



Canadian Paralympic Committee | Comité paralympique canadien



A RESOURCE GUIDE TO BUILDING A PARALYMPIC SPORT CLUB

2007 Canadian Paralympic Committee

For more information about the Canadian Paralympic Committee, visit
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A Message from the Canadian Paralympic Committee

When a world-class athlete receives a medal in honour of his or her performance, it can be hard to believe there was once a time when that athlete was just a beginner with no experience in that sport. For many Paralympians the road to excellence begins in the heart of Canadian cities and towns through community-driven sport clubs and organizations. In many ways, athletic excellence is born from the dedication of these organizations made up of family, friends and volunteers whose efforts provide the driving force that fosters future generations of outstanding athletes.

With this in mind, we present you this guide. It was developed to provide you with a helping hand to build your very own sport club. Through this guide, you will learn all about the individual steps to get your sport club off the ground. Although it is written without any specific sport in mind, we have included links to resources, templates, worksheets and sample documents that can be customized to suit your club's needs. All of these resources and more can be found on the CPC website – www.paralympic.ca - in the Resource Library under the Info Centre section.

Congratulations on taking this first step toward growing and promoting the Paralympic Movement in Canada.

Sincerely,



Carla Qualtrough
President



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THE PARALYMPIC GAMES & THE CANADIAN PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE

The origin of the Paralympic Games dates back to 1948 when Sir Ludwig Guttmann staged the International Wheelchair Games to coincide with the 1948 London Olympic Games. The event gradually grew encompassing other sports and other disability categories. Today, the Paralympic Summer and Winter Games are the pinnacle in international competitions for world class athletes with a physical disability. Canada has participated in every Paralympic Games since 1968.

The Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) formerly known as the Canadian Federation of Sport Organizations for the Disabled (CFSOD) was founded when Toronto, the first Canadian city to become host of a major international sporting event for athletes with a disability, hosted the 1976 Olympiad for the Disabled (later to become known as the 5th Paralympic Games). A Coordinating Committee was established to oversee the disbursement of the government funds for these Games. By 1979, federal funding came to an end but the members of the committee felt it was imperative to maintain a cooperative relationship in support of servicing athletes with a disability. In 1981, the committee formed the CFSOD with the mandate to "coordinate those activities common to member sport organizations for the physically disabled on matters pertaining to promotion, rule integration, coaching integration and participation in national and international competitions and administration involving more than one disability group."

Throughout the 1980's and early 90's, CFSOD played a coordinating role in major international games and was involved in coordinating the Canadian Foresters Games, a national competition for athletes with a disability sponsored by the Canadian Foresters. The first Games were held in Brantford in 1987 with subsequent Games held in Richmond, B.C. in 1989 and Brantford, Ontario in 1991. The last Foresters Games were held in 1993 in Abbotsford, B.C. In 1993, CFSOD undertook a strategic review of its mandate and objectives. The review resulted in changes to the structure of the organization and new objectives which reflected its focus on the Paralympic Games. In April 1993, the CFSOD Board of Directors approved a name change to the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC).

Today, the CPC is a not-for-profit, charitable, private organization recognized by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). The CPC aims to develop and grow the Paralympic Movement in Canada, with a commitment to delivering programs that strengthen the movement in Canada and empower persons with physical disabilities through sport. CPC is a collective network of over 40 national sport organizations, encompassing over 200 Provincial Sport Organizations and 4,000 local clubs.

UNDERSTANDING CANADA'S SPORT SYSTEM

At the very root of the Canadian sport system are the athletes and coaches that are central to an athlete-focused and coach-led sport system.

The first level in the structure of the Canadian sport delivery system is the local community sport club. The role of the sport club is to introduce athletes to a sport and to the basic movements and sport skills: running, wheeling, jumping, skating, throwing, coordination and agility.

Sport clubs typically belong to a Provincial/Territorial Sport Organization (PSO). PSOs oversee the organization of sport in their jurisdiction, encourage participation, and eliminate barriers to participation. Their role includes:

- ✓ Promotion of recreational sport;
- ✓ Recruitment and development of athletes;

- ✓ Staging of competitions;
- ✓ Recruitment, training, and retention of coaches, officials, and volunteers, and;
- ✓ The entry of athletes into provincial/territorial and national competitions.

PSOs also support the hosting, staging, and participation of provincial/territorial teams in multi-sport Games.

