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CSP RENEWAL

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This environmental scan and summary report identifies potential barriers and issues impacting the Canadian sport landscape over the next decade as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The scan includes Pan-Canadian and international COVID-19 related policies, strategies, research and other documents found online.

There is a paucity of research and resources that address the *future* of sport participation as a result of COVID-19; the majority of the documents found (including those on the sites of the NSOs, a sample of PSOs and LSOs, and CPRA's *The Bench*) focus on how sport and recreation organizations have reacted to the pandemic, first implementing public health measures, and then, carrying out re-opening protocols for facilities and programs, as restrictions were lifted. Despite the paucity of literature and other documentation related to the barriers and issues impacting the Canadian sport landscape over the next decade, there are conversations happening about the need and the opportunity for the sport and recreation sector to “build back better”. Further, there is research and other projects just underway to identify and address these issues. These documents and conversations reveal a desire to use this “pause” as an opportunity to seek information about the issues and address these challenges and barriers.

Emergent Themes

A number of themes emerged through the environmental scan. They were consistent with many of the priority themes identified by Goss Gilroy, Inc. in the Summative Evaluation of the Canadian Sport Policy (CSP) 2.0 as well as those identified by the PIM work group, and the findings from the *Canadian Sport Policy Renewal Delphi Survey Results* (Dec. 18, 2020) presented by SIRC.

Overwhelmingly, one of the main themes centred around equity and the fact that while inequity in sport always existed, the issue was brought to the fore, and exacerbated, by the pandemic. While inequity is widespread to many individuals and systems, socio-economic status is the strongest determinant of health and participation in recreational sport and physical activity. As well, many of the articles identified women and girls and race as two areas that must be immediately addressed.

A second compelling theme underscored the need to promote physical activity as essential for maintaining and improving physical and mental health. Despite initial declines in physical activity levels overall, people began to move outdoors, and into nature, to engage in unstructured physical activity and sport opportunities. Being active at home and through the use of technology were also found to be significant trends.

Of course, the move to unstructured activity outdoors and at home seem to be a logical shift with sport and recreation unavailable. However, a number of papers noted that these trends may be here to stay, thus illuminating a theme related to re-imagining sport. Some reasons for this include families having less income to pay for sport, fear that sport experiences may be an ongoing source of infection, and a realized appreciation and enjoyment of more family time, stemming from a slower pace from not having multiple commitments. Further, from within the sector, there is a growing call to strike a balance between sport for all (community and recreational sport and physical activity) and high-performance sport, with a

funding model that aligns. This would also help in terms of moving toward a more equitable and inclusive sport system.

Infrastructure will be a major consideration in the future, both from the standpoint of having to deal with aging facilities (also a priority pre-COVID-19) to, in a post-pandemic world, having to build new or retrofit facilities, parks, trails, etc., in order to put measures in place to guard against and/or manage future pandemics. Examples include widening common spaces and hallways, improving air quality systems, managing pinch points, and accommodating new disease deterrence procedures (e.g., hygiene and cleaning as mandated by public health). Both indoor and outdoor spaces and places will also have to ensure accessibility and inclusion to all community members (e.g., disability, gender, age), and manage the environmental impact. A renewed focus on the importance of outdoor spaces will also require attention and funding.

COVID-19 has put extreme financial pressure on sport and recreation organizations. The impact of this financial stress may cause many organizations to scale down their operations or cease them all together. Sport Tourism will also be affected as well as a number of other associated businesses. Some sports, particularly those played indoors and in teams may be more subject to financial stress and future hardship than individual sports played outside (e.g., golf, tennis, cross-country skiing). Major games will suffer similar losses as professional sport due to the cancellation of major games, reduced spectators, lost retail, and diminished sponsorships. Costs at major games and sporting events will increase due to more strict health and safety measures.

Other themes that came to light were the need to expand and enhance partnerships and collaborations, the importance of having Risk Management plans in place, and the importance of having a robust national surveillance and monitoring system in place.

Although outside the scope of this environmental scan, one other major theme that arose was that of climate change. Areas for consideration include how to minimize the carbon footprint as a result of major sporting events, large stadiums built for tournaments but not always used afterwards, carbon emissions from fan and participant travel, energy use, catering, and food waste. Climate change is also impacting sport including damage to playing surfaces due to extreme temperatures, drought, flooding; building damage as a result of violent storms, coastal erosion affecting sport properties, warmer winters and lack of snow threatening ski resorts, heat waves forcing changes to sport events, and heat exhaustion affecting payers and spectators, to list a few.

Finally, as Sport Canada, with the sector, begins to consider the CSP 3.0, two seminal documents must factor into the discussions: the Sustainable Development Goals and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action. Also worthy of consideration are Sport New Zealand's *2020-2021 Strategic Priorities*, Sport England's *Uniting the Movement* strategy and some emerging work in Canada including CPRA's *ReImagine RREC project*.

Conclusion

A number of excellent documents have been written that can serve Sport Canada in the development of the CSP 3.0. The vast majority of the documents were produced by international organizations, so it behooves us to consider the findings, and build on the information to create a “think piece” in a Canadian context. What is certain is that, whether found in the data or through anecdotal stories, physical activity, recreation and sport are important for Canada’s recovery – economically and from a physical and mental health point of perspective, and must insert themselves into agendas, strategies and policies across government and non-government agencies and sectors. There has never been a more opportune time for sport to contribute to the health and wellbeing of Canada, and the world.

Introduction

This report presents the findings of an environmental scan, the purpose of which was to identify potential barriers and issues impacting the Canadian sport landscape over the next decade as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This scan will serve as a companion document to the Summative Evaluation (*Evaluation of the Canadian Sport Policy 2012*) currently underway for Sport Canada. While the Summative Evaluation provides information to determine the impact and results of the Canadian Sport Policy (CSP) 2.0, this environmental scan will consider the future circumstances related to the five goals of the CSP 2.0 and the considerations for the development of CSP 3.0.

Project methods

The environmental scan sought to identify future-focused Pan-Canadian and international COVID-19 related policies, strategies, research and other documents, and literature found through an online search as well as a review of the Sport Canada COVID environmental scan repositior.

A companion document to the environmental scan will be the results of data mining of existing surveys conducted by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI), to follow in a separate report.

Environmental Scan Findings

First and foremost, there is a paucity of research and documents that address the future of sport participation as a result of COVID-19. The most often identified challenges were related to professional sport in the context of bringing fans back to live games or competitions and the financial burden that will result. Some of these barriers and issues will translate into issues that could affect high performance sport, particularly related to major games. Issues related to participation and recreational sport were identified primarily in the Sport for Development sector and were international in scope.

The vast majority of the documents found indicated that the priorities of the sport and recreation sector have been, unsurprisingly, reactive, focusing on current issues related to, first, implementing public health measures, including ceasing program delivery and closing facilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic and then, working towards re-opening protocols for facilities and programs, as restrictions were lifted.

