INSTITUTE FOR CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP
INSTITUT POUR LA CITOYENNETÉ CANADIENNE

ICC Insights...

PLAYING TOGETHER –
NEW CITIZENS, SPORTS & BELONGING

Full Study Report – July 2014

INTRODUCTION 3
Message from Institute for Canadian Citizenship Executive Director & CEO, Gillian Smith
Executive summary

STUDY 101 7
Research method

CHANGING THE GAME PLAN 11
Canada's sports organizations & demographic shift

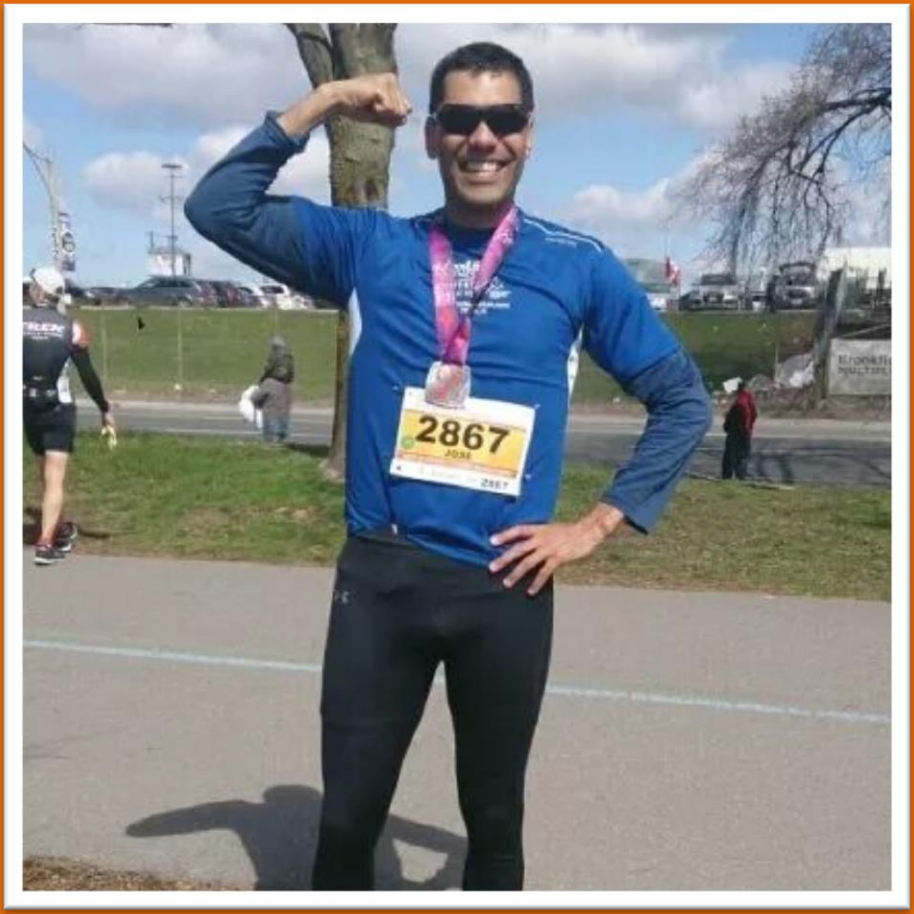
FINE-TUNING THE LINEUP 18
How new citizens play sports in Canada
Barriers to participation
Kids' participation

CATCHING THE GAME 25
Sports new citizens follow
Attending & watching trends
Barriers to watching the game
New citizen engagement opportunities

FIRST PICK 35
Cultivating belonging through sports

PUT ME IN, COACH! 42
Conclusion & recommendations from new citizens

APPENDIX 45
Appendix 1: Online survey questions
Appendix 2: Focus group questions
Appendix 3: About the ICC & its supporters



Jose, Cultural Access Pass Member

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

A sport is a sport. A fan is a fan.

Gillian Smith, Institute for Canadian Citizenship Executive Director & CEO

Playing together – new citizens, sports & belonging tells the story of sports as an effective means to help new Canadians feel at home. The insights of more than 4,000 new citizens – delivered via an online survey and nationwide focus groups – tell the tale of becoming Canadian, in part, by playing and watching sports together.

From cheering for Canada's Olympians, to learning how to play a new sport, to making new friends at their children's sporting events, new citizens have told us how sports helped them feel included in Canadian life.

While sporting activities should be more widely recognized for their role in knitting Canadians together, barriers to inclusion in sports still exist: access, cost, lack of information and other factors contribute to new citizens' inability to participate.

The good news is that the barriers cited by new citizens are mainly structural challenges, rather than cultural issues. The question is not *why* new citizens should be included, it's a matter of *how*.

Through our research, we discovered dozens of local-level initiatives designed to connect all Canadians through sport. But more needs to be done: we need to change how we think about sport and modify how sporting structures operate.

Most importantly, we need to listen to new citizens' experiences and bring their perspectives to bear on how Canadians organize themselves to play.

In this report, new citizens offer their own recommendations to reduce or eliminate real and perceived barriers to participation.

As it turns out, a sport is a sport and a fan is a fan, no matter where in this world you were born.

Sports are familiar, safe spaces to connect to new people. By playing together, we build connections, community and, ultimately, our country.

We are grateful for the generosity of our sponsors, Bouygues Building Canada and Lois & Doug Mitchell, who made this study possible.

The Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) is a national not-for-profit charity devoted to new Canadian citizens. We are inspired by the stories of those who have chosen to make Canada their home and, through our programs, we work to advance their path to full integration and inclusion in Canadian life.

Playing together – new citizens, sports & belonging is the first of a series of reports on the experiences of Canada's newest citizens. Through our connection to new Canadian citizens who have participated in our programs – more than 100,000 to date – the ICC helps bring the voices of new citizens to all Canadians.

"Sport is more of a culture than a hobby here. It's a part of life,"[1]

[1] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014. To protect the confidentiality of our participants, all names used in the report are pseudonyms.

Executive Summary

Playing together – new citizens, sports & belonging, conducted by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC), explores how new Canadian citizens participate in sports in Canada and the role that sports play in their integration and belonging. It provides recommendations on how Canada can better facilitate new citizens' participation in sports.

This study was completed in three phases: an environmental scan; an online survey of new citizens; and eight nationwide focus groups.

This study is unique in the following ways:

- We talk to new citizens, generally resident in Canada for five to seven years.
- We explore the range of their experiences, from before they came to Canada, to immediately after arrival, to now.
- We focus on adult participation rather than children's.
- We explore trends in grassroots participation and attendance at sporting events.
- We investigate in more detail the connections between sports, belonging and citizenship.

We learned that new citizens are game – they want to join, learn, play and cheer. While integration may not be one of the primary reasons they participate in sports in the first place, upon reflection, the new citizens who participated in the study said sports helped them learn Canadian culture. Sports are safe places to meet other Canadians who share similar interests. On the field and in the locker room, new citizens learn the social norms of their new home. Occasionally, those conversations delve more deeply into Canadian politics, history and culture. Major sporting events – from the Olympics to the Stanley Cup playoffs – have a way of bringing all Canadians together and making new citizens feel part of the team.

We also learned that Canadians are generally more than happy to invite new citizens along to try or watch a new sport.

But there are barriers – largely structural – that keep some from getting in the game at a more organized level, leaving them to practice individual sports that take less time and cost less money (e.g., running, walking, biking and swimming). When they do play sports, new citizens tend to gravitate toward those they already know, such as table tennis, basketball and badminton. Some of the more important barriers we identified in the study are as follows.

TIME & COST

The first few years after arriving in Canada are intense: finding jobs and homes, and getting children settled in school are key priorities. Our survey results and focus group discussions indicate that the "survival period" can last much longer than the first few years. Even after becoming more established, new citizens are busy building careers and raising families, leaving little time to dedicate to sports, either as participants or fans.

HIGHLY STRUCTURED SPORTS SYSTEM

Focus group participants commented that the Canadian sports system is very "organized," which can make playing sports more difficult to access. Unfamiliarity with league play or sports infrastructure (such as community centres) and the inability to find the appropriate skill level or anyone to play with all play a role in keeping new citizens on the sidelines.

NEWNESS BRINGS NERVOUSNESS

Focus group participants also identified a hesitation that comes with being in a new environment. They may not be confident in their ability to learn a new sport (especially completely unfamiliar winter sports) or to break into already established sports networks.

INFORMATION DOESN'T REACH ITS AUDIENCE

Many new citizens reported that they just don't know where to look for information, and that the information they find is incomplete. This applied to sports they wanted to practice and those in which they wanted to register their children. They also don't know where to find information to purchase cheap tickets or where to read up on the rules before heading to a game.

VIOLENCE IN SPORTS

Many new citizens are hesitant about sports that are overly aggressive or violent. Parents are reluctant to put their children in hockey – or even attend a game – because fighting is allowed.

GETTING NEW CITIZENS IN THE GAME

The new citizens who participated in this study suggested a number of strategies that can be adopted to make sports more accessible for new citizens and, perhaps, hasten their integration into Canadian life.

- Create a centralized online information hub on sports in Canada, especially designed for newcomers.
- Include basic information about sports and recreation infrastructure in the Welcome Package distributed when permanent residents enter Canada.
- Distribute information on sports participation and sporting events where newcomers congregate – at settlement organizations, English/French classes, libraries, and community centres.
- Recruit new citizen ambassadors and send them out into their communities armed with information. Capitalize on the expertise new citizens bring and engage them as volunteers, coaches, etc.
- Give new citizens the chance to try a sport with little financial risk or time commitment through "learn to" opportunities.
- Create entry-level pricing for lessons or memberships.
- Promote workplace-based sports and recreation.
- Create a tax benefit for adults who play sports.
- Offer newcomers discounted tickets for sporting events, with an explanation of the sport and its rules.
- Get professional sports teams out into communities to develop connections with their members and increase familiarity with sports and its players.

Some of these recommendations have been piloted in certain sports; some have not. One of the big lessons from this study is that individual Canadians have the power to make our sports system more inclusive. Simple gestures, like inviting colleagues and neighbours to try, or watch, a new sport and explaining the rules, can make all the difference. We must not make assumptions about what people know about the Canadian sports system.

By playing together, we build connections, community and, ultimately, our country. A sport is a sport; it's heartening to learn how easy playing together could be in this country.

TOP

Amalia, Cultural Access Pass Member

SECTION 2

STUDY 101

Maria, a new Canadian citizen from Romania, is an avid tennis fan. She was thrilled to learn there was a tennis club across the street from where she lived. What she didn't expect was to wait two years to work up the courage to join.

Maria: I had a tennis club just across the street from my house. Very close, but for two years I couldn't go there and sign up.

Facilitator: No? Why not?

Maria: Because they were looking so, you know, so Canadian, so [at ease] in their own thing there. I never dressed in a skirt, for example. Just cultural difference, you know? Every woman had [a] short skirt and equipment, very nice equipment, and I usually play like, not so well dressed. Yeah, it took me two years to do it.

This story, told during a focus group, points to the themes uncovered in this study. Even when a sports facility is right in their neighbourhood, many new citizens may hesitate to join; they are new and not sure if they are welcome. Add variations in cultural norms – something as simple as clothing – plus the differences in how Canadian sports are organized, and the barriers to participation may be greater than those born in Canada realize.[2]

Sports are woven into the daily lives of Canadians. It's a critical piece of our country's identity and culture, and has great potential to be an inclusive way to bring communities together.

But sports can also be a mechanism for exclusion. Although the tennis club likely did not intend to exclude newcomers like Maria, her story demonstrates that Canada's sports sector still has a way to go to actively welcome and engage our country's newest citizens.

WHY SHOULD SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS CARE?

Immigration is central to Canada's future. By 2030, it will account for all of Canada's net population growth.[3] Approximately 250,000 permanent residents settle in Canada every year, and 85% choose to become Canadian citizens. This is the highest naturalization rate in the world.[4] Cities across Canada – large and small – are being transformed by immigration. These demographic trends will undoubtedly have an impact on Canadian sports. Newcomers arrive with different sporting passions and traditions and may be unfamiliar with sports traditionally popular in Canada. These sports may see their participation levels drop, while new sports – like cricket, table tennis and badminton – will grow in popularity. Both grassroots and professional sports organizations will need to find ways to appeal to this diverse new audience if they want to remain relevant.

[2] Focus group discussion, May 15, 2014.

[3] This is the projection made by Statistics Canada.

[4] See Citizenship and Immigration Canada for statistics on permanent residents, released every October. The naturalization rate is based on Statistics Canada census data.

Research methodology

Playing together – new citizens, sports & belonging was guided by the following research questions:

- How important are sports to new citizens and how are sports integrated into their daily lives?
- Do barriers preventing new citizens' participation in Canada's sporting culture exist?
- What would encourage new citizens to participate in sports to a greater extent than current levels?
- What can sports organizations do to more effectively engage new citizens?
- To what extent does participation in sports contribute to the social integration of new citizens?
- Does participation in certain sports help cultivate a sense of Canadian identity? Conversely, does a lack of participation reinforce a sense of exclusion from feeling Canadian?

These questions were explored over three phases:

- environmental scan - literature review, Internet research and stakeholder interviews;
- national online survey of new citizens; and
- focus groups with new citizens across Canada.

PHASE 1: ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Telephone interviews were conducted with 21 sports organizations across Canada. Two types of organizations were targeted: those that govern individual sports and the umbrella organizations (largely geographically focused) that advocate for sport more generally. A variety of sports were represented, including hockey, basketball, baseball, curling, football and soccer.[5] To account for not speaking to organizations in all sports or levels, we examined the strategic plans of sports organizations published online to determine how immigration and diversity fit into these organizations' long-term planning. Specifically: to what degree are these issues on their radar; what impact, if any, is immigration having on their sport; what are these organizations doing, if anything, to engage new Canadians; and what have they identified as barriers to successful engagement?

PHASE 2: ONLINE SURVEY

Refer to appendix 1 for the survey questions.

The second phase of our research was an online survey sent to new citizens across Canada who participate (or have participated) in the Institute for Canadian Citizenship's Cultural Access Pass[6] program. The survey was in the field for three weeks during March and April 2014; 4,157 new citizens responded to the survey, with 3,020 completing it. The analysis in this study includes partial completions. Since the sample is not a random sample of all new Canadian citizens, a margin of error cannot be calculated and the results are not statistically representative of all new Canadian citizens. Still, the survey offers compelling insights from thousands of new citizens across Canada.

