

In an effort to enhance the sporting experience for our athletes, Alpine Ontario Alpin (AOA) partnered with a team of expert sport scientists,<sup>1</sup> credited with the FUN MAPS,<sup>2</sup> who are advancing our understanding of fun and the significance it plays in the development of our athletes.

The FUN MAPS team<sup>1</sup> has created this supplemental guide for our coaching education Learning Facilitators (LFs) to use as a helpful instructional tool when educating our Entry-Level Course participants about the importance of fun in our athletes' sport experiences.

This has been done by drawing out key research, while also providing direction for how to explain fun and properly equip our coaches with the "facts" and debunk the "myths".

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## LEARNING FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE



For Educating Coaches  
About Fun

#81fundeterminants #11funfactors #funmaps

## THE FUN MAPS ARE INTENDED TO HELP ORGANIZATIONS DEVELOP AND RETAIN THEIR ATHLETES THROUGH MORE OPTIMAL SPORT EXPERIENCES

### FUN, EXPLAINED BY ATHLETES

People think fun varies by person, but when it comes to the things that make sport participation fun, research tells us it is actually more similar than different.<sup>3</sup> According to U9-U19 athletes who developed the FUN MAPS through rigorous research, what makes participating and competing fun are 11 fun-factors comprised of 81 fun-determinants.<sup>2</sup>

#### LEARNING FACILITATOR ACTION ITEM

Become familiar with the *#FUNMAPS Coaching Guide* that identifies the fun-determinants within the factors, ranked by athletes, in order of importance.

#### FACT #1

Fun is the #1 reason why kids participate in sports,<sup>4-10</sup> and its absence is the #1 reason why they drop out.<sup>10-13</sup>

#### FACT #2

Fun is not independent from athlete development; in fact, it is a critical component of commitment toward sport excellence.<sup>14,15</sup>

#### FACT #3

What is most fun is the same for boys and girls – and does not vary by their age, or by the level at which they participate and compete.<sup>3</sup>

It's a misnomer that Team Friendships are the driving force in what makes sports fun for young athletes. To optimize the sport experience for athletes, our coaches must focus on cultivating determinants of **Trying Hard, Positive Team Dynamics, & Positive Coaching.**

Research indicates these are the top 3 most important fun-factors among athletes, regardless of age (younger, older), sex (girls, boys), and competition level (recreational, high performance).<sup>3</sup>

Coaches' ability to optimize fun is critically important because the majority of athletes leave their sport because it's no longer fun. In alpine skiing, we see the highest dropout rate between 13 to 15 years of age. Research also shows coaches of younger athletes (ages 8 to 12) are more in tune with what fun means for their athletes compared to coaches of older athletes (ages 13 to 18) who are missing the mark.<sup>16</sup>



## REPLACE COMMON MYTHS WITH THE FACTS

#### MYTH

Athletes only have fun when smiling and goofing off.

#### FACT

The FUN MAPS show fun = focused, athletic development.<sup>2,3,14,16</sup>

#### MYTH

Friends are what make sports fun for girls; whereas, for boys it's all about competing.

#### FACT

Trying Hard, Positive Team Dynamics, and Positive Coaching drive fun for girls and boys alike.<sup>3</sup>

#### MYTH

Winning is most important.

#### FACT

Winning ranks 40th out of 81 fun-determinants.<sup>3</sup>

#### MYTH

Fun should be saved for the end as a reward.

#### FACT

We give athletes the best chances to succeed through fun training environments.<sup>2,3,14-17</sup>