Appendix A) Prevention & Risk Reduction

a) PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT [HELMETS, MOUTHGUARDS]

- Personal protective equipment can be effective at reducing head trauma injuries such as lacerations, skull fractures and dental trauma.
- Helmet use is compulsory during competition for all snow-based, sliding and speed skating sports, including those hosted by the International Ski Federation (FIS), International Skating Union (ISU) and the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation (IBSF), etc. Athletes should refer to their relevant Federation and NSO for appropriate helmet standards.
- Athletes should also wear their helmet during any skill-based training as they are often exposed to the same level of risk as during competition.
- Athletes are encouraged to ensure that their helmet is well fitting and complies with the appropriate helmet standards outlined by their relevant Federation and NSO. Athletes should also check the integrity of their helmet frequently.
- It is mandatory for an athlete to replace their helmet if they experience a concussive episode or if damage has occurred to the helmet through travel or normal use.
- Evidence suggests mouthguards may be effective at reducing the rate of concussion in some sports, therefore custom moulded mouthguards are recommended.

b) WARM-UP

- Regular participation in a sport-specific warm-up which includes a neuromuscular training component is recommended prior to training and competition.
- Consistent completion of an appropriate warm-up has well-known benefits relating to the prevention of all injuries and specifically lower limb injuries.
- Emerging evidence suggests that completing neuromuscular training as part of a warm-up may be useful in reducing concussion rates.

c) TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS

- Where possible, participation in high level, skill-based training with risk of falling, contact or collision should be avoided until after 2 sleeps following long haul travel. Long-haul travel is defined as greater than 4 hours change in time zone.

d) NECK STRENGTHENING

- Evidence suggests that greater neck strength may be protective against concussion in contact and collision sports. It is recommended that athletes perform neck strengthening as part of their strength and conditioning.