Has Sport Evolved ...or Devolved?  
An alternative look at sport for life

Marie Carlson

Ever wonder where our ideas about sport and active living come from, and what these terms have come to mean in modern popular culture? In Physical Activity in Human Experience: interdisciplinary perspectives, two sport sociologists, Richard Gruneau and Nancy Theberge, review the key issues and themes which have emerged in the history, development, and study of sport and active living since the turn of the century. They take a critical look at the influence that gender, race, class, and culture have had on our understanding of these concepts over the years. While Gruneau explores these developments since early Classical times, Theberge focuses mainly on the late 20th century.

Both authors firmly agree that physically active lifestyles, including sport, have largely been studied and promoted in isolation from analysis of the dynamic cultural, economic and political processes of social life, including the vested interests associated with the marketing and selling of health, fitness and sport. They also agree that it's essential to critically reflect on our past if we are to learn from our experiences and make a difference in the future. Their ideas raise the following questions for us: Which of these insights, patterns and themes are reflected in our sporting experiences today? How do these ideas permeate our thinking as promoters of healthy active living? What should we keep; and what needs to be left behind as we reflect on and improve our practice in the coming years?

This issue of WellSpring looks at the role and meaning of sport in people's lives and in society. This article highlights a few of these authors key points in the hope it will inspire you to reflect on your own understanding of sport and active living.

Changing Definitions

In ancient Greek and Roman times, active living was conceived as the active life of the mind, linked with the idea of individual freedom and creative development. Eventually this broad ideal of human development, achieved by working to transform society, devolved into the view of the good life as biological self-betterment, with emphasis on the physical body and scientific approaches to improving human performance.

Indulgence vs. Discipline

Throughout history, active living has been associated with two competing notions of bodily indulgence and bodily discipline. Originally, the disciplinary aspect involved submitting to the rigors of physical training, typically in a military (and later, school, organizational and community) context. Discipline was usually associated with individual physical skill and national military prowess, reinforced through ritualistic drills and ceremonies. As a significant aspect of male socialization, it instilled loyalty to one's leader and country. Indulgence, on the other hand, was associated with excessive food, drink, sexuality and rough recreation/sport. Increasingly indulgence also came to be associated with power and affluence, decadence and decline—a serious perceived threat to individual and social progress. The authors note the idea that discipline implies strength or goodness, and that indulgence is bad or weak, has carried over into contemporary conscientiousness— with unhealthy consequences to this day.

Duty and Desire

Growing industrialization combined with the Protestant work ethic led to success defined in terms of worldly wealth. At the same time, the rise of science deemed the human body to be perfectible. With these two influences, having a healthy physical as well as social body, became a moral and patriotic duty. The goal of social reform became the channeling of potentially disruptive under-classes and unhealthy social behavior through organized exercise, fitness activities and sport, as well as a focus on diet and other health risk-behaviours. Such beliefs and habits were reinforced through self-discipline, social values and community sanctions. Eventually, becoming fit and healthy required more than knowledge of one's body; it became a skill to be learned from medical and biophysical experts. Bodies could now be engineered from medical and biophysical experts.
GUEST EDITORIAL

Sport is Active Living

Cynthia Smith

Having spent the last six years promoting physical activity, I sometimes perceived sport as the “dark side”. Yet the upcoming Sydney Olympics make it an exciting time for sport in Australia. Much time, effort and money is being expended to create the Sydney Games are a success and that Australian athletes perform well.

Apart from the focus on the 2000 Olympics, sport in the community structure differs greatly from North America. A recent report in the Sydney Morning Herald cited Kerin Perkins, double Olympic gold medalist in swimming, as the most endorseable celebrity in Australia. Imagine the “amateur” athlete in Canada or the U.S.A. reaching this lofty plateau. Even more impressive was the fact that this report was not limited to sporting stars; the survey included media and movie stars. Kerian outstripped supermodel Elle MacPherson and Australian actress Nicole Kidman in the balloting.