National Sport Organizations (NSOs) are members of their respective international federations and have leadership responsibility for excellence and sport participation, in conjunction with PSOs, throughout the country.

The responsibilities of NSOs include:

- ✓ Organizing, governing, and regulating their sport in Canada;
- ✓ Providing essential services in English and French for the development of athletes, coaches, officials and administrators;
- ✓ Determining participation of Canadian athletes in international competitions; and
- ✓ Collaborating with their counterparts in the international development of their sport.

Multi-Sport Organizations (MSOs) such as the Canadian Paralympic Committee, the Canadian Olympic Committee, and Commonwealth Games Canada work with NSOs on the preparation and selection of athletes and teams for international events.

UNDERSTANDING THE PARALYMPIC SPORT SYSTEM

The majority of athlete and coach development activities are the same for both Olympic and Paralympic athletes. Integrating Paralympic athlete and coach development activities into the Olympic system is efficient and maximizes opportunities for podium results. At the national level, 20 of the 25 Paralympic Games sports' athlete and coach development programs are integrated within the Olympic national sport organization (NSO). The remaining five Paralympic Games sports are governed by a sport for disabled organization because they do not have an able-bodied NSO counterpart: goalball, boccia, powerlifting, wheelchair rugby and wheelchair basketball.

In practical terms, local sport clubs provide the infrastructure for athletes to play and acquire fundamental sport skills through qualified instructors. Provincial sport organizations provide up-and-coming athletes with opportunities to further develop their sport skills through training and competitions. National sport organizations hone the skills of high-performance athletes through training programs, as well as national and international competitions that help them to achieve excellence and podium results.

Sport-for-disabled organizations play a role by increasing awareness of sport to Canadians with a physical disability and introducing them to multiple sports through outreach clinics and demonstrations. In addition, they support provincial and national sport organizations, providing them with expertise related to disabilities.

WHY START A SPORT CLUB?

Sport clubs enhance development and encourage shared ownership of sport in the community and provide opportunities for affiliation with Provincial and National Sport Organizations. It is through these links that local athletes are able to integrate themselves into Canada's sport system.

Generally speaking, there are three basic steps to establishing a successful sports club. As you move through the steps, we encourage

you to keep in touch with existing sport clubs in your community, and any relevant provincial and national sport organizations. These groups, like the Canadian Paralympic Committee, play an essential role in the development of any new sport club.

STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING YOUR COMMUNITY AND SPORT

This first step involves performing a community assessment to gain a better understanding of the environment. It is also important to gather information on available resources and venue requirements. Once you've collected information you are now ready to hold a public meeting and begin to set up your sport club.

STEP 2: SETTING UP YOUR SPORT CLUB

Now that you have a better understanding of your communities' needs, the next step involves the establishment of your governance and operational structure. At first glance, this step sounds like a daunting and labour intensive paper exercise. Don't worry; most of the work has already been done for you. All you need to do is fill in the blanks using customized templates. Having a well established club with sound governance, policies and operational guidelines is instrumental to the long-term success of your club.

STEP 3: ACTIVATING YOUR CLUB

Once you have completed all of the hard work to establish your club it is time to open your doors for business. This step involves the recruitment of members to participate in your club activities. The final step is arguably the most satisfying because you witness the culmination of your hard work.



STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING YOUR COMMUNITY AND SPORT

This step involves performing an assessment of your community and its needs to gain a better understanding of the environment. It is also important to gather information on available resources and venue requirements. Once you've collected the information, you are now ready to hold a public meeting and start the set up of your sport club.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Building long-term success for a sport club is a challenging task.
- To ensure its success, a plan outlining the club's schedule and frequency of activities, where the organization wants to go and what it hopes to achieve should be in place. As an organizer, you will need to be quick at spotting problems and finding solutions, and recognize that passion alone is not enough.

Organizers should formulate plans that put high-level ideas on paper. Ask the question, what kind of sport club will this be?

- ✓ Will the club be competitive or mainly recreational?
- ✓ Will the club be limited to children, adults or all-ages?
- ✓ Will the club be committed to one sport or many?
- ✓ Will the club provide services to one or more of the disability types?

Following this, it's time to do some basic research. It is important to determine if there is a need for a new sport club in the community. The more interest and need there is for a new sport club, the better your chance of achieving success. Exploring the potential demand for a sport club will help to plan and structure the organization for long-term success. Keep in mind to avoid duplication of existing sport clubs.

