

Background Paper

High Performance and the Canadian Sport Policy Renewal Process

May 2011

Enhanced Excellence

It is the Goal of the Canadian Sport Policy that by 2012 ...

The pool of talented athletes has expanded and Canadian athletes and teams are systematically achieving world-class results at the highest levels of international competition through fair and ethical means.

Progress and Success to Date

An evaluation of the Canadian Sport Policy was undertaken by The Sutcliffe Group during 2009 on behalf of Sport Canada and the Provincial/Territorial government departments responsible for sport. The evaluation covered the first seven (7) years of the Policy's implementation.

For the Enhanced Excellence goal the evaluation concluded that "very good progress has been made"¹ as a result of 13 of the 15 performance measures having been met or in progress. Similarly impressive progress was made in the Enhanced Capacity (94%) and Enhanced Interaction (100%) goal areas. Enhanced Participation made the least progress at 50%.

Pool of Talented Athletes

The pool of talented athletes, as measured by the number of carded athletes that qualified for a SR1 or SR2 card, increased from 374 in 2002 to 437 in 2010. The single biggest increase in SR1/SR2 cards was between 2006 and 2007; from 389 to 424. This increase followed the first significant injection of new funds for targeted high performance winter sport in 2005 and targeted summer sport in 2006. SR1/SR2 cards are awarded to those athletes who place in the top 8 in events limited to one entry per country, in the top 12 in events limited to two entries per country, or in the top 16 in events with 3 more entries per country, and finish in the top half of the field. The awarding of these cards is not dependent on the size of Sport Canada's budget for the Athlete Assistance Program.

Achieving World-Class Results

Canadian athletes turned in Canada's best winter performance ever at the 2010 Games. Canada won its first ever Olympic gold medal (summer or winter) on home soil and Canadian athletes went on to win a record 26 medals, including 14 gold medals, the most gold medals won by any country at any Olympic Winter Games. Canada's Paralympic athletes were equally impressive winning a record 19 medals, including 10 gold medals, improving on the previous best total of 15 won in 2002. Canada's 10 gold medals placed

¹ Evaluation of the Canadian Sport Policy, The Sutcliffe Group, April 25, 2010, page 5

it third on the gold medal count, thus achieving its performance objective for the Paralympic Games.

Canadian athletes have carried forward their performance momentum from the 2010 Winter Games into the 2010-11 season. At World Cup competitions Canadian athletes won 128 medals, second only to Germany's 201 medals, but only just ahead of the 127 medals won by the United States. At 2011 World Championships athletes with a disability won 14 medals (6-3-5) while their able-bodied counterparts won 31 medals (13-9-9), including a gold medal breakthrough performance by Devon Kershaw and Alex Harvey in Cross Country Skiing. Canada's 31 medals place it second behind Germany's 34 and ahead of Norway's 28 medals.

Canada's performance at the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games improved over performances in 2004 and 2000. In 2008 Canada won 18 medals (14th ranked) compared to 12 medals (19th ranked) in 2004 and 14 medals (15th ranked) in 2000. The 2008 Top 14 performance was achieved only three years after the \$12M of enhanced excellence funding came into effect, and before the additional \$24M provided by Budget 2008 was deployed. At the 2009 and 2010 World Championships Canadian athletes, including non-Olympic athletes, have won 19 medals (2-8-9) and 14 (3-4-7) respectively.

Canada's performance at the 2008 Beijing Summer Paralympic Games declined significantly over performances in 2004 and 2000. In 2008 Canada won 19 gold medals (7th ranked), compared to 28 in 2004 (3rd ranked) and 38 in 2000 (3rd ranked). Paralympic summer sport at the international level has become much more competitive in recent years with countries such as China and Great Britain investing heavily in these athletes. At the 2009 and 2010 World Championships Canadian athletes won 9 medals (2-1-5) and 30 medals (8-12-10) respectively; of the 30 medals won in 2010, 19 were won by Canadian swimmers.

