

History and Heroes

Decade Galleries

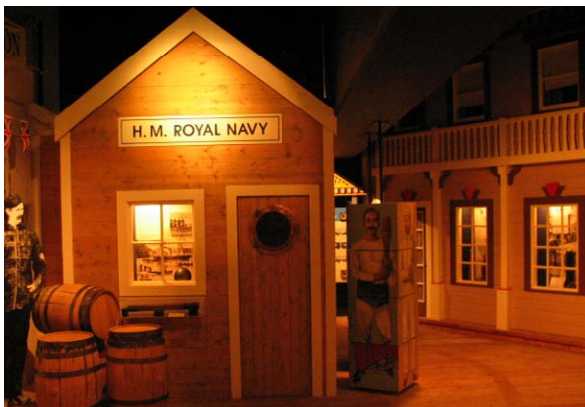
The BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum features galleries highlighting BC sports from the early 1800s to the present. It is distinctive for its unique design and interactive displays featuring what was considered state of the art technology in the 1990s. Museum attendance has steadily increased since its relocation in 1991, after being housed at the PNE for twenty five years. The museum has the only permanent galleries in Canada honouring Rick Hansen and Terry Fox, two Canadian heroes who generated positive public awareness for people with disabilities.



First Nations

According to First Nations' tradition, there are four equal parts of the human being: mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical. In order to have happy life, all four parts of the being must be in balance. Sports and recreational activity enrich the physical aspect of life. First Nations' cultures flourished for thousands of years before the arrival of the Europeans in the 1770s. Sport was an integral part of social activity and played an important role in the community. Aboriginal people engaged in competitions such as target shooting with bow and arrows, swimming, canoe races, long-distance running, wrestling, and rock lifting.

Various dice, stick, and hand (lehal) games were played and lehal enjoys popularity even today.



Frontier Sports

European settlers brought numerous sports from their homelands. Sport was a welcome diversion from the strenuous life in a new country, and sporting events were often held on holidays. Explorers and fur traders visited British Columbia from the late 1700s. European settlement, however, did not begin until the 1840s. Over the next two decades, the Hudson's Bay Company employees, Royal Navy personnel, gold-seekers, and settlers introduced a variety of sports. Early sport was unstructured and often took place on holidays such as the Queen's Birthday (May 24th), American Independence Day (July 4th), and after

1867, Dominion Day (July 1st). By the end of the 1860s, impromptu sport gave way to organized clubs and events. Victoria, New Westminster, and Nanaimo were important centres.

The 1860s

In the gold rush town of Barkerville, billiards, and horseracing were popular diversions. Due to the cold winters, sports such as ice-skating and snow-shoeing were also enjoyed. Between 1858 and 1866, the discovery of gold lured American, Chinese, and European fortune hunters into the Colony of British Columbia. Barkerville, like so many interior gold rush towns, enjoyed a brief but explosive prosperity. Leisure time was limited.

In these rough and unorganized boomtowns, spontaneous sports like billiards, boxing, and horseracing thrived. In towns where bread was bought with gold dust, fortunes were wagered on the outcome of almost any competition.

The 1870s

In the 1860s and 1870s, sports events were central to holiday celebrations. Teams and athletic clubs were becoming established, and new sports were beginning to appear. By 1860, Victoria (formerly Fort Victoria) had grown to a community of several thousand. It had grown almost overnight in response to the influx of gold-seekers in 1858 on their way to the Fraser River. Victoria enjoyed new sports such as billiards and gymnastics, and fads like roller-skating. Most sports, however, were still associated with picnics and included such events as croquet, quoits, caber-tossing and “greasy pig.”

The 1880s

The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885 dramatically reshaped provincial sports. Vancouver and Kamloops became important railway junctions and also major centres for sport. As the railway pushed through British Columbia’s interior, sport followed closely behind. American railway workers introduced baseball, and Eastern Canadians brought snow-shoeing, tennis, and lacrosse with them as they moved west. Reliable railway transport meant inter-city competition could be established. Sport began to expand beyond holiday-based events, and regularly scheduled competitions became more common.