This survey (and the study as a whole) focuses on the experiences of *new citizens*, not permanent residents. This means participants have been in Canada for at least three years to fulfill their residency requirements before being granted citizenship; 63% of respondents have lived in Canada for five to seven years.[7]

[5] No organizational names or names of the individuals interviewed are mentioned in this study; participants were told their comments would be anonymous in the final report.

[6] Cultural Access Pass is a program offered by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship to new citizens who are in their first year of citizenship. Members (and up to four of their children under 18) receive a year of free access to more than 1,200 Canadian cultural places and spaces.

[7] In this report, we use the term new citizen deliberately; when we use the term *newcomer*, we refer to their experiences in

DEMOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS

The majority of survey respondents are between 35 and 44 years of age (47%). 58% reported having children, of which 44% reported that their children play sports. Slightly more women (53%) than men (47%) responded to the survey. The majority of respondents live in Ontario (48%), followed by Quebec (26%), British Columbia (14%) and Alberta (9%). The survey was sent to new citizens who live in urban areas; participants' exact address cannot be determined.

Participants' cultural backgrounds mirror the top source countries of Canadian immigrants: the Philippines, India, China, Colombia, France, Algeria, Brazil, Pakistan, Russia and the United Kingdom are the top ten countries of origin.

Survey respondents are highly educated: 74% have the equivalent of a Canadian university degree. However, this does not necessarily translate to high income levels. While 58% reported working full-time, 46% specified a total household income, before taxes, of less than $60,000, and 79% reported a total household income of less than $100,000. These results are consistent with other research conducted by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship. It is not safe to assume new Canadians are economically settled by the time citizenship is obtained; many are still trying to find employment that matches their skill set and training.

PHASE 3: FOCUS GROUPS

Refer to appendix 2 for the focus group session questions.

In May and June 2014, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship conducted focus groups in communities across Canada to further explore themes exposed in the online survey.

Focus groups were done in the following communities:

- Toronto
- Mississauga, Ont.
- Ottawa
- Winnipeg
- Calgary
- Vancouver
- Richmond, B.C.
- Montreal

The focus groups consisted of seven to 11 participants, with the exception of Winnipeg (five participants). Participants were recruited from the survey (respondents were prompted to leave their contact information if they were interested in participating) or with a targeted recruitment message sent to Cultural Access Pass members in particular locations. A diverse mix of participants in terms of demographic characteristics participated, but the focus groups tended to attract those who already had a strong interest in sports. Those that did not were usually interested on their children's behalf.

DETALIS	TORONTO	MISSISSAUGA	WINNIPEG	CALGARY	VANCOUVER	RICHMOND	OTTAWA	MONTREAL
MEN	5	7	4	7	2	6	8	6
WOMEN	2	4	1	3	9	4	3	4
COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN	7	8	4	10	8	6	9	7
HAVE KIDS	4	6	1	6	1	5	9	5
STRONG INTEREST IN SPORTS	5	7	5	8	8	3	3	4
PLAY OR WATCH	7	8	5	10	11	7	11	7

TOP

the first few years after coming to Canada, before officially becoming Canadian citizens.

Badminton Alberta

SECTION 3

CHANGING THE GAME PLAN

Canada's sports organizations & demographic change

Canada's sports organizations & demographic change

One consistent theme in the focus group discussions was that Canada's sports system is "organized." While Canadians can simply head out the door to the local park and swing a bat, kick a ball or go for a run, participating in team or partner sports requires a certain level of organization, especially during Canada's long winters when outdoor sports move indoors. Canada is flush with organizations for all sports, at different levels of competition and in all jurisdictions. These governing bodies and grassroots groups are the access points for participation.

Playing together – new citizens, sports & belonging began with a literature review, online research and stakeholder interviews to obtain a baseline understanding of immigration's impact on Canadian sport. In particular, we wanted to know how Canadian sports organizations are addressing the country's demographic changes; the level of importance placed upon newcomer engagement in strategic planning; what initiatives, if any, have already been tried, particularly in traditional, mainstream Canadian sports; and what challenges have been encountered in efforts to be inclusive thus far. Exploratory research was also conducted to determine if any similar studies or initiatives had already been attempted.

Interviews were carried out with a variety of sports organizations across the country. An attempt was made to talk to national, provincial and municipal umbrella organizations, as well as those governing Canada's traditionally popular sports.

The organizations not reached via telephone interviews were researched online. The focus was specifically placed on organizations in provinces and municipalities with large, or rapidly increasing, immigrant populations. Many sports organizations did not have strategic plans or annual reports posted online; baseball and football were noticeably absent. We searched national, provincial and municipal levels to learn about hockey, football, baseball, basketball and soccer. For most other sports, we targeted the national level.

Government Sports Plans	Active 2010: Ontario's Sport Alberta Sport Plan British Columbia Policy on Sport and Physical Activity Canadian Sport Policy 2012 City of Calgary Civic Sport Policy 2005 City of Richmond Sport for Life Strategy 2010-2015 City of Toronto Recreation Service Plan 2013-2017 Draft Alberta Sport Plan 2014 Manitoba Action Plan for Sport 2012 Mississauga Sport Plan 2013 New Brunswick Sport Plan 2008 Nova Scotia Sport Plan 2006 PEI Sport Plan 2013 Saskatchewan Ministry for Parks and Sport 2013-2014 Plan Vancouver Sports Strategy 2008
Sport-Specific Organizations (strategic plans or annual reports)	Alberta Soccer Association Strategic Plan 2013-2016 Badminton Canada Strategic Plan 2009-2013 BC Basketball Strategic Plan 2012-2016 BC Soccer Strategic Plan Summary 2012-2015 Canada Baseball Strategic Plan 2010-2014 Canada Basketball Annual Report 2012-2013 Canada Basketball Athlete Development Model 2003 Canadian Curling Association Business Plan 2012-2014 Canadian Lacrosse Association Strategic Plan 2012-2016 Canadian Soccer Association Strategic Plan 2009-2013 Curl BC Strategic Plan Hockey Canada Annual Report 2013 Hockey Alberta Annual Report 2013 Hockey Calgary Strategic Plan 2012-2013 Ontario Basketball Association Annual Report 2012-2013 Ontario Soccer Association Strategic Plan 2013-2015 Tennis Canada Strategic Plan 2012-2015
Other sports organizations (strategic plans or annual reports)	SaskSport Strategic Plan 2013-2016 Sport Alliance Ontario, Annual Report 2012 Sport BC Annual Report 2013 Sport Manitoba Business Plan 2013 Sport Nova Scotia Strategic Plan Sport PEI Strategic Plan 2013-2016 Sport Quebec Annual Report 2012

GOVERNMENT POLICY

At the government level, policy makers recognize the impact demographic change is having on sports in Canada. In 2010, the Department of Canadian Heritage policy research group produced an overview of the factors that have – or will have – an impact on sports' participation levels. A key factor identified is Canada's changing demographic composition, particularly its aging population, the concentration of Canadians in major urban centres and the growing immigrant and Aboriginal populations. By examining Statistics Canada data, the study concluded participation in organized sports is declining. When Canadians engage in sports, they are turning to informal sports and "active leisure" (e.g., walking, jogging), which are less time-consuming and easier to access. Men are more likely to participate in organized sports, while women are more likely to participate in active leisure. For both organized sports and active leisure, participants are more likely to be highly educated and have higher income levels. Canadian-born and younger Canadians are more likely to participate in sports. As we explored, we discovered new citizens face a number of barriers that may keep them out of Canada's sports system.

Changing demographics are having an impact on the types of sports being played. Fewer individuals are playing sports traditionally popular in Canada (e.g., hockey) and new sports are growing in interest as newcomers bring their sporting traditions and preferences to Canada (e.g., soccer, badminton, table tennis and cricket). But increasing diversity presents more challenges than the decline in participation: immigrants may also have different beliefs, values and experiences with sports that may be at odds with how sports work in Canada.

Regardless, the Canadian Heritage study suggests sports are a way to promote the social integration of new Canadians.[8]

Broadly speaking, governments have these issues and challenges in mind when drafting sport policy. Virtually every strategic sport plan (at all levels of government) includes some form of inclusiveness/accessibility/equity as a core principle or value. Canadian Sport Policy (2012) states that sports are a way to "build respect, tolerance and foster intercultural awareness and relationships, assist in the integration of newcomers, and provide opportunities for youth at risk."[9] The plans for sport in Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Mississauga, Toronto and Richmond all list new Canadians as an under-represented group in need of targeted outreach. However, specific strategies to effectively engage are built only into the plans for Mississauga, Toronto and Richmond (cities with high immigrant and visible minority populations). These strategies include: researching the barriers; developing pricing and facility policies to address the realities immigrants face; the need to get immigrants involved in sport-based community groups; and cultivating partnerships with newcomer service organizations to disseminate information on sports and provide opportunities to play.

---

[8] Department of Canadian Heritage, Policy Research Group. *Environmental Scan 2010: Trends and Issues in Canadian* Sport, 2010. The study points out that new Canadians and Aboriginals are less likely to be economically and socially integrated, a key factor in their lower participation levels in sports. Some academic research has been conducted on immigrants and recreation: Azilwood, Bevelander and Pendakur also suggest that immigrant participation in recreation is lower than that of those born in Canada. See Amanda Azilwood, Pieter Bevelander and Ravi Pendakur, "Recreational Participation Among Ethnic Minorities and Immigrants in Canada and the Netherlands," *Journal of Refugee and Immigrant Studies* 4:3 (2006), p. 6.

[9] Canadian Sport Policy 2012, p. 14.

GRASSROOTS SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

Sports organizations' level of investment in attracting newcomers varies. An online review of strategic plans and annual reports shows most are concerned with growing participation and ensuring accessibility. Very few identify new Canadians as a group to target; the Canadian Curling Association,[10] SaskSport and Sport Manitoba are the only organizations in our review that specifically mention immigrants. While this issue does not seem to appear in high-level strategic planning, our interviews with sports organizations and additional online research indicate that organizations are grappling with these issues and implementing pilot engagement initiatives.

Much of the media's discussion on immigration's impact on sport revolves around hockey – Canada's iconic national winter sport. In many places, hockey participation levels are healthy. However, signs of struggle are evident in areas with high immigrant populations. In the 1990s, for example, the Scarborough Hockey Association had 10,000 players; in 2009, the number had dropped to 2,800. And, even though Brampton's population has been increasing over the past 15 years (due to immigration), hockey registration numbers have declined. Hockey Canada has acknowledged it cannot simply sit back and wait for players to come; it needs to reach out to new Canadians if the game is going to survive long-term.[11] Bob Nicholson, the recently departed head of Hockey Canada, left the organization saying it needed to "figure out how to deal with new Canadians."[12]

If a dominant sport like hockey is facing these challenges, it is reasonable to expect sports like baseball and football (sports popular in North America, but not as entrenched in Canadian culture as hockey) will face the same challenges.[13]

By contrast, basketball and soccer have benefited from increased immigration levels. The majority of immigrants come from countries already familiar with, and passionate about, these sports. Consequently, new Canadian citizens are keen to get involved (playing and watching). According to NBA Canada, basketball has overtaken hockey as the most popular sport played by Canadian youth, largely because immigrants already know and love it, and because it is more affordable than sports like hockey.[14] In Winnipeg, a relatively small Canadian city with low levels of immigration compared to Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, there are five Filipino basketball leagues, and most of the players are recent immigrants. Soccer – which is experiencing no difficulty attracting immigrants to the game – is one of the sports doing the most to attract them. Between 2011 and 2013, the Ontario Soccer Association piloted a number of initiatives in Ottawa, largely to bring newcomer teams in contact with mainstream soccer teams. The results have been published in a guide, *New Canadians and Sport: A Resource Guide for Grassroots Sports*, with lessons to help other organizations engage newcomers.

[10] The CCA has gone even further by engaging Dr. Heather Mair of the University of Waterloo to conduct a study on diverse populations and curling.
[11] Toronto Star, "Hockey tough sell to new Canadians"; CBC Sports, "Where are the minorities?"
[12] TSN, "Nicholson takes, gives advice on last day with Hockey Canada."

[13] It was difficult to find individuals to interview from football and baseball organizations. The few reached had not given the issue much serious consideration.
[14] Forbes, "How basketball overtook hockey as the most popular youth sport in Canada."

BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT

The academic literature and our stakeholder interviews identified a number of barriers newcomers face when wanting to get involved in sport, as well as challenges sports organizations face when engaging new Canadians. Some are sport specific; most affect all. Some are applicable to all Canadians, while others are specific to new citizens. Barriers in the literature include:

- Financial barriers. This is especially true for sports like hockey (with expensive equipment and facility fees), but also applies to other sports. It is recognized that many immigrants come to Canada with very few financial resources and their first few years are consumed with other priorities (getting jobs and homes, settling children into school, etc.).
- Time commitment. Many sports demand too much time for many working families to manage, especially those who are adapting to life in a new country.
- The difference in the ways in which sports are organized in Canada. Immigrants may not know how to navigate the Canadian system and information may not be complete, easily accessible or presented in terminology someone new to Canadian culture can understand.
- Complete unfamiliarity with certain sports (e.g., hockey, curling and other winter sports).
- Lack of sufficient information on how to get involved; in particular, lack of information on the assistance programs that exist.
- Insufficient language capability, which prevents some parents from being able to get their children registered.
- Competing interests on behalf of parents who want their children to focus on academics, not sports.
- Political and cultural clashes from countries of origin (or between countries of origin), which can follow immigrants to Canada. This can determine who they are willing to play with and against.
- Integrating new Canadians into the mainstream leagues; many choose to play on teams composed of others from their country of origin.
- The perception of some sports as too aggressive or violent (especially hockey).
- Racism – or a feeling of not being welcome – particularly in sports with few immigrant participants.

A variety of outreach initiatives have been attempted. The vast majority centre on children, with a narrower focus on children in inner-city neighbourhoods. Some organizations have provided opportunities for new Canadian children to try a sport without committing to an entire season (reducing both cost and time), often in partnership with immigrant service organizations. We found the majority of these initiatives were related to hockey. For example:

- Hockey Canada's pilot program in Victoria gave immigrant children free equipment and skating lessons; if they liked the sport, they could sign up for the season at a reduced cost and keep the equipment.
- *Experience Hockey* in Vancouver runs free two-hour workshops to teach hockey basics, including skating. It also educates parents on the rules and terminology.
- RBC's *Play Hockey* program gives community grants to engage newcomer children; for example, Toronto's Thorncliffe Park Neighbourhood Centre received $25,000 for *Learn to Skate* and ball hockey programs.

