

**Canadian Sports Policy and Vancouver City's Strategy for Sports Participation:
The Vancouver Park Board and Public Recreation System**

Wakana Kawamura

Program in Lifelong Sport and Art Activities,
Faculty of Education
University Teacher Education Fukuoka

Hiroaki SAKAKIBARA, PhD

Professor in charge of seminar for graduation thesis
University of Teacher Education Fukuoka

The offprint

Research Journal of Health, Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Vol.65, Feb. 2017
Department of Health and Physical Education, University Teacher Education Fukuoka

Canadian Sports Policy and Vancouver City's Strategy for Sports Participation: The Vancouver Park Board and Public Recreation System

**Wakana KAWAMURA, Program in Lifelong Sport and Art Activities,
University of Teacher Education Fukuoka**

Hiroaki SAKAKIBARA, Professor in charge of seminar for graduation thesis

Keywords: community sport participation Canada

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the Canadian Sport Policy and the strategy for sport participation in the city of Vancouver, with reference to the Vancouver Park Board and public recreation system. Community sport in Canada is supported by the government as policy, and participation is promoted by both public information and autonomous motivation. To understand the Canadian Sport Policy and the formation of community sport in that country, it is necessary to recognise some background characteristics that are unique to Canada. (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2011, p.1) For instance, there are issues related to the integration of a multicultural and social union, sometimes even involving immigration policy. There is also the problem of 'Canadian Identity'. Special value has been found in organised community sport as a way of resolving such issues.

National sports law and policy in Canada and Japan share some common interests, such that Japan's planning for sport policy could benefit from study of the Canadian Model. (IzumoT., 2014, p.20) The sport environment and the ideal of sport organisation is considered in this thesis, which examines the realities of sports participation in Vancouver as implemented under the Canadian Sport Policy. This study focuses on the city of Vancouver, to indicate how Canadian people are influenced by the Canadian Sport Policy, and the strategy for sport organisation that has been established in Vancouver. The features of Canadian Sport Policy 2012 are discussed in comparison with Japanese sport policy, with particular attention to actual participation in the remarkable system for community sport at the facilities of Vancouver.

2. Features of the Canadian Sport Policy

The Canadian Sport Policy was launched in January 2000 by the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The four goal of The Canadian Sport Policy are Enhanced Participation: Enhanced Capacity: Enhanced Excellence: Enhanced Interaction. (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2002, p.16) The first highlighted feature of the Policy is that 14 governments share the policy vision and goal. The second is that there are many participating stakeholders, such as the sport industry and sport organisation. The third characteristic is that the government and the representatives of sport organisations cooperate with each other in the goals of the establishment of organised mechanisms for sport and communication. (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2011, p.15) In addition, there is the additional documentation of an Action Plan. In fact, there are many Action Plans, such as the F-P/T Priorities for Collaborative Action and the Sport Excellence Strategy, and so on. The documents related to the Policy, Action Plans and strategies are made public, representing

systematised, consistent linkages, not just at the federal level, but also among province/territorial governments. From this vantage point, the sport polarity of one's own country becomes clear for sport organs in Canada, making it easy to design and put into practice the mechanisms and measures. (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2013, p.196)

3. Strategy for Sport Participation in Vancouver

Building on the Canadian Sport Policy, Vancouver Sport Strategy (VSS) was published in May 2008. The VSS helps illustrate how sport law has influenced community living in Canada. Within the framework of the Canadian Sport for Life Model, the VSS identifies six strategic goals that include detailed recommendations and outcomes for success in developing sport in Vancouver in the following categories: Strengthened Interaction; Physical Literacy for All; Active for Life; Enhanced Excellence; Quality Facilities for Participation and Performance and Recognition as a Premier Event Destination. These represent the vision for how the VSS balances the pursuit of sport for its inherent value – for physical literacy, sport performance and participation – with what sport can contribute to development, sustainability, health and wellness within the city. One of specific benefits to be derived from the development of the VSS is Community Building. There are many emigrants in Canada, including the city of Vancouver. One in five people was an emigrant in 2006, according to the Japanese Association for Canadian Study. Moreover, 18.4 percent of its 29.6 million people were born outside of Canada; this is the highest percentage since 1931. Thus, many different religions and cultures are represented within Canada. As mentioned above, the Canada Sport Policy recognises special value in sport as a way to unite communities inclusively, encompassing those citizens from outside Canada.