National, Provincial/Territorial and Local Sport Organizations

A search conducted of all of the recognized National Sport Organizations (NSOs) found that the vast majority addressed COVID-19 in the “here and now” and “return to play” contexts. Fairly comprehensive in nature, documents provided information about COVID-19 and how to protect athletes, coaches and officials from the virus. As provinces and territories moved to ease lockdown restrictions during the first wave, the emphasis seemed to move to establishing guidelines for a safe return to practice/training and competition. Many of the sport websites continue to focus on re-opening and have updated the information over the course of the year (2020-2021). As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, it is expected that updates will continue to focus on new public health measures being announced, with the current focus being on the new variants identified throughout the country.

A small sample of Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSOs) and Local Sport Organizations (LSOs) websites were identified and of those analyzed, it was determined that many drew on the information provided at the NSO level. However, most also created their own resources, presumably to reflect the different approaches and public health advice in each province and territory, as well as the various (and often confusing) public health / government guidelines in different jurisdictions. Own the Podium (OTP) also issued a regular update informing stakeholders about general COVID-19 information (e.g., vaccines, travel advisories, COVID-19 screen)

Recreation

Rather than issue a national directive related to COVID-19 safety practices and re-opening advice, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) led an effort to collect and share practices from sport, recreation and parks providers across Canada and internationally. Housed on their new platform, *The Bench* (<https://thebenchcpa.ca/index.html>), resources continue to be shared, with more being added. As the main provider of sport facilities, and as provinces and territories moved to ease lockdown restrictions during the first wave, CPRA hosted six webinars over a seven-week period in June and July 2020 for recreation and sport practitioners to share and learn about re-opening practices in a number of different facilities (trials, parks, playgrounds, multi-sport facilities, arenas and aquatic facilities).

Literature Review

A cursory review of the literature (including white and grey literature) found that the vast majority of research studies, to date, have focused on the pandemic's impact, and subsequent government and public health actions, in terms of physical activity levels (lower), the physical and mental health of citizens (declining), the athletes' ability to train (interrupted but continuing), and the financial impacts to the sport and recreation sectors as a result of closing down (significant).

Seminal Documents

A cursory search for international sport policies was conducted. Of those found, Sport England (released January 2021) and Sport New Zealand (2020-2021 Sport NZ's Response to Covid-19) address COVID-19 in an in-depth way and provide a number of lessons for Canada as it creates the CSP 3.0 (both with and without COVID-19 as a focus). Sport Scotland also provided an interim plan to address COVID-19. Sport Australia's strategy (2018; looks to 2030) and the USA's National Youth Sports Strategy (2019) are among the newest strategies but do not include an amended or interim report to address COVID-19. Three documents that will be critical for Sport Canada to consider and that are reflected in this report are the *Sustainable Development Goals* (including the Framework for Covid-19 Recovery), *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy*, and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*.

Though, as noted above, there is a paucity of literature and other documentation related to the barriers and issues impacting the Canadian sport landscape over the next decade, there are, indeed, conversations happening about the need and the opportunity for the sport and recreation sector to "build back better". Further, there is research and other projects just underway to identify and address these issues. These documents and conversations reveal a desire to use this "pause" as an opportunity to seek information

about the issues and address these challenges and barriers. What documents do exist seem to support the conversations happening in the sector and those outlined in the report provided by SIRC.

This report will present findings from resources that specifically considered and described future issues and challenges for sport, as well as documents from which future considerations could be gleaned. It seems a likely next step is to continue to seek out this information, as much of the work is just beginning, and will continue to emerge in the coming months. This exercise may have been just a bit ahead of its time.

Emergent Themes

Although the initial intent in presenting the findings was to do so by CSP goal and the themes identified by Goss Gilroy, the scarcity of information dictates that the easiest way to present the information is by sharing the **emergent themes** found in the environmental scan. It is important to note, however, that all of the themes found were consistent with many of the priority themes as identified by Goss Gilroy, Inc., and the PIM work group, and the findings from the *Canadian Sport Policy Renewal Delphi Survey Results* (Dec. 18, 2020) presented by SIRC. It should also be noted that many of the themes support, align and/or cross over into each other.

Equity

The pandemic highlighted the overall issue of (in)equity in many sectors and aspects of society. Equity was an overwhelming theme that emerged from the findings in terms of participation in sport, physical activity and recreation. Consistently, the literature highlighted the issue and implored sport leaders and governments, parents and participants to use the current pause on sport to consider the ways in which to make sport more equitable going forward.

One report from the Centre for Sport Policy Studies, *The Implications of COVID -19 for Community Sport and Sport for Development*¹ emphasizes that when it comes to 'building back better', "... the overarching theme is equity and inclusion. In other words, 'better' is generally being taken to mean more opportunity to participate for more people. To emerge stronger from this crisis, it is necessary to acknowledge and address the inherent inequalities in sports that discriminate on the basis of body, gender, sexuality, age, ability, caste, race, tribe, location class and religion. In many ways, this concern for equity and inclusion is a damning critique of the current sport systems in many countries, which is widely seen as inequitable and exclusive."

The report goes on to say that socio-economic status is the strongest determinant of health and the strongest determinant of participation in recreational sport and physical activity. As a result of government funding cuts over the years, freely available sport has been replaced by public, private and the NGO sectors programs requiring payment.

In both the Canadian and international literature, two areas of inequity were also consistently identified:

Women and Girls

Women and girls have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic due to gender inequality (e.g., being the main providers of child care and home-schooling, loss of jobs and/or wages, being on the front lines as essential workers and in harm's way). Many of the same factors have contributed to barriers to women and girls to be active and involved in sport. While many of these barriers existed before the pandemic, they are exacerbated as a result of it.

Among the resources found, the Policy Brief *COVID 19, Women, Girls and Sport: Build Back Better*² warns that the existing gaps between women/girls and men/boys throughout the continuum of sport may widen “if governments, sport organizations, sponsors, civil society, athletes, media and UN agencies do not put women and girls at the centre and address their specific needs in response and recovery plans.” Informed by the Sports for Gender Equality Framework, a multi-stakeholder coalition launched by UN Women and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in March to advance gender equality, the document highlights five key areas of focus (leadership, Gender-Based Violence, Economic Opportunities, Media Participation and Representation, and Girls' Participation in Sport) and provides a number of recommendations.

Moving forward, it is clear that sport must ‘build back better’ by applying a gender equity lens to all planning, implementation, investment and policy development. The voices of girls and women must be heard in the recovery phase of the pandemic and going forward, in order to maintain the advances made to date, and further the agenda. This is important not only for athletes but also administrators, coaches, officials, and medical personnel.

Race

The Black Lives Matter movement has had a significant impact on sport, with the issue prominently raised by pro sport. However, recreation, community sport and high-performance sport all have an opportunity to address anti-black racism and issues of equity related to BIPOC communities. As noted by the US National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA), the United Nations, the IOC and others, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed inequality in all aspects of our society. Recreation and sport are not immune. Black communities have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Moving forward, investments in recreation and sport programs, facilities, parks and other community programs must be made based on eliminating racism, which, at its core, seeks to address inequality. Sport must take a lead role in addressing racism at all levels and can begin by expecting that all funded sport organizations develop a plan to address racism that includes building understanding of the issues (e.g., implicit bias training), that maps out concrete actions to address racism, and that involves all of the people and positions that make up the sport experience (administrators, coaches, officials, parents, players and athletes).