- Ottawa Community Immigrant Services participated in *Share the Puck*, a program that runs hockey camps across Canada and the United States.
- One hockey association in the GTHA visits religious institutions and cultural festivals to promote the sport while working with community ambassadors to spread the word.
- The New Canadians Centre in Peterborough introduced newcomers to hockey through a Peterborough Petes game, complete with a tour of the arena. It also ran a winter activity day at Camp Kawartha to introduce new Canadians to winter sports (cross-country skiing and snowshoeing) for $5 per person.
- The Canadian Curling Association reaches new Canadian children with its *Rocks & Rings* program in elementary schools and, as mentioned, has commissioned research on barriers to the game for newcomers.
- *FHL: Football Hockey Link* is a non-profit organization in Calgary started by two women experienced in immigrant settlement. It links new Canadians to hockey and football through summer programs designed to teach game fundamentals. Each participant tries both sports. If the children want to continue, FHL helps parents navigate the system and get them registered. The organization works with grassroots hockey and football associations and also involves professional or university-level sports teams.
- The Ontario Soccer Association's *New Canadians and Sport: A Resource Guide for Grassroots Sports* details the different ways in which Ottawa soccer associations engaged new Canadians: collaborating with settlement and cultural organizations, a "*play'n'learn*" program (30 minutes playing soccer, 30 minutes learning about Canada); *Community Day Events* connecting newcomers and established Canadians on the soccer field; and training new Canadian coaches.
- Sport4All's free online toolkit, Advocacy Toolkit: Diversity in Sport identifies barriers and challenges to sports participation uncovered through focus groups and includes tips on how they can be addressed. Its *Diversity in Sport Summit* report recommends that sports organizations undergo diversity training and ensure their boards are culturally diverse. It also suggests target groups are included in program planning to ensure it works for them.

PROFESSIONAL SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

Professional sports organizations have recognized the importance of drawing new Canadians to their teams as fans, both in the stands and at home watching on television. CFL Commissioner Mark Cohon has stated in the media it is important to attract new Canadians to football, which is, in his words, "part of Canadian culture."[15] Initiatives piloted include:

- Collaborating with community organizations to grow the game at the grassroots level (e.g., Football Hockey Link and the Calgary Stampeders, mentioned above).
- Many professional teams (Toronto Raptors, Ottawa Senators) are hosting citizenship ceremonies before games, and the new citizens are invited to stay and watch the games.
- The Toronto Argonauts hosted Football 101 sessions with new Canadians in Scarborough.
- Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (MLSE) hosted a Bollywood Night at a Raptors game to attract a South Asian audience.
- MLSE has also sent targeted mailings to multicultural communities.

[15] Toronto Star, "CFL Commissioner Mark Cohon predicts league-wide building boom."

Television networks are also paying attention to Canada's changing demographics and the different ways in which Canadians consume media. They too are searching for ways to appeal to new Canadians in order to grow their audiences:

- CBC has offered Canadian hockey play-by-play in Punjabi to appeal to a South Asian audience. It was so successful the idea has been expanded to Mandarin.
- In early 2014, Rogers (the new home for hockey broadcasting in Canada) announced a plan to tour Canada with the NHL to talk to Canadians about how they want to watch hockey; they're keenly focused on new Canadians, existing core fans and youth.

CONCLUSION

Attracting new Canadians to sports is a challenge grassroots and professional organizations, as well as policy makers, have identified as crucial to not only organizational growth, but the future of sport and physical activity in Canada. Some research has been conducted to identify the barriers preventing new Canadians from participating (notably in hockey) and organizations have piloted different initiatives to alleviate those barriers. But this issue doesn't seem to have escalated enough to penetrate strategic planning within most sports organizations, and the number and scope of initiatives attempted varies considerably between sports. Overall, our discussions with sports organizations revealed an acknowledgement of the issue, but no systematic, successful and sustainable plan of action.

Playing together – new citizens, sports & belonging is unique because of *who* we're talking to and *what* we're talking about: new Canadian citizens, from across the country, sharing their firsthand experiences with Canadian sports as newcomers and then citizens.

The study's uniqueness is also attributed to the fact we are talking about how adults – rather than children – engage in Canadian sports, and the connections we make between sports, belonging and citizenship.

TOP

Ning, Cultural Access Pass Member

SECTION 4

FINE-TUNING THE LINEUP

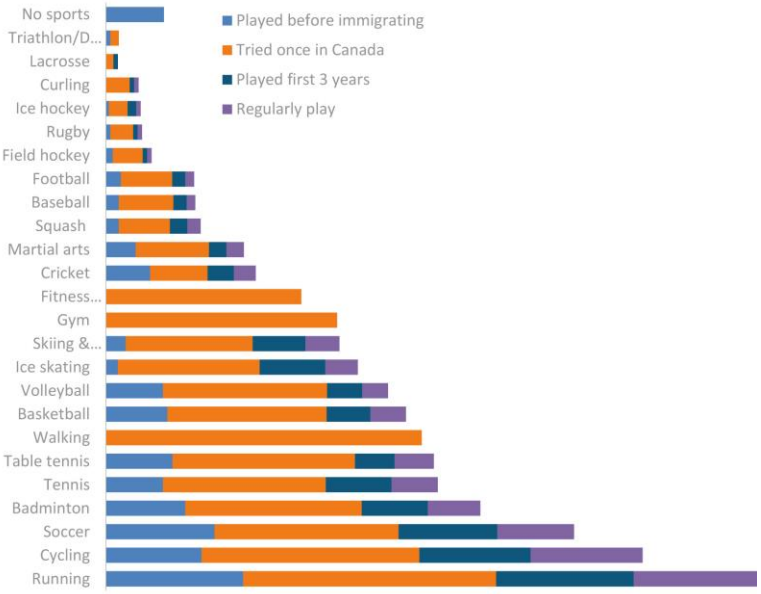
How new citizens play sports in Canada

How new citizens play sports in Canada

Playing together – new citizens, sports & belonging is an opportunity to hear directly from new citizens about their experiences participating in sports in Canada. Being part of this study encouraged new citizens to reflect on their current experiences and attitudes, and on the years leading up to their citizenship when they were focused on the issues common to settlement, such as housing, jobs and schools.

OVERALL PARTICIPATION TRENDS

Sports	Played before immigrating	Tried once in Canada	Played first 3 years	Regularly play
Swimming	32%	64%	35%	32%
Running	31%	58%	31%	39%
Cycling	22%	50%	25%	26%
Soccer	25%	42%	23%	18%
Badminton	18%	40%	15%	12%
Tennis	13%	37%	15%	11%
Table tennis	15%	42%	9%	9%
Walking	n/a	72%	n/a	n/a
Basketball	14%	36%	10%	8%
Volleyball	13%	38%	8%	6%
Ice skating	3%	32%	15%	7%
Skiing & snowboarding	5%	29%	12%	8%
Gym	n/a	53%	0%	0%
Fitness classes	n/a	45%	n/a	n/a
Cricket	10%	13%	6%	5%
Martial arts	7%	17%	4%	4%
Squash	3%	12%	4%	3%
Baseball	3%	13%	3%	2%
Football	3%	12%	3%	2%
Field hockey	2%	7%	1%	1%
Rugby	1%	5%	1%	1%
Ice hockey	1%	4%	2%	1%
Curling	0%	5%	1%	1%
Lacrosse	0%	2%	1%	0%
Triathlon/Duathlon	1%	2%	0%	0%
No sports	13%	n/a	n/a	n/a



New citizens appear to be attracted to activities that are classified as "active leisure" rather than organized sports, which is consistent with research that Canadians are generally spending less time playing organized sports.

When asked what physical activities they had tried at least once, walking (72%), swimming (64%), running (58%), working out at the gym (53%), cycling (50%) and fitness classes (45%) topped the list – all relatively inexpensive activities that are easy to do alone or with family.

These trends also apply to sports new citizens play regularly. Running (39%), swimming (32%) and cycling (26%) are the most popular. In terms of more organized sports, the most popular are soccer (18%), badminton (12%), tennis (11%), table tennis (9%) and basketball (8%).

As discussed in the environmental scan, these are sports that many new citizens are already familiar with and played before coming to Canada.

How do the more traditional, mainstream Canadian sports figure into these overall trends? A significant number of the new citizen participants had tried ice skating (32%) and skiing and snowboarding (29%) at least once. Only 4%, however, had given hockey a shot. Similarly, ice skating (7%) and skiing/snowboarding (8%) remain higher on the list of sports people practice regularly, but hockey (1%) is near the bottom.

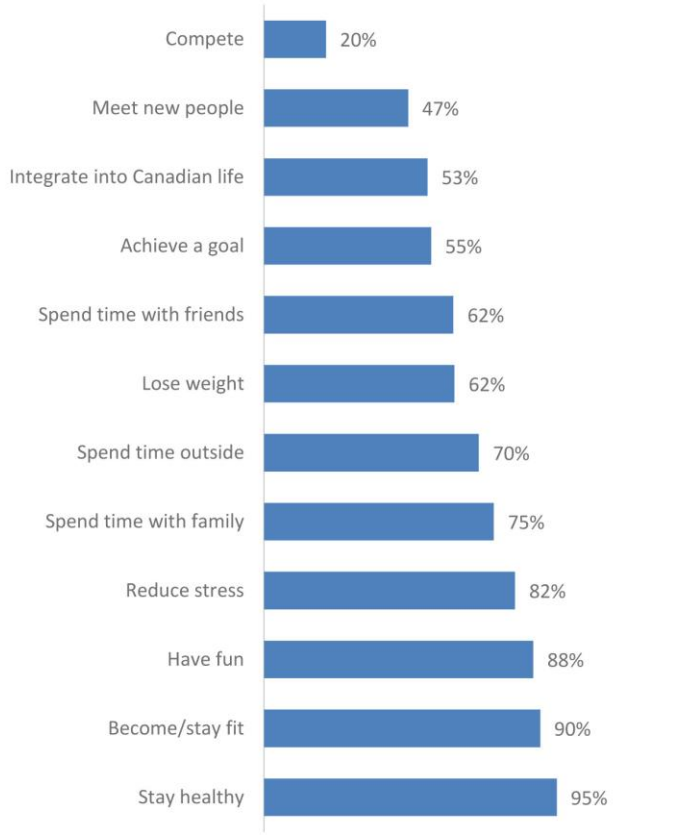
Timing is also a factor we wanted to investigate. With all the demands of settling in a new country, it makes sense that in the first few years newcomers are too busy to spend time playing sports. This is confirmed by the survey findings: only 26% regularly played sports (at least once per week) in the first three years they lived in Canada.

However, overall, 63% played sports at least once in a while. The most popular sports they played in the first few years were those easy to access or common to their country of origin: swimming (35%), running (31%), cycling (25%), soccer (23%), badminton (15%) and tennis (15%). The fact that a majority of respondents participated in some sport presents an opportunity for Canadian sports organizations to engage new citizens more effectively from the start.

While they tend to gravitate to familiar sports, new citizens appear to be open to new sporting experiences in Canada: 54% tried a new sport when they came to Canada. 60% tried winter sports – including skiing (alpine or cross country), skating, snowshoeing, hockey and curling.[16] Furthermore, some continue to ice skate and ski regularly in the winter. Similar to the survey, most focus group participants had also tried a new sport after they arrived; the conversation around new sports generally revolved around winter sports.

When new citizens were asked *why* they play sports, the top answers focused on personal health reasons – to be healthy, fit and have fun. This is not a group of competitive athletes. Playing sports as a way to spend time with family was also an important factor (75%), and 53% said sport was a means to integrate into Canadian society, a finding explored in the "First Pick" section of this report.

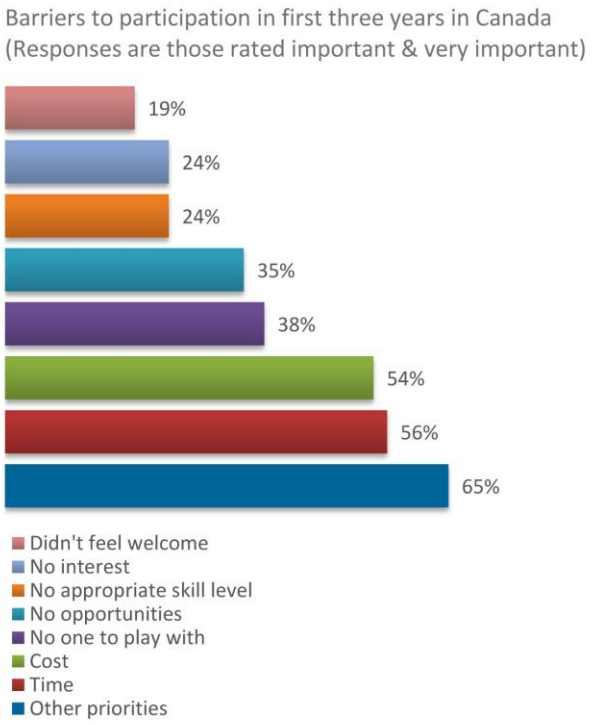
Why new citizens participate in sports
Responses shawn are those rated "important" & "very important"



[16] Skating and skiing were the most popular responses.

PARTICIPATION BARRIERS

Focus group participants and the survey respondents indicated that the first few years in Canada are an intense period of adjustment, leaving little time or money to participate in sports. For example, Katia commented that although she arrived in Canada in 2007, her "survival mode" was just coming to an end seven years later.[17] Other priorities, time and money are the top three reasons cited for not playing sports within the first three years of arrival.