The 1890s

During the 1890s, the action-packed game of lacrosse ignited on the coast. An inter-city rivalry developed between the New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria lacrosse teams. Newly built streetcar lines linked the well-established city of New Westminster to up-and-coming Vancouver. Fans were able to travel easily between the two centres. Along with lacrosse, rugby and cricket were all the rage. Enthusiastic fans watched matches at New Westminster’s Queen’s Park, Vancouver’s Brockton Point, and Victoria’s Beacon Hill.



The 1900s

Soccer, lacrosse, and rugby drew enormous crowds during the first decade of the century. Professional baseball made its first appearance in Vancouver. Enthusiastic fans paid to watch their favourite teams go head-to-head at facilities like Recreation Park. Lacrosse became truly professional. Professional games were relocated from wide-open playing fields to enclosed facilities. Entrance fees provided the money to pay star players. Soccer was tremendously popular with athletes of all ages. First division matches consistently drew large crowds. Teams from Vancouver Island dominated the sport.

The 1910s

During the 1910s, amateur and professional athletes from British Columbia achieved acclaim at all levels of competition. In 1912, Duncan Gillis won BC's first individual Olympic medal. The Vancouver Millionaires hockey team won the Stanley Cup in 1915. Canada's first two artificial ice arenas were built in Victoria and Vancouver. Other new Vancouver facilities included Athletic Park and Con Jones Park. Large crowds turned out to watch professional hockey, baseball, and lacrosse games. Sports suffered after World War I broke out in 1914. Many male athletes enlisted and went overseas to fight. Most competitions ceased as people became more concerned with the war than with sports.



The 1920s

After World War I, there was a renewed interest in sports in British Columbia. In 1925, the Victoria Cougars hockey team captured British Columbia's second Stanley Cup. Sprinter Percy Williams became a hero after his Olympic double gold wins in 1928. Soccer and rugby drew large crowds. Canadian football gained popularity on the west coast. Ski jumping was a favourite winter sport in towns like Revelstoke, Rossland, and Nelson. In the 1920s, more women competed in a wider range of sports from lawn bowling to ice hockey. The first World Women's Games were held in 1922. Women's track and field events were included for the first time at the 1928 Olympics.



The 1930s

The Depression in the 1930s brought extreme economic hardship. Athletes found it difficult to raise the money to compete in international events like the Olympics. Exciting sports such as boxing and six-day bicycle racing, provided entertainment for fans. Amateur basketball gained widespread popularity. Men's teams from British Columbia dominated national competition. The UBC women's squad won the 1930 world championships. In hockey, the Kimberley Dynamiters and the Trail Smoke Eaters each captured a world amateur hockey title. For the first time, British Columbia sports fans could follow the progress of their favourite teams on the radio. In 1933, a Vancouver radio station broadcast its first Eastern NHL game. Movie theatre newsreels included sports reports from around the world.

The 1940s

Sports during the 1940s were completely overshadowed by World War II. Many male and female athletes joined the military. Service teams competed for several national titles. Local competition took centre stage as all international and some national events were suspended. The international careers of many athletes were cut short by the wartime cancellation of the British Empire and Olympic Games. In Canada, national championships for sports such as soccer, tennis, and curling were temporarily halted. Men's and women's basketball and lacrosse championships, however, continued without interruption. Sports fans contributed to the war effort. In 1942, a 'Games for Guns' fundraising program was initiated. All or parts of the proceeds raised at many sporting events were donated to war-related projects.



The 1950s

British Columbia gained worldwide attention when the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games were held in Vancouver. Empire Stadium was built specifically for the Games. The stadium was the site of the historic Miracle Mile- one of the biggest sport stories of the decade. In 1954, the BC Lions football club became the newest professional team in the province. Hydroplaning and marathon swimming were two other popular professional sports. In amateur competition, the Eilers women's basketball squad dominated at the national level. The Penticton Vs won the 1955 world amateur hockey championship. Television came to BC in the 1950s. The new medium had a big impact on sports. In 1954, CBC televised the British Empire and Commonwealth Games. Controversy raged over the issue of Sunday sports. In 1957, Vancouver residents voted in favour of allowing sports on Sundays.