4. The Vancouver Park Board and Public Recreation System

The sport venue is important to bringing communities together to join in sport and improving sport performance. There are many facilities, typically Community Centers, at which Vancouver citizens can play different sports. The Community Centers have an important role, indispensable to the success of the Vancouver Sport for Life Strategy. Every district has one Community Center, usually close to a bus-stop or station. Owing to the convenience of access, everyone can get to the Community Center easily. There is ample seating, and access to beverages and snacks, allowing participants to linger before or after sport activities. The Community Centers are administrated by the Vancouver Park Board, which has exclusive possession, jurisdiction and control over more than 230 public parks in the city, and a large public recreation system of community centers, pools, rinks, fitness centers, golf courses, street trees, marinas, playing fields and more. The Park Board's mission is to provide, preserve and advocate for parks and recreation services to benefit all people, communities and the environment. (Vancouver Park Board, p.1) The VSS maintains that it not only serves as a model for increased participation in high quality sport, but also establishes a platform for the strategic use of sport to build communities. (Vancouver City Council and Vancouver Park Board, 2008, p.7) The Community Centers have an important role in implementing this platform, also having become a place for relaxation and refreshment for Vancouver citizens.

One of the most beneficial features of the Community Centers is their 'drop-in' system, which reaches far beyond the quality of any such system in Japan. Some of its strong points include that anyone can join in an activity, regardless of nationality, sex, age, level of sport or status. There are many types of activities in all 24 Community Centers throughout the city, so people can choose among them, the level

of activity, time, date and place, participating at their own pace. The 'drop-in' system is accessible on a user-friendly website that provides complete information about all 24 Community Centers, where people can confirm the activity's day, availability and the place of activity.

5. Conclusion

Canada has the issue referred to as 'the Quebec problem', with regard to the necessity of integrating a country to form a multi-cultural union and social union that involves an autochthon population as well as immigration policy. Moreover, there is the issue of 'Canadian Identity'. To resolve such issues at the national level, special value was found in sport. There are remarkable concepts within the Canadian Sport Policy 2012. Studying the Canada Model can provide lessons to translate to the development of sport policy in Japan. The features of the Canadian Sport Policy were summarized in this thesis, as well as the reality of sport participation in Vancouver and the influence of the Canadian Sport Policy on citizen life in Vancouver. There are many resources that can help citizens become involved in sport, such as Community Centers and a 'drop-in' system. These resources are lacking in Japan. However, it is not certain how many people are actually using this system and going to the Community Centers. In addition, it is not certain how the government records the number of Community Center users. It is necessary to conduct further research about the level of sport participation in Canada, both before the launch of the Canadian Sport Policy and after, for comparison.

In addition, Canada has a remarkable sport program known as ParticipACTION, which is a national non-profit organisation, originally launched as a government program in the 1970s, to promote healthy living and physical fitness. (ParticipACTION, p.2) With such an important role in Canada, this organisation is worth studying as a model for Japan.

References

Department of Canadian Heritage.(2002) The Canadian Sport Policy May 24, 2002, Ottawa, pp.1-21.

IzumoT. (2014) Development Process of the Canadian Sport Policy, in; Sasakawa Sport Foundation, *Sport Politics Studies*, Vo.3, No.1, pp.18-27.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology(MEXT)(2011), CANADA, in; The Survey of Sports Policy Research Project in Japan and foreign countries, pp.1-37.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology(MEXT)(2013), CANADA, The Survey of Sports Policy Research Project in foreign countries, pp.167-208

ParticipACTION(2016, <http://...Participaction browser>)

Vancouver City Council and Vancouver Park Board(2008), *Vancouver Sport for Life: Vancouver Sport Strategy*, Vancouver, pp.1-44.

Vancouver Park Board(2016, <http://...Vancouver PB browser>)

Table 1. Summary of Community Centers in Vancouver

Activity category	sport social day-camp special-event outdoor-activities	childcare youth-leadership fitness-health education art, culture and environment
Sport activities	volleyball swimming yoga tennis golf women's soccer	football table-tennis badminton boxing soccer basketball
Number of facilities	24, one in each district in the city of Vancouver	
Type of facilities for sport activities	ice rink synthetic turf diamond dance studio baseball ground	gymnasium grass field swimming pool tennis court
Hours of operation	9:00 am to 11:00 pm	
Access	5~10 minutes from closest station or bus-stop	
Management	Vancouver Park Board	

(Source: <http://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/community-and-cultural-centres.aspx>)

Table 2. Summary of the 'Drop-in' System for Sport Participation

Types of activities	volleyball skill clinic swimming boxing soccer golf recreation tennis lesson beginner/intermediate	football yoga badminton recreation basketball competitive women's indoor soccer table-tennis lesson etc.
Fee	\$5~\$10 (depends on activity and place)	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No registration: people can join anytime • Low cost for participation • Participant can choose the level of activities • All kinds of sport activities are held somewhere every day • A participant can find new friends and community • Wi-Fi is available at every Community Center 	
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant's enjoyment is the primary purpose, so skill improvement is not a priority • The number of participants is limited, so if it is popular activity, early attendance is critical 	

(Source: https://ca.apm.activecommunities.com/vancouver/Activity_Search?IsSearch=true)