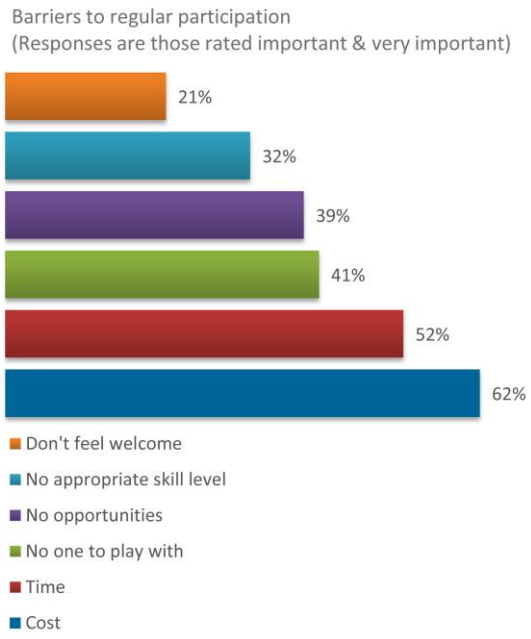


It is encouraging to note that only 24% said they had no interest in participating in those first few years. It's not that new citizens don't want to play sports; there are other factors keeping them from becoming more actively involved.

Do these barriers change as newcomers settle into their life in Canada? Not always.

The survey results indicate that time and cost remain major factors. We know from previous research conducted by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship that new citizens are establishing careers and raising families, which can make it difficult for the adult family members to participate in structured sports. Many of the focus group participants reflected on the fact that a particular stage of life has an impact on the ability to access sports. University students find it relatively easy to participate (more time and an available, cost-effective infrastructure), while those with children and spouses not born in Canada face the most challenges.

It is worth noting that a lack of time and money are also challenges more established Canadians face.



[17] Focus group discussion, June 10, 2014.

Time and cost are likely the two primary reasons individually-based physical activities are so popular. Once the shoes are bought, it costs nothing to go for a run through your neighbourhood. But the cost of organized sports in Canada was a persistent theme in all the focus group discussions. While a few participants said it was less expensive in Canada because there was so much more government support, many came from countries where a system of public clubs made accessing formal training more affordable – an experience shared by participants from Europe and Africa. If new citizens are used to a system in which sports are more affordable, it can be difficult for them to understand why they have to pay so much money to participate in Canada.

Overall, study participants felt Canada had a good system of parks and other outdoor community spaces (e.g., public tennis courts) where they could play on their own and with friends. But they pointed out that these spaces are usable only for certain months of the year:

> "[We] had a lot of free, publicly available space to play any sport you want to…we had designated basketball courts, skating rinks, we had cricket fields, we had soccer fields. Here, you have to go indoors because the winter is there for six, seven months in a year, and then…it is not free."[18]

Some participants felt that private clubs are out to make money and that community centres, although public institutions, are sometimes more expensive than private clubs.

The impact of time can depend on where one lives. For those living in big cities – which happens to be the case for the majority of new citizens – work, family commitments and simply getting around can take a toll on the time available to participate in sports. In Mississauga, this came through loud and clear:

> "It's a big exercise here, to be honest."[19]

It is a "big exercise" because you have to drive to the facility, find parking, participate in the activity and then drive home. What should be a simple process takes too much effort. Raheela, a woman who moved to Mississauga from Pakistan, did her research before coming to ensure she lived near a community centre, making it possible for her family to walk to sports activities. Without a car, it would have taken too much time and money to use public transportation.[20] Compare this to Ottawa, Vancouver and Richmond, which are very active cities with very accessible outdoor spaces that encourage an active lifestyle:

> "[In Richmond] there are more parks and green spaces, so people can also engage in physical activity without really going far from their home."[21]

This was not a sentiment echoed by the Mississauga participants.

[18] Focus group discussion, May 15, 2014.

[19] Focus group discussion, May 15, 2014.
[20] Focus group discussion, May 15, 2014.
[21] Focus group discussion, June 2, 2014.

There are additional challenges that need to be addressed. Organized sports often require teams or partners to play with and against; 41% of survey respondents reported that they did not play some sports because they could not find someone to play with. For example, Ling was an avid table tennis player before immigrating to Canada from the Philippines. When she arrived, she looked for somewhere to play table tennis. While she easily found the courts at community centres, she had trouble finding the players, especially those at her skill level:

> "The problem is, it's like a small community…. People are kind of snobbish…and not really friendly with the newcomers or beginners."[22]

Like any situation where a person is new to a city, it can be difficult to break into established groups. Yet, not all experiences are negative. In Montreal, Luis, walking in the park just a few weeks after arrival, was asked to join a basketball team that needed an extra player.[23] Similarly, Katia was invited to join a basketball team in Ottawa composed of women from her church. While hesitant, she says she was "blown away":

> "They were welcoming…we would play other women who were just like us from different organizations."[24]

The general sentiment from the focus group discussions was that Canadians are generous and welcoming when it comes to sports. Only 21% of survey respondents said they didn't feel welcome.

This unwelcome feeling is not necessarily related to deliberate discrimination. Instead, it could be related to the fact that, like Ling, new citizens are trying to break into established social groups, or, as someone in a new country, they may lack the confidence to take the initiative. Raheela expressed this in the Mississauga discussion:

> "I felt myself slow down with hesitation that, 'Oh, maybe I won't do this right.'"[25]

New citizens may also not be confident in their skill levels. Maria, the tennis player referenced at the start of this report, worried she didn't play at a serious enough level to join the women with the fancy equipment. This concern may intensify in relation to sports that are completely unfamiliar – particularly ice and snow sports. As adults, new citizens feel the chance to learn has passed them by. They are not particularly keen to learn surrounded by children:

> "In my culture, when you get older, it's seen as insulting or humiliating to go get trained like a kid…it's just too much to go from step zero to a reasonable step where you can enjoy the sport."[26]

This does not hold true for everyone. In the same discussion group, Alexei commented that there were fewer cultural constraints in Canada dictating what women and seniors in particular were supposed to do; consequently, some new citizens feel more at ease trying new sports in Canada than they would have before they emigrated.[27]

[22] Focus group discussion, June 2, 2014.
[23] Focus group discussion, June 11, 2014.
[24] Focus group discussion, June 10, 2014.
[25] Focus group discussion, May 15, 2014.
[26] Focus group discussion, June 10, 2014.
[27] Focus group discussion, June 10, 2014.

The survey and focus groups also revealed some new citizens feel frustrated that there are not appropriate skill levels for them. Peter, a basketball fan living in downtown Toronto, put it this way:

"For instance, I played baseball, organized baseball, in Luxembourg. I think every level was welcome to play. Whereas here, if I wanted to play with people my age, it would have to be super competitive or beer league."

He also found it difficult to find informal pickup games.[28]

Some of the barriers mentioned – lack of appropriate skill level, no opportunities to play informal pickup games and even the cost of organized sports – are a reality for many sports. However, in some cases, they could be more a matter of perception and new citizens simply lack the information that those born in Canada grow up with. While 67% of the survey respondents reported they did not have difficulty finding information on sports in the first few years they lived in Canada, lack of information was a persistent theme across the focus groups. For example, when Akono came to Canada with his family from Nigeria, his wife was a high-level competitive badminton player. Yet, they could not find a place for her to play her favourite sport:

"I checked the Internet everywhere the first year. We just got lost. We couldn't figure it out."[29]

Similarly, Kumar tried to get involved in golf:

"I wanted to start playing golf this year, so I tried to look at some of the facilities in Brampton. There were phone numbers…but then you try to get in touch with them, nobody responds, the emails unanswered…. Then you have to go in person. You get interested, and then you find that there's a roadblock."[30]

How much persistence should someone have when information is not easily accessible on the Internet?

In addition, unfamiliarity with how sports are organized in Canada leads new citizens to wonder how to begin looking. As Joseph in Mississauga said:

"I didn't even know what a community centre was…until many years when I happened to be walking by one."[31]

Despite the barriers identified, there are aspects of the Canadian sports system that new citizens appreciate. Those from politically unstable or crime-ridden countries appreciate that Canada provides a safe environment to engage in sport. As Carlos in Toronto said:

"I was able to go out and do it, whereas in Mexico there is no space to do it. It's not safe. I would just not go. So it was a positive thing for me to just find the space and the time and the safety."[32]

[28] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.
[29] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.
[30] Focus group discussion, May 15, 2014.
[31] Focus group discussion, May 15, 2014.
[32] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.

Sadia, a Pakistani woman in Calgary, expressed a similar sentiment. In Pakistan, she left home every morning wondering if she would return home. She realized Canada was different when she saw her neighbours go on their post-dinner walks with their dogs; she started the same tradition with her family.[33] In Ottawa, Gabriele told us how she lived near a park in Brazil, but it was:

"very, very dangerous. Here, I just go out and walk alone and there is no problem."[34]

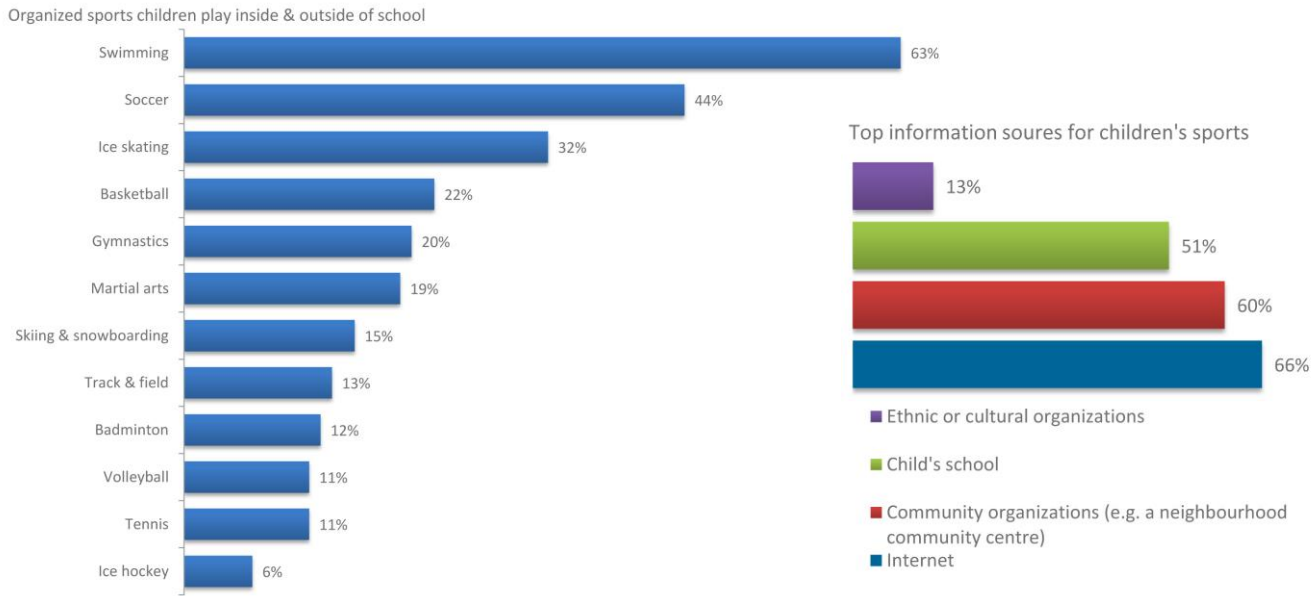
In some countries, it is clear you simply can't go out for a run, ride bikes with the family or play soccer in the street without thinking about your safety.

Another way for new citizens to engage in sports is through their children. Just under half of the sample (44%) had children who play sports and almost everyone (99%) said that playing sports was important, primarily to keep their children active and healthy.

The most popular organized sports for children (defined as belonging to a team or taking lessons inside and outside of school) were swimming (63%), soccer (44%), ice skating (32%), basketball (22%), gymnastics (20%) and martial arts (19%). In terms of mainstream Canadian sports, only 6% reported that their children play either hockey or baseball/softball.[35]

Only 15% reported having problems finding information for their children to participate. Many of the focus group participants reported a key difference between Canada and their country of origin was the extent to which Canada promotes sports as a key activity for children.

CHILDREN AND SPORTS PARTICIPATION



[33] Focus group discussion, May 26, 2014.
[34] Focus group discussion, June 10, 2014.

[35] Unfortunately, football was left off the list. Given the trends in the survey, however, we would not expect the children of new citizens to play that sport in large numbers.

In Richmond, Kim felt that the schools did a good job promoting sports: information was always available, they brought in Olympic athletes to inspire the children, and they ensured children could try different types of sports.[36]

The survey results demonstrate the importance of mainstream Canadian society as a source of information about sports; only 13% of respondents turned to their ethnic or cultural organizations. As we heard repeatedly in the focus groups, community centres are important institutions for accessing sports. Letting newcomers know community centres exist, in addition to the subsidy programs available for lower income households, is a good start to getting them involved in sports.

The Internet is definitely the tool of choice, but, as we pointed out earlier in this section, complete and clear information is not always accessible online. In its absence, word of mouth takes on an important role; this point came out strongly in the focus groups. For example, Alya wanted to register her children in hockey in Toronto, but could not find enough information online. So, she:

> "spoke to 10 different neighbours trying to figure out how to get them into a league, and then what hockey entailed."[37]

Cultural factors do not seem to play a significant role as barriers to children's participation in sports. Many new citizens in the survey simply reported that their children are too young to participate meaningfully. However, the next most significant factor is cost (25% said it is very important), followed by their children having other hobbies (12%) and their desire to have their children focused on school (11%). This focus on academics instead of sports came up in the course of our stakeholder interviews as a cultural difference between Canada and other countries that may prevent children from getting involved. Participants in this study who self-identified as Asian confirmed that their parents focused on academics, leaving sports to be played as a minor hobby outside school hours. However, after coming to Canada, they viewed the emphasis on sports in school as positive and were keen to get their children involved.

While getting children involved in sports was perceived as much easier than getting involved as an adult, there were a number of barriers identified:

- Like other Canadians, new citizens feel that sports in Canada are too expensive, especially if they want their children to play on a team, take lessons and participate at a more competitive level.
- New citizens don't always know how to get their children registered in sport. Alya's experience signing up her children in hockey is an instructive example. She is married to a Canadian-born man, spent a significant amount of her life in the United States and spoke English fluently when she arrived in Canada. This is someone who should not have had difficulty getting her children registered in sport. Yet, she didn't know registration deadlines are months in advance or that her son would need to know how to skate before joining hockey.
- Many parents were not comfortable putting their children in what they perceived as physically aggressive sports – particularly hockey and football. Grace, from the Philippines, said her daughter really wanted to play hockey, but, "I don't know. I have feelings about it, so I say no."[38] Similarly, Carlos, from Mexico, said:

[36] Focus group discussion, June 2, 2014.
[37] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.
[38] Focus group discussion, June 2, 2014.