This research does not need to be time-consuming, but it should provide some idea about the local interest level for a new sport club. Some questions to consider:

- ✓ What are the sport and recreation activities, trends, and interests already available in the community?
- ✓ Are there suitable training locations available for use?
- ✓ Is the required equipment for the sport accessible in the community?
- ✓ What are the general demographics of the area? Is this expected to change significantly over time? (e.g. is the community growing or shrinking?)

Another key consideration is whether your sport club and competitions will be exclusive to people with disabilities or open to other athletes, a new concept called 'reverse integration'. Information on reverse integration can be found on the CPC website.

Answering these questions will help provide some context to your organization and will be useful when promoting the club to others. Most of this information should be available through discussion with officials at existing sport clubs and community service groups.

Your municipality's recreation department is an excellent resource and a good start. A meeting with the recreation director will likely provide valuable insight and advice. Other resources include existing sport clubs, your local Canadian Paraplegic Association and rehabilitation centres. Provincial Sport Organizations (PSO) may also have a good idea of the level of activity in a particular community and the need for a club.

Resource on CPC Website: Reverse Integration





RESOURCE AND VENUE REQUIREMENTS

No matter what sport the club chooses to pursue, equipment and facility concerns are inevitable. In the assessment phase, it is important to determine the club's needs in terms of equipment and facility access.

Start by contacting existing sport clubs or organizations – these may lead to productive partnerships that can help establish your sport club.

Another source is your municipal recreation department who may be able to provide information about available equipment and facilities in the area. You may also wish to contact the local school boards. At this stage, finding existing and available resources is the primary concern. Resources will vary and are likely to be inconsistent in some geographical areas, better for some sports while lacking in others.

Accessibility is a key consideration in setting up a sport club for athletes with a disability. Although most government-run facilities are accessible for people with disabilities, this may not be the case for all venues. Accessibility is crucial; many people with disabilities may be discouraged from participating if venues make it difficult for them to do so.

There are grants available from events such as Wheels in Motion and organizations such as Tennis Canada to improve accessibility in sport facilities. Some PSO's have equipment loan programs that clubs can access for their members. Local service clubs (Kinsmen, Kiwanis, Lions, etc.) can also be approached to help support equipment purchases.

If the sport involves special transportation needs, you can provide resources for accessible transportation such as specially equipped buses and other vehicles.

INITIAL PUBLIC MEETING

Once a greater understanding of the local situation has been developed and information about resources available has been gathered, it is time to set up a meeting with friends, family, co-workers and members of the general public who may be interested in participating in the sport club. The goal of this meeting is to introduce the idea to others and to build the momentum required to get the concept off the ground.

It is important to schedule the meeting in order to maximize the potential number of people who are able to attend. Be sure to determine an appropriate time, date and location and conduct advertising through a variety of methods including:

- ✓ Invitations and follow-up calls to key individuals;
- ✓ Notices in your local newspaper and in other community calendars;
- ✓ Posters in community centres, sports facilities, libraries, schools and medical facilities;
- ✓ Messages on local Internet websites;
- ✓ Promotion through service organizations for persons with a disability such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Canadian Paraplegic Association, Easter Seals, etc.

To ensure the meeting runs smoothly, create an agenda. The agenda provides an outline of what is to be discussed and ensures that all necessary subjects are covered. Prepare the agenda in advance and take into consideration the amount of time each portion of the meeting should take. When holding the meeting, stick to your timetable. A typical meeting should last no more than 90 minutes. One person should act as meeting Chair to ensure that the agenda is followed. It might be helpful to assign someone to be a timekeeper to make sure the meeting stays on schedule.

During the meeting, it is important to take notes. The summarized notes are called minutes. Minutes are important because they provide a record of what was said, commitments made and by whom and tasks to be followed up. Minutes should be kept for future reference and reviewed at the beginning of the next meeting. Typically, minutes are a great resource to use to decide the agenda for following meetings.

Resource on CPC Website: Meeting Agenda and Minutes

STEP 2: SETTING UP YOUR CLUB

Now that you have a better understanding of your communities' needs, the next step involves the establishment of your governance and operational structure. At first glance, this step sounds like a daunting and labour intensive paper exercise. Don't worry; most of the work has already been done for you. All you need to do is fill in the blanks using customized templates. Having a well established club with sound governance, policies and operational guidelines is instrumental to the long-term success of your club.

