

# Industry Profile: Sports & Recreation

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## 1. Overview of the Sports & Recreation Industry

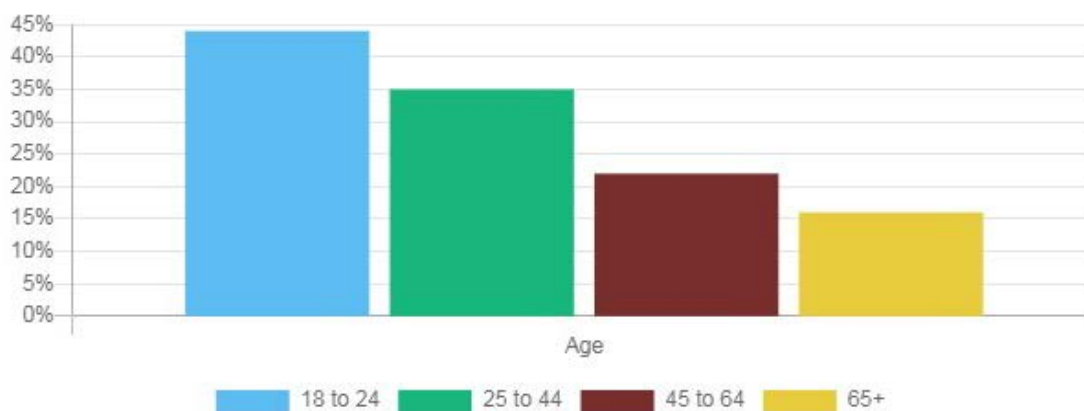
### Introduction

#### **Participation in sports** (*athletes, spectators, coaches, referees administrators*)

In BC, there are estimated 800,000 participants in amateur sports (SportBC).

Across Canada one-quarter (27%) of adults (18 years and older) participated in sport in 2019-2021. A substantially higher percentage of men (36%) participate in sport compared to women (19%). Participation generally decreases considerably with increasing age (i.e., from 44% of 18 to 24 year olds to 16% of adults 65 years and older).

**Sport Participation, Adults (18 years and older), 2019-2021 Physical Activity Monitor**



Source: 2019-2021 Physical Activity Monitor (*Adult Focus*),

<https://cflri.ca/publications/sport-participation/adults/>

According to Canadian parents, 74% of children, between the ages of 5 and 17, participate in sport with a higher proportion of young children (age 5-12) compared to older children (age 13-17) (this number increases to 81% in British Columbia).

Sources:

**Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute CFLRI**

- 2019-2021 Physical Activity Monitor (PAM) (released February 2022)  
<https://cflri.ca/publications/sport-participation/>  
 2019-2021 Physical Activity Monitor (*Adult Focus*),  
<https://cflri.ca/publications/sport-participation/adults/>
- 2010-2011 Physical Activity Monitor (Children and Youth focus),  
<https://cflri.ca/publications/sport-participation/children-and-youth/>
- Bulletin 2: Participation in organized physical activity and sport, CANPLAY (Canadian Physical Activity Levels among Youth Study),  
[https://cflri.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CPLY-2014-2016-Bulletin-2-Organized\\_EN.pdf](https://cflri.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CPLY-2014-2016-Bulletin-2-Organized_EN.pdf)

**Statistics Canada: British Columbia: Regular participation in sports**

		Sex	Total, both sexes	
		Age group	Total, 15 years and over	
		Population characteristics	Total, all characteristics	
		Estimates	Number of persons (x 1,000)	Percentage of persons
Geography	Regular participation in sports <sup>2</sup>		2016	2016
			Persons	Percent
British Columbia ( <a href="#">map</a> )	Total, all types of participation		4,025	100.0
	Regularly participated in sports in the past 12 months		1,117	27.7
	Did not regularly participate in sports in the past 12 months		2,872	71.3

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0602-01 Regular participation in sports by sex and other demographic characteristics, release date May 2019

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310060201>

**More Canadians involved in amateur sport as coaches, referees, administrators, and spectators.**

In addition to participation in amateur sport, Canadians are also involved in sport indirectly as *coaches, referees, umpires, administrators, and spectators*. According to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute's 2020 Sport Monitor, over one-quarter (27%) of adults report volunteering in an activity related to sport in the 12 months prior to the survey.