"I would never play or encourage my children to play hockey…. That is the one sport that has in the rules that they are allowed to punch each other. That is the worst message I could send to my children."[39]

While it is not necessarily true the rules allow fighting, this is a perception hockey organizations must address. Generally, new citizens appreciated the game but could not get past the fighting.

- Gender can also play a role. Some parents come to Canada with perceived ideas about what sports their children – especially their daughters – should be playing. While they are happy their girls have many opportunities to play sports (often more than in their country of origin) and they see the value in their participation, they are sometimes not willing to put them in sports like hockey, because girls *just don't play physically aggressive sports*. Ana, a new citizen from Brazil now living in Montreal, had a negative reaction to the suggestion that her daughters could play hockey, saying that in Latin American culture, girls don't play physically aggressive sports; if they are going to play a winter sport, figure skating is more appropriate.[40]
- Some immigrant children come to Canada with experiences that may impact their sports participation. Pakistani-born Sadia told us she had to tell her daughters' teacher that they came from a country where her girls did not have the same sporting opportunities as their Canadian-born counterparts. According to her, the teacher was very cooperative and worked with her daughters to ensure they had opportunities to participate in team sports.

Finally, it is important to note that children can often facilitate their parents' participation in sports. This can manifest itself in two ways. In the Calgary focus group, participants reported that when their children began participating in "Canadian sports" (particularly something like skating), they learned too so they can do the activity as a family. However, one participant began ice skating before her children were born so that she could teach them this important Canadian skill.[41]

TOP

[39] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.
[40] Focus group discussion, June 11, 2014.
[41] Focus group discussion, May 26, 2014.

Amalia & son, Cultural Access Pass Members

SECTION 5

CATCHING THE GAME

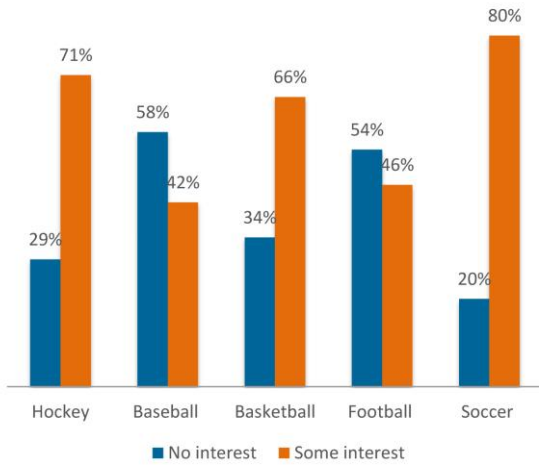
How new citizens watch sports in Canada

How new citizens watch sports in Canada

The second aspect of engagement in Canadian sports we examined is whether or not new citizens count themselves as fans of Canada's sports teams. Do they follow particular teams? How do they follow them? Do they attend games? Do they watch sports on TV?

FOLLOWING SPORTS

All things considered, please rate your interest level in the following sports.



Roughly half of our survey respondents said they follow a professional sports team; the question applied to sports teams all over the world. Among those who specified the teams they follow, 43% specifically mentioned Canadian professional sports teams. About half of the respondents (49%) also follow a national sports team, with 29% following a Canadian national team.

We asked specifically about their interest in the main professional sports available in Canada: hockey, soccer, basketball, football and baseball. Not surprisingly, soccer is the overwhelming favourite (although this likely relates more to international soccer than MLS). Interestingly, 71% have some interest in hockey. Basketball, an internationally popular sport, comes in third at 66%, followed by football (46%) and baseball (42%).

The Internet and television are the main ways respondents follow their favourite sports teams and sports in general. International news websites are the top source of information. The most important Canadian sources are: mainstream television news (e.g., CBC, CTV, etc.), Canadian news websites (e.g., Globe and Mail, National Post, CBC, CTV, etc.) and Canadian television sports broadcasters (e.g., TSN, Sportsnet, etc.). Beyond broadcasters that focus exclusively on sports, other forms of media focusing solely on sports are not as popular (e.g., sports magazines, blogs and even the websites of favourite teams). Consistent with other research the Institute for Canadian Citizenship has conducted with new citizens, survey respondents generally do not turn to social media to consume sports information.

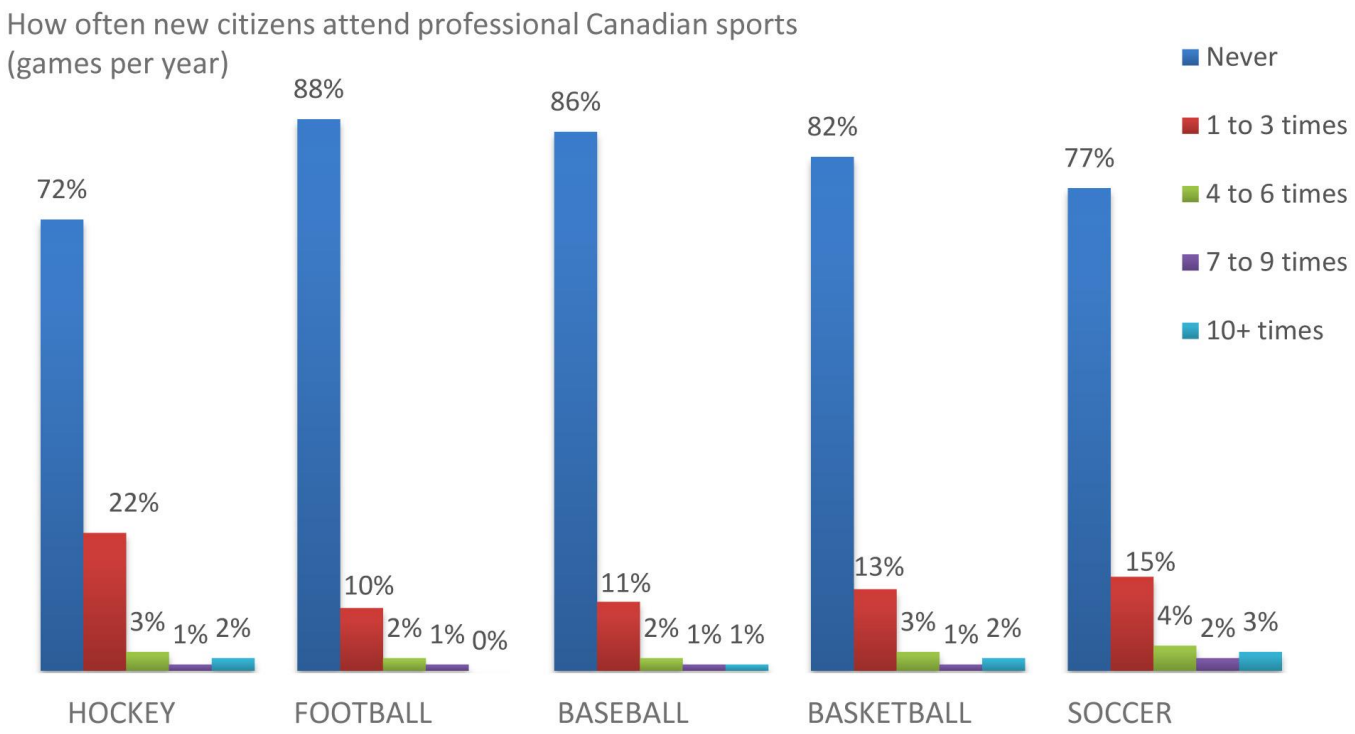
ATTENDING AND WATCHING PROFESSIONAL SPORTS – TRENDS

Not surprisingly, our respondents do not go to professional sporting events very often, if at all.

They are most likely to attend a professional hockey or soccer game, but still only a small proportion of respondents have ever been to those games (28% for hockey, 23% for soccer). Among those who have attended any professional sporting event, most have attended only one to three times.

While we did not ask survey respondents how they got opportunities to go to these events, we did ask focus group participants. Many had been to these events at least once.

What got them through the door were free tickets offered through their personal networks (work or friends). Only a couple of individuals had actually bought tickets.



Sadia was one of the exceptions; she bought her family Calgary Flames tickets shortly after arrival in Calgary. That was her first time at a live sporting event.[42]

The results related to watching sports on television are more encouraging.

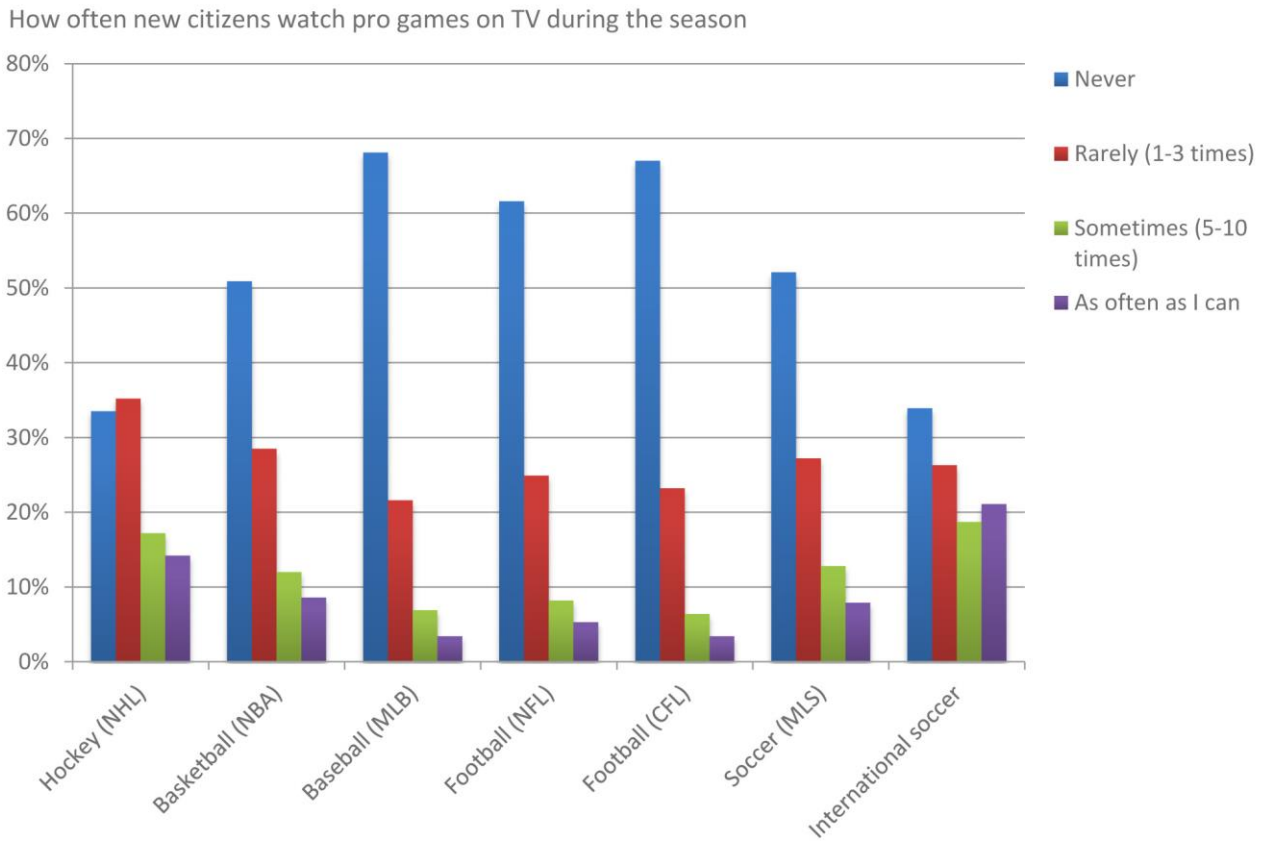
Hockey (67%) and international soccer (66%), followed by basketball (49%) and North American soccer (48%), are the most popular draws among new citizens.[43] Interestingly, only 34% reported that they have never watched hockey on television, a sport many were unfamiliar with before they arrived in Canada. This apparent curiosity about Canada's most popular sport was reflected in the focus group discussions. When Farhan arrived in Canada from Afghanistan with his family, the first television program they tuned in to was CBC's *Hockey Night in Canada*. He was hooked.[44] Among new citizens passionate about sports – those, like Farhan, who try and catch every game they can – hockey and international soccer are the clear favourites.

We also asked respondents to tell us which major sporting events they watch on television. The most popular events are the Summer and Winter Olympics – over half of the respondents reported watching those events every time they happen (with the summer games being slightly more popular).

"When Canada wins the gold medal in the Olympics, I was the proudest person…. Finally I am part of a community that…achieves things."[45]

[42] Focus group discussion, May 25, 2014.
[43] Percentages refer to the proportion that watches at least one game.
[44] Focus group discussion, June 10, 2014.
[45] Focus group discussion, 8 May 2014.

The FIFA World Cup closely follows, with 51% of respondents watching it every time it happens. Of the major professional sporting events in North America, the most popular event is the Stanley Cup playoffs (22% watch every time); however, the NFL Super Bowl (19%) and baseball's World Series (16%) are not far behind. Only 9% make sure they catch the CFL Grey Cup every time.[46]



[46] The NBA Finals was not included on the list of options, an oversight given the popularity of basketball among new Canadians.

BARRIERS TO WATCHING PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

We asked our survey respondents why they don't attend professional sporting events more often – specifically NHL, NBA, CFL, MLS and MLB.

