



Volleyball New Zealand

Athlete Development and Performance Strategy

2019-2030 (VNZDPS)

VNZ uses Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) as the framework for *Playing the Game* (Pillar 2 of the VNZ Strategic Plan 2018-2021). LTAD is an internationally recognised system of best practice for cultivating sports participation, defining pathways for development, and producing high performance athletes. Athletes are at the centre of LTAD, with dynamic connections to other elements of the system (including coaching, competition schedule and the school/club/association structure) necessitating the alignment and common understanding of multiple stakeholders. LTAD recognises the importance of athlete wellbeing, fundamental movement skills, physical literacy, and participation in multiple sports as foundation stages. The VNZDPS focuses on subsequent stages (beginning with VNZ Youth athletes) and identifies pathways for maximising potential and developing high performance athletes.

VNZ will take a lead role in overseeing the LTAD system of volleyball in New Zealand; by supporting understanding and enhancing the capacity of the volleyball community to develop and perform their roles, delivering components of the Athlete Development Pathways (ADPs), and seeking to align the structural elements of the LTAD development system. The latter includes the coach development plan, which is aligned to and synergistic with the VNZDPS. The VNZDPS sets the overarching strategy for 2019-2030, with reviews to be completed every four years, enabling the best practice foundations of LTAD to remain stable while embedding a mechanism to allow for improvements, innovations and progression of goals. The *VNZ Development and Performance Lead* is responsible for implementation of the VNZDPS.

The VNZDPS adapts the concept and models of LTAD from comparable sports and other volleyball countries to the context of volleyball in New Zealand. The VNZDPS is an evolution of the previous VNZDPS 2016-2019; incorporating stakeholder feedback from the *Athlete Development and Performance survey (2018)*, 'conversations' with key stakeholder groups, the collective input from members of the *VNZ Performance Programme Review Working Group*, and peer review by external experts. VNZ acknowledges all those who have provided input and contributed their thoughts to the VNZDPS.

Section 1: Aims, Goals and Principles

The VNZDPS Aims to:

1. Define Athlete Development Pathways (ADPs) that inspire, maximise potential and develop high performance athletes.
2. Identify development and competition opportunities for athletes at each stage of the pathway.
3. Engage all stakeholders in a common understanding of LTAD and the ADPs, in particular athletes, coaches, and parents/whānau.
4. Align with development opportunities for coaches, recognising the critical role of quality coaching to athlete development and performance.
5. Link to the *VNZ Strategic Plan 2018-2021* and promote the embedded values – integrity, wellbeing, accessibility and collaboration.

The VNZDPS Goals are:

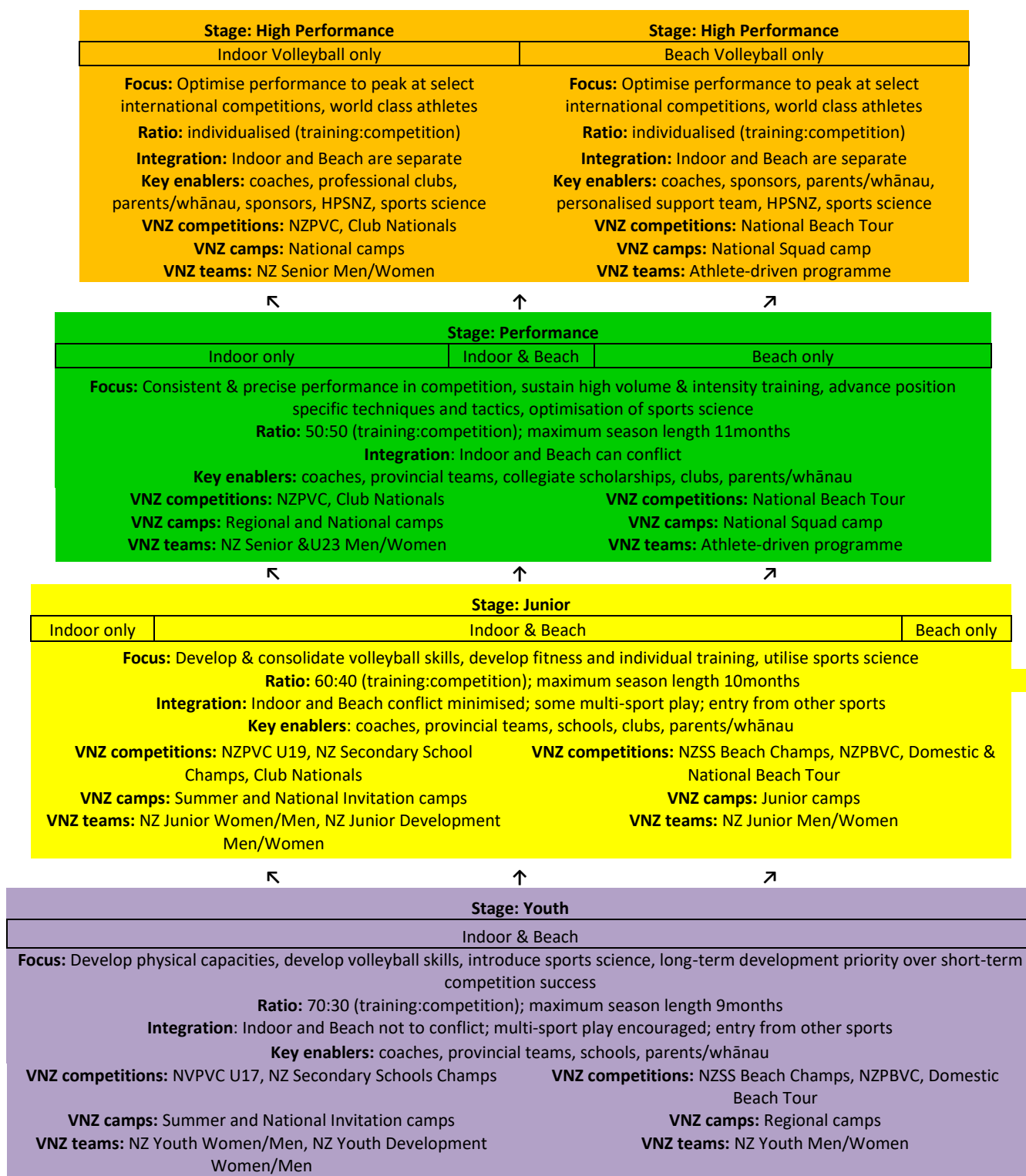
1. To deliver robust ADPs, providing a sustainable framework for producing high performance athletes.
2. To compete at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games (Beach).
3. To support two quality competition opportunities per annum, per gender for the NZL Senior Men's and the NZL Senior Women's teams (Indoor). Specific goals to be agreed.
4. To increase the number of athletes on collegiate scholarships and contracted to overseas professional clubs.

The Principles of the VNZDPS are:

1. Prioritise holistic long term athlete development.
2. Recognise integrity as a core value, focusing on transparency, and respect between all stakeholders.
3. Integrate ADPs for both disciplines (Indoor, Beach) where appropriate, promoting the associated benefits and minimising potential conflicts.
4. Align training, skills focus and application of sport science with each stage of the ADP, ensuring stages with an emphasis on development are not undermined by a focus on competition and winning.
5. Schedule domestic and international competitions to allow athletes to participate (as appropriate) in the New Zealand Secondary Schools Volleyball Championships (NZSSVC), New Zealand Provincial Volleyball Championships (NZPVC), New Zealand Provincial Beach Volleyball Championships (NZPBVC), and National Beach Tour, with the NZPVC and National Beach Tour being priority events.
6. Select international competitions based on the quality of the event, alignment with the VNZDPS, and what is manageable and sustainable for athletes, their families and office resources.
7. Provide opportunities for athletes to represent New Zealand in a manner that raises the overall profile and mana of NZL Volleyball teams.
8. Align with Sport NZ 'Balance is better' and 'Talent Identification' plans.
9. Leverage partnership opportunities with Oceania (particularly Australia) and the benefits associated with volleyball being a global game, e.g. by accessing overseas expertise, tools, training and competition opportunities that support the VNZDPS.