An interesting issue identified as a result of the release of the *Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA, 2018)*³ stemmed from the purpose of the plan, which was “to ensure that all people have access to safe and enabling environments and to diverse opportunities to be physically active in their daily lives,

as a means of improving individual and community health and contributing to the social, cultural and economic development of all nations.” However, given that a number of people do not have access to these environments, the term ‘physical activity insecurity’ was created and raised the issue as one related to equity and human rights.

“The role of the sporting community in promoting social inclusion and solidarity and in combating negative stereotypes and abuse, including by speaking out against discriminatory and harmful behavior, is therefore especially needed at this time. Beyond advocacy, sport for development actors are also highly encouraged to embrace the human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality, as well as provisions contained in relevant human rights instruments regarding the right to play, leisure and sport, indigenous and traditional sport and games, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and sport for well-being; and to promote sports interventions as means to foster social inclusion, social cohesion, protection and skills development. Further to this, access to sport should be increasingly considered and integrated as a mean to enhance and complement efforts to mitigate and prevent the generation of conditions conducive to violent extremism in all of its forms. In this endeavour, proper attention should be given to ensure that sport and its values are used and tailored to meet the specific needs of each beneficiary community and demographic.”⁴

Sport, going forward, must seize the opportunity to ensure that, in all its forms (i.e., recreational to high performance), it is accessible to **all** citizens irrespective of gender, ability, income, age, geographical location, culture, citizenship, goals (i.e., desire to participate or excel).

Physical Activity and the Focus on Physical and Mental Health

Another very strong theme was the importance of physical activity and its contribution to physical and mental health, with an emphasis on mental health. A number of sub-themes emerged that should be considered in the CSP 3.0.

- (i) *Physical activity as “essential”.* When recreation centres were closed and sport was cancelled, the benefits of unstructured activity to support physical and mental health gained more attention. Although early Canadian and international studies found that physical activity levels declined during the first wave, which may have been, in part, due to public health restrictions and inconsistent (or incorrect) messaging about being active outside, people, on their own accord and at the (eventual) urging of community leaders and public health experts, found other ways to be active through unstructured physical activities. During the second wave, and the subsequent implementation of public health measures, physical activity was deemed essential, and, therefore, encouraged despite the stay-at-home orders. Local governments even created space for people to walk and cycle more easily and safely by closing down streets for walking and cycling. A number of both Canadian and international reports recommended an increased priority on physical education and activity in schools (in-person and during online teaching) as a means to improve physical and mental health.

- (ii) *Physical activity outdoors and in nature.* As indoor facilities closed down, a growing number of people moved outdoors to be active. Activities such as walking, hiking, cycling and cross-country skiing gained new popularity. Other outdoor sports such as golf, tennis and pickle ball also gained popularity for their ability to be done in a socially distanced way and outdoors. Being active outdoors, and particularly in places of nature, provided physical benefits but also an opportunity to combat the social isolation and improve mental health. According to a national survey⁵ of children and youth conducted after the first wave, for the majority of children and youth, outdoor activities declined, but some children reported spending more time walking/biking or playing outdoors than before. A higher proportion of children and youth with increased outdoor activities were meeting the physical activity recommendations and overall 24-hour movement guidelines. Two studies, including one from UBC⁶ found that after a decline in physical activity during the first six weeks of the pandemic, moderate-to-vigorous physical activity rebounded. However, lighter and more incidental physical activity did not, which could have “significant and long-term implications for physical and mental health.” According to sportanddev⁷, this trend will continue as lockdowns end given that outdoor activity poses fewer risks than indoor sport. Moving more activities outdoors may be the new trend.
- (iii) *Physical activity at home and virtually.* A number of resources identified in the environmental scan highlighted ways that fitness professionals, sport organizations, and local governments supported their clients, players and citizens to engage in physical activity opportunities. They were vast and varied, including home exercise that involved fitness routines using props found in one’s home, online instruction (live streaming and videos, connected fitness equipment), and neighbourhood fitness classes on the street and from balconies. A study by Garmin⁸ found that (downhill) skiing and golf had been replaced with virtual cycling and indoor workouts to maintain and exceed physical activity levels prior to the pandemic.

Related to this is the issue of **technology**. Resources in the environmental scan raised issues from the benefits, as outlined above, to the challenges resulting from inequity (“digital poverty”), when some individuals and some communities across Canada have limited to no access to internet services. For people with disabilities, technology has provided more opportunities to participate in home exercise and with coaches and teachers and coaches and sport professionals may have had opportunities for professional development in the area of inclusion, among others⁹. One innovation put forward as an opportunity to address equity in youth sports is the “design and utilization of gamified e-training”, that while it would never replace a face-to-face coaching experience, may help those in underserved communities benefit from having access to quality coaching, training routines and social connections¹⁰.

Dr. John Cairney¹¹ predicts that hybrid models – in-person and digital modes of physical activity and sport delivery – will continue into the future. He cites the fact that many women and girls prefer working out at home than going to the gym. Further, many companies, such as Peleton and Nike have capitalized on online activities and have stayed connected to

consumers. Sport, physical activity and recreation can do the same and increase their reach geographically and to new audiences, particularly underserved populations. E-sports have and will enjoy continued popularity.

- (iv) *Physical activity around home.* A number of resources identified that people reported valuing the time spent with family through physical activity and unstructured play and sport, as well as with neighbours, and being close to home in their neighbourhoods and communities. For example, Sport England reported¹² that COVID-19 has made the world a much smaller place for many, and as a result, community and place has come to matter more as it built strong connectivity. People feel safe in their communities and have discovered what their communities have to offer. “People are increasingly identifying their 'place' as their immediate streets or neighbourhood, rather than the town or city in which they live. Communities are noticing place more, and there's a greater need for hyper-local working to find solutions to issues such as mental health and active travel.” Questions that sport and physical activity leaders will have to answer include how does this notion of place influence physical activity and sport habits? How do we ensure parks and outdoor spaces remain accessible and safe? Some reports have also found that active transportation has increased (cycling and walking) as people avoid close contact from using public transportation. Another trend, according to sportanddev⁷ is the offering of free activities to support people who have lost income and to encourage more physical activity and take the opportunity to introduce people to sport.

This finding supports the next theme that gives greater emphasis to ensuring that physical activity plays a greater role in sport policy.

Re-imagining Sport

In a study done by the Centre for Sport Policy Studies¹, for the social policy development section of the Commonwealth Secretariat in the UK, they point out that much attention has been focused on professional and international sport (e.g., the postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics), with much less attention being paid to the effects on community sport and recreation, despite the evidence that connects recreational physical activity to the prevention, management and treatment of physical and mental illness, among its many other benefits. They go on to argue that there needs to be “a balance between sport for all, which includes community sports and recreational physical activity, and high-performance sport – and the highly competitive development systems that lead to high performance and professional sport. The latter absorbs massive public resources in many countries – government funding, facilities and equipment, coaches and instructors, and so on. By some estimates, the proportion of government funding in some countries is 90 per cent to high-performance sport and 10 per cent to sport for all. As a significant public health measure, a shift to 50-50 funding would go a long way toward helping to establish equitable and inclusive sport for all.”