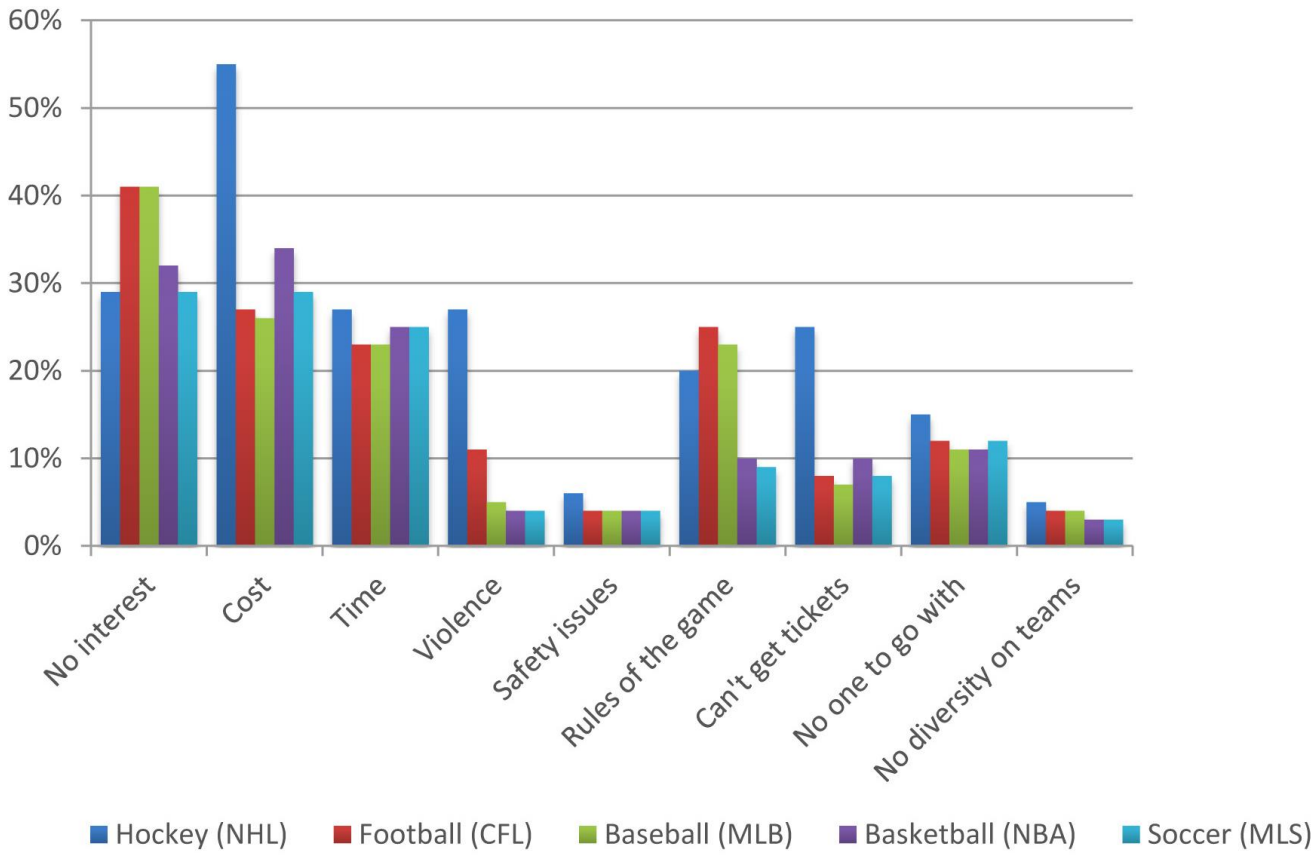
It is important to note that this question was not applicable to everyone who responded, as there aren't professional sports teams in every Canadian city. Among those who responded, however, the reasons for not going varied according to the sport.

For hockey, a sport we have established holds some interest, cost was the overwhelming factor. Given that a high proportion of survey respondents live in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area this is not a surprising finding; Maple Leafs tickets are expensive and in short supply.

Violence was another factor that played a role for hockey, but not necessarily other sports (except the football).

Given the media's focus on fighting and concussions, many Canadians – not just new citizens – are being turned off hockey. This was also a persistent theme in the focus groups; there was a sense that hockey lacks "fair play." Participants were hesitant to take their children to games where they might witness a fight.

For basketball, a sport already familiar to new citizens, the top barriers were equally split between lack of interest (32%), cost of tickets (34%) and lack of time to go to events (25%).



Football and baseball have the most work to do to draw new citizen fans to their sports. Over 40% of the survey respondents said they simply do not have any interest in either sport, the highest among all the professional sports. One factor may be a basic inability to follow the play: almost a quarter of the respondents said they don't go to games because they don't know the rules (hockey is not far behind). The focus group participants were similarly unenthusiastic about these two sports. Over and over, we heard them say these sports in particular are boring. They describe the games as too long, and were put off by the "stop/start" nature of the play compared to a sport like soccer. As Rehan in Richmond commented about baseball:

> "The two times they actually hit it for a home run, I was at the concession stand…I stood there for five hours and nothing happens, and…the two times I went to the concession stand I miss it."[47]

The focus group participants also commented on the rules being difficult to understand, especially for football. Marcus, a German immigrant now living in Toronto, took his visiting mother to a BC Lions game and said:

> "I tried to read up on it when I came here, but I still find it difficult, to be honest."[48]

Lack of diversity on professional teams does not appear to be an issue for our survey respondents. However, it was rated slightly more important for hockey.

NEW CANADIAN ENGAGEMENT - OPPORTUNITIES

While there are aspects of Canadian professional sport that turn new citizens off, there are some encouraging signs professional sports teams should capitalize on.

Our focus group participants reported that attending Canadian professional sports is very family-friendly, especially compared to European and South American soccer matches. There were no concerns expressed about the safety of being in a crowd at a match, and they would not hesitate to take their children to professional sporting events (with the exception of some parents being hesitant about exposing their children to the fighting in hockey). Karen in Vancouver pointed out that at soccer matches in the UK you had to be careful not to wear the wrong colour on game day, and the fans of the two teams could not be seated in the same sections.[49] This is a familiar story for many immigrants from Europe and South America. Carlos in Toronto appreciates in particular the Junior Jays Saturdays, where families can attend a Blue Jays game and their children can participate in the kids' zone activities. He is keen to take his daughter when she is old enough.[50]

Second, when new citizens do pass through the turnstiles (often a result of free tickets), they generally enjoy the experience, even if they are unfamiliar with – or uninterested in – the game.

They like the atmosphere, the entertainment and the feeling of being part of the experience. For example, Alya went to a Toronto Marlies game when her son's class sang the national anthem and had a wonderful time.

[47] Focus group discussion, June 2, 2014.
[48] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.
[49] Focus group discussion, May 31, 2014.
[50] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.

"It was great, because you didn't actually have to watch the hockey…. You just feel like everyone's there for one thing, and that's just to have fun and support the team."[51]

She didn't understand the rules and didn't even watch much of the game. Still, there was enough entertainment to keep her happy while she experienced the sport everyone talks about.

As with sport participation, information about how to become a consumer of professional sports may present a key opportunity. For example, Alya said about her Marlies experience:

"We say that we want to go back, but it's always how do you get the tickets? At that time, the school arranged it; you gave them a cheque. I have no idea how to get tickets."[52]

There is also the general notion that tickets – especially for hockey in certain markets – are prohibitively expensive, so why even bother?

There were extensive discussions in the Ottawa and Calgary focus groups about the various ways one can obtain cheaper tickets: sitting in the "nosebleed" section (still a great experience) and getting tickets to the skills competition.

Non-NHL professional teams – such as the Toronto Marlies – also offer considerably cheaper tickets and have a reputation for offering their fans a great time. Ensuring this information is easily available to newcomers may facilitate higher attendance at professional sporting events.

TOP

[51] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.
[52] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.

Anniel, Cultural Access Pass Member

SECTION 6

FIRST PICK

Cultivating belonging through sports

Cultivating belonging through sports

Are sports an important part of Canadian culture? 95% of survey respondents think so. The survey's comments section revealed two important ways in which the respondents interpreted the question:

- Sports have the ability to generate national pride and a more intense connection to Canada and being Canadian.
- Sports are a natural – or "universal" – connection point between people, helping them feel at home in their new country.

Upon reflection, sports seem to be recognized by new citizens as an integrator. It is not necessarily the primary reason new citizens choose to play or watch sports when they come to Canada. However, integration is often the result. When asked why they participate in sports, 53% said integrating into Canadian society was an important or very important factor in their decision – well below the top reasons relating to personal health. But 69% stated that sports helped them learn about Canadian culture during their first three years here – either through their own participation or their children's. This section of our results analysis explores how sports contribute to integration and belonging in Canada.

SPORTS AS SOCIAL NETWORKING

Sports are an effective integrator, offering a more casual environment than the workplace. In the words of one survey respondent:

"Canadians act more openly, naturally and with less reservation in sports than they would in the office environment."

By participating in sports, new citizens meet other people who share their interests and speak the same (sports) language.

Social activities are often built into league play. Teammates become friends when they go out together after the game. Building a network is a key way to feel at home, even for those from countries that are culturally similar to Canada. As one of the survey respondents said:

"[Clearly] there's not a huge difference between the culture of the UK and that of Canada, but those subtle differences can be important. The friends I made at the gym (playing squash) and at soccer certainly helped me to feel at home here more quickly, and to integrate more successfully."

Those "subtle differences" are the aspects of culture that new citizens cannot learn from books or the Internet; they are learned only through interacting with people. According to the survey respondents, these nuances include:

- jargon and slang used in the language;
- how to handle conflict;
- acceptable behaviours or gestures; and
- the Canadian sense of humour.

In addition, sports can be the starting point for deeper discussions about Canadian politics, culture and history. As one survey respondent put it:

"[The] locker room is a great place to learn about Canada!"[53]

[53] This was also reflected in the focus groups. In Ottawa, for example, Alexei said he played sports for the love of the game, but he realized later it gave him the opportunity to learn how to socialize in Canada. Focus group discussion, June 10, 2014.

New citizens have demonstrated through their survey responses and contributions to the focus groups that Canadians are generally open and willing to share their sporting passions, making sports participation (for those who enjoy sports) an important way to help newcomers and new citizens feel more rooted in Canada.

This works, however, only if new citizens play sports with a diverse group of participants, including other immigrants and Canadian-born individuals. As discussed, newcomers often start with sports popular in their countries of origin, and in Canada those sports – namely table tennis, badminton, cricket and soccer – tend to be dominated by particular immigrant groups. As one survey respondent said:

> "it helped little because I was playing with people from my country. I think it would have been more helpful if I had the opportunity to join teams that had diversity."

Similarly, Ling, the table tennis player in Vancouver, had a bit of trouble answering that question. She was very clear that playing table tennis introduced her to a new community of people, which helped her feel more at home, but because most of the participants were Asian (although some had been in Canada for a long time), she was unsure if it helped her integrate into Canadian culture or just into "life in Canada" – an important distinction.[54] In addition, some of the sports organizations we talked to were concerned that newcomers gravitate to teams composed of people from their own cultural backgrounds. Newcomers should not be faulted for this; in a new place, it makes sense they find comfort around those from the same country of origin.

It is clear there are some structural barriers to sports in Canada that compel newcomers to stick together and start their own teams or leagues. It is also clear that if we can break down some of the barriers to sports and invite everyone to play together, we can potentially help new citizens feel at home in Canada much sooner. And while Canadians are generally happy to share their sports passions with newcomers, one of our focus group participants suggested that new citizens should also share their passions – soccer, cricket, table tennis, etc. – with other Canadians.[55]

For those who do not play sports, or do not even have a general interest, registering their children in sports can provide the same advantages for them. Of our survey respondents, 87% said that watching their children play sports or volunteering for their children's sports teams made them feel more connected to their community.[56] Just like participating in sports, it offers a chance for new citizens to practice their language skills, make new friends and learn more about Canadian society. According to one survey respondent, it definitely helped cultivate a sense of belonging to their community:

> "I have met many, many people from different backgrounds, ways of thinking. It gives you a great view of the people in your community, their needs, their interests, ways of life, etc."

Seeing their children integrate also gives some new citizens a sense of confidence, which in turn helps them feel like they belong.

[54] Focus group discussion, June 2, 2014.

[55] Focus group discussion, May 26, 2014.

[56] "Community" can have different meanings for different people. The survey question specified the community they live in, not their cultural, ethnic or religious community. Note that only 21% reported an active volunteer role in sports.

Another survey respondent said:

"[Talking] to trainers and other caregivers makes me feel that I belong here and that I am not alone. Watching how well my children are blending into the Canadian culture and society makes me feel connected even more."

In the survey, a few respondents said their children's participation made them feel "part of the same team" with the other parents. In the survey and focus groups, we heard children's sports were a fun way to interact with other Canadians, a way to connect with others and lighten the load of those first years of settlement.

FEELING PART OF THE SAME TEAM

Playing is not the only way in which sports can act as a connector. Simply knowing about sports – or showing an interest in learning – is an easy way to establish connections, begin conversations and feel more included in Canadian society. Many of the focus group participants shared that sports were a common conversation starter in the workplace; this was where they learned about popular Canadian sports:

"[It's] the next biggest topic in our discussion in the workplace. So yeah, we hear about sports from colleagues and that's the first time I heard about ice hockey, from my friends."[57]

In Ottawa, the participants also pointed out sports idioms (particularly from baseball) hold a prominent place in Canadian English. Simply not knowing those can make new citizens feel outside the mainstream culture.[58]

As discussed earlier, new citizens told us that the best part of attending sporting events was the atmosphere, particularly the feeling that everyone is connected. In Calgary, Farzana commented that differences seem to disappear when at a sporting event:

"When you're at the game and the Flames score, whoever's sitting next to you is going to give you a high five…it doesn't matter what you look like or how much money you make."[59]

Major sporting events like the Stanley Cup playoffs or the Olympics can be pivotal moments for new citizens in their identification with their community or country.

For instance, during the 2012 Winter Olympic Games, Alexandra, a new citizen from Romania, got swept up in her boss's excitement about curling:

"For the Olympics, my manager was into curling, and I didn't know anything about curling…. So I watched it with her…I even cried when they [Canada] won."[60]

The 2010 Vancouver Olympics proved to be an event that cemented several new citizens' connection to Canada, particularly those living in Vancouver, like Karen:

"I was only here six months and the Olympics came to town…there's for me a very, very strong correlation between identifying Canada as home and sports bringing people together."[61]

[57] Focus group discussion, May 15, 2014.
[58] Focus group discussion, May 15, 2014.
[59] Focus group discussion, May 26, 2014.
[60] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.

It was not just sports in general that made such an impression on Karen; hockey created an enduring connection to Canada. She became a Canucks fan, contributes to a hockey blog and works with an organization that provides opportunities for low-income children to play the game. This was not just the case for Vancouverites; new citizens throughout Canada got swept up in the excitement.

Gender may also influence the role of sports as an integrator and connector. As Peter in Toronto said:

"Knowing about the players from my childhood helped me to relate to guys my age here. It's easier to make friends, talk about the Alomars and that kind of stuff…that really helped me integrate and make friends quicker…. I feel like as a guy, if you don't know sports…good luck at making friends."