Section 2: The VNZ Athlete Development Pathways

By applying the LTAD framework to volleyball in NZ, the development of volleyball athletes has been divided into a series of stages. Each stage has a unique focus and key enablers have been identified. VNZ promotes the integration of both indoor and beach volleyball, where appropriate, with the LTAD framework clearly identifying the benefits to athlete development and each discipline. It is important to note that for most athletes, their pathway through the stages will not be in a straight line and there are many different trajectories that may characterise an athlete's experience. The ADPs aim to provide flexibility for athletes to exit and re-enter the system. An expanded LTAD model is presented in *Appendix 3*.



Section 3: Training and Development Guidelines

LTAD stage	Focus	Ratio train:compete	Volleyball training	Physical training	Mental training
<i>High Performance</i>	Optimise performance to peak at selected international events, world class athletes	Determined on individualised basis	Determined on individualised basis	Determined on individualised basis	Determined on individualised basis
<i>Performance</i>	Consistent & precise performance in competition, sustain high volume & intensity training, advance position specific techniques and tactics, optimisation of sports science	50:50 Minimum of 10hrs training per week (in season); maximum season length of 11months; consideration given to periodisation	75% (percentage of training) Increase training volume & intensity, advance volleyball skills and tactics aligned with individual needs & VNZ Playing Handbook	20% (percentage of training) Key stage to build strength & aerobic power; develop & maintain other elements of fitness	5% (percentage of training) E.g. relaxation & visualisation
<i>Junior</i>	Develop & consolidate volleyball skills, develop fitness and individualised training, utilisation of sports science	60:40 Minimum of 8hrs training per week (in season, across all sports); maximum season length of 10months; consideration given to periodisation	75% (percentage of training) Increase training intensity, consolidate volleyball skills and tactics aligned with individual needs & VNZ Playing Handbook	20% (percentage of training) Key stage to build strength & introduce aerobic power; develop & maintain other elements of fitness	5% (percentage of training) E.g. transfer technique & tactics to competition
<i>Youth</i>	Develop physical capacities, develop volleyball skills, introduce sports science, long-term development priority over short-term competition success	70:30 Minimum of 6hrs training per week (in season, across all sports); maximum season length of 9months; consideration given to periodisation	75% (percentage of training) Continue to develop basic volleyball skills and tactics aligned with individual needs & VNZ Playing Handbook	20% (percentage of training) Key stage to build aerobic base, develop speed & introduce strength training; develop & maintain other elements of fitness	5% (percentage of training) E.g. coping skills & concentration

- Multiple stakeholders, organisations and individuals, must collectively deliver and optimise athlete training.
- Physical training requirements are closely linked to growth and stage of maturation, this requires careful monitoring to ensure fitness elements are introduced, prioritised and maintained at appropriate times.
- At each stage, in addition to physical development, consideration needs to be given to an athlete’s emotional and cognitive development when planning their training and competition schedule.
- It is critical that the Youth and Junior stages, with an emphasis on training and development, are not undermined by a focus on competition and winning.
- The VNZ Playing Handbook is designed to guide the development of fundamental and position specific volleyball techniques and tactics, and is used by multiple stakeholders from local to national level.
- Coaches must understand, engage, and challenge athletes on an individual level as well as on a team level. Quality, progressive individual and team feedback is critical maximising an athlete’s potential.
- Other aspects of sports science and wellness are to be integrated into an athlete’s routine.

Section 4: VNZ Teams and Squads

VNZ will support the following teams/squads on a two year cycle.