ESTABLISH AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The first stage of Step 2 involves the recruitment of volunteers to help you with setting up your club. What was once the responsibility of one or two dedicated people at the club's beginning now requires the support of a larger, more formally organized group commonly referred to as the Executive Committee. Some of the jobs that may need to be filled include:

Chairperson

The chairperson, sometimes referred to as the club president, is the figurehead and official representative for the club. The chairperson must maintain a strong understanding of the club's programs, organization and financial situation and support the overall goals of the club. The chairperson is the organization's chief advocate, acting as a facilitator for club activities and manager of committee and executive meetings.

Secretary

The club secretary acts as the head administrator of the club by providing a link among members, club executives and outside organizations. When individuals are interested in learning about the club, they will typically contact the secretary. Internally, the secretary organizes meetings, prepares the agenda and ensures minutes are taken and distributed. The secretary also plays a key role in coordinating the logistics around club activities and events. Maintaining membership lists is also an important duty of the secretary.

Treasurer

The treasurer is the club's financial manager and is expected to handle duties related to money. This includes budgeting, invoicing, tracking income and expenditures, maintaining bank accounts, preparing financial statements and filing annual returns when applicable.

Fundraising Coordinator

This individual creates a fundraising plan for the club, in order to ensure there is ongoing revenue to support the club's activities.

Volunteer Coordinator

The volunteer coordinator must be a competent individual with the energy to seek out and supervise club volunteers. The volunteer coordinator develops recruitment strategies, conducts interviews with volunteer applicants, defines job descriptions, maintains volunteer records and organizes volunteer training.

ESTABLISH YOUR GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

All of the guidelines that form the basis of a sport club, including its mission statement, operating structure, membership rules and organization, should exist in writing. Typically, these are contained in documents known as the club's by-laws and policies. These documents form the foundation for the sport club.

Having a written foundation is important because it ensures that everyone involved understands the mandate and mission of the sport club. Beyond this, it is useful as the organization grows and therefore becomes the need for the club to be incorporated as a society.

Incorporation may sound daunting; however, it mainly involves registering with the provincial government and filing a tax return on behalf of the club. The benefits of being incorporated are significant. As an incorporated organization, the club will be able to enter into contracts and own property. Incorporation also limits the liability of club members from debts that may be generated by the club. Incorporation is often required for a club to be eligible for government funding, grants and lottery/gaming funds.

Incorporation information is available by contacting any provincial or territorial government department. You may consider speaking with a local club that is already incorporated to help you gain a better understanding of the process.

Insurance is also an important question to be addressed in the initial stages of a setting up a sport club. Insurance for amateur sport clubs provides coverage for players, coaches, volunteers and officials acting within the scope of their responsibilities. Typically, this insurance can be purchased through your Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) or they will be able to provide guidance on how insurance can be obtained.

Resource on CPC Website: By-laws and Policies

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers exist at the core of Canada's local sport and recreation organizations. In most cases, volunteers undertake the important tasks of coaching, fundraising, officiating and equipment maintenance, to name a few.

Recruiting and retaining volunteers is vital for the survival and growth of a sport club. Typically, recruiters look to people in the

community with whom they have established relationships, such as parents, friends, neighbours and co-workers. Although this approach is the most convenient, it is limited in scope. You'll want to reach out to the community at large. Posting notices at community centres and schools, placing ads in newspapers, and contacting similar organizations for a list of their volunteers are all great ways to reach a broader base of potential volunteers.

Many organizations are really successful in attracting volunteers. Reasons may be that the activity is exciting, glamorous or challenging. Even with such draw cards, many clubs do not hold volunteers for long periods of time. Volunteers want to feel: needed, useful, part of the team and welcome. Something as simple as recognition is a very important factor to volunteer retention. To retain your volunteers you must recognize their efforts. Here are some examples of how to cultivate a volunteer:

- ✓ Smiling and calling them by name
- ✓ Offering personal praise to the volunteer while on the job
- ✓ Writing letters and postcards of thanks
- ✓ Providing certificates of appreciation
- ✓ Giving identification pins, T-shirts
- ✓ Acknowledging them in club newsletters
- ✓ Presenting volunteer awards

Effective volunteer programs can't operate without some degree of risk. But organizations can protect themselves, their volunteers, and the people they serve by implementing a risk management strategy. Practicing sound risk management is more than just looking out for potential problems, buying insurance and avoiding lawsuits. It is an ongoing process. The Knowledge Development Centre's risk management guide offers you some simple tips and ideas to help you develop a risk management strategy.