Touching on aspects of inequity and the financial implications that sport will need to face as a result of COVID-19, the Changing the Game project¹³ (US) suggests that parents may not want to return their

children to the current system of sport. They cite more family time, rested kids (from not rushing to many sports and/or many practices and games for one sport), kids enjoying other pursuits and unstructured play on their own and with siblings, the lack of desire to travel to other areas to compete, and financial hardship as reasons for not returning to sport in its current form. “Parents and kids have rediscovered free play, family activities and outdoor sports ... Instead of sorting the weak from the strong when they’re 6 or 7 years old, (can we) promote more low-cost, local activity that’s more inclusive and more affordable for families, at least through grade school”. Suggestions include mandatory coach education and development; mandatory parent engagement and development; creative programming that includes more local play and small-sided games; delay the desire for talent selection and separation; provide balance for families; transformational values and character development.

Due to the financial pressures that many families could face in the months and years ahead, membership retention is an area of concern for sport, particularly at the community and competitive level. Combined with some of the other findings, including parents reporting their and their children’s enjoyment of re-engaging in unstructured play and the slower pace of life, and their reticence to travel far from home, there is an opportunity to determine other ways to offer the sport experience to all ages.

The Centre for Sport Policy Studies¹ also suggests that there may be some practices that have occurred due to the pandemic. For example, parents and kids spending more time together may have involved sport-related activities, contributing to their greater appreciation of their child’s right to play and the role sport and physical activity plays in physical and mental health promotion, with the result being a new focus on health-promoting physical activity and sport for school-aged children). This also provides an opportunity to reflect on the current state of sport to ensure its safety as a place for children to participate or compete. “In the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts should be made to build back better sport for children. This includes ensuring that all organised sport for children has implemented safeguarding policies and procedures; prioritises physical and mental well-being; promotes inclusiveness; and fully respects and protects the rights of children.”

A report to the European Commission, *Mapping study on the intergenerational dimension of sport*¹⁴, which consisted of a literature review and the identification of 92 projects taking place, highlighted a number of benefits resulting from intergenerational sport opportunities. The benefits were mainly categorized into mental and physical wellbeing, individual development and social development. Intergenerational programs changed attitudes and perceptions and increased positive stereotypes of each of the age groups and fostered social and community cohesion. In an analysis of the 92 projects, the study found that the majority of the initiatives were focused on increasing the overall level of participation in sport and physical activities or promoting intergenerational learning through different types of activities, including sport.

From *Team sport in a covid-19 world. A catastrophe-in-waiting, or a disguised opportunity to evolve and contribute further to population health?*¹⁵, this article explores, in light of decreasing sport participation numbers, whether or not sport is losing touch with the general population, or are people simply turning to non-traditional sports and individual activities? The articles argues that people turn away from

traditional sport for a number of reasons including not being fit enough to participate, a lack of time, poor accessibility, cost and fear of injury. Perhaps it is time to address these challenges. One example of a sport that made changes to their sport was rugby. New Zealand Rugby and the Rugby Football Union made significant changes to school and club rugby such as team size, game-length, and the degree of contact, with more of a focus on non-contact rugby so players can “enjoy the game without the usual commitment, nor risk of injury”. Other examples of changing the rules include walking and mixed-sex versions of different team sports in order to address the barriers noted above and to be seen as sports ‘for life’, similar to golf and tennis. The Danish Football Association has also introduced recreational football training concepts for untrained women, as well as for patients with prostate cancer and cardiovascular diseases. Given the flexibility and innovation that has occurred in order to deal with the challenges of the pandemic, sport organizations must rely on that same spirit of innovation to address key concerns related to the many of the pre-COVID barriers identified, such as different membership options, activity times, and formats of sports available to the wider population, injury prevention programs, and more community participation, which could build a wider support-base as a result.

A number of national sport strategies, including those newly released by Sport England¹⁶ and Sport New Zealand¹⁷, include a significant emphasis on physical activity and unstructured play as part of their strategies. The National Youth Sports Strategy¹⁸ (2019) from the USA, outlines a number of barriers (and this is prior to COVID-19) to youth engaging in sport. They highlight: lack of access to play spaces, cost, social factors, lack of interest or knowledge, time and competing demands; barriers to sustained participation: cost, lack of enjoyment, lack of physical literacy, pressure from others, physical factors, stress and burnout, time constraints and other priorities

The Centre for Sport Policy Studies¹, in its report to the Commonwealth, referred to the ‘two solitudes’ – “on the one hand sport for all, which includes community sport and recreational physical activity; and, on the other hand, high-performance sport and the highly competitive development systems that lead to professional sport. The latter absorbs massive public resources in many countries – government funding, facilities and equipment, coaches and instructors, and so on. By some estimates, the proportion of government funding in some countries is 90 per cent to high performance sport (‘sport for the few’) and 10 per cent to ‘sport for all’. As a significant public health measure, a shift to 50-50 funding would go a long way towards helping establish equitable and inclusive sport for all.”

In a year when COVID-19 has disrupted community sport and dried-up club revenue streams from registrations, grants and sponsorships, some experts herald more focus on inclusion and diversity as a potential lifeline ... too often sports administrators get caught up in the ‘currency’ of high-performance success or top line revenue. Yet pandemic lockdowns have instead reinforced just how much more important sport is to what she calls ‘internal currencies’—mental and physical health.¹⁹

Infrastructure

Sport in the future, as in the past, requires safe infrastructure. For several years, sport and recreation leaders have advocated for government funding to support the improvement of existing facilities, as well as the building of new facilities to replace aging infrastructure. According to CPRA, “prior to COVID-19, the capital funding requirements of the parks and recreation sector across Canada were in desperate need of additional investments due to the physical deterioration of existing community sport and recreation infrastructure and the increased but unfulfilled need for new sport and recreation infrastructure to a growing, aging and diversifying population. The 2019 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card indicates that over a third of all recreation facilities across Canada are in ‘fair’ condition or worse and that a large proportion of facilities are over 50 years old. It also states that the expected lifespan of these types of facilities and spaces is between 20-40 years thus rendering many operating beyond their expected lifespan.”²⁰ Those calls are repeated in the findings from the environmental scan. In the post-pandemic world, community sport and recreation infrastructure will have to put measures in place to guard against and/or manage future pandemics including widening common spaces and hallways, improving air quality systems, managing pinch points, and accommodating new disease deterrence procedures (e.g., hygiene and cleaning as mandated by public health).

Beyond the pandemic, consideration for facilities must account for the growing calls of organizations such as the IOC and United Nations for sport to do its part in meeting climate change objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals. Facility design and operation play a big role in meeting climate change commitments.