The 1960s

There are many well-known BC athletes from the 1960s. Skier Nancy Greene won gold and silver at the 1968 Olympic Games. Elaine Tanner swam her way into the record books with her seven-medal performance at the 1966 British Empire and Commonwealth Games. Harry Jerome became one of Canada's greatest sprinters after equaling five world record times. The 1961 Trail Smoke Eaters and the 1964 BC Lions were two of the outstanding teams during the decade. The Smoke Eaters blazed their way to a second amateur hockey title. The BC Lions won their first Grey Cup. Television had a huge impact on sports. Fans could watch a wide variety of sporting

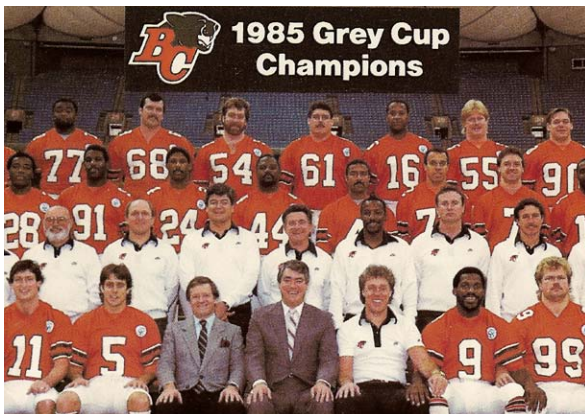
events without leaving their homes. The Olympic Games were broadcast around the world for the first time at the 1960 Games.



The 1970s

The 1970s was a decade of firsts for BC athletes and teams. The decade began as the Vancouver Canucks entered the NHL. Karen Magnussen captured the world figure skating title in 1973. The Whitecaps brought the decade to a close with their NASL Soccer Bowl victory. BC athletes on the Canadian swim team, such as Shannon Smith, Bruce Robertson, and Leslie Cliff, produced brilliant medal winning performances. In track and field, Debbie Brill and Greg Joy achieved phenomenal success at the international level. Athletes with disabilities set many world track and field records. Politics entered the inter-

national athletic scene during the decade. The 1972 Olympics are sadly remembered for the terrorist attack that killed eleven Israeli athletes. Four years later, a boycott by many African teams cast a shadow over the Olympics in Montreal.



The 1980s

The 1980s was a decade of success for three of British Columbia's professional teams. The 1982 Vancouver Canucks captivated the province with their amazing playoff run. The BC Lions roared to their second Grey Cup victory. The new Vancouver 86ers captured two Canadian Soccer League titles. During the 1980s, BC athletes won Canada's first Olympic medals in rhythmic gymnastics, ice dancing and the decathlon. Lori Fung, Tracy Wilson, and Dave Steen were Olympic heroes. There were many other big stories during the decade. The journeys of Terry Fox and Rick Hansen inspired everyone. In 1983, the first sporting event was held at BC Place Stadium. The issue of drugs in sports came to the forefront after Canadian Ben Johnson tested positive for steroids at the 1988 Olympics.



The 1990s

The 1990s saw British Columbia appear on the world stage in two different areas. First, in 1994, visitors flocked to the beautiful city of Victoria to witness the Commonwealth Games. Then in the same year Vancouver was awarded an NBA franchise. A 20,000 seat downtown stadium, General Motors Place, was built to house the new Vancouver Grizzlies Basketball Team and the surging Vancouver Canucks Hockey Team. The decade started with Jo Anne Ritchie winning a world triathlon championship in 1991, followed by Olympic gold medals in 1992 for Kerrin Lee Gartner in women's downhill skiing, and both the Men's and Women's Rowing Eights Crews.

In 1994 two Vancouver professional teams excelled, the B.C. Lions winning their third Grey Cup and led by the Russian Rocket, Pavel Bure, the Vancouver Canucks went all the way to the Stanley Cup final, losing to the New York Rangers in the seventh game. In 1994 the Dunhill Cup Golf Team with all B.C. members won the world title, the first time a Canadian entry had advanced past the qualifying round. The decade ended with Ross Rebagliati at the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics becoming the first snowboard rider to win a gold medal and then in 1999 the tragic death of Vancouver's motor racing hero, Greg Moore, the youngest winner in CART history.