Fair and Ethical Means

A commitment to fair and ethical sport underpins Canadian high performance sport. Policies, programs and national initiatives such as the Canadian Policy Against Doping in Sport, the Canadian Anti-Doping Program and the True Sport Strategy provide an ethical framework to guide high performance athletes and support personnel to behave ethically and promote ethical sport within the Canadian sport system.

In 2010 Sport Canada developed its *Strategy on Ethical Sport* to define its role in advancing and supporting ethical sport in Canada and abroad, and in February 2011 a revised edition of the Canadian Policy Against Doping in Sport-2011 was approved by Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for sport. This policy is guided by the fundamental commitment to safeguard the integrity and values of sport and to protect the health of individuals from the unethical practice of doping and envisions a Canadian culture of ethical, doping-free sport.

On an ongoing basis the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport manages the Canadian Anti-Doping Program. This program is consistent with the World Anti-Doping Code and is operated in conjunction with the sport community with a focus on education, prevention, international collaboration, detection, deterrence and research.

Current High Performance Sport Environment

Canada's high performance sport environment has been considerably strengthened over the past several years. The following provides a summary of the current status of the key components including some important future challenges.

Targeted High Performance at the Olympic and Paralympic Games

Own the Podium (OTP) was created in the Fall of 2005 as a high performance technical advisory body with a mandate to coordinate and focus the resources of the national funding parties on targeted high performance sport programs with the objective of achieving Canada's full potential at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The initial funding parties were Sport Canada, the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC), winter NSOs and the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Winter Games. In November 2006 the reach of OTP was expanded to include targeted sports on the program of the Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games; it was again expanded in June 2010 to include responsibility for the Summer Team Sport Strategy.

OTP continues as an innovative and collaborative high performance initiative between Sport Canada, the COC and the CPC. OTP has responsibility to:

- Identify those sports/athletes with medal potential at future Olympic and Paralympic Games, known as "targeted sports" or "targeted athletes";
- Recommend funding levels for targeted sports/athletes to the national funding parties - Sport Canada, the COC and CPC; and
- Provide technical advice on system development and leadership to the high performance sport community.

Presently 18 Olympic and 11 Paralympic summer sports are targeted by OTP for the 2012 Summer Games, while 15 Olympic and 4 Paralympic winter sports are targeted for the 2014 Winter Games. The performance objective for the 2012 Olympic Summer Games is to rank in the top 12 on medal count and in the top 8 on the gold medal count at the 2012 Paralympic Summer Games. The performance objective for the 2014 Olympic Winter Games is to be the number one ranked nation on the medal count and to rank in the top three on the gold medal count at the 2014 Paralympic Winter Games.

Funding for Targeted Sports

Parallel to the creation of OTP was the increase in funding for targeted Olympic and Paralympic sport. Since 2005, the Government of Canada has steadily increased ongoing

support for targeted summer and winter high performance sport (enhanced excellence) through the Sport Support Program (SSP), starting with \$23M in 2005-06 and increasing to \$64M/ year in 2010-11. Funding of Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program also saw an increase, rising from \$15M in 2003-04 to \$25.9M in 2010-11. Within the Hosting Program support for the hosting of small international single sport events has increased from \$1M in 2003-04 to \$3.8M in 2010-11, while up to \$20M per event is available for the hosting of large international single sport events based on one such event being hosted every two years. Sport Canada's core support to all NSOs via the SSP has remained the same since 2003-04 at approximately \$36M.

During the 2005-2010 period VANOC corporate sponsors, the COC, the CPC and provincial /territorial governments provided \$53.4M towards targeted winter sport, while \$21.5M was provided by non-federal government sources for targeted summer sport during 2006-2010. This increased funding has provided a solid base of funding for those summer and winter sports that demonstrate the potential to win medals at Olympic and Paralympic Games. Moving forward however, a challenge for the high performance sport community is how to attract private sector funding for high performance sport, for both the targeted and non-targeted sports.