Finally, building outdoor spaces must attract all members of the community by ensuring the spaces are accessible and safe. Safety refers to conveying a sense of welcome and belongingness, safe from becoming injured (as much as possible) and the ability to safely physically distance from others. This includes widening sidewalks and trails so people can walk, run, cycle, wheel, and participate in other forms of activity with the space they need to feel safe, ensuring spaces are welcoming to all members of the community. Donnelly, et al (The Centre for Sport and Human Rights)¹ urge ministries of sport and other government officials to ensure that the innovations and ideas that have been borne from the pandemic, remain in place as part of a permanent means to get people active. CPRA has called up governments to invest in community sport and recreation infrastructure in order to “provide an economic stimulus to communities but also enhance a service that Canadians have learned to appreciate even more during the pandemic.” In the *National survey of children and youth shows COVID-19 restrictions linked with adverse behaviours* report⁵, it was found that living in an apartment building was a potential deterrent to being outdoors, while low dwelling density possibly encouraged these active behaviours. If youth had access to parks in high-density neighbourhoods, they were more likely to be active outdoors.

According to the US National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA)²¹, “As change piles upon change, there is one outcome that is increasingly apparent: parks and recreation will change forever. Because of the pandemic, public parks have become more important to people and more essential to our health and well-being than perhaps at any time before this pernicious disease threatened our health and freedoms. This pandemic hits us at every level — financial, health, economic, even emotional. One thing it has shown

us is how important parks are to every walk of life. Parks are not just ‘nice to have,’ they are ‘must have.’ They are critical infrastructure and vital to the public.” Further, “Pandemic is demonstrating that community-oriented public systems that are grounded in the needs of local communities and neighborhoods, such as public parks and recreation, will be strengthened rather than fractured by the pandemic.”

It would be important for the sport community to influence urban planning practices that promote healthy and resilient communities¹. Parks, trails and the outdoors should be positioned as a strategy to help residents endure the social and physical restrictions brought on by COVID-19 and future pandemics.²²

“Residents are increasingly looking to parks and trails as beacons of hope, places for restoration and spaces where they can escape from pressures and fears, even if just for a short time. It is critical that residents can access these spaces and places at a time when they most need them.”²²

Financial Implications

Unsurprisingly, financial implications were an issue at all levels of sport, particularly for professional sport. According to Cheri Bradish and Norm O’Reilly in an article in the Toronto Star²³, collective spending on amateur sport in Ontario has been approximately \$12 billion annually, with households spending over \$3,500 each year on sport-related activities. The losses to sport through tournaments, registrations, coaching and membership fees, not to mention the impact of the costs associated with the deterioration of physical and mental health will be significant. Of 910 Ontario-based sports organizations, 65% are were closed in June, while 74% anticipated a decrease in program activity after a safe return, with 40% expecting at least a 50 percent loss in revenues upon return. This does not account for the second wave of the pandemic and future shutdowns. According to Bradish and O’Reilly, the pandemic will change the landscape of youth sport in the months, and likely years to come and the reach will be wide including to sport tourism, the impact on organizations and sponsors. In the US, travel sports are estimated to be a \$19 billion industry. Canada also relies on competitive team travel to drive local tourism. However, there may be a push from public health, and parents, to decrease travel and play locally as per many of the findings presented above. There is the potential for some sports to disappear, while others, where there is inherent physical distancing such as golf, tennis and others, may be impacted less.

Professional sport has lost, and will continue to lose billions of dollars (estimated at up to \$92.6K per minute in the US as per Emsi, a labour market data company) based on job losses of 28 sport occupations due to the disruption of games and major events.²⁴ Though outside the scope of this environmental scan, learnings from professional sport may be closely linked to major games which are feeling the financial burden from cancellations, reduced spectators, closure of retail outlets, diminished sponsorships, etc. Hosting events may also mean longer lines and staggered arrivals, the need for health checks upon entry, additional hygiene and sanitation measures, and limited freedom of movement. Inconvenience aside, this has the potential to drive up costs to see an event live. This will also impact tourism. For elite athletes, sponsorship money may be decreased and sport broadcasting will also feel the effects with fewer elite

and pro-sports being broadcast. However, events may look to reaching out to spectators virtually, where a hybrid of in-person and virtual spectators will exist.

According to *Resourcing the Sustainability and Recovery of the Sport Sector during the Coronavirus Pandemic*²⁵, a policy paper from The Commonwealth, the effect of the lockdown on sport will be many times more severe than the effect on the overall economy. A report from the EU (*Mapping Study on measuring the economic impact of COVID-19 on the sport sector in the EU*)¹⁴ suggests that sport is a very employment intensive sector compared to others, which aligns with the findings from Emsi. However, other areas that will contribute to significant financial pressure are closed stadia, cancellation of major sport events, sport clubs and facilities locked down (it is suggested that outdoor facilities will experience faster economic recovery than indoor ones), the closure of fitness studios/gyms (there is growing evidence, as noted in this report, that many will continue to be active at home or outside), goods and services (equipment, restaurants), sport injury sector. Organizations that took part in the EU study identified various other impacts of COVID-19 including lost revenues, cash flow difficulties, unemployment and insecure work, vulnerability of freelancers, athlete income (e.g., prize money and reduced sponsorships) and a loss of volunteers who are restricted to their homes. In order to tackle the challenges resulting from the financial losses, a number of considerations were suggested. Those applicable in a Canadian context include: building partnerships and enhancing coordination between sports and member states; embedding sport within other sectors to ensure sustainability, such as public health and the environment; continuing to present the evidence about the importance of sport (with an emphasis on the economic); supporting the coordination of re-scheduled sporting events; supporting the development of information sharing and dissemination across stakeholders; using and developing digital options as an integral element of existing sport offerings; and developing broader emergency preparedness plans.

From a recreation perspective, facilities across the country have closed. After the easing of restrictions last spring, some re-opened but many did not, choosing to hold off until the new year. And many, as was reported to CPRA, may never open again. Municipalities will continue to feel the financial impacts due to post-pandemic public health requirements that will require additional infrastructure investments and operational costs (adding to the current issue of aging infrastructure), a potential continued loss of revenue due to public fears about returning to facilities, physical distancing requirements, among others. There is concern that due to significant reductions in municipal budgets, recreation departments, despite their value to society, will not be re-funded immediately. According to the NRPA²¹, in the US, it took the recreation sector ten years to recover after the last recession, as opposed to other sectors that took one to two years to rebound.

On a positive note, according to a policy paper put forward by The Commonwealth²⁵, sport is very effective at increasing employment and can be used as a policy tool during recession to reverse the effects of economic decline. Research in the UK suggested that every £1 spent on sport generates £1.91 in health and social benefits, many of which benefit children and youth. The other challenges, notwithstanding (as noted in the themes above), sport is strongly associated with sectors such as tourism and accommodation. Sport and recreation play a key role in the health and well-being of our communities, citizens, climate, and reconciliation.

Given the potential shift in thinking re what ‘build back better’ might look like, sport must use this as an opportunity to re-build the system to address the many issues raised prior to COVID-19.

Themes to Note

Partnerships and Collaboration

In many of the resources found, the theme of working in partnership and collaborating with stakeholders, community members and decision-makers, was either explicitly discussed, or mentioned as a regular course of action. Partnerships and the need for collaboration went beyond working with those in the traditional physical activity, sport and recreation sector, but expanded to partnerships with education, private companies (to assist with local logistics in event implementation), and the health sector – health care, promotion and public health. Sport and recreation saw themselves as partners in the prevention of disease but also in providing assistance during a crisis and as a means to recovery.