It is estimated that more than 1.8 million Canadians volunteer in organized sport, representing 18% of all Canadian volunteers. The contribution of volunteers helps to ensure that sport programming is more accessible and affordable, by lowering operational costs of service providers

*Immigrants make up 20% of all people working in Canada as sports coaches.* There are more than 2,800 immigrants working as athletes, coaches, officials and referees across the country.

Sources:

**Status of Amateur Coaching In Canada**, Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

[https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2013/parl/xc61-1/XC61-1-1-411-8-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/parl/xc61-1/XC61-1-1-411-8-eng.pdf)

**Immigration Matters in Sports**

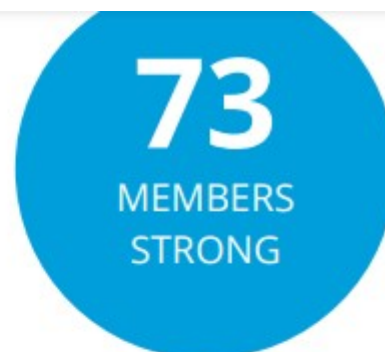
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/campaigns/immigration-matters/growing-canada-future/sports.html>

**Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute CFLRI**

- Volunteering in Sport, 2020 Sport Monitor  
<https://cflri.ca/publication/volunteering-in-sport/>
- Relaying the Research: Volunteering in Sport  
<https://cflri.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CFLRI-RelayResearch-Volunteering-EN-FINAL.pdf>
- Monitoring & Tracking the Field, Volunteering in Sport  
<https://cflri.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CFLRI-TrackingTheField-Sport-Monitor-Volunteering-EN-Final.pdf>

## Sport Organizations in BC

# OUR MEMBERS



### Provincial Sport Organizations

Badminton BC  
Basketball BC  
BC Adaptive Snowsports  
BC Alpine Ski Association  
BC Amateur Athletics Association  
BC Amateur Baseball Association  
BC Amateur Hockey Association  
BC Archery Association  
BC Artistic Swimming  
BC Ball Hockey Association  
BC Cheerleading Association  
BC Diving  
BC Fencing Association  
BC Golf Association  
BC Lacrosse Association  
BC Netball Association  
BC Provincial Football Association  
BC Rhythmic Sportive Gymnastics Federation  
BC Ringette Association  
BC Rugby Union  
BC Sailing Association  
BC Snowboard Association  
BC Soaring Society  
BC Soccer Association  
BC Ultimate Society  
BC Weightlifting Association  
BC Wheelchair Basketball Society  
BC Wrestling Association  
Biathlon BC  
Bowl BC  
Bowls BC  
Boxing BC  
Canada West Wushu Association  
Cricket BC  
Canoe Kayak BC  
Curl BC  
Cycling BC  
DanceSport BC  
Field Hockey BC  
Gymnastics BC  
Horse Council BC  
Judo BC  
Jump Rope BC  
Karate BC  
Pickleball BC  
Rowing BC  
Skate Canada BC/YK Section  
Softball BC  
Speed Skating BC Association  
Sport Climbing Association of British Columbia  
Squash BC  
Swim BC  
Tennis BC  
Triathlon BC  
Volleyball BC  
W.T.F. Taekwondo Federation of BC  
Water Polo West