On the professional side of sport, there are national professional leagues in Rugby Union, Rugby League, Aussie Rules Football, and Basketball. It is interesting, when one considers that Canada has a population 50 percent greater than Australia, to see how many leagues can survive when Canadian professional sports are continually struggling to survive the “small market” problem.

On a less elite note, the emphasis on sports in our society brings us to the youngest level. School children in primary and high schools all must try out for school teams - no recreational involvement mandate here. In addition, the school programs have organized competitions that Canada does not match. Elementary and high school sports all have local, regional, state and national championships. Since arriving down under, my 12-year-old daughter has to been to Adelaide, Melbourne and Brisbane as a member of the Queensland State Primary Schools swim teams for the National Primary Schools swimming championships. I was amazed to see the level of competition and organization involved. The competitions, complete with formal opening and closing ceremonies, are a wonderful display of team spirit that would rival the Canadian Olympic Team!

But what does this high level of sport involvement and focus on sport performance mean for the activity levels of the overall population? Not much apparently. The recent release of a document entitled Acting on Australians Weight: A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Overweight and Obesity by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC, 1997) of Australia indicates a crisis in physical activity participation and movement in Australia.

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In 1997, the NHMRC report was released, which stated that 60% of the adult population of Australia was overweight or obese. The report was a call to action, with the following recommendations:

1. Increase awareness of the health risks associated with obesity.
2. Encourage healthy lifestyle choices, including regular physical activity.
3. Improve the availability and accessibility of physical activity programs.
4. Support research into effective interventions for weight management.

Since the release of the NHMRC report, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of physical activity and health promotion. Many organizations and individuals have worked together to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

The Australian government has implemented several initiatives to promote physical activity, including the National Physical Activity Strategy and the Australian Sports Commission. These initiatives aim to increase physical activity levels and promote healthy lifestyles.

In addition to government initiatives, there have been many community-based programs and organizations that have been working to promote physical activity and health. These include local clubs, schools, and workplaces that offer physical activity programs and encourage healthy behaviors.

Despite the progress made in recent years, there is still much work to be done to improve physical activity levels in Australia. The NHMRC report highlighted the need for continued efforts to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles. The Australian government and other organizations continue to work towards this goal, with the hope of improving the health and well-being of all Australians.

In summary, the promotion of physical activity is crucial for the health and well-being of individuals and communities. The NHMRC report and subsequent government initiatives have been important steps in this direction. However, continued efforts are needed to achieve the goal of a more active and healthy society.

W. Kerry Mummerly, Ph.D.
sufficient frequency, duration and intensity to be protective against heart disease. One of the most notable “factsoid”s to come out of the NHMRC document is the finding that the average Australian is gaining 2 grams of fat per day.

What seems noticeable to an observer such as myself is that competitive sport participation follows primarily an elite model, with relatively low levels of habitual physical activity being practiced by those not skilled enough to continue relatively high levels of competitive involvement. In this way I find Australia, or at least my restricted view of Australia, to be a country displaying more extreme activity involvement patterns than those I observed in Canada. Those who do sport down under, do it in a major way; those who don’t participate may share nationalistic pride in Australia’s accomplishments but unfortunately adopt a dangerously sedentary lifestyle.

In summary, Australia is a sporting-minded country with the capability to begin developing a major focus on leisure-time physical activity. This focus is driven by similar behavioural, health and economic concerns that have influenced the emphasis on positive behavioural change in Canada. ■

References Cited

Kerry Mummery, is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Health and Human Performance at Central Queensland University in Rockhampton Australia. Formerly the Responsible Lead Change for the Alberta Centre for Well-Being, Kerry moved to Australia in December 1996. Since then, he has had the opportunity to observe the active lifestyles of Australians and compare them to Canadians.

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The Alberta Centre for Well-Being goes to Iran!

Pauline Poon was invited to Tehran to present our educational video resource, Acting Our Age... Older Adults Engaged in Physical Activity, at Iran’s first International Conference on Aging. The conference was convened to honour The International Year for Older Persons, and to promote human principles and explore new ways to better understand the elderly and the aging phenomenon around the world. Issues associated with this resource, call the psychological, emotional, environmental, nutritional and physical activity aspects of aging were examined and a 14-point Declaration was produced. For more information, please contact Pauline Poon, Research Coordinator, at (780) 492-0554 or e-mail: pauline.poon@ualberta.ca.