Terry Fox - Our Hero

Terrance Stanley Fox is a true Canadian icon. He exemplifies perseverance and determination. Terry was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba on July 28, 1958. A life changing event would intensify Terry's determination to succeed. Despite being born in Manitoba, Terry grew up in BC. In 1976, Terry began his post-secondary studies at Simon Fraser University.

Nearly a year afterwards, he was diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer, estrogenic sarcoma. Eventually, the doctors had to amputate Terry's right leg six-inches above the knee. Terry immediately began to learn how to use his newly acquired artificial limb. He had to undergo chemotherapy treatment for 16 months consecutively following his diagnosis.



In February of 1979, he became determined to find a cure for cancer. On April 12th, 1980, he began his Marathon of Hope across Canada, from coast to coast (St. John's, Newfoundland to Vancouver, BC). Terry began his magnificent journey by dipping his artificial limb into the Atlantic Ocean.

During his Marathon of Hope, Terry ran 143 days before his cancer had spread to his lungs. He was forced to stop at Thunder Bay, Ontario. Terry's dream was not lost however as within a year of his passing (June 28, 1981), the annual Terry Fox Run was established and has since raised over \$380 Million (and counting). Terry Fox is the 1980 recipient of the BC Sports Hall of Fame's WAC Bennett Award.

"We do not think of him as one who was defeated, but as one who inspired us with his example of the human spirit and adversity" – Pierre Elliot Trudeau



Rick Hansen - Man In Motion

Known to the world as the "Man in Motion", Rick Hansen has returned from an incredible 2 years, 34 countries and 25,000 miles wheeling around the world to raise money for spinal cord research. Rick's budding career as an athlete was cut short at age 15, when a truck accident left him paralyzed in both legs. He overcame his devastating loss of movement however, by using his wheelchair to play sports again. He led the Vancouver Cable Cars wheelchair basketball team to 5 national championships in 6 years. He has won 19 international marathons and set Canadian and World Records in wheelchair races in track & field. He was awarded the National

Disabled Athlete of the Year in 1979, 1980 and 1982 and shared Canada's Outstanding Athlete of the Year Award with Wayne Gretzky in 1983.

Apart from competition, Rick tirelessly promotes awareness of disabled athletes. He is the Ambassador for Canadian wheelchair athletes and with his goal of 10 million dollars for spinal cord research attained. Rick Hansen received the WAC Bennett award and was inducted into the BC and UBC Sports Halls of Fame in 1987. Take a look at the Rick Hansen Exhibit at the BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum online at www.bcsportshall-offame.com. and "have the courage to commit to your own dreams." - Rick Hansen

Greg Moore - Human Spirit

As Vancouver's home-grown hero, Greg Moore is a household name. When Moore made a choice early on to follow his father's footsteps and pursue racing go-carts over playing goal in hockey, the rest was history. In his 13-year career, the young driver progressed through the North American Championships earning various titles and honours, and quickly catapulted to the heights of professional racing. Still a teenager, Moore and his team won their first Indy Lights season opener in Phoenix, making him the youngest driver to ever win a CART sanctioned event. The 1995 racing season saw Moore break the record for most career Indy Lights victories with 13 wins. In his debut the following year as the youngest full-time Indy Car driver, Moore took the racing



world by storm. A year later he became the youngest winner in CART history. At 22 years, the sophomore driver held off Michael Andretti to take the checkered flag at the Milwaukee Mile.

In 1997 and 1998 Moore finished in seventh and in fifth places respectively in the Cart championships. In 1999 he commenced the year with a fantastic win at Homestead in the series opener and achieved eight top ten finishes that year. His tragic death at the season finale in Fontana in October 2000 cut short one of the most brilliant racing careers of all time and the world mourned the loss of this young man. He

was and is an inspiration to those who knew him and loved him so well, and to a multitude of fans who never met him. Greg Moore was inducted into the BC Sports Hall of Fame in 2000.

“At 22 years, the sophomore driver held off Michael Andretti to take the checkered flag at the Milwaukee Mile.”