### Multi-Sport & Disability Sport Organizations

BC Blind Sports and Recreation Association  
BC Deaf Sports Federation  
BC Games Society  
BC Recreation and Parks Association  
BC School Sports  
BC Sports Hall of Fame  
BC Wheelchair Sports Association  
Engage Sport North  
Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council  
Moresports British Columbia Society  
Pacific Sport - Fraser Valley  
Pacific Sport - Okanagan  
PacificSport - Vancouver Island  
Special Olympics BC  
Sportability  
SportMed BC

Source: SportBC Annual Report 2021-2022

<https://sportbc.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Sport-BC-Annual-Report-2022-2.pdf>

**Sources:**

ViaSport BC, <https://viasport.ca/accredited-recognized-affiliated-sports-in-bc/>

SportBC.com <https://sportbc.com/wpcontent/uploads/2022/05/Sport-BC-Annual-Report-2022-2.pdf>

***Immigrants and Sports in Canada: participation & benefits***

Sports help new Canadian citizens (those who have lived in Canada for at least three years and have attained Canadian citizenship) integrate into Canadian society.

***'Playing Together New Citizens, Sports & Belonging'*** reports that:

- 69% of newcomers who play sports within the first 3 years believe it helps them learn about Canadian culture
- 53% of newcomers said integrating into society was an important or very important factor in their decision to participate in sports.
- 95% of new citizens surveyed agree that sports are an important part of Canadian culture
- sports can teach elements of Canadian culture not learned in books or online: jargon and slang, humour, how to handle conflict, acceptable behaviours or gestures
- sports provides opportunity to practice language skills, make new friends, learn more about Canadian society, enjoy meaningful social interactions, benefit from fewer cultural constraints than they did in their country of origin
- more meaningful social interactions occur in the stands and on the field than at work

Source: Vital Signs: Sport & Belonging

[https://communityfoundations.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Vital\\_Signs\\_Sport\\_and\\_Belonging.pdf](https://communityfoundations.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Vital_Signs_Sport_and_Belonging.pdf)

Newcomers to Canada may need financial assistance to participate in sports; these initiatives may help:

- make subsidy information accessible by sharing it with all families when they register their kids.
- connect families with organizations that provide equipment, especially for activities requiring size specific equipment that needs to be replaced as the child grows.
- Contact local municipalities to see if subsidy programs available that allow residents in financial need to access recreational programs.
- offer free programs to newcomers when possible.
- offer a variety of programs at different price points to improve participation and reduce the elitist status of certain sports.
- have payment instalments to reduce the reluctance to participate if fees are high and are required to be paid up front.

Source: Sport for Life for ALL NEWCOMERS TO CANADA

<https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Inclusion-for-New-Citizens.pdf>

All levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal) along with sports and recreation organizations such as the BC Recreation & Parks Association (BCRPA) focus on teaching *skills for health living* and fostering *physical literacy* –(ability to master fundamental movement and **sport skills** that allows individuals to move confidently and with control in a wide range of physical activity situations).

- provincial government of BC provides sport-related grant programs that encourage sport participation and healthy living, develop high-performance athletes, and improve of sport and recreation programs, e.g. BC Sport Participation Program, Coaching & Officiating Development Fund. For further details on BC government programs , see:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/sports>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/sports/sport-funding>

- BCRPA provides programs such as 'Choose to Move' and 'ActiveAge' that target inactive older adults 65 years of age and older (increases physical activity levels and strives to decrease social isolation, motivate and support the adoption of active lifestyles); see:  
<https://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/everything-else/activage-choose-to-move/#1842> .

Sources:

- ViaSport British Columbia <https://viasport.ca/grants/>

### ***Sport Tourism in BC***

Sport tourism in British Columbia is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry. In 2019 domestic sports tourism was \$598 million and international sports tourism was \$1.120 million

Sport tourism can be a key to a community's economic development both through the value of a sport as a tourism generator, and the potential to market other business and economic opportunities.

Across Canada, the sport tourism industry generated \$7.4 billion in value in the calendar year 2019.