Older Adult Physical Activity Video and Discussion Guide
Acting Our Age... Older Adults Engaged in Physical Activity is a 27-minute video and discussion guide produced by the Alberta Centre for Well-Being in collaboration with several other organizations. Designed for practitioners in the fields of health, recreation, education, and community development, as well as for older adult themselves, Acting Our Age thoughtfully explores the components of healthy, active aging. Acting Our Age can help practitioners to deepen their understanding of the successes, barriers and challenges faced by older adults involved in physical activity.

More information and contact: Pauline Poon, Acting Our Age Edmonton, Research Coordinator, at (780) 492-0554 or e-mail: pauline.poon@ualberta.ca.
For the Fun of It

Skid Row Dogz reclaim fun, friendly competition of sports

Philip O’Hara

Winning at all costs demands a high price for many young people playing competitive sports. Fed a steady diet of high calibre professional sports on television and inundated by product endorsing multi-millionaire sports celebrities, it’s understandable why many young people don’t see the intrinsic value of participating in sports. Add the pressure to win at any cost from both coaches and parents and we’ve inadvertently produced a generation of couch potatoes who think sports is watching the TSN and munching Doritos, not something you do.

The good news is that many Generation Xers are rediscovering, or experiencing for the first time, the pleasure of being active and playing sports when winning is not the primary goal. Members of Edmonton’s ball-hockey championship team, the Skid Row Dogz, have learned that greater than the thrill of victory is playing with your friends and having fun accomplishing a goal together. Several of the team members grew up in Edmonton’s inner city and never played organized ice hockey when they were young largely because they couldn’t afford it. Instead, they learned their skills playing road hockey in back alleys.

For more information about the program, contact Dan Peacocke or Jeff Jones at (780) 466-8573 or e-mail: dhockey@epsb.edmonton.ab.ca.

SNAP SHOTS

Donnan Hockey Program
At Donnan School in Edmonton, a powerful education program is emerging. It is an ideal blend of academics and athletics.

“Last year my son had the best school year he’s ever had. He enjoyed school and excelled academically. He developed confidence, a wonderfully pleasant attitude, and significantly improved his hockey skills. Now he’s playing AAA hockey and applying a high standard of excellence to everything he does.” (Mrs. Wendy Berube, September 1999)

This unique program was designed and implemented by the people at Academic and Athletic Development, a non-profit society dedicated to advancing the way that hockey is taught in Canada and finding the best possible ways of blending athletic development with academic achievement. The Board Directors, which consists of an impressive group of highly successful leaders in business, education and hockey, keep the program on track ensuring that both competence and character development receive equal attention.

For more information about the program, contact Dan Peacocke or Jeff Jones at (780) 466-8573 or e-mail: dhockey@epsb.edmonton.ab.ca.

Special Olympics – Unlocking the Potential

In Canada, over 20,000 athletes with a mental disability participate in training and competition organized by 11 provincial and territorial chapters. This dynamic growth, driven by a remarkable outpouring of 6,000 volunteers, is based on the recognition that Special Olympics is providing a unique opportunity for an equal sporting experience. Special Olympics has helped to unlock that potential and has allowed our citizens with a mental disability to display their gifts to the world.

For more information, contact Alberta Special Olympics at (780) 415-0719.

The National Sport School – Study Hard, Play Hard

The National Sport School supports student athletes to attain their educational and sport goals. Established by the Calgary Olympic Development Association and the Calgary Board of Education, the school utilizes the Alberta Secondary Curriculum Grade 9 through Grade 12. Students write the Alberta Diploma Exams and are expected to achieve their Diploma in the normal three-year period (unless they enter in Grade 9 in which case they have four years). The school runs on a year round calendar, and school timetables may be varied throughout the year to facilitate training and competition schedules. The National Sport School is committed to a high expectation for academic achievement, and students are expected to maintain status in both their curriculum and their sport.