Volunteers are very special people. Without their efforts many clubs would cease to exist and communities in general would lose a valuable asset. Always remember the volunteer's contribution and importance.

Resource on CPC Website: Risk Management Guide

COSTS AND BUDGETING

The purpose of a budget is to establish a sound financial record for club activities. Once the budget is created, it is used as an instrument to plan for future events and provides an accurate historical record for new officers. Budgeting is essential for any business or household. The same applies to sport clubs. In developing a budget, all possible sources of income should be compared to all possible expenses.

Income may be generated from:

- ✓ Membership fees: Typically, clubs create their own membership fees and structure and are sold on an annual basis.
- ✓ Donations: Financial contributions made by the general public, the business community and club members in support of club activities.
- ✓ Sponsorships: Arrangements between the club and external organizations, usually businesses, that results in financial assistance. Sponsors are provided with the benefit of affiliation with the club through advertising, access to club members, and positive exposure in the community.
- ✓ Grants: Subsidies provided by government or other funding agencies.
- ✓ Fundraising and Special Events: The club and its members can plan and carry out various fundraising initiatives to generate income for the club.

Expenses may include:

- Facility rental: Costs for training location, such as use of a gymnasium or ice rink, as well as office space to carry out administrative tasks.
- Equipment: Expenses related to purchase of sporting equipment necessary for the club. Though some equipment may be donated or provided by members, anticipate some costs in this regard.
- Administrative expenses: Includes all stationary, postage, phone calls, and other such office related costs.
- Travel: Out-of-town club activities such as tournaments or competitions, as well as business trips where transportation and overnight accommodation is required.
- Promotion: Advertising, signage and other expense related to marketing.
- Coaching/Instructors Fees: In some sports coaches are paid, while in other sports they are volunteers.

Keep in mind, this is only a limited list of sport club sources of income and expenses. The importance of budgeting cannot be overstated.

Resource on CPC Website: Budget Worksheet

COACHING

Coaches are important to the success of any club. At the outset, enthusiasm and commitment are more important than technical qualifications. Often, a person's experience as a current or former athlete makes them ideal to provide coaching support. At the fundamental level, coaching athletes with disabilities is no different than coaching able-bodied individuals. Generally speaking, most coaches already possess the necessary technical skills and knowledge required to coach athletes with a disability. The only missing piece in their coaching "toolkit" is a basic understanding of a few key aspects that are unique to athletes with a disability. For more information on coaching visit www.coach.ca.

Once the sport club is up and running, it is recommended that attempts be made to find a certified coach or for the coach to become certified. This topic should be explored with your affiliated Provincial Sport Organization. The PSO may also be able to provide resources such as sample lesson plans and mentor coaches to help support the club coach.

The coach is one of your club's most precious resources and it is important to acknowledge the coaches' contribution to the club on a regular (annual) basis. Many communities and PSOs have Community Coaching Awards, and it is a great idea to nominate a deserving coach to acknowledge their hard work and dedication.

Resource on CPC Website: Codes of Conduct

Now that you've conducted your community assessment and established your governance and operational structure, it's time to ACTIVATE YOUR CLUB.

STEP 3: ACTIVATE YOUR CLUB

The final step is arguably the most satisfying because you witness the culmination of your hard work. After doing the hard work of completing Steps 1 and 2, you are now ready to activate your club. This is an exciting process and the following are marketing tips to help you get the club off the ground.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Membership recruitment and retention is the process of increasing or maintaining the number of members actively participating in your club's activities.

Recruitment Strategies:

- Brochures, flyers, posters
- Direct mail campaign
- Advertising and public relations
- Website
- Discount fees for new members
- Local events (e.g. conferences, fairs, etc.)
- Cross-promotion with sponsors, other sports, events, etc.
- Networking and partnering (special events, conferences, etc)
- Word of mouth – INVITE A FRIEND – get members involved
- Prize give-away for new members
- Reward current members who attract new members
- Initiate or partner with someone to deliver an Outreach program
- Offer joint memberships with other sports
- Come-and-try it days

Retention Strategies:

- Discount rate on membership fees for renewal
- Engage your current members on Committees and/or Recruitment initiatives
- Maintain a current database of members and send out regular communiqués
- Conduct regular member surveys to request input into club operations
- Recognition awards for volunteers and outstanding contributions made by members

MARKETING, PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY

In today's world, marketing has become synonymous with success in all sports – from the community to the professional level. For amateur clubs, survival depends on getting the word out to attract new athletes and a steady stream of volunteers.

