



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BC School Sports Celebrates Record High Participation in School Sports

Burnaby, BC - BC School Sports (BCSS) is thrilled to announce that the 2023-2024 academic year has marked another milestone in school sports participation, with student-athlete registrations reaching an all-time high. Our member schools have wholeheartedly embraced the value of quality athletic programs, witnessing firsthand the positive impact on their communities and students. This year, BCSS member schools have proudly fielded an impressive **7,742 teams** across the 18 sports we offer, showcasing the vibrant and growing spirit of school-based athletics.

The 2023-2024 academic year witnessed a remarkable **123,313 student-athlete registrations**, marking an 8.2% increase from last year's record-breaking numbers. This impressive growth represents a 19% rise in participation over the past decade and a 12% surge since the COVID-19 pandemic. In tangible terms, this means 23,819 more students are participating in school based athletics compared to ten years ago, with an additional 14,700 athletes joining since schools returned to normal operations post-pandemic.

Sport-Specific Growth:

- **Cross Country:** This sport continued its impressive multiyear trend of strong growth, with participation rising from 4,783 participants last year to 5,412 this year, marking a significant 13.2% increase. This sustained growth underscores the enduring popularity and accessibility of cross country among students.
- **Winter Sports:** These sports experienced the most substantial overall growth, with Ski/Snowboard participation surging by 15% and 21%, respectively. Wrestling saw an extraordinary growth in participation, including a 19.8% rise among female wrestlers and a remarkable 50% increase among the number of male wrestlers.
- **Girls' Sports:** Acutely aware of the high dropout rate from sports by girls during high school years, BCSS has focused on retaining female athletes. In 2023-2024, 46% of total registrations came from girls, a strong indicator that the inclusive and welcoming environments is encouraging girls to get involved and stay involved throughout high school.



Multiple Sport Participation and Coaching:

- A total of 27,835 (4.9% increase) student-athletes participated in more than one school sport in 23-24, with 15,071 male and 12,764 female athletes showcasing their versatility and commitment.
- The dedication of coaches remains vital to the success of school sports, with 14,827 coaches supporting students throughout the 2023-2024 school season. This includes 9,619 male and 5,208 female coaches.

BCSS Executive Director, Jordan Abney, expressed his enthusiastic praise for schools and coaches, stating, “Our 460+ member schools are doing an outstanding job of offering diverse and inclusive opportunities for youth to experience the transformative power of school-based athletics. This is especially commendable given the limited resources available within the system. It is crucial that we continue to elevate the status of school sports within our communities and ensure that the necessary support is provided to sustain these invaluable experiences for generations to come.”

As BCSS gears up for the new school year, the organization is dedicated to expanding opportunities for students to participate in school sports, highlighting the crucial role these activities play in fostering mental and physical well-being. The positive impact of school sports on young lives is undeniable. BC School Sports invites everyone to rally behind their local school teams and join this inspiring journey of athletic growth and excellence. Your support can make a lasting difference in the lives of student-athletes and the broader community.

About BC School Sports:

BC School Sports is a voluntary organization of over 460 public and independent schools in British Columbia. It is the governing body for school sport and coordinates and delivers opportunities with our member schools for interschool competitions in over 18 activities to over 123,000 student-athletes each year. BCSS delivers 61 provincial championships annually, with thousands of student-athletes competing at the highest levels of interscholastic competition.

BC School Sports

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