#### **Source:**

Sport Information Resource Centre: Sport Tourism Canada: Value of Sport tourism in 2019  
<https://sirc.ca/news/value-of-sport-tourism-in-2019-tops-7-billion/>



## 2. Occupations in the Sports & Recreation Industry

*During the years 2021-2031, immigrants to BC are projected to fill 35 per cent of all additions to the labour supply in the province.*

### **Sports & Recreation: Occupations in Demand across all BC regions:**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Job openings 2021-2031</b>
Athletes, NOC 5251	230
Coaches, NOC 5252	1240
Sports Officials & Referees, NOC 5253	310
Program Leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness**, NOC 5254 **ranked in <i>High Opportunity Occupations</i> in BC	8460
Recreation, sports and fitness program and service directors, NOC 0513 **ranked in <i>High Opportunity Occupations</i> in BC	1390

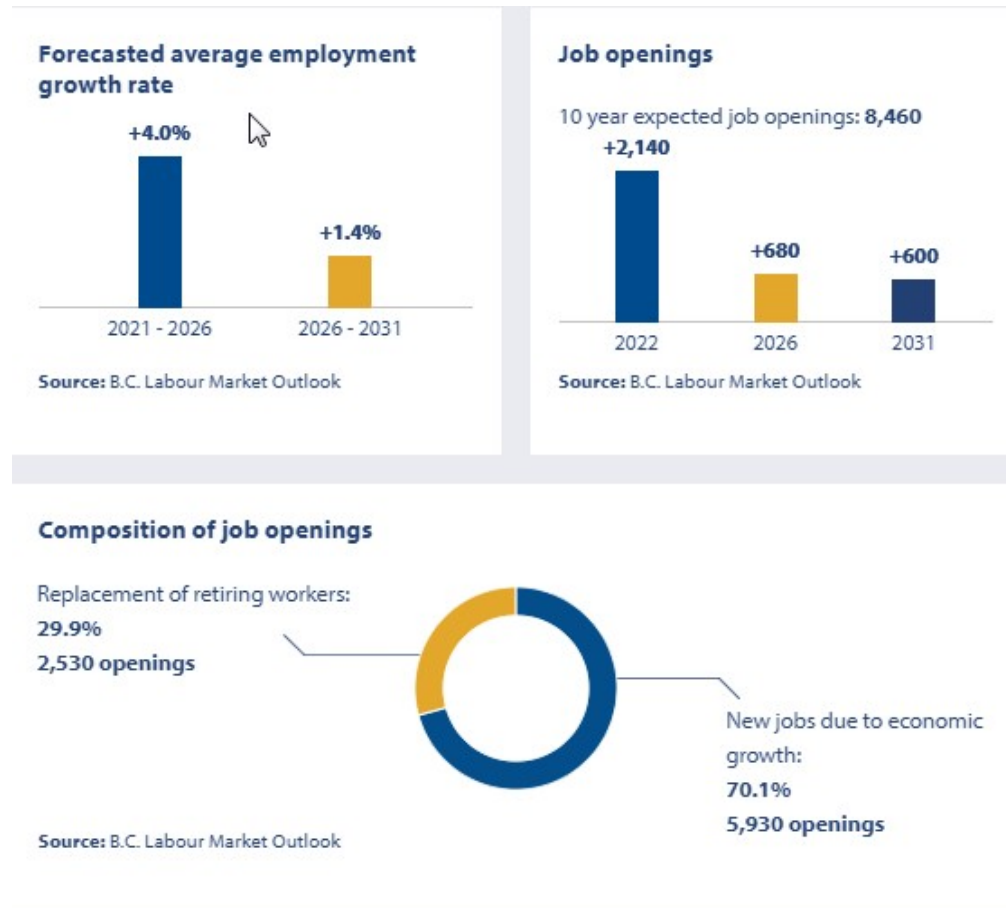
Source: BC Labour Market Outlook

<https://www.workbc.ca/labour-market-industry/labour-market-outlook.aspx>

### **Employment Outlook**

For the period, 2021-3031, the largest employment growth in the sports and recreation industry will be for *Program leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness* (NOC 5254). BC is forecast to have 4.0% expected annual demand growth rate from 2021-2026 and 1.4% from 2026-2031, with **3,480** Job openings.

