



HAYLEY WICKENHEISER
Women's Ice Hockey

Where Our

When athletes step up to the starting line at the Olympic Games, they are not alone. Our country's finest athletes are supported by a network of eight Canadian Sport Centres—Olympic training hubs with facilities, services, and staff working to give athletes the tools to achieve world dominance in their sport.

By KAREN CLARK LE POOLE
Photography by EWAN NICHOLSON

IMMEDIATELY CANADIAN S

THERE ARE THREE CANADIAN SPORT Centres in British Columbia and Alberta—PacificSport Canadian Sport Centre Vancouver, PacificSport Canadian Sport Centre Victoria, and the Canadian Sport Centre Calgary (CSCC). “CSCC is a hub, where essential support services are provided for athletes and coaches,” says Dale Henwood, president of CSCC. “The core competence is an atmosphere of excellence.”

PacificSport Vancouver aims to be a world leader in sport performance. “We are dedicated to creating a world-class training environment for Canadian athletes,” says PacificSport Vancouver President and CEO Wendy Pattenden. “Our staff goes above and beyond to make sure athletes are heard and supported.” The mission in Victoria holds many of the same values. “We want to create a dynamic sport environment for sport performance at all levels by integrating world-class athlete services, coaching excellence, and long-term sport development initiatives,” says Roger Skillings, president and CEO of PacificSport Victoria. “Our vision is to be a world-leading high-performance training centre by 2008.”

The one characteristic central to all three Canadian Sport Centres is dedication to Canada's athletes. “Olympic athletes are unbelievable individuals under tremendous stress,” says Skillings. “They are in constant need of additional support because of the expectations placed on them to perform. Athletes are great ambassadors and role models, so we try to create a support network for them and interact in a caring way.”

PacificSport Victoria is located at Saanich Commonwealth Place—a legacy of the 1994 Games in Victoria. PacificSport Vancouver has head offices in the TELUS Centre for Sport in Vancouver with eight training and competition satellites around the province, while CSCC operates out of the Olympic Oval at the University of Calgary. The Sport Centres offer athletes performance, support, and life services. Dr. Gordon Sleivert, director of sport science and medicine at PacificSport Victoria, says staff aim to be innovative—to lead rather than follow—when it comes to sport performance.

The mission of the new PacificSport Technology Centre located at the Vancouver Island Technology Park is to develop and operate new technology in sport to enhance the international success of Canadian athletes. “The centre is unique in that

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This applies to such a wide range of athletes like runners, sports teams and weight trainers who maintain rigorous training and push themselves to peak performance. The risk of infection for a serious athlete may be further compounded by exposure during travel, lack of sleep, severe mental stress, malnutrition, or weight loss.

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Director Medical Services –
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What Athletes Are Saying About Their Sport Centres

"Every element the Canadian Sport Centre Calgary provides is critical to Canada's athletes. They have a very comprehensive program where athletes are well taken care of, and we have access to all of the resources we need to achieve our goals. I have used the CSCC to access sport medicine, nutrition information, sport psychology—the list goes on and on. All of the programs the CSCC provides have helped me become a very balanced and healthy athlete."

—KYLE SHEWFELT, 2004 OLYMPIC CHAMPION, GYMNASTICS

"PacificSport Canadian Sport Centre Vancouver has supported me over the years with great services, including nutrition, physiotherapy, and massage therapy. Recently, they went the extra step in providing me extra funding through the Podium Fund to help me prepare for Athens. It was certainly a key to achieving my goal and bringing back the silver medal in the marathon."

—KELLY SMITH, 2004 PARALYMPIC SILVER MEDALLIST, ATHLETICS

"PacificSport Canadian Sport Centre Victoria understands the fundamental needs of an amateur athlete trying to compete in a professional and competitive sport environment. They give us direction with training facilities, medical services, sport therapy, and sport science, offering clinics with the latest sports information. They also help us balance the importance of achieving success and being great role models for kids in our community."

—DIANE CUMMINS, 2004 OLYMPIAN, ATHLETICS

"Athletes need an independent advocate with respect to improving living needs and daily services. PacificSport Vancouver provides a collective voice for athletes and provides legitimacy to athletes' needs and concerns. It has helped me become a much more well-rounded, informed, and fit athlete as well as providing me a valuable connection to a well-respected professional services firm."

—STEPHANIE QUINN, 2004 CIS NATIONAL CHAMPION, FIELD HOCKEY

"PacificSport Victoria provides a base of support for athletes. They help athletes financially, but they will also help you find a hotel room, book a plane ticket, or get a job. They provide guidance when athletes don't know where to go—I would have quit sport a long time ago if it wasn't for them."

—GARY REED, TWO-TIME NATIONAL CHAMPION, ATHLETICS

"The CSCC cares about the future of athletes. They emphasize preparation for life after sport. The CSCC will help you schedule classes or prepare your résumé, and they'll encourage you to take courses like public speaking that prepare you for life after sport and make you more well rounded. And being a well-rounded person makes you a better athlete."

—JEREMY WOTHERSPOON, FOUR-TIME WORLD SPRINT CHAMPION, SPEED SKATING



Diane Cummins



Kyle Shewfelt (middle)



Kelly Smith

human performance specialists work closely with professional technologists, engineers, computer experts, and tradespersons to provide leading-edge solutions for athletes and coaches," says Sleivert. "The centre has fully equipped and staffed machine and electronic shops, a rapid prototyping instrument, as well as an environmental facility to research extreme temperature conditions."

There is also a mobile science unit—a lab that can go into the field to training camps and remote competitions. Sport science and exercise physiology enable athletes to opti-

mize their strength and conditioning regimen. "Sport science allows the athlete to feel confident in what they're doing," says Diane Cummins, an 800-metre runner who competed at the 2004 Olympics in Athens and was fifth at the 2001 World Championships. "It lets the athlete know their training is right and in step with or ahead of what their competitors are doing."

The Canadian Sport Centres also have well-established sport medicine teams for early recognition and treatment of injury and illness. "The CSCC helped me access the

best doctors and physiotherapists when I injured my foot in March 2004," says Kyle Shewfelt about his injury that occurred just five months before winning an Olympic gold medal in artistic gymnastics. "The CSCC booked all of my MRI and doctor appointments, so I received immediate treatment the day I got home. The CSCC wants to see an athlete succeed just as much as the athlete wants to achieve that success." The Canadian Sport Centres provide priority response and

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