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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2021TACS0061-001811  
Sept. 18, 2021

Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

### **More children, youth will be able to get in the game**

VICTORIA – Thousands of children and youth will have the opportunity to be physically active through sport, thanks to the B.C. government's historic investment in Sport BC.

"We know far too many young people missed out on game time due to COVID-19, and the health orders that were put in place to protect us over the past 18 months," said Melanie Mark, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. "I'm thrilled to see that children and youth are returning to the playing field to enjoy the physical and mental benefits sport has to offer. Our government believes strongly in creating winning conditions that reduce financial barriers and open doors so that children across British Columbia have the opportunity to thrive."

Mark highlighted the work of KidSport BC at a BC Rugby event held to commemorate and raise awareness of KidSport BC Week that took place Sept. 13-18, 2021. This annual provincial recognition highlights the work of KidSport BC and coincides with the beginning of the school year when many kids' sports teams kick off their season.

In spring 2019, the B.C. government invested \$2.5 million to Sport BC to expand access to amateur and recreational sport programs for children through KidSport BC. From this investment to date, Sport BC has directed \$1 million for BC Kidsport chapters to offset the financial impacts of COVID-19 and to ensure service levels remained consistent with previous years. In addition, Sport BC has supported 19 projects, totalling more than \$300,000. These programs include:

- Hazleton Hockey Initiative – Grow The Game
- Golf BC – Youth Indigenous Golf Program
- BC Wheelchair Association – Bridging the Gap
- Tennis BC – Kids Team Tennis
- Volleyball BC – New Canadians in Volleyball

"Sport helps kids set and achieve goals, lead active lives and make new friends, factors that are especially important for kids who face disadvantages growing up," said Rob Newman, president and CEO, Sport BC. "Through KidSport BC and the exciting programs and initiatives being offered by our members, we are focused on getting more kids off the sidelines and into the game. All kids deserve the chance to be involved in sport and experience its benefits. Sport BC welcomes this opportunity to partner with the Province to further enhance sport programming for under-represented children and youth."

The work of KidSport BC is aimed at increasing participation by children who are often under-represented in sport, including children from lower-income families, Indigenous children, children and youth with disabilities, girls and newcomers to Canada.

**Quick Facts:**

- Established in 1993 by Sport BC, the KidSport BC program is a not-for-profit organization that provides financial assistance for registration fees to kids 18 and younger who face financial barriers to sport participation.
- In 2019-20, KidSport chapters around B.C. distributed more than \$3.25 million to help 10,755 kids in 150 communities.
- This included 39% of the sport programming for girls and 45% for Indigenous groups in 2020.
- Currently, the Province invests \$400,000 annually in Sport BC to fund KidSport BC.

**Learn More:**

Learn more about KidSport BC: <https://kidsportcanada.ca/british-columbia/>

A backgrounder follows.

**Contacts:**

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## BACKGROUND

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### **Programs funded through KidSport BC**

Following is a list of funded KidSport BC projects that have been supported to date by the Province's \$2.5-million investment. Some of these programs are on hold as a result of the provincial health orders placed on sport due to the pandemic.

**Ringette BC – Gym Ringette:** A program that introduces ringette, physical literacy skills and activity to students by providing trained instructors for schools or other sport introductory programs. The program focuses on physical literacy skills and activities primarily for girls, Indigenous youth and new Canadians.

**Lacrosse BC – Spirit Lacrosse:** The Spirit of Lacrosse program introduces ongoing lacrosse programs within Indigenous communities with the aim of fostering relationships between the Indigenous communities and the local community lacrosse associations.

**Hazleton Hockey Initiative – Grow The Game:** This program enhances accessibility to hockey by providing free or low-cost programming, including hockey equipment and skills sessions, allowing kids to try hockey for the first time. This is a collaboration between Hazelton Minor Hockey Association, BC Hockey, Sport BC, I-SPARC and BC Housing to provide community-driven hockey activities for Hazelton and region.

**Nanaimo Community Initiative – Multi-Sport Program:** This is a community-driven collaboration between the region's First Nations, BC Housing and various provincial sport organizations. It is an initiative to introduce community members to sport participation and to encourage healthy family activities.

**BC Ultimate Society – Ultimate Spirit:** An Indigenous outreach program that unifies connection, healing, and wellness in community through culture, spirit and sport. It is a collaborative initiative that takes a holistic approach to health. The program acknowledges the important interaction of the physical, mental, spiritual and cultural aspects of Indigenous communities in B.C.

**Golf BC – Youth Indigenous Golf Program:** An eight-week golf lesson program for Indigenous youth focusing on physical literacy, golf skills, rules and etiquette.

**Wrestling BC – BC Grassroots Development Program:** A program that teaches the fundamental movement skills of wrestling that focuses on safety, fun, inclusion, physical literacy and forming friendships.

**BC Wheelchair Association – Bridging the Gap:** This program provides the opportunity for children and youth with physical disabilities to participate in adaptive sport activities during the COVID-19 pandemic through home activity kits and virtual programming, as well as in-person

programming for select wheelchair sports.

**Waterpolo – I Love Waterpolo:** This program is aimed at providing a supportive environment where girls feel safe to participate in waterpolo. The program's goal is to lay the foundation for the sport and to create spaces that continue to inspire and welcome more girls, especially those who come from diverse backgrounds.

**Curl BC - Getting Started in Curling Camps:** A curling program aimed at promoting the joys of playing sports and physical activity among children between 6 and 12 who come from diverse backgrounds.

**Tennis BC – Kids Team Tennis:** A provincewide initiative that provides youth, from ages 6 to 12, the opportunity to combine practise and play with a focus on a skills development. Kids Team Tennis introduces children to fundamental movement skills and the building blocks for all sports. The aim is to increase social and emotional resilience through connectiveness and belonging.

**Volleyball BC – New Canadians in Volleyball:** This program introduces volleyball to young new Canadians with the understanding that new Canadians face additional barriers that may limit their participation in sport.

**SportMed BC – 5K InTraining Program for New Canadians:** SportMedBC offers grants through its InTraining program for new Canadian youth between 13 and 18.

**BC Athletics - Professional development training program:** Each year BC Athletics partners with school districts throughout the province to deliver professional development training to teachers for their physical education programs. Through track-and-field-inspired activities, this youth program teaches the fundamental skills of running, jumping and throwing, as well as wheeling for children who use wheelchairs.

**BC Provincial Football Association - Flag Football Program:** This program aims to attract new flag football players by increasing access for girls with financial barriers to participation in sport. This program also seeks to foster the formation of new flag football clubs that will facilitate ongoing participation by young female players.

**BC Adaptive Snowsports - Snowmobility Program:** The program provides the opportunity for anyone, including those with physical limitations, to participate in snow sports.

**Rugby BC:** A variety of non-contact rugby programs for youth. This includes girls-only programming and a registration fee waiver for youth from low-income families.

**SportAbility:** Sport programming for children and youth with physical disabilities, including boccia, power soccer, para soccer and para ice hockey.

**BC Blind Sport Association:** An expansion of the association's existing Insight in Schools and Communities project. The program covers the fundamental skills of a variety of individual and team sports.

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