Peter grew up in Europe, where he had the ability to follow North American baseball, basketball and hockey. In response, Alya said that she didn't feel the same pressure to know about sports, perhaps because she was a woman and she wasn't expected to be interested in it. [62]

HOW NEW CITIZENS VIEW HOCKEY, CANADA'S NATIONAL SPORT

When discussing sport and integration, the conversation in the focus groups tended to revolve around hockey. For new citizens, Canadian sporting culture is synonymous with hockey. In every focus group, we asked participants to tell us the first thing that came to mind when they thought about sport in Canada. Inevitably, the first answer every time was hockey.

There were two different camps on the connection between hockey and Canadian culture. We heard a couple of times during the focus group discussions that the domination of hockey – and the active promotion of it by the government – was overwhelming, both in a cultural sense and a pragmatic sense. Participants felt other sports don't get the attention and funding they deserve. For example, Peter in Toronto commented,

"[It's] very much promoted as, if you don't play hockey, you're not Canadian. It's everywhere. Even in our citizenship booklet…. It's on the money. It's too much, I feel."

Raj agreed:

"Yeah, I feel sometimes isolated. I try to get into it, but the overall perception of sports is just hockey-oriented, so if I am non-hockey, then I am nowhere…." [63]

Only in Calgary did another participant echo the same feelings. These individuals did not seem resentful of hockey culture; in their countries of origin, it is simply a different sport that dominates the sporting culture. The majority of the participants saw the domination of hockey in Canadian culture as an opportunity to embrace something new. As Ali in Mississauga put it:

"I am very much a Canadian as I am an Indian, because this country has given me a lot too. So why wouldn't I support a sport which my country supports?" [64]

[62] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.

[63] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.
[64] Focus group discussion, May 15, 2014.

Many of the focus group participants, recognizing how important hockey is to Canadian culture, talked about how they felt compelled to show interest in order to feel a part of the mainstream. It is clear that Canadians are happy to share their passion for the game. For Karen in Vancouver, this was a genuine interest that eventually turned into a love for the sport:

> "I was like, 'Who is Bure?' And they laughed at me…. I wanted to know…who is that person? What do they mean to Vancouver? How are they relevant to Canada?"[65]

Similarly, Sadia in Calgary consulted her colleagues before attending her first hockey game in order to learn more about the game:

> "That is the best of Canada here. The people are very helpful."[66]

Others were not as enthusiastic about the game, but wanted to still make the effort in order to feel like they belong:

> "Especially during game season, everyone wears jerseys and it seems like a big festival…. It makes me feel like I have to know hockey, otherwise I won't join their conversation. Like my husband, he doesn't know anything about hockey, but he got himself a Canucks jersey."[67]

They joked that you "score points" with Canadians if you learn enough to pretend like you know what you are talking about. Others wanted to participate for the sake of their children's integration:

> Je veux participer, assister dans un match de hockey…pour mes enfants pour qu'ils sachent qu'est-ce que c'est et vraiment de gouter cet air d'être canadien sportif qui comprend qu'est-ce que c'est le hockey. [68]

Furthermore, the focus group participants recognized that new citizens were not obliged to give up their passion for other sports, as Canada is a multicultural country (although they would appreciate it if there were more facilities to play the sports they love). Some take pleasure in sharing their interests with their Canadian friends. For example, Marcus said:

> "So my buddies brought me to hockey games even though I don't love the game like they do, but it's contagious… you just feel the energy and then you love it too. Then when it's the World Cup and I bring them to the Germany games, they are not as passionate as I am, but in the end they're all shouting and jumping, because it's contagious."[69]

[65] Focus group discussion, May 31, 2014.
[66] Focus group discussion, May 26, 2014.
[67] Focus group discussion, June 2, 2014.
[68] Focus group discussion, June 11, 2014. English translation: "I want to participate, to go to a hockey game…for my kids to know, to understand what hockey really is about and for them to really have a taste of what being a Canadian athlete truly means."
[69] Focus group discussion, May 8, 2014.

CONCLUSION

Sports are clearly more than just sport. They have the ability to connect people from different backgrounds and provide safe spaces for them to explore different cultures. For new citizens, playing sports with more established Canadians offers opportunities to share and engage in deeper discussions around Canada's culture and history, helping them to learn more about Canadian society and feel more at home with every passing game. Hockey in particular has a powerful hold, and when new citizens arrive they need to figure out how they are going to engage with it. Some choose to ignore it, but most seem to recognize its importance in Canadian culture and embrace it as a way to fit in with their neighbours and colleagues. And when Canadians take an interest in the sports that new citizens have a passion for, sports becomes a powerful way to unite us all.

TOP

Romit & Ritu, Cultural Access Pass Members

SECTION 7

PUT ME IN, COACH!
Conclusion & new citizens' recommendations

Put me in, coach! Getting new citizens into the game

Before the Institute for Canadian Citizenship embarked on developing *Playing together*, we conducted a literature review of existing work examining the link between sports and inclusion. The idea of sports as an integrator is not a new idea and, frustratingly, the barriers to participation identified in previous research are consistent with our more recent findings.

What was missing, however, were the voices of new Canadians in the discussion. With our unique ability to connect to new citizens across Canada, we wanted to uncover:

- their views on how they choose to participate and watch sports in Canada;
- how those behaviours may differ from their participation in their countries of origin; and
- more significantly, if and how sports help make new citizens feel more at home in Canada.

We were hopeful we would receive interest from new citizens in our survey, and we were genuinely surprised and delighted by the fact that more than 4,000 new citizens chose to spend 20 minutes or more online telling us about their experiences, and that dozens also chose to spend a few hours in focus groups. This response in and of itself is telling: new citizens want to share their views on Canada and being Canadian and, although this wasn't asked explicitly, we surmise that few have had the opportunity to do so.

Equally heartening was to find the vast reserves of goodwill toward integration that exist right across Canada.

Sports authorities are eager to find new players and fans for their sports; indeed, a number of organizations across Canada have already embraced their role as nation builders through sport. And on the flip side: new citizens want to get involved.

What we heard from new citizens and sports authorities alike is that the barriers to participate in sports are overwhelmingly structural, rather than cultural. There is a genuine, urgent need to re-think how we organize and communicate about sporting life in Canada, ensuring more and different participants can get involved.

Where barriers exist in the organization of sporting culture, new citizens told us:

SPORTS IN CANADA ARE HIGHLY ORGANIZED

…for Canadians. The structure of organized sports in Canada is formal and regimented in a way that makes sense to those who were raised here, but can be confusing and intimidating to newcomers, many of whom are used to a "pickup" sports culture.

LET NEW CITIZENS TRY BEFORE THEY BUY

Create opportunities for new citizens to participate in "learn to" camps and 101s in the form of one-time or multiple-day workshops. New citizens can also encourage native-born Canadians to try an unfamiliar sport, such as badminton or cricket, for a day. Canadians can make learning and playing a two-way street.

PLAYING/WATCHING SPORTS COSTS A LOT

Cost was cited numerous times as a barrier to participation. Ideas such as a tax benefit for adults who play organized sports (much like the current federal tax credit for children in sport) could ease the financial burden.

Providing information about equipment exchanges, subsidized equipment purchase plans and used equipment sales would also be helpful.

Developing "first-time buyer" plans with substantial discounts to attend professional games is another way to help new citizens experience a sport. As we heard many times, once you get someone in the door, the experience of simply being present is a game-changing experience.

CREATE MULTIPLE ACCESS POINTS

Create opportunities to meet professional teams and players, both at the stadium and in the community.

TELL US MORE! INFORMING NEW CITIZENS ABOUT SPORTS

Structural barriers to participation were compounded by communication difficulties, both in *what* is being said about sports and *where* information is available. On these challenges, new citizens told us:

PUT INFORMATION ONLINE

Re-work the information that is available online about a sport by including more "101" content and taking care to simplify language and remove jargon. It is also important to remove the assumption that "everyone knows this" about a sport in favour of clear, accessible information. Ask new citizens to review "101" information to ensure new eyes understand the content.

MEET NEW CITIZENS WHERE THEY ARE

Distribute information at key locations on newcomers' journey to becoming Canadian: through "welcome packages" offered at airports, English as a Second Language classes, settlement organizations, libraries and community centres.

EMPOWER NEW CITIZENS

Recruit sports ambassadors, empowering new citizens to tell their stories. As new citizens become involved in sporting activities, encourage them to volunteer and help shape organizations by reaching out to new communities.

Creating a vibrant, inclusive sporting culture in Canada is hard work, but we have found that the will to build it is there on all sides. All Canadians – new or established, individuals or collective sporting authorities – need to be braver and louder in saying, "please join us."

The power of play is undeniable. Canadians understand the value of playing together in creating social bonds, promoting active, healthy living and, ultimately, building a stronger country.

TOP

Alexander, Cultural Access Pass Member
Photo by Clock Tower Image

SECTION 8

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Online survey questions

20+ MINUTES

1. What is your favourite way to be physically active?

2. Have you ever participated (even just once) in any of the following physical activities?
Please check all that apply:

Ice hockey
Field hockey
Basketball
Baseball
Soccer
Football
Cricket
Volleyball *(indoor and beach)*
Tennis
Table tennis
Badminton
Cycling
(road, trail and mountain)
Working out at a gym on your own or with a personal trainer
Running/jogging
Swimming
Curling
Skiing
(downhill, snowboarding and cross country)
Triathlon/Duathlon
Martial Arts
Ice skating
Squash
Lacrosse
Rugby
Walking
(for fitness or pleasure, not just to get around)
Fitness classes
(yoga, weight training, spin classes, etc.)
Other, please specify

The following questions specifically ask about your participation in sports.
We do not include activities like going for a walk, fitness classes/working out at a gym, or yoga.
You can play sports competitively or just for fun.

3. Which of the following sports do you participate in regularly? "Regularly" means approximately once per week during playing season. You can play competitively or just on your own or with friends.
Please check all that apply:

Ice hockey
Field hockey
Basketball
Baseball
Soccer
Football
Cricket
Volleyball
(indoor and beach)
Tennis
Table tennis
Badminton
Cycling
Running/jogging
Swimming
Curling
Skiing
(downhill, snowboarding and cross country)
Triathlon/Duathlon
Martial Arts
Ice skating
Squash
Lacrosse
Rugby
Other, please specify (do not include going for a walk, fitness classes or yoga)

(road, trail and mountain)

4. Since moving to Canada, have you tried any new sports?
   Yes | No

5. If yes, please tell us which new sports you tried:

6. In general, why do you participate in sports? Please rate the importance of the following reasons:

Rating Options: Not at all important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important

Reasons:

- To get or keep fit.
- To stay healthy.
- To lose weight.
- To meet new people.
- To spend time with my family.
- To spend time with my friends.
- To compete.
- To achieve a goal.
- To have fun.
- To reduce stress.
- To integrate into Canadian society.
- To spend time outside.
- *Other, please explain*

7. Think about the sports you don't play. Why don't you play them? Please rate the importance of the following reasons:

Rating Options: Not at all important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important

Reasons:

- I don't have time.
- They are too expensive.
- There aren't any or enough opportunities for me to play where I live.
- There are no opportunities to play at my skill level.
- I don't have anyone to play with.
- I don't feel welcome on teams or in leagues where I live.
- *Other, please explain*

The following questions ask about your participation in sports before and just after you moved to Canada.

8. Which sports did you participate in regularly BEFORE you moved to Canada?

Regularly means approximately once per week during playing season; it can be competitively or just for fun.

Please check all that apply:

Ice hockey
Field hockey
Basketball
Baseball
Soccer
Football
Cricket
Volleyball *(indoor and beach)*
Tennis
Table tennis
Badminton
Cycling *(road, mountain, trail)*
Running/jogging
Swimming
Curling
Skiing *(downhill, snowboarding, cross country)*
Triathlon/Duathlon
Martial arts
Ice skating
Squash
Lacrosse
Rugby
None
Other, please specify (do not include activities like yoga, walking for pleasure, fitness classes, or working out at a gym)

9. Did you play sports competitively or for fun in the first three years that you lived in Canada?
   - Yes, regularly (approximately once/week during playing season)
   - Yes, once in a while
   - No

10. If yes, which sports did you participate in the first three years after you moved to Canada?

Please check all that apply:

Ice hockey
Field hockey
Basketball
Baseball
Soccer
Football
Cricket
Volleyball *(indoor and beach)*
Tennis
Table tennis
Badminton
Cycling *(road, mountain, trail)*
Running/jogging
Swimming
Curling
Skiing *(downhill, snowboarding, cross country)*
Triathlon/Duathlon
Martial arts
Ice skating
Squash
Lacrosse
Rugby
Other, please specify (do not include activities like yoga, walking for pleasure, fitness classes, or working out at a gym)

11. If you tried to find opportunities to play sports in the first three years that you lived in Canada, did you find it difficult to find opportunities?

Yes | No

Please explain

12. If you tried to find information about sports in the first three years you lived in Canada, did you have difficulties finding it?
    Yes | No

13. Where did you find information about participating in sports?
    - Internet
    - Family and friends
    - Community organizations (e.g. your neighbourhood community centre)
    - Ethnic or cultural organizations

    Please explain

14. If you played sport during your first three years in Canada, did it help you learn about Canadian culture?
    Yes | No
    Please explain

15. If you didn't play sports in your first three years in Canada, why not? Please rate the importance of the following reasons:
    Rating Options: Not at all important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important
    Reasons:
    - I didn't have time.
    - I couldn't afford it.
    - I simply wasn't interested.
    - I didn't have anyone to play with.
    - I didn't feel welcome on teams or in leagues where I lived.
    - There weren't opportunities to play at my skill level.
    - There weren't any opportunities to play the sports I liked.
    - I had other priorities.
    - *Other, please specify*

The following questions ask about your children's participation in sports.

16. Do you have children (less than 18 years of age) who live at home AND play sports? They can play sports in school, take lessons, or just have fun playing with friends.
    - Yes, I have children who play sports.
    - No, I have children, but they don't play sports.
    - No, I don't have any children less than 18 years of age living at home.

17. Which organized sports do your children play inside and outside of school? For example, this means your children could belong to the school track team, or play in a hockey or soccer league run by your city/town.
    Please check all that apply.

