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Olympic champion, sports leaders and student athletes open National Sport School at Canada Olympic Park

CALGARY—Outstanding student athletes now have a world-class facility to pursue academic and athletic excellence with the opening of the National Sport School at Canada Olympic Park.

The innovative school, developed and operated by the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) and WinSport Canada, moved from Ernest Manning High School to a new five-story office tower on the west side of Canada Olympic Park (COP). The move centralizes sports training and student learning to simplify the busy lives of high school athletes with dreams of Olympic gold.

The original school was formed in 1994 after studies indicated that close to 50 per cent of exceptionally skilled young athletes were forced to choose between school or sport due to conflicting schedules.

Relocating the school to C.O.P marks the next major advancement in WinSport Canada's continued goal to centralize resources for Canadian athletes with construction of the nation's first Canadian Sport Institute.

"Quality and innovative education for student-athletes motivates WinSport Canada's vision for the future," said Dan O'Neill, president, WinSport Canada, "We recognize it is not easy to balance the pursuit of excellence in athletics and education. Locating the school within the Calgary culture of excellence provides a golden opportunity for these student-athletes to learn from current Olympic and world champions, while pursuing both their sporting dreams and a world-class education."

"The National Sport School embodies everything we mean by personalized learning," said Sydney Smith, CBE area director. "We have created a unique learning opportunity that recognizes the gifts of student athletes and their desire to succeed in the arenas of sports and education."

The National Sport School has a tradition of champions. Seven National Sport School student-athletes have won Olympic and Paralympic medals for Canada. Earlier this year, 36 current and former National Sport School student-athletes competed at the 2011 Canada Winter Games, winning 29 medals.

At the same time, the school consistently graduates some of the highest ranked academic performers in Alberta.

"Athletes burn significant energy travelling to various locations each day to access the resources they need to be fully prepared to achieve excellence," said Kyle Shewfelt, Olympic gold medalist in gymnastics and a graduate of the school. Shewfelt helped open the facility by welcoming a busload of student-athletes as they arrived.

"The National Sport School allows athletes to complete their high school education while competing. It is even more significant for a young athlete to have access to educational opportunities, and sport services like massage and physiotherapy in the same location they train," said Shewfelt. "Thanks to WinSport and the Calgary Board of Education's vision, the journey to fulfilling an Olympic and Paralympic dream was simplified today for young student-athletes who can now access all of these much-needed services in one location."

The National Sport School combines the latest in technology with a supportive individualized academic learning program to meet the needs of young high-performance athletes who spend most of their time training and competing in different locations around the world. Teacher-student interaction is split between time in the classroom and web-based learning programs.

About WinSport Canada

The Canadian Winter Sport Institute provides world-class sport facilities where Canadian athletes can discover, develop and excel. WinSport Canada owns and operates Canada Olympic Park, the Bill Warren Training Centre in Canmore, the Beckie Scott High Performance Training Centre on Haig Glacier, and funds two-thirds of the operating costs of the Olympic Oval in Calgary. A not-for-profit organization, WinSport Canada supports national sport organizations, encourages educational opportunities and subsidizes the operation of unique training and recreational facilities used by the nation's top athletes and the general public. For more information on WinSport Canada, please visit www.WinSportCanada.ca.

About the CBE

The CBE is proud to deliver personalized learning opportunities to more than 100,000 Calgary and area students. As a leader in education, the CBE provides learning opportunities as unique as every student. For more information, please visit www.cbe.ab.ca.

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