For more information, contact CODA Executive Offices, Sport Department at (403) 247-5446, web site: www.cbe.ab.ca/b830.

The Trans Canada Trail Relay 2000

As part of this year’s millennium celebrations, more than 5,000 people will either walk, cycle, ride horseback, cross-country ski, or snowmobile across 16,000 km of trail that stretches across Canada’s mountains, prairies, forests, parks, towns and cities in celebration of the launching of the Trans Canada Trail. Their relay baton will be a vessel filled with water from the Atlantic, Pacific or Arctic Oceans. When the six-month relay reaches its finale on September 9, 2000, in the National Capital Region, the waters will ceremoniously be poured into an elaborate, newly built $1.4 million interactive fountain.

For more information, visit the web site: www.tctrail.ca/relay.

Health Canada’s Launches New Regional Web Site

The Health Promotion and Programs Branch (HPPB) AB/NWT/Nunavut Region are proud to announce their new web site. The web site contains information specific to HPPB programs and projects delivered in Alberta, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. We encourage health professionals and the general public to visit the site for information on Healthy Living, Program/ Project Information, Resources, an Events Calendar, Health Activities and Frequently Asked Questions. There are a myriad of links to our community and national web sites, such as Health Canada OnLine and Health Promotion OnLine.

Information has been posted on the site related to lifecycle issues, funding projects, population health, research and knowledge development, social marketing, tobacco reduction, the environment, etc.

Health Canada Sante Canada

Sports should first and foremost be about having fun and making friends.
Joan Frederick  

Ruth Oldenberg of Vermilion was 59 years of age when the Alberta Seniors Games were staged in her hometown in 1988. Because she did not participate in any of the team activities that were part of the Games, Ruth looked for an individual event in which to qualify. Although she had not done any running since high school, she started training to take part in the track events and qualified to represent her zone at the provincial Seniors Games in Vermilion. Ruth lives on a farm and was able to mark off 10-metre and 100-metre distances to assist with her training. An interesting side effect of all this was that she came to have a much better concept of metric distances, something she had previously resisted learning!

Ruth won gold in two events in 1988 and has never looked back. She has been a participant in every Alberta Seniors Games since and also in the 1996 and 1998 Canada Senior Games, winning medals each time. She has also participated in community fundraising in her own and surrounding communities. Ruth says, “The Alberta Seniors Games have given me the incentive to stay active, and have provided a tremendous amount of enjoyment and recreation for me over the past eleven years. I hope to keep running as long as I can!”

The idea of staging competitions for seniors was conceived in the mid-1970’s by a group in Calgary who started a program called “Ol-lympyx”, derived from the words “old limpers”, which conveyed the idea of the real Olympics, but at a slower pace. The 1976 “Ol-lympyx” were staged in Calgary and this imaginative project exploded into one of the greatest seniors’ programs the city had ever seen.

Provincial Seniors Games became a reality in 1980 when Alberta’s 75th Anniversary Commission approved funding to support the concept of province-wide athletic competitions for seniors, a first in Canada. Held in Camrose with 750 participants aged 55 years and over, the first Alberta Seniors Games were such a resounding success that the government approved the staging of Seniors Games every other year. A support group of seniors formed the Alberta Senior Citizens Sport and Recreation Association (ASCRSA) to assist with the planning for the biennial Senior Games.

Since their inception, the Games have tried to provide something for everyone, emphasizing friendly competition, participation and community spirit by providing

A recreational swimmer all his life, 68-year old Bobby Chan won his first ever medal, a Bronze, in swimming this summer at the Alberta Seniors Games. For this first time participant in the Games, this medal was the highlight of his sporting life, but he intends to keep up his daily practices and achieve Gold next time around.

The Alberta Seniors Games emphasize friendly competition, participation and community spirit.

Marjory Murphy has been playing Scrabble since 1954. Now 88 years of age, she has competed in the Alberta Seniors Games since 1990 and continues to play Scrabble regularly, including her daily game on her computer. Marjory attributes her mental acuity to this wonderful game and appreciates the opportunity to showcase her skills through the Alberta Seniors Games.

