

Sport in Calgary: building on the Olympic legacy – June 2011

The arrival of Canada's Sport Hall of Fame to Calgary on July 1st builds on an already vibrant sports culture in the city. This short document reveals that Calgarians are avid supporters of their professional sporting teams and are among the most active populations in North America. With first-class training facilities, public infrastructure and the proximity of some of the best Alpine skiing in the world, Calgary must be mentioned as one of the top sport cities. Add to this an edifice in the Sport Hall of Fame dedicated to inspiring greatness in sporting achievement and Calgary's reputation is cemented further.

The Calgary Stampede and the 1988 Winter Olympic Games are the two events that have most shaped Calgary's civic sporting identity. The Labour Day Classic, the Calgary Flames' 1989 Stanley Cup victory and the team's 2004 run in the Stanley Cup Finals also occupy a place in the collective sense of identity as do annual grass-roots events like the Mac's Midget Hockey Tournament and Forzani's Mother's Day Run.

Calgary's sporting identity is defined in terms of landmark facilities like the Scotiabank Saddledome, Talisman Centre, the Olympic Oval, McMahon Stadium, Canada Olympic Park, the Stampede Grounds, Spruce Meadows, Southland Leisure Centre and Millennium Park. The newly minted Canadian Sport Hall of Fame will add to this list and inspire a new generation of Calgary athletes to pursue excellence in athletics for years to come.

There are considerable economic benefits to hosting sporting events. Since 2007, Calgary has hosted 40 national and international events attracting visitors from around the world, generating 70,000 hotel room nights and stimulating significant economic activity. For example, the 2012 IIHF World Junior Hockey Championship is expected to produce \$50 million in economic activity throughout the province of Alberta.

Much of the momentum around Calgary as an ultimate sports city is in large part to the Olympic Legacy. Below is a look at some of the statistics that reveal a close relationship between sports and economic performance.

Calgary Olympic legacy in numbers

- The Olympic Games in 1988 saw a 12 per cent increase in tourism the year of the games, and 3.25 percent increase in the 5 years following the games
- The Games created \$1.4 billion in benefits, including capital projects, and visitor expenditures
- The facilities remaining from the legacy fund as well as new projects offer Canadian athletes an international advantage
- Plans to expand COP are expected to draw 1,000,000 visitors/year.
- Visiting athletes, supporters and fans spend over \$10 million dollars per year while in Calgary
- Since the Canadian Sport Centre Calgary was opened in 1994 it has supported 352 medalists in Olympic, Para-Olympic and World Championship Competition.
- Of the 2010 Canadian Winter Olympic team, 108 out of 206 athletes and 15 of the 26 (58 percent) Canadian medals were won by athletes from Calgary and the Bow Valley area.
- Currently, there are over 400 high performance athletes training in the Calgary region – exceeding totals in any other Canadian city.

Source: *Canadian Sport Centre Calgary*

Professional and semi-professional sport in Calgary drives amateur and recreational sport participation rates, and Calgary has one of the highest participation rates in Canada. Aside from economic, there are considerable social and cultural benefits of sport—improving quality of life, unifying community, fostering a collective sense of identity, generating pride and exemplifying excellence. Because of these benefits, Calgary boasts incredible sport infrastructure.

Current infrastructure in Calgary

- 27 Aquatic facilities
- 9 Curling rinks
- 4 Boxing gyms
- 11 Bowling facilities
- 1 Velodrome
- 1 BMX facility
- 29 Golf facilities
- 328 Gymnasias
- 21 indoor rectangular field facilities
- 51 indoor ice facilities
- 17 outdoor athletic park facilities
- 1 outdoor equestrian facility
- 661 outdoor playfields (community level)
- 26 indoor racquet facilities
- 123 outdoor tennis facilities
- 2 skiing/sled facilities
- 3 outdoor tracks with field capacity

Source: City of Calgary

The **10 Year Strategic Plan for Sport Facility Development** reported that:

- 45 per cent of Calgary households had at least one occupant who actively participated in amateur sport in 2008
- 320,000 participants engaged in 85 different sport activities administered by over 400 sport organizations
- 80 per cent of all participation appears to take place in 13 sport activities

Sport Calgary is presently showing that:

- Calgary has between 500 to 600 sport organizations representing approximately 100 sports

Vital Signs 2010 reported:

- In 2009, 62.4 per cent of people aged 12 and over in the Calgary reported being moderately active or physically active compared to 52.5 per cent nationally, up from 56 per cent in 2008. Calgary continues to be one of the most physically active cities in Canada.

Professional sports teams

Club	League	Venue	Established	Championships
Calgary Flames	National Hockey League	Scotiabank Saddledome	1980	1
Calgary Stampeders	Canadian Football League	McMahon Stadium	1945	6
Calgary Roughnecks	National Lacrosse League	Scotiabank Saddledome	2001	2
Calgary Vipers	North American League	Foothills Stadium	2005	1