

September 16, 2009

David Zussman, Chair  
*2010 and Beyond Panel*

Re: Written submission to the panel via [vgl@rogers.com](mailto:vgl@rogers.com)

**Dear David:**

The Toronto Sports Council is pleased to provide you with the following submission to the *2010 and Beyond Panel*.

Even though our primary mandate is the horizontal integration of all sports at the community level, our submission is based on the belief that an effective high performance sport system in Canada is dependant on effective community sport delivery systems that facilitate equity, access and quality sport experiences.

We feel that the *2010 and Beyond Panel* has the opportunity to bring sport in Canada to a new level of competency and governance, recognizing the need for systemic continuity as we retain and enhance the promising practices that currently exist.

The TSC represents hundreds of community sport organizations and thousands of athletes. Our diverse membership is comprised of well structured sport organizations and many sport organizations who have yet to establish formal linkages to the Canadian Sport System.

The TSC would welcome the opportunity to discuss its submission in person with the members of the *2010 and Beyond Panel*.

Yours truly,



Karen Pitre  
Chair

**High performance sport is an essential component of the Canadian Sport System.** The pursuit of excellence is a very worthy goal for athletes at all levels of the sport participation continuum.

The following submission is a look at sport through the 'eyes' of the Toronto Sports Council. Our responses are categorized in the questions that you have asked. Our perspective is through the community lens, with full acknowledgement that our understanding of the National Sport System is limited in scope and that discussions regarding governance and service delivery at the National level of sport is best represented by those who volunteer and work at that level of the Canadian Sport System.

## **1. Strategies for Improving International Performance**

*A larger participation base with equitable access to a higher level of quality and technically appropriate sport participation opportunities will improve international sport performance.*

For many decades, it has been said that participation in sport and physical activity is a fundamental right of all children and youth. This is not being realized in Canada. Barriers to participation in sport include: a shortage of opportunities to participate in quality, technically sound and developmentally appropriate sport experiences; exclusive and biased recruitment of athletes to participate in sport opportunities; excessive financial and time commitments being established as mandatory for all families of athletes.

*" It is very sad to witness our youth becoming less involved in basketball and soccer because they can't find a way to participate at a higher competitive level. The children in our house league develop great skills in their early years, and then it stops. We need to create opportunities so that children and youth stay involved in sport. The consequences of our children not staying involved in sport can be, and has been, devastating."*

*Abdi Mohamud, Chair, East African  
Community Association of Lawrence Heights.  
Former Somali National Basketball Team  
Player and Coach.*

Another barrier to participation in sport, which has a direct negative impact on the development of high performance athletes, is facility availability. In Toronto, there is a serious shortage of stage-appropriate training facilities for all participants, able bodied and disabled. Some of the Toronto facts:

- In the August 2005 research report 'A Sport Framework for the City of Toronto', it was identified that there is a severe lack of District and Regional sport training facilities, thus limiting participation opportunities from the house league level to the higher competitive levels.
- There is a known deficit of 80 outdoor sports fields.
- There are extensive waiting lists for use of community centre gymnasiums.
- There is a shortage of available arena time in the City.
- The Toronto District School Board has chosen to close many of its pools, reducing the opportunity for children and youth to learn how to swim and to experience different aquatic sports.

## **2. Changes to governance and leadership in High Performance sport**

*Athletes, at all stages of Canadian Sport for Life, train and compete in a community. A governance model for sport in Canada should establish the necessary linkages to influence the quality of sport experiences at all levels of the Canadian sport delivery system.*

The governance model for sport in Canada should be value-driven and established with the linkages needed to effectively communicate with and influence sport organizations at all levels of the sport participation continuum.

*“ Community sport is central to the development of community spirit and national pride. It is the foundation of the sport system in Canada. If there is no community sport, there is no sport.”*

*For the Love of Sport  
1992 Sport Benefits Publication  
Sport Ontario*

### **3. A different approach to governance and leadership**

*Sport is ready for a change. Federal, Provincial/Territorial and Municipal governments have an important role but it is not to lead sport programming at any level of the Canadian Sport System.*

The fragmentation and role confusion that exists at all levels of Canadian sport should stop. Federal, Provincial/Territorial, and municipal governments should continue to develop value-based sport policy and provide the necessary resources for sport facility infrastructure, but the mandate to oversee sport programming should be delegated to value-driven not-for-profit organizations that are managed by sport for sport.

At the National level, the federal government should have an arms-length relationship with an organization that is responsible for achieving behavioural outcomes for all policies established – an organization capable of establishing appropriate linkages to comparable Provincial/Territorial and community-based organizations that can work effectively at achieving desired behavioural outcomes.

### **4. Improved service delivery to high performance athletes**

*It is imperative that high performance athletes are provided with the necessary supports and services that enhance their chance of success.*

The governance model for sport in Canada should be athlete-centered. High performance athletes should be provided with the facilities, time and supports needed to achieve world class results. Universities and National Training Centres should be utilized to their potential. The federal government should continue to make greater contributions to high performance sport. Contributions from Corporate Canada should be enhanced. Provincial/Territorial governments should further support their high performance athletes. Communities across Canada should embrace those high performance athletes that reside and train within their boundaries.

### **5. Performance targets for future Olympic games.**

*World class results should be our performance target. We should provide our National level athletes with the resources they need to*

*train and compete so that world class results are consistently realized.*

As well,

If a revitalized Canadian sport system were to clearly value participation through equitable access for all children and youth to quality sport programming, then the performance targets, in time, will take care of themselves.

## **6. Developing additional resources for high performance sport.**

*It is our collective responsibility to demonstrate that sport is worthy of investment by multiple sectors: voluntary; public; and private.*

We should change our 'game plan'. Do things different. Do things better. Reduce confusion. Achieve continuity. Be steered by the value of sport and the collective benefit of capacity building through sport.

We should build a sport system for '*Beyond 2010*' that clearly values and supports all levels of the sport participation continuum. This can be done without jeopardizing the resources needed to sustain a strong high performance sport system in Canada.