Participation rates increase with education and family income. Participation was twice as high for Canadians with a family income of more than $80,000, compared with those having a family income of less than $20,000.

Statistics Canada, 1992 General Social Survey

For the Fun of It… continued from page 4
Within the past ten years there has been a proliferation in the number of professional sport franchises operating in North America. Just recently the National Football League announced that it had awarded its 32nd team to a group from Houston for the paltry sum of $700 million (US). As the number of professional teams operating in the North American market continues to grow, it can be asked whether or not these sports organizations are contributing to the health and well-being of the communities that they serve? This question is debatable; however it is possible to view this question in two ways which might help to clarify this issue. First, whether or not professional leagues or teams benefit the youth of a community, and second, do professional sport franchises encourage activity in individuals other than the youth of the community. With these two questions in mind, professional sports and the efforts of different teams and their respective leagues can be critically examined.

Youth Physical Activity

In Alberta it is hard to imagine that there is another professional sport which has the same influence over the community as hockey. Both the Flames and the Oilers have strong winning traditions that are continually promoted. Recently there has been a debate about the viability of these teams because of their economic situations. As a result, there have been numerous proposals from the National Hockey League (NHL) with regard to government funding for these teams. The most recent proposal had the NHL asking the provinces for a share of lottery revenues. This proposal, despite being very self-serving for Canadian NHL teams, was meant to benefit the community. But is it possible to draw a conclusion about how professional sports teams benefit the members of the community that they serve? This question is debatable; however it is possible to view this question in two ways which might help to clarify this issue. First, whether or not professional leagues or teams benefit the youth of a community, and second, do professional sport franchises encourage activity in individuals other than the youth of the community.

One way that professional sports encourage young people to become active can be demonstrated by the influence expansion teams have over the communities they enter. The Nashville Predators of the NHL began during the 1998-99 season. It is debatable whether the team initially had any influence over youth hockey participation in the community. However, the Nashville Youth Hockey League (NYHL) web site indicates that perhaps the presence of professional hockey has affected participation rates in the sport. This year the NYHL boasts of a “Record Registration to Launch Season”. It is questionable if these numbers reflect the number of children that are taking up an active lifestyle for the first time or whether they participated in other forms of activity. Yet, until there is further study on the subject, it is hard to deny that there appears to be a relationship between the presence of a new professional franchise in Nashville and an increase in the enrollment rates in youth hockey.

Another way in which professional sports can be seen to influence the activity levels of youth sport is in the influence of pro-am associations have over the development of the game locally, nationally and internationally. The Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) is an organization that is actively involved with growing the game of golf and the number of participants involved with the sport. Specifically, the LPGA has for the past ten years been encouraging youth participation through the “Girls Golf Club”. This program is centered in the United States, but has branches in Canada, New Zealand and Australia. The program serves 2500 young girls and is continuing its expansion throughout the U.S. and the world. Efforts of the LPGA are representative of some of the ways that associations and groups affiliated with professional athletics serve to develop and expand youth participation in physical activity.

Adult Physical Activity

Although professional sports teams and leagues encourage youth activity and participation, there is some question as to whether the same might be said for adult participation rates. Despite the probable protestations of professional sports leagues, it can be suggested that the goal of the leagues is to encourage active spectatorship and not participation. The majority of the revenues that fund the four major North American professional sports leagues are derived from two sources: television and ticket sales. The fan is encouraged to passively watch the event being presented. Spectatorship necessarily prevents participation in the event being viewed. It can then be argued that the focus of professional sport leagues and teams is to encourage its patrons, predominantly members of the communities that they serve, to watch the event being presented. Spectatorship necessarily prevents participation in the event being viewed.

Unfortunately cheering for your favourite team does not increase/sustain your heart rate enough to benefit your health.
A Narrative Case Study of Lifelong Sport Participation

Pauline Poon, M.A.

