

(December 14, 2009)

Coalition forms to rally for team sports in Canada

*Nineteen sports join cause, including Hockey Canada and the Canadian Soccer Association;
Elite individual athletes also speak up for the 'foundation' of their careers*

TORONTO, ON – The large majority of Canadians who participate in sport do so as part of a team. Yet only 17 per cent of the government's core athletic funding goes to team sport organizations.

United in concern for the future of their sports, nineteen national sport-governing bodies have joined forces to raise awareness of the importance of team sport.

In addition to communicating the unique benefits of team sports, the Canadian Team Sports Coalition (CTSC) will collaborate on common issues and opportunities including sponsorship, public policy, sport tourism, multi-sport event hosting, athlete services and funding.

"There is urgency for team sports to work together," said Wayne Parrish, Executive Director, Canada Basketball. "The Canadian sport system currently focuses largely on medal count to determine funding. This model does not reflect the many benefits of team sport, such as leadership, the physical development of children, economic impact, community development and patriotism. In this coalition we have a new crop of leaders who are willing to work to bring these issues to the forefront."

In addition to publishing an independently researched report entitled *Full Team Ahead: The Benefits of Team Sport to Canadian Sport*, the coalition surveyed 572 high performance English and French Canadian athletes to help prove the importance of team sport.

The survey results reveal, among other findings:

- Participating in team sports is the foundation from which almost all elite Canadian athletes emerge, whether or not they move on to individual sports later in their careers.
- 90 per cent of the athletes surveyed participated in team sports in the developmental stages of their careers.
- 73 per cent of the athletes surveyed indicated that participation in team sport was **very important** to their development as an athlete.

The *Full Team Ahead: The Benefits of Team Sport to Canadian Sport* report also revealed that seven of the top 10 most popular sports (based on participation) are team sports and that team sports play an important role in building communities and in socializing young Canadians. Research also reveals that in terms of overall involvement in sport (through participating, volunteering and attending events) team sports outperform individual sports by a significant

margin: 24 million Canadians are engaged in some manner in team sports, as compared with 10 million Canadians who are involved in individual sports.

"There is no doubt that team sport faces unique challenges, and as sport leaders we know there are serious funding issues," added John-Paul Cody-Cox, Executive Director, Volleyball Canada. "Approximately 17 percent of Sport Canada's direct grants and contributions go to team sport organizations. Many of the sport leaders interviewed as part of this project feel this is a significant disparity."

"The focus of the Canadian Team Sports Coalition is to strengthen our team sport in Canada by raising awareness levels of its distinct benefits, many of which have been highlighted in our research," added Bob Nicholson, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, Hockey Canada. "We hope that our efforts as a coalition will help change a funding model that focuses primarily on medal count."

| Canadian Team Sports Coalition Members | |
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| Canada Basketball | Handball Canada |
| Volleyball Canada | Canadian Cricket Association |
| Rugby Canada | Hockey Canada |
| Water Polo Canada | Canadian Lacrosse Association |
| Canadian Soccer Association | Sledge Hockey Canada |
| Field Hockey Canada | Canadian Blind Sport Association |
| Softball Canada | Canadian Wheelchair Basketball Association |
| Baseball Canada | Canadian Wheelchair Rugby Association |
| Football Canada | Broomball Canada Federation |
| Ringette Canada | |

For further information, including complete 2009 Canadian Team Sports Coalition research results and report, visit www.canadateamsports.ca

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