It is a good idea to appoint someone to be responsible for the creation and execution of a club marketing plan. When building the plan, it is important to consider what the organization offers to the community and how to best communicate messages that support the club's objectives.

Marketing objectives may include:

- Increase total participation in the club, including athletes, officials, coaches and volunteers;
- Increase participation by specific groups, such as athletes of a particular age;
- Build relationships with other community sport organizations;
- Generate interest from funding bodies; and
- Enhance public awareness of the sport.

Ultimately, having a clear idea of what the organization hopes to accomplish is an important step in the development of the marketing plan. Once this is established, it is necessary to determine target groups and the key messages needed to reach them. For example, trying to build interest from sponsors will require a different marketing approach than attempting to recruit new athletes. Effective marketing isn't achieved by randomly handing out flyers or putting up posters; it is a deliberate and planned effort driven by a strategy.

Building the marketing plan

A basic marketing plan will outline the steps needed to propel your strategy into action. This plan should capture your objectives, a snapshot of your target market, a sense of what benefits your club's offers to the group, and the methods of communication used to get the message out.

For example, for a sport club hoping to recruit new athletes -- in particular teenagers and young adults -- it is important to draw up a list of ways to get their attention. Many young people can be found in schools, colleges and community centres. Therefore, it makes sense to put up posters and hold information sessions in these locations. Conduct research on media outlets in the community relevant to the target group to consider advertising or public relations outreach. Develop messages that are relevant to the target group. For the teen group, an example would be highlighting how much fun the group had or its successful social events might be an effective way to attract teens.

Contact your PSO to see if they have existing marketing resources or recruitment and awareness programs already in place.

Resource on CPC Website: Sample Marketing Plan

Publicity

Publicity is a unique form of promotion – it is unpaid and emerges out of relationships with the news media. Publicity exists in the form of content found in newspapers, radio broadcasts and television programs and it can go a long way in establishing the profile and public awareness of your sport club.

To generate publicity, develop press releases that provide information to reporters on the club's accomplishments and any current or upcoming activities. One idea is to hold a special event that the media could attend and cover as news. Examples of a special event could include a sport demonstration or exhibition, a tour of the training facility or an announcement about a new sponsor.

It is in the interest of any sport club to build relationships with the local media. When working with the media, it is important to be aware of media requirements for reporting including appropriate use of language. Typically, community reporters are interested in stories that involve recent events and special accomplishments involving local people. For a sport club, publicity may be generated by sharing human-interest stories that come from the experiences and achievements of the club's athletes.

Resource on CPC Website: Sample Press Release and Guide to appropriate use of Paralympic language

What is a press release?
A press release is a written announcement issued to the news media and other targeted publications for the purpose of letting the public know of developments related to your organization. Press releases are written in a style similar to news stories, with a compelling headline followed by the main points of interest presented at the beginning of the text. Press releases end with the contact information of an organization representative who can offer additional information to any reporter interested in covering the story.

GENERATING SUSTAINABLE REVENUE

Clubs need to actively work to fund their activities. Here are a couple ways you can generate revenues to financially support your club's activities.

Fundraising

Fundraising benefits your club in many ways. One, it creates bonds with club members outside of practice and game situations. Two, it promotes your club to the local community (who may also be potential fans or sponsors). Three, it helps to further the advancement of your club by showing a commitment to consistency and quality.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship involves reaching out to the business sector and seeking financial support for the organization. In exchange, the sponsor company receives the benefit of affiliation with a local club. This benefit can exist in a number of ways, such as through media coverage, use of company logo in club advertising materials, signage at training facilities and acknowledgment at special events and functions.

Things to consider in seeking sponsorships:

- ✓ What is the club's profile? Does the club have qualities attractive to sponsors?
- ✓ What exactly can the club offer a sponsor?
- ✓ What is the competition? How are your club's sponsorship opportunities superior to those of other clubs?
- ✓ What is the intended use of the sponsorship dollars? Can that be used to motivate interest?