LTAD stage	Indoor Men	Indoor Women	Beach Men	Beach Women
	Year 1			
<i>High Performance</i>	Athletes supported on a case by case basis upon reaching international world class level			
<i>Performance</i>	NZL Senior / Under 23	NZL Senior / Under 23	NZL Senior squad	NZL Senior squad
<i>Junior</i>	NZL Junior NZL Junior Development	NZL Junior NZL Junior Development	NZL Junior Squad	NZL Junior Squad
<i>Youth</i>	NZL Youth	NZL Youth	NZL Youth Squad	NZL Youth Squad
	Year 2			
<i>High Performance</i>	Athletes supported on a case by case basis upon reaching international world class level			
<i>Performance</i>	NZL Senior / Under 23	NZL Senior / Under 23	NZL Senior squad	NZL Senior squad
<i>Junior</i>	NZL Junior	NZL Junior	NZL Junior teams	NZL Junior teams
<i>Youth</i>	NZL Youth NZL Youth Development	NZL Youth NZL Youth Development	NZL Youth Squad	NZL Youth Squad

- Junior and youth age groups are defined as per the FIVB regulations.
- A plan of potential Tours for each team is provided in *Appendix 1* as a guide only; all Tours are subject to change and approval by VNZ. VNZ supports Tours aligned with the VNZDPS, VNZ calendar, and FIVB international window. Important supporting *Notes* are also provided in Appendix 1.
- Each team programme will provide development opportunities for a wider squad of athletes. The timing of squad announcements will be on a programme by programme basis. Teams will be selected from programme squads.
- Team coaches are responsible for planning appropriate training and competition in preparation for scheduled Tours. Noting the importance of the June/July window for NZL Senior team tours in August/September.
- The VNZ Development and Performance Lead will proactively facilitate collegiate scholarship opportunities and contact with professional clubs, establish and maintain communication with overseas based athletes, update the VNZ database with details of overseas based athletes, and assist with reintegrating athletes' into the ADPs on return to NZ.
- Athletes are required to play in their age group. Exceptions will only be granted if all of the following stakeholders see that playing in a higher age group is aligned to their developmental stage and in the best interest of the athlete's long term holistic development: the player, their parents / guardians, relevant coaching staff, the VNZ Development and Performance Lead. Athletes must request in writing to VNZ that they wish to be considered for selection at a higher age group prior to the commencement of the relevant VNZ Event i.e. NZPBVC or the NZSSVC.
- Active steps will be taken to minimise costs to athletes (and acknowledge the prestige of making a NZL representative team), including accessing sponsorship or other funding, and giving close consideration to all Tour costs e.g. uniform requirements. Any HPSNZ funds are provided directly to the named athletes.

Section 5: VNZ Camps

VNZ will support the following camps on an annual cycle, camps being an integral component of the ADPs.

LTAD stage	Indoor	Beach
<i>High Performance</i>	Athletes supported on a case by case basis upon reaching international world class level	
<i>Performance</i>	Regional/National Performance camps	Performance Squad camp (February)
<i>Junior</i>	Summer camps (December/January) National Invitation camp (April)	Junior camps (January & October)
<i>Youth</i>	Summer camps (December/January) National Invitation camp (April)	Regional camps (April & October)

- Camps are designed to include both technical and tactical volleyball skill development, physical training and testing, mental skills training, sports science and wellness education (e.g. nutrition, massage, rest and recovery), coach and referee modules, and other items that contribute to athlete development (e.g. drug free sport requirements, scholarship information and athlete profiles). The Development and Performance Lead will facilitate access to experts in these areas to ensure athletes have access to current, stage appropriate information.
- The VNZ Development and Performance Lead working closely with the Head coaches (indoor) are responsible for designing and leading the programme of Regional and National Performance camps, with the respective team manager(s) organising and administering these camps. When appropriate, regions may combine for regional camp activities e.g. athlete numbers, facilities, athlete quality, coaching resource. Performance squad and team selection timing is determined by the Head coaches in consultation with the VNZ Development and Performance Lead.
- The VNZ Development and Performance Lead is responsible for designing and leading the Performance Squad camp (beach). Approximately 8 athletes per gender will be selected, with key consideration given to National Beach Tour points, athlete playing level and intent to play internationally. Future consideration may be given to the feasibility of an open Performance Squad camp in December.
- The Junior and Youth camps (beach) are coach driven in consultation with the VNZ Development and Performance Lead. NZL Youth Squad selection (beach) will be made after the October camp (where possible) and Junior Squad/Team selection will be made in February (where possible).
- The Junior and Youth Summer camp (indoor) is an open camp, and the Junior and Youth National Invitation camp (indoor) is by invitation. Administration is centralised by VNZ. Junior and Youth squad selection will be made in February (where possible) and team selection will be made after the April camp (where possible, including consideration of the timeframe for finalising Tour logistics and preparation requirements for targeted events).