**Program leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness (NOC 5254)**



Other careers in sports and recreation industry follow with lower growth for the period 2021-2031

**Coaches:** 1240 job openings

**Athletes:** 240 job openings

**Sports officials & referees:** 290

**Sources:** WorkBC Career Profiles for Athletes, Coaches, Sports Officials & Referees, Program leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness

<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>

### 3. Finding Jobs in the Sports & Recreation Industry

#### *Online Job Postings*

- **Indeed.ca**  
<https://ca.indeed.com/>  
search for example: sports jobs, athletic club jobs, sport development jobs, fitness jobs, recreation jobs
- **BC Recreation & Parks Association**  
<https://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/jobs/>  
postings for fitness instructors, aquatic fitness, personal trainers, and recreation workers
- **CanFitPro Fitness Industry Jobs**  
<https://www.canfitpro.com/industry-jobs/>  
[sort results by city to show BC locations]
- **SIRC – Sport Information Resource Centre – Careers**  
<https://sirc.ca/careers/>  
postings from across Canada – can search by job title or browse all listings
- **SportBC**  
<https://sportbc.com/careers-2/>  
postings with SportBC, and SportBC member sports organizations
- **ViaSport British Columbia**  
<https://viasport.ca/careeropportunities/>

#### *Creating a List of Potential Employers*

You can use directories to produce lists of employers in the sports, recreation and fitness industries in British Columbia. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **IdeaFit**  
<https://pro.ideafit.com/fitnessconnect>  
select either 'Fitness Professionals' OR 'Health Clubs/Studios', then enter your town/city and type of fitness (e.g. yoga, Pilates)

- **Registry of Fitness Professionals**  
<https://www.thefitnessregistry.com/>
- **CivicInfoBC**  
<https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/municipalities>  
provides contact information for municipalities throughout BC. Try linking to your town/city then look for their Parks & Recreation Department - most hire fitness professionals to lead programs

## 4. Additional Resources

Still looking for more information? Try looking at the following resources:

- **ViaSport British Columbia**  
<https://viasport.ca/>  
nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing awareness, opportunity and participation in sport across BC; members include sports organizations
- **SIRC, Sport Information Resource Centre**  
<https://sirc.ca/>  
provides access to national, provincial, and territorial sport organizations, researchers, sponsors, and leaders
- **Sport BC.com**  
<https://sportbc.com/>  
Sport BC is the non-profit sport federation, representing over 70 Provincial, Disability, and Multi-Sport Organizations (PSOs, DSOs, MSOs) in British Columbia.
- **CanFitPro**  
<https://www.canfitpro.com/>  
provides certification for wide variety of fitness instructors (e.g. fitness kickboxing, active aging, pre & post natal)

- **HelloBC: Recreation Sports in BC**

<https://www.hellobc.com/things-to-do/events/?categories=sports-outdoors-events>

lists a wide variety of recreation sports and their sponsoring organizations in BC (including skiing, surfing, bicycling, mountain biking, dragon boats, adventure races)

- **HelloBC: Adrenaline**

<https://www.hellobc.com/things-to-do/adrenaline/>

zip lining, river rafting, surfing, diving, skydiving, paragliding – service providers, adventure packages

- **Vancouver Sun: Extreme sports in BC**

<https://vancouver.sun.com/tag/extreme-sports/>

- **Five extreme sports to try this summer (in BC)**

<https://bcliving.ca/health-fitness/fitness/adrenaline-junkies-get-your-fix-five-extreme-sports-to-try-this-summer/>

**Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Branch, Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.**

*Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic>*



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