

Key Facts: Community Sport in Canada

A part of every community

55% of boys and 44% of girls 15 years of age or younger, and 28% (7.3 million) of Canadians over the age of 15, are active in sport.

1.8 million Canadians coach amateur sport, 800,000 participate as amateur referees or officials, and 2 million volunteer their time as administrators or helpers in amateur sport.

18% of Canadians belong to a local club, community league, or amateur sport organization.

39% of active Canadians take part in over 250,000 sport events in Canada annually.

Largely supported by communities themselves

Canada has 33,650 sport and recreation organizations that make up 21% of our non-profit sector. 71% of these organizations are local.

Sport and recreation organizations engage 28% (5.3 million) of all volunteers in Canada – more than any other sector.

Community sport volunteers each contribute an average of 143 hours a year to sport.

73% of sport organizations have no paid employees.

Sport and recreation organizations rely on governments for only 12% of their funding, compared with 49% for voluntary organizations overall.

Highly valued by Canadians

92% of Canadians believe that community sport can have a positive influence in the lives of youth.

72% believe that sport is a key contributor to quality of life in their communities.

57% believe that community sport currently reinforces positive values to a great extent.

A fundamental source of health and wellbeing

80% of sportspeople surveyed in 2004 rated sport as very important in improving their physical fitness and health.

70% described their health as excellent or very good, compared with less than 50% among those not active in sport.

Adult Canadians who participate in sport average almost three hours of moderate and vigorous physical activity per week, and are likely meeting recommended activity levels.

Children who participate in sport are more likely to reach recommended physical activity levels than those who do not.

A key positive factor in the lives of children and youth

Canadians rank sport as the 2nd most positive influence in the lives of youth, after family.

Over 80% of Canadians believe that promoting positive values in youth should be a priority for sport in Canada.

70% of parents feel their expectations of what sport should provide their children have been met or exceeded.

A significant contributor to Canada's economy

Canada's sport sector accounts for 1.2% of GDP and provides 2% of all jobs, employing 262,324 Canadians.

In 2004, Canadians spent \$15.8 billion on sport – \$1,963 per household.

Almost 1/3rd of tourist trips to Canada in 2006 included participation in sport or outdoor activities.

Workplace sport and fitness programs can reduce annual absenteeism by 1.6 days per employee, generating payroll savings of 1.1% per year.

Increasing physical activity levels by 10% would save Canadians over \$150 million annually in direct health care costs.

Under pressure

Adult sport participation has declined from 45% in 1992 to 28% in 2005.

Over the same period, participation as sport spectators at amateur events has increased from 24% to 35% (9.2 million Canadians).

Sport participation rates peak at age 10 to 13, then decline steadily with age. The main reasons youth do not participate are lack of time (34%) and lack of interest (30%).

71% of Canadians believe high cost is a major barrier to community sport participation.

A 2002 Decima survey identified the following issues as the most serious facing community sport: focus on winning/competition (16%), violence (10%), parental over-involvement (10%), parental under-involvement (7%), and poor coaching/leadership (6%).

The following issues were identified as very serious: harassment (38%), intolerance/racism (29%), lack of fair play (21%), and injuries (18%).