How does sport differ from exercise and physical activity? Both sport and exercise are physical activity, and sport is a form of exercise. Here are some definitions. Physical activity is defined as “any body movement produced by the skeletal muscles that results in a substantial increase over the resting energy expenditure.” Exercise is physical activity performed during one’s free time on a repeated basis, over an extended period of time, with specific objectives (e.g., fitness, performance, and health). Sport comprises complex physical skills, but the perception of competition in using these skills is a necessary condition in distinguishing sport from exercise and physical activity. A lifelong commitment to sport participation is challenging for many reasons. The lack of financial, social, cultural, and physical environment supports may influence participation at various stages of life. In addition, it may be difficult to sustain the motivation. Hence, we admire people who can maintain participation in sport over a lifetime. Professional sport celebrities like Nancy Green-Raine and Gordie Howe enjoy the visible recognition accorded to long-term sport involvement.

The Impact of an Early Start

Some studies have shown that participation in physical activity in one’s early years was the best predictor of continual participation in adulthood. If certain ideas and actions in the past have been successful in achieving specific goals, then individuals are predisposed and motivated to maintain those patterns. Langley and Knight cite this Continuity Theory as an adaptive strategy to deal with changes related to the aging process. Central to this theory of adult development is the evolution of life structure, self, and personality.

The patterns of ideas and actions are built upon one’s prior history. Thus, the perceived benefits of sports participation in childhood are hypothesized to be a critical factor in the continuation of that action. Taylor indicates that the reverse relationship might be true. If exercise during childhood is voluntary and rendered unpleasant, then it may have negative consequences for later activity involvement. The Case Study

To understand the meaning of the sport experience over the life span, Langley and Knight took a narrative approach to conducting an in-depth inquiry into one person’s experience. “Art”, a 68-year-old retired university professor was the subject because of his current and long-term involvement in sports. Influenced by his mother’s opinions that being active would keep him healthy, Art participated in baseball, softball, competitive swimming, and tennis in his youth. Art’s involvement in sports continued throughout his undergraduate years as a varsity swimmer and a semi-professional baseball player in the summer. The contact with Art demonstrates how involvement in sports led him to a coaching position with a university swim team on the condition that he completed a master’s degree program. He went on to obtain a doctoral degree and continued his research on safety education. In Art’s case, many of the important life changing decisions he made over his life span were influenced by sports, particularly by the confidence and connections gained through sport participation.

Personal coping practices and the concept of external continuity with dimension of the Continuity Theory. Art’s values, beliefs and attitudes to life and sports developed in concert with the maturation of his identity and self.

Art’s desire to be noticed and respected as a person is interpreted as mirroring his competitive drive for success in sport. Thus, the external continuity provided through sport was meaningful and provided Art with a sense of familiarity while participating in new locations and meeting new people. The continuity in sport participation evolved as Art aged. Selective optimizations is the concept that people optimize benefits and compensate for shortcomings when physical and environmental constraints are imposed due to aging. Even though baseball, softball, and swimming were Art’s interests Art experienced earlier in life, Art selected tennis as a sport that he could pursue later in life to maintain his levels of success with his capabilities and limitations changed.

Conclusion

Art attributed his success in life to sport participation. It is important to recognize that environmental and personal conditions differ in each individual case. Thus, we need to examine various issues that may affect life long participation. How would a woman with lower education and income level, little social support, and cultural barriers be able to enjoy sports for life? Regardless of how sport is different from exercise or physical activity, the challenge for individuals and advocates of physical activity is to recognize both the benefits and barriers of participation from a broader perspective.

Notes


Cross the Line

A high school inspiration

Angie Leonard

Ten years from now when I look back on my high school years at Beaverdale Regional, I know that I will have many memories. Some will be vivid. Others will be less outstanding. But some of my most treasured memories will be those spent in the gym or on the field. Today when I reflect on my high school sports experiences; I am overcome with a warm feeling as I recall our volleyball team’s 1996 championship win; or our 1997 adventurous journey to Cuba to train and play against an elite team; or the first time I did a middle hitter and I learned that no matter what I’m doing, there is a champion on my high school sports experiences, I am overcome with a warm feeling as I recall our volleyball team’s 1996 championship win; or our 1997 adventurous journey to Cuba to train and play against an elite team; or the first time I did a middle hitter and I learned that no matter what I’m doing, there is a champion on the horizon. The winners are always the ones who learn from their mistakes and build their future successes upon those mistakes. A banner that my team painted stated, “Commitment is a line you must cross, it is the difference between dreaming and doing. Cross the line.” I believe that my involvement in athletics has given me the strength and confidence to be a leader and to cross the line in everything that I do.  