Risk Management

Of course, the majority of articles found detailed how to minimize the risk of the spread of COVID-19 and re-open safely. However, there were also a few calls for clearer messaging, based on the science, from governments and public health and consistency across jurisdictions. One example shared from the Aspen Institute¹⁰ was the emphasis that teams must put on prevention efforts. A number of articles called on sport to ensure they have risk management plans, not only for future pandemics, but other potential catastrophic events (sport has been impacted, in the past, by other natural disasters such as volcanoes and other weather-related events). According to The Centre for Sport Policy Studies¹, few countries were prepared for the pandemic, especially in the area of community sport and sport for development. “The pandemic exposed the underfunding and neglect of physical education and community sport, which resulted in the sector being unable to serve as a significant source of resilience for country populations.” Further, the decline in participation will likely have a severe impact on physical and mental health, and the already lower levels of physical activity of women and girls. They call for countries to begin planning for future pandemics.

Surveillance and Monitoring

The need for a robust surveillance and monitoring system was raised in both the Canadian and international articles/resources. The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention have called for epidemiology and surveillance to monitor trends and inform programs. The Centre for Sport Policy Studies¹ recommends that there be an immediate strengthening of investments in community sport and Sport for Development as preventative health measures in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals and suggests that “a first step would be to implement ‘common indicators to measure the contribution of physical activity and sport to prioritized SDGs and targets. ... Governments should plan to fund, monitor and evaluate CS and S4D as essential components of national population health.” Finally, Kidd, et al. suggest collecting comprehensive, national-level data on sport and physical activity participation that includes analyses using social class, racial, ethnic and gender data, and data concerning age and disability.

Ensuring Integrity in Sport

A smaller theme noted through the environmental scan related to the importance of ensuring that the integrity of sport should be at the centre of efforts aimed at “recovering better” and, in so doing, will help to advance the Sustainable Development Goals and the contribution of sport to development and peace. The resource, *Recovering Better: Sport for Development and Peace*⁴ calls on governments, sport organizations and relevant stakeholders to tackle corruption and crime, good governance, inequalities and injustices. “Furthermore, to strengthen the protection of athletes and promote the ethics of sport, enhancing the integrity of sport requires implementation of commitments to anti-doping.”

Climate Change

Though slightly outside of the scope of this environmental scan related to COVID-19, climate change should be viewed as a significant issue that will both affect sport, recreation and physical activity and provide an opportunity for the sector to make an impact on. Areas for consideration include how to minimize the carbon footprint as a result of major sporting events, large stadiums built for tournaments but not always used afterwards, carbon emissions from fan and participant travel, energy use, catering (and food waste). Climate change is also impacting sport including damage to playing surfaces due to extreme temperatures, drought, flooding; building damage as a result of violent storms, coastal erosion affecting sport properties, warmer winters and lack of snow threatening ski resorts, heat waves forcing changes to sport events, and heat exhaustion affecting payers and spectators, to list a few.

The UN Climate Change’s Sports for Climate Action²⁶ initiative encourages sports bodies to reduce their carbon emissions but also to use sports to encourage members of the public to take action. This initiative aims at supporting and guiding sports actors in achieving global climate change goals. “The Sports for Climate Action Initiative will provide sports organizations with a forum where participants can pursue climate action in a consistent and mutually supportive fashion by learning from each other, disseminating good practices, lessons learned, developing new tools, and collaborating on areas of mutual interest. Participants in the Sports for Climate Action Initiative will commit to adhere to a set of five principles and incorporate them into strategies, policies and procedures, and mainstream them within the sports community, thus setting the stage for a wider dissemination of the message and long-term success.”

Considerations for Sport Canada in developing CSP 3.0

As well as the issues, challenges and considerations identified in the Emergent Themes, a number of seminal documents and newly released international strategies may provide some additional consideration in the development of the CSP 3.0.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)²⁷ are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals. In terms of where sport can make an impact, sport (including physical activity and recreation) contributes to almost **all** of the SDGs:

Goal 1: No Poverty

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being

Goal 4: Quality Education

Goal 5: Gender Equality

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Goal 13: Climate Action (and relates to goals 6, 14 and 15)

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Goal 17*: Partnerships

Three reports, *Recovering Better: Sport for Development and Peace. Reopening, Recovery and Resilience Post-COVID-19*⁴, *Sport for Development and Peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*²⁸, and *Measuring the contribution of sport to the SDGs*²⁹ outline the alignment between sport and SDGs.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission³⁰, with the purpose of advancing reconciliation in Canada, made 94 Calls to Action, of which five apply to sport. They are as follows:

87. We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.

88. We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous

Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.

89. We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples.

90. We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to, establishing:

- i. In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples.
- ii. An elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes.
- iii. Programs for coaches, trainers, and sports officials that are culturally relevant for Aboriginal peoples.
- iv. Anti-racism awareness and training programs.

91. We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events.

Sport Strategies: Sport New Zealand and Sport England

Though a number of sport strategies exist, both Sport New Zealand and Sport England have recently released new strategies. In both cases, they have taken into consideration the impact of COVID-19.

Sport New Zealand

Sport New Zealand's published 2020-2024 Strategic Plan was deferred in order to focus on the immediate and important needs created by COVID-19. In deferring the Strategic Plan Sport NZ issued [2020-2021 Strategic Priorities](#),¹⁷ an interim response to COVID-19, that is focused on the next twelve months in order to remain responsive to urgent needs, while monitoring the situation and using the opportunity to gain insight and understand what the future holds. The interim plan will focus on addressing inequities in the system. Further, Sport NZ has undertaken a Futures Project that "explores innovative new solutions and options to ensure the play, active recreation and sport system remains fit for purpose and sustainable into the future."

The following is an excerpt from their plan:

Sport NZ's vision is not just that the sector will recover and continue to contribute to the nation's economy and wellbeing, but that we will have the opportunity to re-imagine those aspects of the system that have

been sub-optimal in the past. While the initial focus is on supporting partners and protecting all the building blocks of a healthy system, there lies before us a sense that play, active recreation and sport has an even greater role than ever before in the future of vibrant communities. The Outcomes Framework demonstrates Sport NZ's value proposition under a wellbeing model. That is, how physical activity through play, active recreation and sport benefits wellbeing. Wellbeing is more important than ever. The pandemic and the highly uncertain economic outlook we now face will impact on all aspects of wellbeing and the four capitals. By 2032, we aim to achieve four long-term outcomes that contribute to wellbeing:

- Improved frequency, intensity, time and type of participation in play, active recreation and sport
- Enhanced experience of participants, supporters, volunteers and workforce
- Increased variety of culturally distinct pathways for tangata whenua and all New Zealanders
- Improved system that is capable, diverse, trusted and reflects the Te Tiriti O Waitangi and its principles of Partnership, Protection and Participation.

And we are aiming to impact five intermediate outcomes that replicate the socio-ecological model of behaviour:

1. Individual Factors (e.g., knowledge, confidence, motivation, competence)
2. Personal Relationships (e.g., family, friends, coaches, teachers)
3. Social and Cultural Norms (e.g., organisational practice, community structure, cultural background)
4. Physical environment (e.g., spaces and places, infrastructure access)
5. Policy (e.g., national regulations organisational policy)

2021- Targeted investment in other populations will be informed by evidence and insights as they become available. Early evidence and history shows that people who already face disadvantage and inequitable access to opportunities for play, active recreation and sport will be disproportionately negatively affected by the economic and social impacts of the pandemic. Our strategic focus on areas of deprivation and inequality remains valid.

