

# What You Can Do: The Case for Community Sport in Canada

## Federal/provincial/territorial governments

5 key actions F/P/T governments can take to break down the silo around sport and strengthen our community sport system:

- Establish shared metrics for good sport and an inclusive, accessible high quality community sport system and use these to monitor progress and to assess the impact of federal, provincial and territorial sport development policies and programs.
- Adopt more horizontal, cross-governmental approaches to sport that engage all interested departments in policy and program development (not just sport ministries and departments) and integrate sport into other policies and programs where it can help advance their objectives (e.g. health, newcomer settlement, youth development, crime prevention, etc.)
- Establish dedicated sport and recreation infrastructure funding, and work to ensure these resources are distributed equitably to communities and regions, especially to those with few resources of their own.
- Pursue sport funding policies that support excellence but also increase participation and inclusion in order to reap sport's full benefits. The result – a diverse range of enjoyable and challenging sport opportunities that enable everyone to participate regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, income or ability.
- Promote positive values and enforce ethical conduct in sport to ensure good sport, encourage long-term participation, and leverage greater benefits from community sport investments.

## Municipal governments

5 key actions municipal governments can take to harness the power of sport in their communities:

- Ensure equitable access to sport facilities and programs throughout the community, giving priority to low-income neighbourhoods where they can generate the greatest public benefit and making sure all facilities are fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- Actively promote positive values in community sport, by articulating clear standards for ethical behaviour and inclusion for all municipally funded sport and working with sport organizations to build capacity to meet these standards.
- Ask how sport and recreation facilities and programs can help advance key social and economic goals and develop the necessary strategies and linkages between municipal and other community programs to make it happen.
- Facilitate dialogue between sport and other community organizations, focusing on how they can work together to advance shared community objectives.
- Develop an integrated community sport plan aimed at providing accessible, quality sport experiences to all community members regardless of income, gender, age, ethnicity, or ability. Use a process that engages and challenges sport organizations, school boards, service clubs, business groups, community service organizations, foundations, law enforcement agencies, health practitioners, band councils, and other interested groups to play an active role.

## Business

5 key actions businesses can take to mobilize sport's benefits in the workplace and in the community:

- Recognize the value of sport participation and voluntarism in building employee skills and leadership and support employee involvement by providing time off to volunteer and donating to employee-supported community sport teams and organizations.
- Ensure the sport you support is good sport. Ask sport teams and organizations your business is considering supporting how they promote fair play, fun, inclusion and excellence in their program(s).
- Include community sport in corporate philanthropy programs as a tool to help achieve other important social objectives like healthy child and youth development, equal opportunities for girls, improved educational outcomes, youth employment, crime prevention, etc.
- Donate expertise and services in-kind to community sport organizations. Financial, IT, human resource and management expertise and services can significantly improve organizational capacity and mobilize more resources for sport programs.
- Establish workplace sport and fitness programs to encourage active healthy living and provide sport and physical activity opportunities for employees and their families.

## Community institutions and organizations

5 key actions institutions and organizations can take to get the most out of sport in their community:

- Ask how sport can help you and you can help sport. Sport can be a powerful tool for advancing many social, economic and environmental goals – including those of your organization. To harness sport's benefits, though, sport and non-sport organizations need to establish shared goals and work together to achieve them.
- Partner with local sport organizations to tailor existing programs to achieve shared goals or to pilot new programs. Sport programs aimed at achieving specific social and economic objectives need to be intentionally designed to achieve these ends. Sport and non-sport expertise are both critical to this process.
- Aim to learn and share what you learn. The intentional use of sport to achieve specific social and economic ends is not new, but we still have much to learn about what works best. Evaluate programs and share what you learn with other organizations.
- Promote and practice good sport. Sport's ability to deliver broader social and economic benefits is inextricably linked to the quality of the sport experiences provided. Sport works best when it is inclusive, fun, fair, and promotes excellence.
- Lend your support to community sport. Take advantage of opportunities to communicate the broader social and economic value of good community sport to local, provincial and federal decision makers. This will help ensure resources are made available for sport programs and facilities in your community.

## Community sport organizations

5 key actions sport organizations can take to close the gap between the sport we have and the sport we want:

- Champion ethical conduct. Commit to fair play. Make respect for the rules, officials, coaches and players a priority – on the field and on the sidelines.
- Promote inclusion. Remove barriers, encourage participation and make it possible for everyone to get involved and stay involved.
- Strengthen connections. Create opportunities for people to get together through sport. Make newcomers feel welcome. Promote friendship, trust, cooperation and respect.
- Support excellence. Teams and athletes carry the hearts and hopes of the community wherever they compete. Help them to be the best they can be.
- Recognize sport as a valuable community asset. Help sport live up to its full potential. Enable it to contribute to the wellbeing of the entire community.

## High performance athletes

5 key actions elite athletes can take to make a positive difference and give back to their communities:

- Be a positive role model on and off the playing field. Whether they choose to be or not, all elite athletes are highly influential role models for young people. Reinforce the positive power of sport, inspire and give back by living and championing the best values of sport.
- Publicly support good sport and encourage other athletes to do the same. Speak up in support of good sport principles – go for it, play fair, respect others, keep it fun, stay healthy, and give back. Rally other athletes to stand up for the sport that they believe in and Canadians want.
- Be clear that sport excellence can never be achieved at the expense of fairness. The principles that guide good sport on the playground are the same ones that govern high performance sport. Excellence and fairness are mutually reinforcing at every level and the hallmarks of great athletes and great sport.
- Champion commitment to community sport. Every trip to the podium begins in the same place - a community gym, pool, track, playing field or rink. As beneficiaries of these community resources, elite athletes can help ensure future athletes of all skill levels also benefit by advocating for community sport.
- Tell people what sport can do. Help Canada to be the best in the world, not just when it comes to sport performance, but in seeing sport as an invaluable public asset and finding ways to release its enormous potential at home and abroad.