Sponsorship proposals can be put forward in a number of ways, such as in writing, through a presentation or even on video. However, it's important to consider context. Small sponsorships can likely be accomplished through verbal agreement. For larger commitments, expect to be required to present it in writing. Many sponsor organizations will have their own forms. In most cases, expect to answer the following questions:

- What amount of money is being asked for and for what purpose?
- What are the details of the club's activities, history and membership?
- What is the club's annual operating budget?
- What are the club's future goals?
- What are the benefits to the sponsor?

Keep in mind that some businesses, particularly large organizations, receive many sponsorship requests. It is worth investigating to see if they have a formal sponsorship procedure before tailoring a specific proposal. Usually this means a simple phone call to the business. Often, the company's community marketing or public relations department handles sponsorships. A company may also have a foundation, grant or donations program that may be more suitable to the club's purposes.

Resource on CPC Website: Sponsorship Proposal

Individual donations

Seeking donations is another means to generate funds to support the organization. As with other forms of fundraising, seeking donations should be included as part of the club's operating plan. It is important for the person responsible for fundraising to be able to identify potential donors, execute a plan to reach them, and be successful in achieving a response. As with sponsorships, it is important to have clear objectives in mind and to communicate the value of the donation, to both the club and to its community which will benefit from the club's success.

Grants

There are typically two sources of financial assistance available at the local level: provincial government grants and subsidies and community-based support from organizations such as the Lions and Rotary Clubs.

For smaller clubs to access government funding, it is necessary for the club to approach their affiliated PSO. This funding may be applied to important club activities such as:

- Hosting major events;
- Hiring staff;
- Capital projects;
- Training for coaches; and
- Travel and accommodation

Grant application criteria differ depending on the source of funds. Generally, grant applications require:

- ✓ Club contact information;
- ✓ A brief description of the club;
- ✓ A description of the project or initiative requiring funding;
- ✓ Budgetary information;
- ✓ Amount of funding requested;
- ✓ Other sources of financing for the project or initiative; and
- ✓ Audited financial information about your club.

Grants are typically offered on an annual basis, so it's a good idea to develop a calendar with all closing dates for applications. It is also a good idea to have the necessary application forms on hand to ensure their timely completion. Deadlines are critical; grantors often cannot consider applications received after the posted due date.

Resource: Many local Credit Unions, community associations, Kiwanis, Lions and Rotary Clubs provide grants and/or funding assistance to local sport clubs. Contact these organizations in your community to inquire about the criteria for financial support.



PHYSICAL DISABILITY DEFINITIONS

Amputee

An amputation refers to a missing limb or part of an arm or leg. Some athletes were born without a limb or parts of limbs. Others have lost limbs or parts of limbs through illnesses like cancer or diabetes, or as a result of an accident. Amputations can affect an individual's balance and ability to move. Some athletes wear prosthesis, an artificial device that replaces the missing body part and helps improve movement. Athletes with amputations compete in a number of sports including cycling, cross country skiing, alpine Skiing and athletics.

Spinal Cord Injuries

Spinal cord or back injuries may result in paralysis, which affects movement of the lower body, upper body and all or part of the trunk muscles. The degree of a disability from a spinal cord injury depends on where the injury has happened along the spinal cord. In general, the higher the injuries on the spine, the less function there is afterward because more muscles are affected. People with spinal cord injuries who are paraplegics have limited or no function of the lower body, but have use of their arms allowing them to participate in sports such as wheelchair basketball and sledge hockey. Quadriplegia affects both arm and leg movement. Quadriplegic athletes compete in such sports as wheelchair rugby.

Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is a condition that damages the areas of the brain that control movement and body posture. This damage can occur before, during and after birth due to a delay in oxygen getting to the brain. The disability may have no visible signs, or it may cause lack of control of facial and limb movements and speech difficulties. Other neurological traumas may occur later in life such as head injury or stroke and are grouped with this disability. Athletes who experience mild symptoms of CP compete in sports such as seven-a-side soccer, while those athletes with more severe symptoms compete in boccia and other sports.

Les Autres

This impairment classification encompasses individuals with Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Polio and Spina Bifida. It also includes a number of other disabilities that do not fall into any of the more specific classifications. Athletes in this class compete in sports such as athletics and swimming and sledge hockey.

Multiple Sclerosis: a chronic, unpredictable condition that affects the brain or spinal cord or both, causing muscular weakness, loss of coordination, and speech and visual problems.