    Ice hockey
    Field hockey
    Baseball or softball
    Gymnastics
    Swimming
    Ice skating

Basketball
Volleyball
Soccer
Cricket
Tennis
Track and Field
Martial Arts
Rugby
Badminton
Squash
Skiing *(cross country, downhill, snowboarding)*
Lacrosse
Other, please specify

18. Did you find it difficult to find opportunities for your children to play sports after you arrived in Canada?
    Yes | No
    Please explain

19. Where did you find information to get your children involved in sports? *Please check all that apply:*
    - Internet
    - My child's school
    - Community organizations (e.g. a neighbourhood community centre)
    - Ethnic or cultural organizations
    - Family or friends (word of mouth)
    - *Please explain*

20. Do you think playing sports is an important experience for your children?
    Yes | No

21. If yes, why do you think playing sports is important for your children? Please rate the importance of the following reasons:
    Rating Options: Not at all important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important
    Reasons:
    - It keeps them active and healthy.
    - It teaches them teamwork.
    - It builds their confidence.
    - It encourages them to spend time outside.
    - It helps them make friends.
    - It helps them integrate into Canadian society.
    - *Other, please specify*

23. <no 22? Renumber as necessary>Have you ever volunteered for your children's sports team or league?
    Yes | No

24. If yes, what did you do or what do you presently do?

25. Do you watch your children play their sports?
    Yes | No

26. Does watching your children play sports or volunteering for their sports teams or leagues make you feel more connected to the community you live in?
    Yes | No
    Please explain

IF CHILDREN DO NOT PLAY SPORTS…

27. Why don't your children play sports? Please rate the importance of the following reasons:
    Rating Options: Not at all important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important
    Reasons:
    - My children aren't interested in sports.
    - Sports are too expensive.
    - Sports are too violent.
    - I want my children to focus on school.
    - Competition is not healthy for children.
    - My children don't feel welcome on teams or in leagues.
    - My children are too young to play sports.
    - My children have other hobbies.
    - I don't know where to find information about sports for my children.
    - *Other, please specify*

The following questions ask about attending sporting events and watching them on television.

28. Do you follow a professional sports team? This could apply to any team, in any sport, anywhere in the world.
    Yes | No

29. If yes, please tell us which one(s):

30. Do you follow a national sports team? This could apply to any team, in any sport, anywhere in the world.
    Yes | No
    If yes, please tell us which one(s):

31. How do you follow your favourite sports teams and sports in general? *Check all that apply:*

Internet – Canadian news websites (e.g. National Post, Globe and Mail, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation)
Internet – international news sites
Internet – Canadian sports TV broadcaster websites (e.g. TSN, Sportsnet)
Internet – international sports TV broadcaster websites
Internet – the website of my team(s)
Internet – sports blogs
Internet – websites of sports magazines
Internet – social media (Facebook, Twitter)
Print newspapers
Print sports magazines
Television – sports channels (e.g. TSN, SportsNet)
Television – mainstream news channels (e.g. CBC, CTV, NBC, ABC)
Radio – sports shows
Radio – general news programs
Other, please specify

32. Approximately how many times a year do you attend the following sporting events?
Rating Options: 0 | 1-3 | 4-6 | 7-9 | 10+
Responses:
- National Hockey League (NHL) games
- Canadian Football League (CFL) games
- Major League Baseball (MLB) games
- National Basketball League (NBA) games
- Major League Soccer (MLS) games

33. Do you attend any of the following sporting events at least three times a season? *Please check all that apply.:*
- University level hockey
- University level football
- University level baseball
- University level basketball
- University level soccer
- Minor league baseball
- Minor league basketball (e.g. National Basketball League of Canada)
- Minor league hockey (e.g. American Hockey League)
- Junior hockey (e.g. Canadian Hockey League)
- Minor league soccer (everything below the three Major League Soccer teams)
- *Please specify which teams you go out to watch*

34. What prevents you from going to professional sporting events more often? For each reason listed, please tell us if it applies to the sports listed across the top of the question. *Please check all that apply:*

Categories to Rate:	*Response Options:*
NHL games (National Hockey League)	There are no teams where I live.
CFL games (Canadian Football League)	I'm simply not interested.
MLB games (Major League Baseball)	I can't afford the tickets.
NBA games (National Basketball Association)	I don't have time.
MLS games (Major League Soccer games)	I don't like the violence.
Does not apply to me	I don't think being in the crowd is safe.
	I don't understand the rules of the game.
	I can't get tickets because they are too popular.
	I don't have anyone to go with.
	I don't see people like me on the teams.
	<remove indent>Other reasons, please specify

35. What, if anything, can professional sports organizations do to encourage you to go to games?

36. If you have children, would you take your children to a professional sporting event (such as those above) if they wanted to go?
    Yes | No
    Please explain

37. How often during the playing season do you watch the following types of sporting events on television?
    Rating Options: Never | Rarely (1-3 games) | Sometimes (5-10 games) | Often (as many as I can)
    Reponses:
    - Hockey – National Hockey League (NHL)
    - Basketball – National Basketball Association (NBA)
    - Baseball – Major League Baseball (MLB)
    - Football – National Football League (NFL)
    - Football – Canadian Football League (CFL)
    - Soccer – Major League Soccer (MLS)
    - Soccer – International leagues

38. Which of the following major sporting events do you watch on television? *Please check all that apply:*
Rating Options: Every time | Occasionally | Never
Responses:
- Winter Olympic Games
- Summer Olympic Games
- World Cup of Soccer
- Super Bowl
- World Series
- Grey Cup
- Stanley Cup Playoffs
- UEFA Champions League
- Cricket World Cup
- UEFA European Championships (Euros)
- *Other, please specify*

39. All things considered, please rate your interest level in the following sports:
Rating Options: Not interested | Somewhat interested | Interested
Responses:
- Hockey
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Football (Canadian and American)
- Soccer

40. We want to know if your interest in the sports listed in previous question makes you feel more Canadian, less Canadian or makes no difference:
Rating Options: More Canadian | Less Canadian | Makes no difference
Responses:
- You are in hockey. This makes you feel:
- You are in baseball. This makes you feel:
- You are in basketball. This makes you feel:
- You are in football. This makes you feel:
- You are in soccer. This makes you feel:

41. We want to know if your interest in the sports listed in previous question makes you feel more connected to your community, less connected to your community or makes no difference. *"Community" means the community where you live, not your cultural or religious community.*
    Rating Options: More connected to your community | Less connected to your community | Makes no difference
    Responses:
    - You are [interest level] in hockey. This makes you feel:
    - You are [interest level] in baseball. This makes you feel:
    - You are [interest level] in basketball. This makes you feel:
    - You are [interest level] in football. This makes you feel:
    - You are [interest level] in soccer. This makes you feel:

You are almost done! The following questions ask about adding sports to our Cultural Access Pass (CAP) program.

42. Are you interested in including sports in the CAP program? Offers could be for both current and past members.
    Yes | No

43. How interested are you in the following types of offers?
    Rating Options: Not interested | Somewhat interested | Very interested
    Responses:
    - Discounted tickets to sporting events
    - Opportunities to try sports

44. Toronto will host the Pan-American Games in July 2015. If you live in the Toronto area, are you interested in attending some of the events?
    Yes | No

45. If yes, please tell us what events you would be interested in seeing:

46. Canada will host the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2015. Host cities are Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal and Moncton. If you live near one of the host cities, are you interested in attending the games?
    Yes | No
    Please explain

47. Do you think that sports are an important part of Canadian culture?
    Yes | No
    Please explain

Finally, the following questions are about you – they will help us better analyze the results.

48. What is your gender?
    Male | Female

49. How old are you?
    18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-64 | 65+

50. What province or territory do you live in?
    - Alberta
    - British Columbia
    - Saskatchewan
    - Manitoba
    - Ontario
    - Quebec
    - New Brunswick
    - Nova Scotia
    - Prince Edward Island
    - Newfoundland
    - Yukon
    - Northwest Territories
    - Nunavut

51. What country were you born in?

Afghanistan
Albania
Algeria
Antigua
Argentina
Armenia
Australia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Azores
Bahamas
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belarus
Belgium
Benin
Bolivia
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Brazil
Bulgaria
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Korea, Republic of
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Latvia
Lebanon
Madagascar
Malaysia
Malta
Mauritania
Mauritius
Mexico
Moldova
Mongolia
Morocco
Myanmar
Nepal
Netherlands

Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cambodia
Cameroon
Chad
Chile
China, People's Republic of
Colombia
Congo, Democratic Republic of
Costa Rica
Croatia
Cuba
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
England
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Fiji
Finland
France
Gabon
Georgia
Germany
Ghana
Greece
Grenada
Guatemala
Guinea
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Ivory Coast
New Zealand
Northern Ireland
Nigeria
Pakistan
Palestine
Panama
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Qatar
Romania
Russia
Rwanda
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Saint Lucia
Saudi Arabia
Scotland
Senegal
Serbia
Sierra Leone
Singapore
Slovakia
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Sweden
Switzerland
Syria
Taiwan
Tanzania
Thailand
Tibet
Togo
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Uganda
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
United States
Uruguay

Jamaica	Uzbekistan
Japan	Venezuela
Liban	Vietnam
Liberia	Wales
Libya	Yugoslavia
Lithuania	Zambia
Luxembourg	Zimbabwe
Macedonia	*Other, please specify*

52. How many years have you lived in Canada?
3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | More than 10

53. What is the highest level of education you have? Please choose the equivalent Canadian level:
- Less than high school
- High school
- Some college or technical school
- College or technical school diploma
- Some university
- University – Bachelor's
- University – Master's
- University – PhD

54. What is your combined household income BEFORE taxes? Please include the income of ALL adult members of the household:
- $20,000 - $39,999
- $40,000 - $59,999
- $60,000 - $79,999
- $80,000 - $99,999
- $100,000 - $119,999
- $120,000 - $139,999
- $140,000 - $159,999
- $160,000 - $179,999
- $180,000 - $199,999
- $200,000+

55. What is your employment situation?
- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Self-employed
- Searching for work (unemployed)
- Raising a family at home
- Retired
- Student
- Working and attending school
- *Other, please specify*

TOP

Appendix 2: Focus group questions

(90 MINUTES)

1. Let's do a quick round of introductions. Please tell us your name, where you emigrated from, how long you have been in Canada and whether or not you have children. Also share your interest level in sports on a scale from 0 to 5 and why *(zero meaning absolutely no interest in playing or watching sports; five meaning you love playing and watching sports).*

2. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of sports in Canada? This can relate to particular sports, how sports are organized and the role of sport in Canadian culture.
   [Record using a flip chart]

3. We have a diverse set of countries of origin seated at this table. What I would like to do next is brainstorm the ways in which sports in your country of origin and Canada are different and similar.
   [Record using a flip chart; one column for similarities and one for differences]
   These similarities and differences can relate to particular sports, how sports are organized, how people play sports and the role of sports in the cultures of the two countries.

4. Think back to the first time you played a sport in Canada.
   - How long after you arrived in Canada was it?
   - How did you get involved?

5. What new sports did you try when you came to Canada?
   - How long after you arrived was it?
   - What was the best part of the experience?
   - Have you continued playing?

6. We often hear that people don't play sports – or don't do it more often – because they don't have the time or money. Pretend you won the lottery. You have lots of money and time.
   - Are there still sports you would not try?
   - Are there sports you would not want your children to play?
   - What are they and why don't you want to play them (or not want your kids to play them)?

7. Part of the goal of this project is to help Canadian sports organizations serve new Canadians better. Based on your own experience as a new Canadian, what can sports organizations in Canada do to make it easier for you to participate in sport?
   - What can municipalities do to make it easier for you to participate in sports?

8. Let's talk about attending sporting events. Here in *[city]* there are a number of sports teams: *[list]*.
   - Which sporting events have you gone to?
   - Tell me a little more about your experience attending these events. How did you get tickets? Why did you want to go? What was the best part of the experience? Would you go again?
   - If cost was not a factor and you could get tickets no problem, are there any sports teams you would not go and see? Why not?
   - What, if anything, can sports organizations do to encourage new Canadians to go and watch their teams?

9. Sometimes it seems that Canada is all about hockey. It's all we watch, play, think and talk about. Coming from countries that maybe don't feel the same way about hockey, how does this make you feel as a new Canadian?

10. When an immigrant comes to Canada, they have to learn how Canadian society works. You can learn some of this in a book or online, but there are many things you have to learn through living in the country and interacting with other people. You can do this in a number of places – at work, in your neighbourhood, in community organizations and even sports. From your own experience, how important was sports in helping you integrate into Canadian society?

11. As someone who has been in Canada for at least three years and has become a citizen, what advice regarding sports would you give to a friend who wanted to move here?
    - Based on your experience, what would you tell him/her about sports in Canada?

12. Is there anything we haven't discussed that you think is important for us to know about new citizens and sport?

Appendix 3: About the Institute for Canadian Citizenship & its supporters

MEET THE INSTITUTE FOR CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP

The Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) is a national, non-profit charity that helps accelerate new citizens' integration into Canadian life through original programs, collaborations and unique volunteer opportunities. While our focus is on encouraging new citizens to take their rightful places in Canada, we want all citizens – new or not – to embrace active citizenship in their daily lives. The ICC is founded and co-chaired by the Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul. To learn more about the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, visit www.icc-icc.ca. You can also follow us on Twitter, @ICCICC.

What is ICC Insights?

Launched in 2012, ICC Insights explores the experiences of new Canadian citizens to bring their voices to the Canadian mainstream, reframing the national conversation on inclusion, identity and citizenship. Our research is uniquely focused and stands alone in its mission to develop a comprehensive understanding of newcomers' experiences as Canadian citizens beyond immigration and settlement. ICC Insights works with new citizens who are engaged, active and excited to share their stories. This study is just the first of many conversations with new citizens we want to bring to light.

MEET BOUYGUES BUILDING CANADA

As a global player in construction, Bouygues Building Canada designs, builds and operates buildings that improve the quality of people's living and working environments. As a leader in sustainable construction, the company and its employees have a long-term commitment to helping their customers shape better lives. *Playing together* resonated with Bouygues because of their connection to Toronto's Pan Am/Parapan Games in 2015; they have built several major sports structures for the Games.

MEET DOUG & LOIS MITCHELL

Doug Mitchell is a respected business and community leader who has brought great energy and commitment to a wide range of organizations. Together, Doug and his wife Lois generously give to numerous causes. *Playing together* resonated with the Mitchell's because of their passion for sports; Doug played briefly for the Hamilton Tiger Cats.

TOP