Section 6: VNZ Policy guidelines

1. Athlete Identification

Athletes are expected to be respectful, an ambassador for themselves and for VNZ, and have a passion for volleyball. Athletes are expected to develop a Growth Mindset, self-responsibility, self-awareness and an exceptional work ethic. The key component is the athlete's ability to play the game of volleyball i.e. Athletes should have a high volleyball IQ and high level of skill (technique under pressure).

The athlete identification policy, process and criteria will be developed by the VNZ Development and Performance Lead and respective coaches (with wider consultation as appropriate) and should be transparent, seek to minimise bias and manage conflicts of interest. Coaching Staff / Selectors will consider the VNZDPS Goals when identifying talented athletes. Athletes (and parents) will be provided with all relevant information pertaining to athlete identification criteria (and the ADPs) in a timely and meaningful way.

2. Team Selection

Athletes are required to attend relevant trials and training camps. Athletes (and parents) will be provided with all relevant information (pertaining to selection criteria, costs and tour information) in a timely and meaningful way. Athletes can represent NZ in both disciplines within a year should they make themselves available to do so, this is at the discretion of respective coaches and in liaison with the VNZ Development and Performance Lead. The ability to be considered for representation across disciplines may be constrained by the timing of events and expectations of training programmes.

The selection policy, process and criteria will be developed by the respective head coach and the VNZ Development and Performance Lead (with wider consultation as appropriate) and should be transparent, seek to minimise bias and manage conflicts of interest. Coaching staff will consider the VNZDPS Goals when making selection decisions. Selectors are required to have an open and positive relationship within and across disciplines and ensure that all information is shared to make sure the best decision for the athlete can be made.

NZ Junior beach athletes become available for selection for indoor teams following their beach commitments, subject to external influences (e.g. Asian Champs Tournament regulations require the naming of teams some time out from the tournament). This means that NZ Junior beach athletes playing the National Tour in January may not attend the Summer camp (indoor) and this will not adversely affect their selection for the National Invitation camp (indoor). During this period athlete availability will be discussed between the respective athlete, parents/whānau, and the respective discipline head coaches.

The VNZ Board will ratify all New Zealand representative Volleyball teams.

3. Evaluation

The importance of quality, progressive feedback to athletes on an individual and team level is highlighted in Section 3. Athletes are responsible for monitoring their training/competition workload (with key supporters).

Tour evaluation templates will be completed by the respective athletes, coaches and support staff and reviewed by the Development and Performance Lead, with learnings shared across all programmes as appropriate.

VNZ will define process and performance metrics to evaluate the implementation of the VNZDPS.

Coach, Manager and Referee selection and evaluation are dealt with in separate policies.