OTP works closely with the COC and CPC to augment federal government funding with the goal of a minimum of an additional \$10M for upcoming years. OTP also strives to work with independent organizations to align high performance goals and funding initiatives.

Summer Team Sport Strategy

The implementation of the Summer Team Sport Strategy for Olympic and Paralympic sports was made possible by the \$6M of new funds contained in Budget 2010. The long-term aim of the Strategy is two fold; to have more Olympic and Paralympic summer teams in medal contention at the Games and to win more team sport medals. For the 2010-12 period this strategy is specifically focusing on:

- Supporting six summer Olympic team sports to create and implement necessary athlete development system changes, based on a long-term strategic approach to generate improved results over time;
- Strengthening two Paralympic teams that are not yet competitive at the international level by improving their national team program and implementing a more systemic approach to high performance athlete development;
- Strengthening the development systems of the two currently targeted summer Olympic teams to generate improved and sustained results; and
- Strengthening the high performance athlete development systems and athlete pool size of the five currently targeted summer Paralympic Teams.

Paralympic Sport

Significant new Government of Canada funding contained in Budget 2010 has provided the CPC with the opportunity to create an ambitious strategic plan aimed at developing a sustainable world-class Paralympic sport system and enhancing performance at the Paralympic Games. The challenge moving forward is to expand, strengthen and better align the overall Paralympic sport system with a focus on addressing the gaps at the P/T level. Additionally, there is an ongoing need to ensure that high performance facilities and equipment meet the needs of Paralympic athletes and their sports.

Long Term Athlete Development

Long term athlete development (LTAD) focuses on the general framework of athlete development, with special reference to growth, maturation and development. Sport Canada's vision for CS4L and LTAD is that all Canadians have the necessary competencies to experience a positive life-long sport experience and excel in sport in an integrated and sustainable sport system. For high performance sport this vision can be translated to mean:

- **More** – success at the highest levels of international competition;
- **Better** – quality programs, development of talent, use of resources, and systematic development and retention of athletes;
- **Strategic** – use of resources and collaboration between sport and other sectors; and
- **Sustainable** – sport-specific athlete pathways and integrated sport development.

Sport Canada has provided funding for LTAD related work since 2005. A crucial driving force behind the advancement of CS4L and LTAD has been the LTAD Expert Group funded by Sport Canada. These experts have worked extensively across the country to assist at each stage of LTAD development. NSOs have been developing their sport-specific LTAD models since 2006 and this phase is nearing completion as all models for Sport Canada funded NSOs should be completed by 2011-12

Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) language has resounded across the country where uptake has been strong from not only the sport community, but also the health and the recreation communities where CS4L principles are being integrated as well. The commitment of the sport community to the CS4L/LTAD philosophy, together with the alignment of the strategic plans and implementation activities of Sport Canada and P/T governments, lays the foundation for the paradigm shift that is needed for Canada to have an effective and successful sport system. The challenge moving forward for organizations at all levels of the sport system, including the Paralympic sport system, will be to implement the system and program changes called for in their LTAD models.

Provincial/Territorial Investment in High Performance Sport

In recent years, there has been substantial national and provincial/territorial investment in infrastructure projects related to high performance. For example, the Province of Alberta contributed \$69 million to the WinSport Canada development that will house the Canadian Sport Institute Calgary and build upon the high performance assets already present in the Calgary area. The provinces of Quebec and British Columbia have also committed significant funds to high performance sport facilities. In addition, there has been a substantial increase in investment toward high performance programming at the P/T level. Ontario and British Columbia have been especially proactive in sport investments over the past 3 years. In other areas, such as the Atlantic Provinces, investment in high performance sport at the provincial level is at an all time high. The availability of appropriate funding and the alignment of athlete development pathways throughout the sport development continuum, including those for athletes with a disability, continue to be challenges at both the P/T and national levels.