Our stated areas of interest in play, active recreation, physical education and sport are enduring. The pandemic confirms the need and opportunity to continue shifting our balance, to do more in play and active recreation, as signalled in our original strategic plan.

One other resource to note from Sport New Zealand is *Think Piece Covid-19*.³¹ This resource, part of a series, presents a number of changes and trends most likely to impact the future of the play, active recreation and sport sector and approaches that can be taken to prepare for these situations. Based on an assessment of the longer-term implications from COVID-19 that are emerging, it highlights the implications for sport, physical activity and recreation and provides a summary of implications such as Creating of a new normal; Living with Social Distancing; Economic recession; Costs as a barrier; Mental health; Societal resilience; Transformed work will reshape leisure; and Mobility and Proximity behaviour. The Think Piece aligns very closely with the emergent trends identified in this paper.

Sport England

*Uniting the Movement*¹⁶ is Sport England's 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. One of the key pieces of their mission is tackling inequalities.

Vision: Imagine a nation of more equal, inclusive and connected communities. A country where people live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives.

Mission: We're here to invest in sport and physical activity to make it a normal part of life for everyone in England, regardless of who you are.

The strategy will tackle "five big issues":

1. Recover and Reinvent - Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people.
2. Connecting Communities - Focusing on sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together.
3. Positive experiences for children and young people - Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.
4. Connecting with Health and Wellbeing - Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.
5. Active Environments - Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

Recovering Better: A Compilation of Recommendations from the Literature

The following provides a number of recommendations that were collected from some of the resources found through the environmental scan.

The Future of Sport and Development (sportanddev)²²

Informed by 30 countries in six continents and representing NGOs, governments, intergovernmental organizations and sports, among their recommendations are:

- Build a more equitable and inclusive sport for development and sport sector
- Invest in grassroots sport and sport for development
- The need to change elite sport
- Focus on people and communities - not sport itself
- Unite different approaches and actors
- Make gender equality the priority
- Adapt and consider new delivery models
- Use sport to tackle mental health problems and trauma
- Invest in teaching, learning and research
- Turn challenges into opportunities

Sport in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic: towards an agenda for research in the sociology of sport³³

From the [European Journal for Sport and Society](#), the following excerpt outlines some of the questions we should be asking as we look to the future of sport.

1. What role will sport, exercise and physical activity play in the future? The first area that has piqued our sociological curiosity over the past months relates to the fundamental purpose of sport; who it is for, what counts as 'sport' (and physical activity and exercise), and how might this change over the forthcoming weeks, months and years. Questions about whether sport will even be possible in the forms and formats of the past will be central considerations, whilst new processes of re-sportization and de-sportization as new regulations on social distancing and civilised (or risk-averse) conduct could be key foci.
2. Will the organisational structure of sport change in response to the pandemic? It has already been highlighted elsewhere that the global shut-down or postponement of competitive sport at the elite levels is precluded on the notion that such 'mass gatherings' significantly exacerbate the risks of the spread of the virus because of the widespread networks they are based upon (Parnell et al., 2020). Some sources even discuss the end of globalisation per se, citing the combined effects of the virus, nationalist and populist trends in politics and environmental concerns (e.g., Bremmer, 2020). Such observations raise questions about the extent to which global sport will be viable in the future, requiring us to consider whether the continued globalisation of competitive sport can continue at a sustained pace, or whether new limits based around health parameters must be introduced to the movement of athletes on regular 'tours' or for international events. What's more, relatively little has been said about the impact of social distancing or isolation on sport at a more general, community-based or local level.
3. Will the inequalities highlighted by the pandemic begin to be addressed? Further trends have been observed that are linked to inequality, with some suggesting that the rates of infection are higher amongst populations less able to self-isolate due to financial concerns, including those on precarious contracts or who lack savings and who cannot simply 'pause' their working lives due to a lack of welfare support. Similar pressures also exist amongst those living in poverty or in physical living circumstances that make maintenance of social distance impossible (e.g., those who live in high-density housing). Similarly, those defined as 'essential workers' have also often been unable to maintain social distance due to their roles in healthcare, education, delivering goods or in food retail, for example, and healthcare workers in particular are apparently at extreme risk of infection in many countries. Moreover, several groups have largely been absent from the wider discourse about risk, including some of society's most marginalised groups such as the homeless, refugees or those stranded in migrant camps due to newly closed borders. Yet trends are beginning to emerge which suggest (rather predictably) that such groups are more likely to be negatively impacted than wealthier groups. What's more, we note that increases in ethnic discrimination have also been reported as a result of this pandemic, with some labelling COVID-19 the 'Chinese Virus'?
4. How will the lives of athletes and other participants in sport change, and what new considerations will inform teaching and coaching practice in the future? As noted above, there is little doubt that the everyday lives and practices of sports participants, not least athletes, have had to change,

pause or even cease as a result of the pandemic. For those that coach or teach sport, this has required a fundamental restructuring of the way in which we engage with and instruct sports participants. In turn, coaches are likely to have to address multiple key questions, such as how to monitor athletic performance, injury and other feedback about training due to the distance between coach and athlete (sometimes only possible due to the presence of the limited view provided by a webcam and computer screen). In sport, where technique and physical skills are paramount, this could limit the effectiveness of many kinds of coaching practice. Moreover, coaching programmes are also likely to have to change due the lack of proximity between coaches and athletes, leading to the substitution of technique-based coaching with strength and conditioning practices, for example. Similarly, the ability of coaches and teachers to ensure the development of togetherness and belonging within squads and teams is likely to be altered. This time away from the pitches, pools and tracks could also give coaches an opportunity to reflect on their practice, and engage with CPD or conversations with other coaches and practitioners across different sporting cultures and landscapes, which may lead to changes in coaching philosophies, behaviours and practices. be some way off. The experience of sport is also likely to have changed. It seems that due to the global lockdown and social distancing regulations, sport is increasingly experienced alone in quieter outdoor spaces, or else at home alone or in family groups with contact with others only through a camera and computer screen. Although convincing evidence is yet to develop, there are indications that the use of tracking technology, the rise of e-sports and online courses could become even more prevalent (e.g., Gerrish, 2020). It will be interesting to observe the extent to which the digitalisation of sport that started before the COVID-19 pandemic wins territory and takes up a larger share of the sport practices. The same applies to increasingly-encouraged individual 'sport' participation in the outdoors, which could eclipse the practice of group sports. Indeed, individual outdoor sports have growing popularity in Europe (Scheerder et al., 2015), and yet it will be interesting to see whether this upward trend is further encouraged by COVID-19 pandemic in the face of often contradictory advice in some countries to stay indoors. Whilst exercise in the natural environment is often assumed to be beneficial in many ways (e.g., Nielsen et al., 2016), the impact of reduced sociability in sport and exercise could also be a focus of sociological investigation. Similarly, the way in which the senses are experienced and utilised within sport is likely to have changed for many people; some senses are likely to become limited (such as smell and touch), creating a greater reliance upon sight and kinaesthesia, changing the ability of athletes, teachers and coaches to share feedback.

