Alpine Ontario Alpin

Spring 2026 | 30 Minutes

PART 1 — Opening: Start with Honesty

Tone: warm, direct, no spin.

Good morning everyone. I want to start by just saying — I'm really glad you're here. The fact that you showed up, that you care enough to spend a day together doing this, that matters to me. Some of the topics in today's debrief will not be comfortable. And it takes a certain kind of coach — a certain kind of person — to sit in that discomfort and still lean forward.

I've been around this sport my whole life. Two Olympics, years on the national team, almost a decade working at the club level, and now 4 years with Alpine Ontario. And I'll tell you honestly — right now is one of the more challenging moments I've seen for Canadian alpine skiing. And that's exactly why today matters.

We had zero alpine or SX medals in Milan Cortina. Worse, we had zero male technical athletes represent Canada. Zero. We had one male athlete represent Canada at the World Junior Championships in Narvik. One.

Let that sit for a second. Not to make anyone feel bad. But because we need to be honest with each other if we're going to move forward together.

PART 2 — The Current State

Tone: factual, honest, not alarmist.

So where are we?

Ontario is the largest alpine ski province in Canada. We have over 1,300 U14 and U16 athletes. That's the biggest development pool in the country. And yet the pipeline from that base to the national team has a serious leak somewhere.

Our performance system has been audited. The gaps are documented. Two years ago, many of you were part of the Bridging the Gap conversations. The issues we identified then? They haven't gone away. In some areas, they've gotten worse.

I won't go into details here, as Joey will do a deep dive with his presentation this morning. But to be clear, the gaps are real, they span from coaching shortages, to issues with culture and work ethic around fitness, a lack of skills and technical basic with our young athletes, and daily training environments that don't mirror what our athletes will face at the next level.

And I want to be clear — these are not small problems. They are compounding ones. Every year we don't address them, athletes fall further behind, the system weakens. Some leave the country, others leave the sport. Some never reach potential we didn't even know they had.

PART 3 — The Systemic Picture

Tone: contextual, honest, zoom out.

Now — this isn't just an Ontario problem. And you deserve to understand the bigger picture, because it affects everything we do.

Own the Podium and Alpine Canada have moved to a very narrow, medal-first funding and program delivery model. Relative to historic norms, the national team has been cut down, and funding allocation to nextgen development has been minimal. Men's technical — the area where we showed up to Milan-Cortina with no athletes — has been flagged internally as a crisis. The feedback from the CAST men's head coach was direct: programs are understaffed, training environments lack depth, and the daily training environment doesn't generate the competitive pressure needed to develop world-class athletes.

The proposed solution from national coaches is to create more vertical integration using a National Training Group — a group of U21 athletes, members of provincial ski teams, brought together under in collaborative environment with additional CAST support. The goal is to create a shared development vision and ownership between PSOs and the national team, and to move 50% of those athletes into CAST within two to three years. That's promising engagement. But it's still a proposal. And the athletes entering this training group are further behind the last cohort that have struggled to make the jump to the world cup.

At the provincial funding level, we were not successful in our OHPSI application this year. OHPSI is now tightly focused on Olympic and Paralympic podium results — and we couldn't demonstrate enough of them. So we fall outside their threshold. Ultimately, a lack of performance at the top level has a ripple effect on the funding through the development pathway, making the hill even harder to climb back to top. It's a vicious reality we face.

But I want to be honest with you. This is on us. The programming we're delivering at all levels in Canada, and in Ontario, needs to be better. The daily training environments, the quality of coaching delivered, the skill development at the right stages — these aren't where they need to be. We can't just point at the funding partners and say the problem lives there. It lives here too.

Our funding model is not in sync with our development model. That's not my opinion — that came directly out of the PSO-ACA meetings in Toronto this past year. The gaps within our system are growing. And the people closest to it are crying out for leadership.

PART 4 — What We're Doing About It

Tone: forward-looking, concrete, genuine.

So what are we doing?

First — Operation plan: We're setting clear targets, improvement initiatives, and clear accountability at every pillar: athletes, coaching and technical leadership, support services, daily training environment, alignment, and governance.

On coaching specifically — we're working on our coach development pathway. More opportunities for mentorship and interface opportunities. Active recruitment and integration of retired athletes into coaching roles.

We're also investing in skill development and evaluation frameworks, as well as on-snow programs through the ADP, ODST and OST. We're creating structures and vertical integration that allow athletes to be supported more deliberately through the development stages.

And there's genuine optimism at the national sport level right now. The federal government has announced new funding for sport in Canada, directed largely at national programs and NSOs. That matters for the pipeline. There are conversations happening at Alpine Canada such as the National Training Group proposal — that could create better vertical integration between where our athletes train in Ontario and where they go next.

We are optimistic new thought leadership at ACA will stimulate more deliberate support for next gen development.

PART 5 — Your Role: The Call to Action

Tone: urgent, empowering, personal.

Here's what I need from you. And I mean this.

The gap between where we are and where we need to be doesn't get closed by Alpine Canada, or Alpine Ontario alone. It gets closed by every coach in this room making better decisions about how they're developing athletes. Every day. In every session.

The Norwegian ski team is one of the best programs in the world right now. Today you're going to hear from someone leading the women's program — someone who sees what elite development actually looks like at the highest level. I want you to watch through that lens. Not to copy what they do, but to ask yourself honestly: what can I learn from Tim. What's the gap between what I'm delivering, and what that level requires?

Because here's the thing — the athletes who are going to represent Canada in 2038 are in your programs right now. They're U14s and U16s. And what you do this summer, next fall, next season — it matters.

Great athletic cultures are built in small moments. In the quality of the feedback after a . In the culture you set around fitness and professionalism. In whether your athletes understand the demands of the next level before they get there.

The gaps we've identified in Ontario programs below our ski teams are about culture and work ethic around fitness. About coaching quality and exposure to international demands. About skill development at the right stage. Those things live in your hands.

We need urgency. Not panic — urgency. There's a difference. Panic is reactive. Urgency is intentional. It means we don't wait for the system to fix itself. We act now, with the tools we have, and we keep pushing for the system to improve around us.

The provinces are crying out for leadership. We need to act. That message came from inside our own team, talking about the national system. I'm saying the same thing to you today about the Ontario system. Leadership is needed at every level. Including yours.

PART 6 — What Today Looks Like

Tone: energizing, transitional, welcoming.

So here's what we're going to do today.

We're going to hear from one of the world's leading coaches — a real window into what elite development looks like at the highest level.

We're going to take an honest look at our current state — not to assign blame, but to be clear-eyed about what the data is telling us.

We're going to have a panel of Ontario coaches share their perspective — we want to explore some wins, challenges, and how to overcome hurdles in front of us. I trust this will stimulate some reflection and discussion amongst the greater audience.

And we're going to walk out of here with practical takeaways

The conversations we have today matter. Your voice matters. Let's make this count.

— END OF PREPARED REMARKS —