Canadian Sport Centres

The network of Canadian Sport Centres (CSC) continues to play a key role in providing Canadian high performance athletes and coaches with sport science, sport medicine and life services in support of their high performance sport goals. These Centres are jointly funded by Sport Canada, provincial governments and the private sector. To further improve the delivery of services, work is underway for a number of CSCs to become Canadian Sport Institutes (CSI). The key ingredients of a CSI include dedicated sport and related training areas, performance staff and a critical mass of high performance athletes and coaches to develop an environment of excellence.

Direct Support to Athletes

Sport Canada and a number of P/T governments operate programs that provide direct support to high performance athletes. Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) annual budget of \$26M supports approximately 1,825 athletes per year from both targeted and non-targeted sports, up from \$15M in 2003-04. The AAP provides carded athletes with a monthly tax free living and training allowance, and supplemental support for tuition, deferred tuition and special needs. In 2008-09, P/T governments provided approximately \$21M in direct support to athletes.

In 2008 the COC introduced the Athlete Excellence Fund (AEF) to replace its Performance Recognition Support Program. The main change to the program was the provision of performance rewards for winning gold, silver or bronze medals at the Olympic Games - \$20,000, \$10,000 and \$5,000 respectively. The AEF provides performance based awards of \$5,000 during non-Olympic years. In 2008 the COC distributed \$515,000 to Olympic Summer medalists and \$1.7M to 2010 Olympic Winter medalists. For the 2009-12 period the COC has budgeted \$5.2M for the AEF.

Petro-Canada's Fuelling Athlete and Coaching Excellence program funds 50 developing Olympic and Paralympic athletes and their coaches each year with an \$8,000 grant towards their high performance sport expenses. Athletes supported are those who have not yet reached Sport Canada AAP carding status and the funds are intended to help the athlete achieve AAP support. Since 1988 over 2,300 athletes and their coaches have received \$7M in support through this program.

CanFund – Canadian Athletes Now provides grants of \$6,000 to active Olympic and Paralympic national team athletes. Since 1997 this fund has raised more than \$11M to support athletes in need of financial support.

Coach Development and Working Environment

Sport Canada provided \$13.4M to NSOs for coach salaries and benefits in 2009-10 including \$7.9M of enhanced excellence support to targeted sports, plus \$4.1M to the Coaching Association of Canada for coach education and training. Despite the 27% increase in funding for coach salaries from Sport Canada since 2006-07 there is an ongoing need to increase the number of full-time world-class coaches working in high performance sport and to improve their working conditions, including professional development for high performance coaches, as well as high performance directors and other technical staff. NSOs continue to be challenged with ensuring that sufficient capacity exists within their organization to properly run their high performance program.

NSO Governance and Organizational Capacity

Strong and effective NSO governance structures are critical to the effective operation of high performance programs. Sport Canada, the COC and other partners are actively involved with experts in this area to design and deliver initiatives that will allow NSOs to strengthen their approaches to governance.

Hosting of the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games

The hosting of the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games in Toronto will have many positive impacts for high performance sport in Toronto and surrounding municipalities, particularly in the area of sport facility legacies. Many existing facilities will be renovated and upgraded, while much needed world class facilities will be built for track cycling, soccer, athletics and the aquatic sports. The University of Toronto Scarborough campus will also be the future home of the proposed Canadian Sport Institute Ontario. From a sport development perspective, the 2015 Games also provide the opportunity to build high performance capacity and expertise, as well as the opportunity for some athletes and team sports to qualify for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Canadian Pride and the 2010 Winter Games

The Vancouver/Whistler Winter Games had a galvanizing effect on key high performance sport stakeholders and Canadians in general. Throughout the Games sport

excellence was celebrated and valued. A Harris-Decima poll taken at the end of the Olympic Games indicated that that 99% of the Canadians polled were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the performance of Canada’s athletes. With respect to this result the lead pollster opined “I can’t remember a time when as many Canadians felt so good about the same thing at the same time”. The challenge going forward is to maintain this visibility for all of high performance sport.