

Sport a significant contributor to Canada's economy

- Sport plays a significant role in the economic, as well as the social life, of communities, providing jobs, boosting tourism in large and small communities alike, contributing to neighbourhood economic renewal, and enhancing skills and productivity in the workplace.
- The Conference Board of Canada reports that:
 - Sport contributes 1.2 percent of Canada's GDP, up from 0.9 percent in 1996
 - Canada's sport sector employs 262,324 Canadians – 2 percent of Canadian jobs
 - Canadian households spent \$15.8 billion on sport in 2004 – 2.18 percent of total household spending or \$1,963 per Canadian household.

Enhancing tourism through sport travel and events

- One of the ways that sport contributes to economic growth is through sport-related tourism. Special events, including sport events, have become one of the fastest growing types of tourism and are an integral part of tourism development.
- Canada hosts over 250,000 sport events annually ranging from professional events, to multi-sport amateur games to local tournaments. All of these provide economic benefits in the form of visitor spending on accommodation, food and drink, entertainment, and gifts/souvenirs,
- Major multi-sport amateur sport events attract thousands of international athletes, delegation members, officials, media and spectators who spend locally on accommodation, food, event attendance, transport, gifts and souvenirs. They also leave a continuing legacy in the form of high quality sport infrastructure and international awareness, which lead to higher levels of ongoing sport tourism.
- The 1988 Calgary Winter Olympic Games attracted over 150,000 people to Calgary, 40 percent of these were visiting Calgary for the first time, 27 percent having never heard of Calgary before. International tourist volumes in Calgary have grown significantly since these Games.
- In 2006, travel surveys showed that 4.17 million or 30.1 percent of all overnight person-trips from the United States to Canada included participation in sports or outdoor activity. That same year, 1.15 million or 27 percent of all international trips to Canada (excluding those from the US) included participation in sport or outdoor activity.
- According to the House of Commons Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada, sport accounted for an estimated \$4 billion in tourism expenditures in 1997, attracting tourists to all regions of Canada and increasing our visibility and reputation in the world.

Contributing to local economic development and renewal

- In his groundbreaking book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida, documents the important role that “just-in-time” community sport and recreation amenities (such as parks, playgrounds, walking and bike paths, and public playing fields) play in making communities attractive to highly mobile knowledge workers.

- Companies seeking new investment locations are also increasingly sensitive to quality of life as an important factor in attracting and retaining the highly skilled employees they need. By investing in sport and recreation green space, facilities and services that appeal to these workers, communities can increase their attractiveness to companies seeking to employ them.
- Sport can also boost the fortunes of disadvantaged neighbourhoods by providing employment and, through local sport and employment plans, helping local residents to acquire the sport volunteer opportunities, training and accreditation they need to access these jobs.
- UK research has shown that sport can provide business and employment opportunities at the local level and provide a route to the motivation and skills necessary to access these and other employment opportunities. These skills include confidence, self-esteem, transferable skills, and basic qualifications.

Enhancing workplace skills and productivity

- Sport participation – and physical activity levels more broadly – have important implications for economic productivity as well.
- Employers are increasingly turning to sport and physical activity to improve productivity in their workplaces.
- Workplace sport and fitness programs can reduce annual absenteeism by 1.6 days per employee, leading to payroll savings of 1.1 percent per year.
- Employers also place a high value on the transferable skills acquired by sport participants and volunteers because these skills improve workplace performance.
- According to the Conference Board of Canada survey, the vast majority of active sport participants, volunteers and attendees rate sport as an important way to gain skills that they can apply away from sport, in their personal lives and also across a broad range of jobs and workplaces.
- Sport volunteers identified even stronger skills gained than did active participants among the eight categories of skills they were asked to rate. They particularly valued coaching and mentoring skills, personal integrity, responsibility to others, fair dealing, and leadership and teamwork skills. Employers prize these skills because they improve workplace performance.

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