Reprinted in part with permission of the Alberta Schools’ Athletic Association.
Sport resources available from the Alberta Centre for Well-Being Library


An in-depth look at what is unhealthy about sport today and how to apply a green ethic to sports - an ethic that embodies a combination of environmental stewardship, economic efficiency and social responsibility.

Sabo, Don and Snyder, Marjorie. (1993). Miller Lite report on sports and fitness in the lives of working women. Sponsored by Miller Lite Brewing Company, this was the first study to explore the role of sport and fitness in the lives of working women.


This document, better known as the Mills Report (named after the chair of the Sub-Committee, Dennis Mills), examines the economic value of sport both nationally and regionally, the contribution of sport to national unity, and the potential scope and rationale for federal government involvement, or increased involvement, in the promotion of amateur sport in Canada. [Also available from the Sport Canada web site at www.pch.gc.ca/sportcanada/]


Former Canadian decathlon competitor Gord Stewart draws on his own athletic experiences in this collection of essays written over a 12-year period. He examines the role and meaning of wellness, fitness and sport in our lives, and discusses the evolution of physical activity, sport and play in Canada.

Sources for more information

Sport Information Resource Centre (SIRC)
www.SPORTquest.com

Located in Ontario, the Sport Information Resource Centre is an international leader in identifying, collecting, organizing and disseminating information about sport, physical activity, fitness and sports medicine. They produce SPORTDiscuss, the bibliographic database that has over 500,000 references and some abstracts of journal and magazine articles, books, book chapters, dissertations, theses and conference proceedings. The database also helps users to locate the full text of a document through direct links to web sites or through SPORTExpress, their document delivery service.

Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) www.coach.ca

The CAC is a not-for-profit organization with the mission to "establish education, training and ethical standards for coaches in Canada." They produce and distribute a number of books and videos, and are currently promoting a new publication, Straight Talk About Children and Sports: Advice for Parents, Coaches, and Teachers.

Written by Janet LeBlanc and Louise Dickson, the book includes an overview of children and sport, and provides practical tips for dealing with the issues of participation, competition, motivation, self-esteem, skill development, injuries, and the role of parents and coaches in organized sport for children ages six through twelve.

Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure
www.hillarysport.org.nz

Located in Wellington, New Zealand, the Hillary Commission is "dedicated to improving the quality of life by enabling all New Zealanders to participate and achieve in sport, fitness and leisure." The Commission believes that all New Zealanders have the right to participate and achieve in sport and physical activity whatever their background, ability or disability. Their web site includes a number of downloadable documents such as the national strategy for getting the population more physically active, and participation statistics for all ages and segments of the population.

Sport Canada
www.pch.gc.ca/sportcanada

Information on programs and policies, major games and sporting events, sport facts, news releases, and selected papers and publications are all available from this web site. The most recent publication listed is a report released in May 1999 on gender in Canada’s national team programming (based on a survey conducted in 1997-98).

Edmonton Sport Council
www.edmontonsport.com

A relatively new organization in Edmonton whose web site provides directories to the sport groups and facilities of Edmonton, a calendar of events, discussion board, and information on workshops they offer (e.g. working with the media, fundraising and coaching).

Women’s Sports Foundation (WSF)
www.lifetimesport.com/WeSPORT

Among other things, the WSF web site offers articles and/or references for a number of topics and issues such as disabled athletes, exercise and pregnancy, history of women in sports, participation facts and trends, research in progress, and sports psychology. They also have a number of links to other international women’s sports foundations.

