

Canadians Support Increased Public Investment In Own The Podium Initiatives For Our Athletes

3 out of 4 Canadians feel that the *Own the Podium* initiative was worthwhile despite not placing #1 in total medal count

Ottawa, Ontario (February 27, 2010) – As the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games come to a close, a poll conducted by *Angus Reid* on behalf of the *Sport Matters Group* indicates that a very strong majority of Canadians (72%) support an increased public investment of \$22 million for a program like *Own the Podium*. Despite not achieving its goal for Canada to top the total medals table, 3 out of 4 Canadians feel that the *Own the Podium (OTP)* initiative was worthwhile.

“We asked some very direct questions and received a very clear response from Canadians. They fully support the investment *Own the Podium* has made in our Canadian athletes and coaches,” said Ian Bird, Senior Leader of the Sport Matters Group. “It’s clear that Canadians want more of what they’ve seen during the Games and that they value public support for initiatives like OTP which assist our athletes and coaches in their quest to be the best. This is a major shift in mindset with significant implications for the future direction of high performance sport in Canada. Leaders in Canada’s sport system have a new job ahead – to surpass the expectations for sporting success now held by Canadians who have felt the impact of the results in Vancouver.”

Consistent with a poll conducted prior to the Games on February 2nd, this poll also sought the views of Canadians on the impact of our athlete’s performances on a number of national priorities. Canadians hold very strong opinions that the results achieved at the Olympic Games in Vancouver have made us proud (74% very positive impact, 92% positive impact) and have brought us together as a nation (57% very positive impact, 83% positive impact). Canadians also closely link the performances of Canadians athletes to their own motivations towards sport participation (78% positive) and physical activity (75% positive).

This series of polls will continue through the 2010 Paralympic Games to be held in Vancouver and Whistler this March.

Visit www.sportmatters.ca for more information.

The Sport Matters Group (SMG) is a voluntary group of Canadian sport and physical activity leaders who work together to advance the important contribution that sport makes to society, to strengthen public policy and to promote innovation in sport systems.

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For enquiries:

Mr. Ian Bird
Senior Leader, Sport Matters Group
M: (613) 447-2488