

KEY SPORT MESSAGES

Sport embraces all ages, all economic brackets and both sexes. It is a road to equity for disadvantaged groups in our society. It has become a powerful factor in our Gross Domestic Product and is a wonderful instrument to promote international trade.

Sport is a force for national unity and a builder of national pride. Sport is a key to our future as it enhances the health of our children (better fitness, self-esteem, confidence achievement in school), providing them with positive alternatives in their daily lives.

Most wonderful of all, sport is good in and of itself. To swim, or run or play ball for pleasure, or to strive for excellence at the peak of athletic competition. It is a human activity and a human value that needs no justification beyond itself. And it exists in each and every one of Canada's communities!

Following are some examples of sport's contribution to Canada:

Benefits of sport: better health and well-being...

1. Sport and physical activity are important components of healthy living:

- Longer life
- Higher resistance to diseases
- Improved physical functioning

- \$2.1 billion (2.5%) of the total direct health care costs, can be attributed to physical inactivity. A 10% increase in physical activity would produce an immediate direct cost savings of \$150 million annually (CFLRI 2000).
- \$770 million a year could be saved in the healthcare for heart disease alone if all Canadians were active.

2. Sport also acts as "preventive medicine" and reduces health care costs

- 57% of Canadian adults (18 years and older) are not active enough to benefit their health
- The World Health Organizations says that an investment of US\$1.00 (time and equipment) provides more than US\$3.00 in medical cost savings
- In the next 20 years the number of people over 60 years old will double. Sport

- and physical activity can help to reduce and postpone age related disability.
- Modest physical activity and improved diet can prevent 60% of Type II (late-onset) diabetes cases.
- Following a minimum physical activity requirement reduces cardiovascular disease by 1.5 times, yet around 60% of adults DO NOT engage in sufficient physical activity for health benefit.

Sport contributes to healthy communities and child and youth development ...

3. As a major contributor to community social life, sport is an important part of our culture, traditions and identity

- More than 2 million Canadians volunteer in sport (more than in any other category) representing 35% of all volunteer activity.
- Sport volunteers contribute 350,000 hours of work annually, equivalent to 175,000 full-time jobs.

4. Community sport is second only to the family in potential to transmit values to children

- 92% of Canadians believe that community sport can have a positive influence on the personal and moral development of youth

5. Participation in sport and recreation develops self-esteem, self-discipline and responsibility among Canadian youth; sport encourages a positive identity, especially for youth at risk.

- female high-school athletes are 92% less likely to get involved with drugs, 89% less likely to get pregnant, and three times more likely to graduate from high school than their non-athletic peers.
- In Northern Manitoba, there was a 17.3% reduction in crime in communities with a sports program and a 10.6% increase in communities without a program
- It costs 100 times more to incarcerate a young person than it does to provide recreation programs
- Obesity in boys and girls has tripled (from 5-15%) between 1981 and 1996. Recent data indicates that more than 30% are overweight

Sport has positive economic spin-offs...

6. Sport's contribution to GDP is similar to that of forestry, printing and mining with direct positive impacts on manufacturing, retail and services

- Sport and recreation has an \$8.9 billion impact on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), or 1.1% of the Canadian GDP, and related employment is 262,325 or 2.0% of the total jobs in Canada
- In Quebec, Alpine Skiing creates more jobs than the manufacturing industry
- The Canadian sporting goods industry paid over \$223 million in wages and salaries in the mid-1990s

7. Hosting sport events can have a major economic impact.

- Hosting the 2010 Winter Olympic / Paralympic Games will result in a projected \$3.3 billion economic impact, and will create over 77,000 jobs.
- Hosting the 2003 World Road Cycling Championships in Hamilton, Ontario had an impact of \$X
- Hosting the 2003 Canada Winter Games in New Brunswick had an impact of \$70 million and created over 1000 jobs, and generated more than \$10 million in tax revenue.

Sport reinforces national values and improves our international image

8. The examples of top athletes promote positive values and inspiration to young people. Sport induces a strong sense of pride in Canada

- Think back to your experience when Canada two gold medals in 2002 Olympic hockey—all of Canada cheered
- We have all been moved by the accomplishments of Rick Hansen, Terry Fox, Silken Laumann, and Wayne Gretzky. Some of these individuals have transcended sport and become Canadian icons.
- When our Canadian athletes wear red & white – the entire country comes together.

9. By enhancing Canada's trade profile, sport helps exports and tourism

So why the concern?

Despite the countless benefits of sport, federal government stated intentions (i.e., policies) are not supported by adequate funding levels. Canada's funding substantially lags that of comparable countries. In 2002, 44% of Canadian youth reported participating in organized sport at least once a week. This number decreased to 38% in 2003, while 78% of Australian youth reported participating once per week. Australia, with a population of 19 million (two-thirds of Canada's), spends \$157 million annually on sport (50% more than Canada).

Canadians' involvement in sport is too low to achieve full health benefits. Olympic athletes, who set the example to younger Canadians, are hampered by the expenses involved

What do we need?

- **Invest in the amateur sport community by *increasing funding by \$75 million MORE a year beginning with the next budget***
- **This is an *investment in the future* with extensive long-term paybacks**
- **It is much lower than arts funding and subsidies given to businesses**

You can help enormously

- We are asking you to promote this idea as widely as you can

The result of this small investment: a sustained legacy that will positively affect Canadian athletes and the lives of all Canadians for years to come