

## **Benefits of Hosting Competitions**

The USSA Training Systems are divided into 7 different domains to help better understand the process for Long Term Athlete Development. One of those is the Competition Domain, which outlines the types and levels of competition appropriate for each phase. Events are an important tool for evaluating performance and progression and, in the later phases of the Training Systems, become the key to advancement in the sport.

The Competition Domain of the USSA Training Systems provides a guideline for the introduction of phase appropriate competition. Competition is introduced in Phase 2 of the Training System with a focus on fun, local events that reward skill and progression. Phase 3 starts athletes into regional competitions. Phases 4 through 6 gradually increase the volume and level of competitions. By the time an athlete reaches Phases 5 and 6, results at competition become more important in order to qualify for the next level or for selection to events, such as World Juniors.

While travelling to competitions, staying in hotels with teammates and adapting to life on the road is an important part of the development process, hosting competitions on home turf also offers significant opportunities to both your program and your athletes. Hosting a competition can be a lot of work. You have to do all the pre-planning, coordinate and prepare the venue, recruit officials and volunteers, organize timing or judging, and take care of all the little things that make up a successful event. But, the advantage to your athletes to sleep in their own beds, get proper rest, eat nutritious meals, and compete on their home turf makes the efforts worthwhile. The mental advantage is an equally important factor in hosting home competitions. Athletes will generally feel less pressure and anxiety competing on familiar territory, especially younger athletes in the earlier phases of their development. Finally, hosting competitions can be great exposure for your program by showcasing your organization and home mountain to other athletes and programs. Hosting a competition is a significant invest of time, manpower, and other resources, but the benefits to your program, your athletes, and their long term success is well worth the investment. And, despite the hard work, can be whole lot of fun too.