5. Will the virus result in the further exclusion or stigmatisation of 'risky' and marginalised groups? Much has been made of the notion that the virus 'does not discriminate,' and yet similarly much of the wider discourse surrounding the virus has focussed upon the heightened risk of mortality to several specific groups, such as older adults, pregnant women and those with 'underlying health problems' (some of which might be unrecognised prior to infection) (Jordan, 2020; Zhou et al., 2020). The response to this, according to some sources, is for some policymakers to socio-culturally construct their response to manage the virus as action to protect such groups by reducing their access and socialisation with other, less risky groups (the young and ostensibly healthy). This raises the questions about whether new forms of inequality in sport participation could be produced, reproduced or exacerbated. In other sport, exercise and physical activity

contexts it has been observed how the ‘othering’ of specific groups, such as older adults or those managing chronic can result in marginalization or segregation into age- or health-risk appropriate activities (e.g., Bangsbo et al. 2019; Evans & Crust, 2015; Tulle, 2008). For example, growing distinctions between the healthy and less healthy, between ‘clear’ groups and unknown ‘at risk’ groups could lead to new forms of established–outsider relations (see Elias & Scotson, 1994), especially where outsider groups lack social cohesion to challenge stigmatisation processes and internalise established beliefs concerning their vulnerability to infection. Furthermore, such threats are not limited to specific, isolated or ‘at risk’ groups. If close proximity between young and old, healthy and unhealthy or ‘high-risk’ and ‘low-risk’ groups becomes prohibited, will this lead to increased exclusion or segregation of such groups, and if so, where will the line be drawn between those who are ‘safe’ to participate with others and those who are not? Could this definition of risk extend to further stigmatise disabled groups through an extension of the medical model of disability? How will the costs and benefits of exclusion be weighed against one another, and who will decide on which costs are acceptable (i.e., what are acceptable costs to justify exclusion from the very activities which are intended).

Work in Progress

Undeniably, there is still much work to do in terms of addressing the future of sport, recreation and physical activity as a result of COVID-19. There are some projects currently underway that will help inform the Canadian Sport Policy 3.0 including:

- *The ReImagine RREC project* (phase one currently underway through CPRA)
- A number of other resources and projects are currently under way examining the effect that COVID-19 has had, and will have related to designing spaces and places to support and encourage the participation of physical activity, recreation and sport
- *Global Challenges and Innovations in Sport – Effects of the Novel Coronavirus on Sport* (a special issue of *Society in Sport* with calls out now to researchers)
- *COVID-19: Response, Reflection and Resilience Building in the Canadian Sport System Amidst a Pandemic* (Royal Roads University, the project will focus on structural and systemic gaps and identify opportunities with Canadian sport institutes and governing bodies related to COVID-19)

Related, is a new research project through the Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University: *Examining Diversity in the Canadian Sport Industry* (focusing on the sport experience of individuals who identify as racialized persons) as well as work

Finally, though the scope of this environmental scan and report is related to the impacts of COVID-19 on the future of sport, there are a number of other concerns that must also be considered in a renewed Canadian Sport Policy, given their present and future danger. These include (but are not limited to) new pandemics, other natural disasters, climate change, and the opioid crisis (which affects all members of society).

Conclusion

A number of excellent documents have been written that can serve Sport Canada in the development of the CSP 3.0. The vast majority of the documents were produced by international organizations, so it behooves us to consider the findings, and build on the information to create a “think piece” in a Canadian context. What is certain is that, whether found in the data or through anecdotal stories, physical activity, recreation and sport are important for Canada’s recovery – economically and from a physical and mental health point of perspective, and must insert themselves into agendas, strategies and policies across government and non-government agencies and sectors. There has never been a more opportune time for sport to contribute to the health and wellbeing of Canada, and the world.

There is a growing yearning for change, a reconnection with optimistic idealism on how we design systems to serve us all and sport must not miss its opportunity to redefine itself and set itself a bold new path in a scary new world. A post-COVID-19 planet will likely see a worldwide recession not seen since the World Wars, and a global population coming to terms with astronomical losses, not to mention huge levels of unemployment and the emotional tax from months of instability. For the world of sport to return to the no-compromise, over-funded, over-resourced pursuit of perfection that has become the aspirational modus operandi for sports organisations in the “developed world” seems at best, misguided, at worst, a little vulgar.

We have a collective interest in sport to start considering, start talking about and start designing a future of sport that caters not only to a new world where its very relevancy will likely be questioned, but one that perhaps better lives up to its stated values. Sport has long had the potential as a pioneer for social change and in a world of increasing turmoil and instability, sport is a beckoning frontier for us all; a physical articulation of pure endeavour, sport is where our cumulative efforts can show the power of universal access, of fairness and of equality for the rest of society to follow. If sport is to wield its hypnotic power for good in a post-COVID-19 world and shine the light on what can be achieved when we all unite behind that yearning deep within all of us for fairness, then this is our time to grasp the baton of responsibility handed down by those who have walked this path long before us; that sport and all its opportunities must never become a luxury pastime of a leisured few. It’s time to reform our systems to better distribute genuine opportunity in sport.

In a post-WW1 Europe, the father to the modern Olympic Games; Pierre De Coubertin travelled the ballrooms of the French bourgeois to wax lyrical and raise funds for his vision for the role of sport in society, and amidst what was a period of nigh-on apocalyptic difficulty for many in society, he spoke of sport’s potential, and its responsibility to play its part in healing a battle weary and grossly unequal society. It’s time for us to reconnect with those same responsibilities and to give ourselves the very best chance of being able to look back at the impact of sport in the 2020s not as one that merely celebrated athletic prowess, but one that when the world needed it to step up to a higher calling, answered the call for global unity and for diverse togetherness and delivered an example for the rest of society to follow.³⁴

Appendix A

Canadian Sport Policy 2.0 Goals

The CSP 2012 has five goals as follows:

- Introduction to sport: Canadians have the fundamental skills, knowledge, and attitudes to participate in organized and unorganized sport.
- Recreational sport: Canadians have the opportunity to participate in sport for fun, health, social interaction, and relaxation.
- Competitive sport: Canadians have the opportunity to systematically improve and measure their performance against others in competition in a safe and ethical manner.
- High performance sport: Canadians are systematically achieving world-class results at the highest levels of international competition through fair and ethical means.
- Sport for development: Sport is used as a tool for social and economic development, and the promotion of positive values at home and abroad.

Summative Evaluation Priority Themes

Priority Themes were identified by Goss Gilroy, with the first seven elaborated upon in the draft Summative Report:

1. Values and ethics
2. Safe Sport
3. Systems performance: leadership, capacity, HR, retention of officials, roles and responsibilities
4. Partnerships and Collaboration
5. Sport for Development, considering sustainability and legacy issues
6. Play and unstructured sport
7. Participation in sport by underrepresented populations
8. Private vs public sport offerings and delivery
9. Active transport, fitness and recreation
10. Facility retrofitting and design
11. Event hosting and sport tourism
12. Economic impact

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