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Physical Therapy and Physical Activity (CAAWS) www.caaws.ca

CAAWS is a national not-for-profit organization that works in partnership with Sport Canada and with Canada’s sport and active living communities to achieve gender equity in the sport community. Their business is to “encourage girls and women to get out of the bleachers, off the sidelines, and onto the fields and rinks, into the pools, locker rooms and board rooms of Canada.” In addition to producing a number of resources as well as the news bulletin, Take Five (www.caaws.ca), CAAWS has recently launched a new component to their web site called girls@play. It highlights nutrition information, new sports magazine subscriptions for girls and women, and current events and sports heroes.

Youth are encouraged to sign up on the girls@play network so they can participate in a chat group, and receive other benefits such as information on grants and scholarships, and a collection of women’s sport cards.

Promotion Plus
www.virtualplanet.com/promo_plus

Based in Vancouver, this volunteer-run non-profit society promotes physical activity and sport for girls and women and advocates on their behalf, for the equal opportunity to participate in sport and recreation in British Columbia. The organization produces and sells their own resources, distributes books, videos and posters on behalf of CAAWS, and publishes a quarterly newsletter that is available by mail or through their web site. The newsletter highlights current issues in girls’ sport, recent research, and new resources. See the fall 1999 edition for a review of Raising Our Athletic Daughters: How Sports Can Build Self-Esteem and Save Girls’ Lives, a publication by Jean Zimmerman and Gil Reavil released in October 1999.

In 1991, 53,000 Canadians worked in sports-related jobs, an increase of 14% since 1986. Women held 42% of the jobs.

2000 - Canada

3rd Conference of Local Health Authorities of the Americas March 13 - 16, Quebec City, QC

The theme is Health and the Quality of Life. Our Municipalities in an Era of Globalization. Many countries are increasingly placing the responsibility for organizing health and social services on communities and municipalities and it is well worth the effort to explore, share and analyze such initiatives.

Contact: Secretariat du 3e Congres des responsables locaux de santé des Antilles, 938, rue Saint Maurice, Montreal, Quebec H3C 1P4.

Ph: (514) 395-3908, (514) 395-1801, Em: info@ops3.conmix.com visit conference site at www.mss.gov.qc.ca/3congresaquebec

Qualitative Health Research Conference April 6 - 8, Banff AB

6th Annual. Keynote speakers are Sue Emirzian, Sally Thorpe, and Arthur Frank.

Contact: International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, 6-10 University Estates Centre, University of Alberta, 8303-112 Street, Edmonton, AB T6G 2T4.

Ph: (780) 492-9904 Fx: (780) 492-9904 Em: qualitative.institute@ualberta.ca

Building Bridges: Creating an Integrated Approach to Women’s Health April 29 - May 1, Victoria, BC

The goal of this conference is to encourage an integration of social determinants of health and biomedical approaches to women’s health.

For more information contact: Anee SPEER, Women’s Health Bureau, BC Ministry of Health, 5-1, 1515 Blanshard St. Victoria, BC, V8W 3C4.

Ph: (250) 952-2277, Fx: (250) 952-2799, Em: annee.speer@mohl.hwnet.bc.ca

The First International Conference on Women, Heart Disease and Stroke May 7 - 10, Victoria, BC

Science and Policy in Action. Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

Contact: April Taylor, Taylor & Associates, (613) 747-0262, Fx: (613) 745-1846, Em: graylot@netrover.com

SummerActive May 12 - Jun 20, Canada

A relatively new organization, an estimated 5 million Canadians of all ages and abilities have participated in fun-filled events to promote the health and related benefits of physical activity. Check with your local community SummerActive events happening in your area.

Sneaker Day May 12, Canada

Removing the Barriers II Keeping Canadian Values in Health Care May 25 - 27, Vancouver, BC

Contact: Dr. Ralph Mai, (416) 368-4156, Fx: (416) 638-6076, Em: ralph.mai@utoronto.ca

4th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Preventive Oncology May 25 - 28, San Diego, California


Contact: 835 Market Street, Suite 511, San Francisco, CA, USA 94103-1824, (415) 974-9609, Fx: (415) 974-0300, Em: info@asa.asaing.org or visit www.asaing.org

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Calendar of Events

8