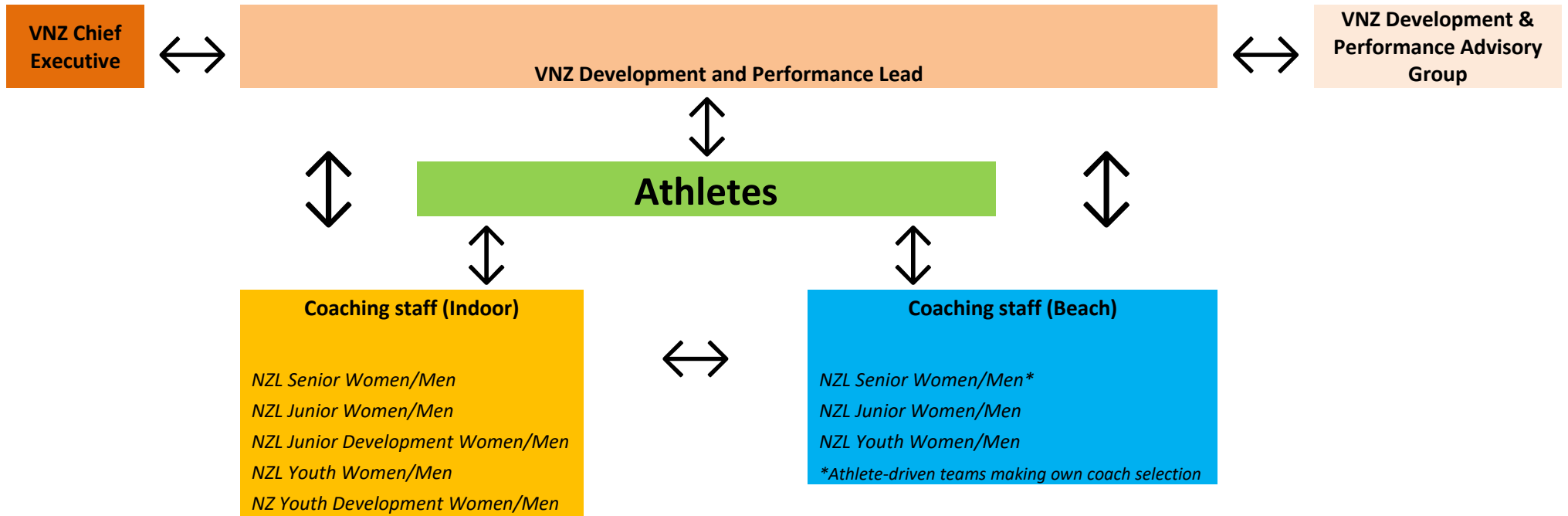
Appendix 1: Plan of potential Tours 2019/2020*

*this is a guide only, all Tours are subject to change and approval by VNZ, with confirmation only possible once event regulations are confirmed

