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Ski cross racer Julia Murray can see the gym where she trains from her apartment in Whistler, B.C. It's a larger and more comprehensive gym than it was a few months ago, thanks to a financial boost from the federal and provincial governments. "It's a million times better than the one I have been working at," Murray said from Whistler. "It's way bigger and has tons of extra equipment. The support we're getting is amazing." The creation of a Canadian sport institute is underway in B.C. with the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic facilities in Whistler playing a major role. The Canadian and B.C. governments announced \$1.3 million in funding Monday towards tying the Canadian Sport Centre Pacific in Victoria to the athletes' village, the sliding centre and the nordic and downhill skiing sites in Whistler. The institute combines services and training for Canada's summer and winter athletes and prepares them for international competition. Murray, who is from Whistler, moved into what was the athletes' village five days ago and is just a two minute walk to the gym. "Next summer there will be a big soccer field for us to work out on too," she said. "There's a bunch of running and biking trails around it as well. It's a great location. "For athletes coming into Whistler, all the national teams that are coming here to train, they're going to stay in a building right beside the gym." The new funds will be used to improve coaching, equipment, sport science and medicine, as well as give athletes more time to train on the Olympic facilities. "It's linking facilities with the programming side," explained Alex Baumann, chief executive officer of Own The Podium. "What was announced today can go into a variety of areas. "In Whistler, you have a strong legacy from the 2010 Games and you need to keep that going and Victoria is already well-established for summer." Own The Podium was a \$117-million program established five years out from the 2010 Winter Olympics to help Canadians win medals. Canada won 14 gold medals, a record by any country at a Winter Games, and finished third in the overall medal count with 26. OTP continues to run high-performance programs and divide funding between sport federations, with a view to winning medals at the 2012 Summer Games in London and the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Russia. Canada's sport landscape is changing post-Games with a move to establish institutes. A **winter sport institute** is currently under development in Calgary with the first of three phases scheduled for completion in December. Legacy facilities from the 1988 Winter Olympics will operate jointly with a new \$220-million Athletic and Ice Complex under construction at **Canada Olympic Park**. The Quebec government committed in this year's budget to establishing a sport institute in that province. Baumann expects Quebec to come online within a year and for Toronto to follow prior to hosting the 2015 Pan Am Games. "We're looking at Quebec and they've been a very progressive partner in moving forward," Baumann said. "They're well on their way. "Toronto is a little bit later because the institute won't get up and running until a couple of years before the Pan Am Games." Canada currently has seven sport centres across the country. The centres administrate programs and services to athletes, but they don't provide physical place for them to ply their trade. The ultimate vision is to have sport institutes in each of the four western provinces, Ontario, Quebec and in Atlantic Canada, with B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Quebec operating as national institutes. "Having lived in Australia for 15 years, I saw the benefits of having a robust institute network," Baumann said. "There were more full-time quality coaches in the system and there was cross-fertilization of ideas between sport, athletes, coaches and support-service providers." The federal government is providing \$650,000 of the new money to the B.C. institute with the provincial government matching that contribution. The Canadian government says its total contribution to Canadian Sport Centre Pacific in 2010-11 will

be over \$3 million. "The government put a flag down with its partners and said 'this is something we must continue', so now we can go forward to London and Sochi and beyond and know that, in the view of our own country, this matters and people want to see us succeed," said John Furlong, former head of the Vancouver organizing committee and now chairman of OTP's board.