Muscular Dystrophy: a progressive genetic condition characterized by progressive muscular weakness and shrinking of the muscles. Paralysis is the inability to move a part of the body. Some people with Muscular Dystrophy may experience paralysis because of the gradual weakening of arm, shoulder and leg muscles.

Poliomyelitis (Polio): a viral infection of the motor cells in the spinal cord that leads to deformation, muscular paralysis or weakening of the muscles. The severity of the infection determines the extent of the damage and paralysis.

Spina Bifida: a developmental buckling of the spine in which one or more of the vertebrae fail to completely close during early development. Vertebrae are the series of bones that make up your spine. This leaves an opening in the spine that leads to nerve damage. This affects muscle function and sensation to varying degrees.

Visual Impairments

With visual Impairments, an athlete may have partial sight or may be completely blind. Some persons can distinguish only the difference between light and dark. Others see a mist, as if a thick white curtain were always in front of their eyes. Some see the world around the edges of a dark area in the centre of their eyes, never seeing a whole shape, but only its top, bottom or sides. For others, everything is blocked off but a tiny speck of light. Some see nothing at all. Athletes with a visual impairment can participate in a variety of sports, including goalball, alpine skiing, cross country skiing, biathlon and cycling.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I find out more information about a particular sport?

For more information about a particular sport, please visit the CPC website at www.paralympic.ca or contact your Provincial or National Sport Organization. A detailed sport directory is available online at www.paralympic.ca/feeltherush.

What is the appropriate way to report on persons with a disability?

The first rule of principle is to identify the athlete and sport first with an emphasis on their ability rather than disability. Try to avoid using emotional words like tragic, afflicted, victim or confined to a wheelchair. Also, focus on their athletic accomplishments and not solely on their human story. For a complete list of suggested language please consult the Paralympic Lexicon available on the CPC website at www.paralympic.ca/lexicon.

What type of equipment is needed?

Each sport has distinct equipment needs. Some sports require sophisticated sport equipment such as sit-skis or hockey sledges while other sports have minimal equipment requirements such as swimming or curling. For more information on equipment requirements, please contact your Provincial or National Sport Organizations.

Why are certain sports not included in the Paralympic Games?

The criteria established for the determination of sports, disciplines and events looks to achieve a program that reflects diversity and the highest standards of athletic excellence whilst guaranteeing regional access for qualification and elite opportunities for all athletes, especially women and athletes with severe disabilities. Only events that meet the standards within the timeline established are considered for inclusion on the Paralympic Games Program by the International Paralympic Committee.

What are the Paralympic Games?

The Paralympic Games are the largest multi-sport event in the world for athletes with a physical disability. The Paralympic Games date back to 1948 when Sir Ludwig Guttmann staged the International Wheelchair Games to coincide with the 1948 London Olympic Games. The event gradually grew to encompass other sports and other disability categories, and now the Paralympic Summer and Winter Games are the highest level of competition for elite athletes with physical disabilities. They are linked to the Olympic celebrations every two years using the same facilities and athletes must meet strict qualifying standards in order to compete. Canada has participated in every Paralympic Games since 1968.

Why are the Paralympic Games important?

Focusing on the participants' athletic achievement rather than their disability, the Paralympic Games provides the spectators, viewers and volunteers with a unique experience showcasing the athletes' pursuit of a lifetime performance. The Paralympic athletes' strength and skill, competing at the highest level offers a glimpse of human greatness, leaving a legacy for generations to come.

What is the difference between the Paralympics and the Special Olympics?

The Paralympic Games is an elite high-performance sporting event for athletes with a physical disability. Conversely, the Special Olympics provide sport competition for athletes with an intellectual disability. There is no connection other than mutual support.

What is classification?

Classification is simply a structure for fair and equitable sport among athletes with varying degrees of disability. Not unlike wrestling, boxing and weightlifting, where athletes are categorized by weight classes, athletes with disabilities are grouped in classes defined by the degree of function presented by the disability.

Classification is a process that includes assessment and observation by medical and sport-specific technical experts (called classifiers) to determine in which group an athlete will compete. In determining the class, classifiers take into consideration an athlete's disability along with the physical demands, movements and skills required of their sport. Some sport classification rules also require classifiers to observe athletes in a competitive situation to determine their practical capabilities. Once an athlete completes the required movements and/or is observed in a practical setting by classifiers, he/she is assigned a competition classification or "class". It is this class that determines the competitors against whom the athlete will compete, and in some instances, an athlete's eligibility for rule and equipment adaptations.