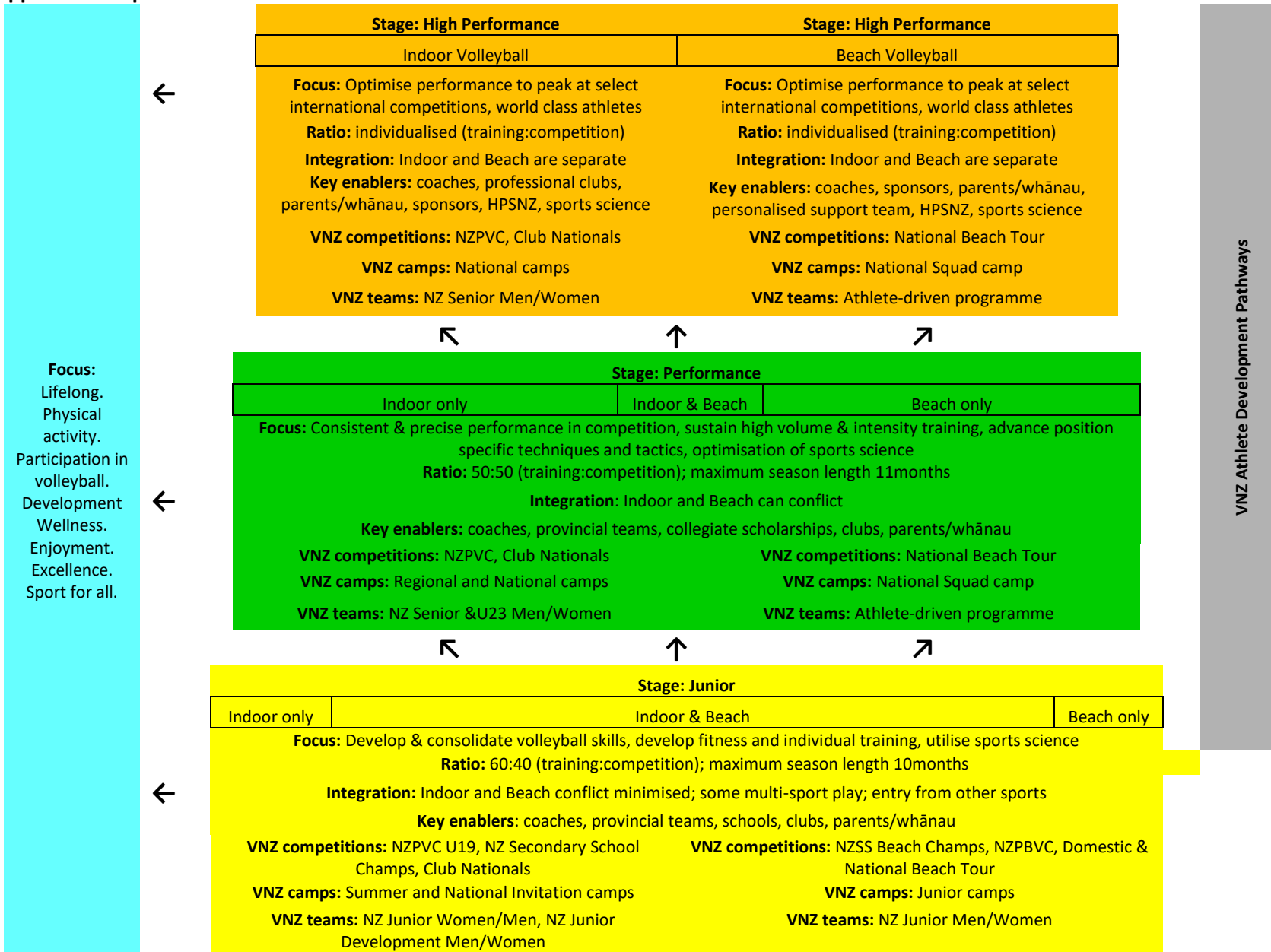
Team	2019 (yr1)	2020 (yr2)	Notes
Indoor			
NZL Senior Men	Asian Champs	Asian Volleyball Cup	
	Tour 2 TBC	Tour 2 TBC	
NZL U23 Men	AIS Tour	Oceania / Australia	VNZ will support a NZ U23 indoor team where the squad of players is of sufficient capacity that the ADP would be strengthened by providing further opportunities for these athletes. The NZ Senior indoor teams have two Tours per year which also provides an opportunity to introduce U23 athletes into one of these Tours. World University Games will also be considered as a potential event for the U23 team.
NZL Senior Women	Asian Champs	Asian Volleyball Cup	
	Tour 2 TBC	Tour 2 TBC	
NZL U23 Women	AIS Tour / Asian Champs	Oceania / Australia	VNZ will support a NZ U23 indoor team where the squad of players is of sufficient capacity that the ADP would be strengthened by providing further opportunities for these athletes. The NZ Senior indoor teams have two Tours per year which also provides an opportunity to introduce U23 athletes into one of these Tours. World University Games will also be considered as a potential event for the U23 team.
NZL Junior Women & Men	Australian Jnr Volleyball Champs/USA	Asian Champs	VNZ will support NZL Junior and Junior Development indoor teams in year 1 of each cycle and NZL Junior teams in year 2 of the cycle. Where possible, the NZL Junior Women and Men should attend the same event in year 1. NZL Junior athletes that don't make the NZL Junior team in the second year of the cycle will continue their development and participation in the ADP through NZPVC, Club and camps and potential future selection in the NZ U23 team. The structure of the Junior programme has considered the need for international competition experiences, athlete motivation, prioritisation of the NZPVC, athlete capacity, integrity of the programme and organisational resources.
<i>W2002-03 M2001-02</i>			
NZL Junior Development Women & Men	Australian Jnr Volleyball Champs		
<i>W2002-03 M2001-02</i>			
NZL Youth Women & Men	Australian Jnr Volleyball Champs	Oceania / Asian Champs	VNZ will support NZL Youth indoor teams in year 1 of each cycle and NZL Youth and Youth Development teams in year 2 of the cycle. NZL Youth athletes that don't make the NZL Youth team in the first year of the cycle will continue their development and participation in the ADP through NZPVC, Club and camps and potential future selection in the NZ Youth and Development teams (year 2), Junior and Junior Development teams (future years). The structure of the Youth programme has considered the need for international competition experiences, athlete motivation, prioritisation of the NZPVC, athlete capacity, the need to develop a wide base, integrity of the programme and organisational resources. *Consideration will be given to having two Development teams per gender in year2 of the cycle (which may include North and South Island teams) if the factors above support this.
<i>W2004-05 M2003-04</i>			
NZL Youth Development Women & Men		Australian Jnr Volleyball Champs*	
<i>W2004-05 M2003-04</i>			

Beach			
NZL Senior Men & Women	Asian & World Tour / World Champs	Asian & World Tour / World Champs / Olympics	For Performance stage beach volleyball athletes, an athlete-driven model of development and competition is in place. The focus of VNZ efforts for these athletes is to provide a quality National Beach Tour, manage athlete selection, support a squad camp, and facilitate opportunities to play internationally. VNZ support for U21, U23 and World University Games teams will be considered on a case by case basis as the opportunities arise. High Performance athlete needs will be addressed on a case by case basis.
NZ Junior Men & Women	USA Performance Champs	Asian / World Champ Qualifier / World Champs / Youth CGs / Youth Olympics Australia/Oceania	VNZ will support a NZL Junior Squad of 10 athletes per gender to travel to the USA in year 1 of each cycle, and 5 NZL Junior teams per gender in year 2 of the cycle (up to 2 teams per gender to attend up to two pinnacle events and up to 3 additional teams per gender to attend an Australian or Oceania event). Junior athletes that don't make the NZL Junior Beach Squad will continue their development and participation in the ADP through the NZPBVC and camps and potential future selection in the NZ Senior squad. The structure of the Junior beach programme has considered the need for international competition experiences, athlete motivation, prioritisation of the National Beach Tour, athlete capacity, integrity of the programme and organisational resources.
<i>2002-2003</i>			
NZ Youth Men & Women Beach	Australia	USA Performance Champs	VNZ will support a NZL Youth Squad of 10 athletes per gender to travel to Australia in year 1 of each cycle and a squad of 10 athletes per gender to travel to the USA in year 2 of each cycle. Youth athletes that don't make the NZL Youth Beach Squad will continue their development and participation in the ADP through the NZPBVC and camps and potential future selection in the Junior squad. All players should continue their development in the indoor volleyball pathway. The structure of the Youth beach programme has considered the need for international competition experiences, athlete motivation, prioritisation of the NZPVC, athlete capacity, the need to develop a wide base, integrity of the programme and organisational resources.
<i>2004-2005</i>			

Appendix 2: VNZ Athlete Development and Performance Structure



Appendix 3: Expanded LTAD model



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Stage: Youth

Indoor & Beach

Focus: Develop physical capacities, develop volleyball skills, introduce sports science, long-term development priority over short-term competition success

Ratio: 70:30 (training:competition); maximum season length 9months

Integration: Indoor and Beach not to conflict; multi-sport play encouraged; entry from other sports

Key enablers: coaches, provincial teams, schools, parents/whānau

VNZ competitions: NVPVC U17, NZ Secondary Schools Champs

VNZ competitions: NZSS Beach Champs, NZPBVC, Domestic Beach Tour

VNZ camps: Summer and National Invitation camps

VNZ camps: Regional camps

VNZ teams: NZ Youth Women/Men, NZ Youth Development Women/Men

VNZ teams: NZ Youth Men/Women

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Stage: Foundation*

Focus: Kiwi Volley, physical literacy, fundamental movement and sports skills, fun, enjoyment, building sports skills

Integration: Multiple physical activity settings, multi-sport participation; encouraged to play indoor and beach volleyball

Key enablers: coaches, early physical activity and foundation sports programmes, other sports, parents/whānau

* The Foundation stage can be broken into further sub-stages