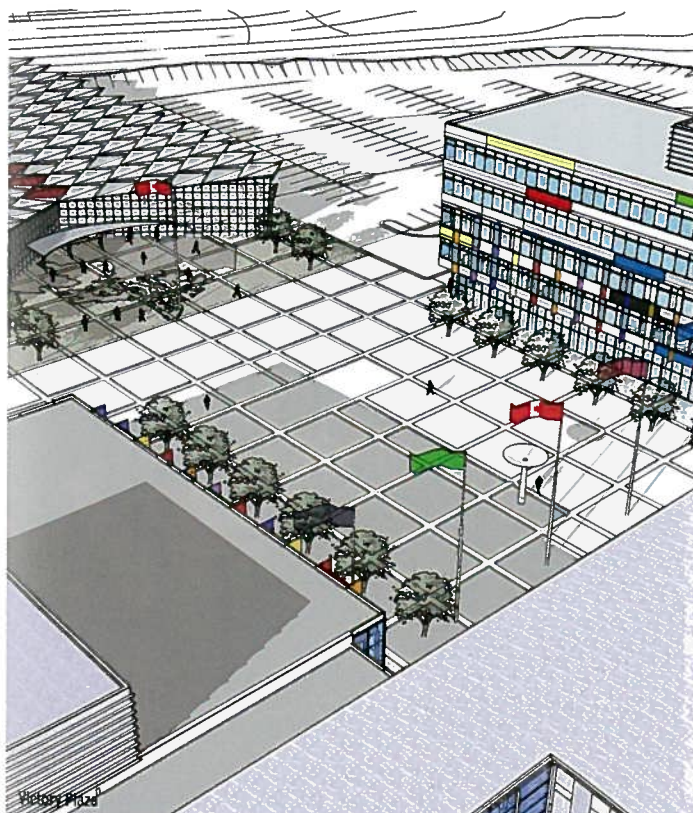




International Ice Rink

## In It to Win It:

Becoming number one in winter sports



Victory Plaza

According to Nielsen Media Research, two-thirds of the global population tuned in at some point last August to watch the Beijing Olympics. With the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver on the horizon, the Canadian Winter Sports Institute (WinSport Canada) is preparing the country for the spotlight.

"We believe that when your athletes do well on the national stage, it's great for national pride," says Guy Huntingford, President and CEO of WinSport Canada.

WinSport Canada owns and operates several high-performance sports training facilities across Canada and recently began renovating and adding to that list. One of the premier sports development organizations in the world, WinSport Canada's mission is to help Canada become the number one nation in winter sports performance. Canada is currently ranked number two in world standings behind Germany, but WinSport Canada anticipates its facilities will bring Canada to number one for 2010.

The nonprofit recently changed its name to WinSport Canada from the Calgary Olympic Development Association (CODA), which it was named in 1988 after the Winter Olympics in Calgary. However, the organization was founded in 1956—long before it was called CODA—to bid on behalf of Calgary to host the winter games. After 1988, its purpose shifted to preserving the legacy.

"The CODA name had served us well for 20 years," says Huntingford. However, with the new facilities, WinSport Canada felt it was time to brand itself as a national player to reflect a Canadian feel. "When you're the Calgary Olympic Development Association and you're talking to somebody in Toronto or Montreal, it just doesn't resonate as well as WinSport Canada."

The organization is mostly self-sufficient, just receiving its first government funding this past year for its newest facility. Most of the high-performance facilities are open to the general public when the athletes are not using them in order to generate revenue for the organization.

"Our goal is to have a sustainable business model," says Huntingford. "My motto here is that we're a not-for-profit organization but we're not for loss. We make sure every dollar that comes in from our commercial operations goes back into high-performance sports."



### LEAD THE FIELD

WinSport Canada currently runs six training facilities. Its first facility was the Canada Olympic Park—the massive sports center that the company has operated since it was first used for the 1988 Olympics.

More facilities were opened from then on. The Bill Warren Training Centre is located within the Canmore Nordic Centre, which is world renowned as one of the top facilities for Nordic sports. The organization funds two-thirds of the Olympic Oval at the University of Calgary and oversees operations for the National Sport School (NSS) facility. WinSport Canada teamed up with the Calgary Board of Education in 1994 to open the NSS for high-performance student-athletes. Meanwhile, WinSport Canada's Bob Niven Training Centre is open exclusively to Olympic development athletes.

The final two facilities are based in unique locations. WinSport Canada actually owns two glaciers—the Farnham Glacier in British Columbia is home to Camp Green and the Haig Glacier in Alberta houses the Becky Scott Training Centre. The unique locations allow athletes to train during the summer months without traveling outside of Canada. Farnham features alpine skiing and snowboard training, while Haig is ideal for cross country and Nordic sports.

The training camps at the glaciers do present challenges, especially when it comes to transporting athletes in and out. Glacier heights reach approximately 10,000 feet and those altitudes can make for difficult weather conditions. Yet the facilities easily support multiple athletes with a full range of lifestyle features, including food, Internet access and recreational equipment.

"Our camps are 100-percent environmentally friendly," says Huntingford. "When we leave the glaciers—whenever that may be—there will be no footprint. We'll just pick ourselves up and move along."

### GETTING COMPLEX

As mentioned previously, this group of facilities will soon be receiving another member—the Athletic and Ice Complex at Canada Olympic Park. The over \$200 million, 500,000-square-foot facility broke ground in 2008, beginning construction on what will be the first winter sports institute in Canada.

The facility will feature four ice rinks—three for the National Hockey League and one international rink—and a large training center for high-performance athletes. The training center will include weight rooms, doctors, strength coaches, nutritionists and other services athletes need, all under one roof. A five-story office tower is attached.

"We're hoping to put most of our national sports organizations, certainly winter sports, all in one place so we can develop the best business practices and synergies," explains Huntingford.

WinSport Canada hopes to earn LEED Silver certification on the facility despite green challenges inherent in hockey rinks.

"Producing ice is very energy intensive," says Huntingford. "However, making ice also creates a lot of heat. Those heat exchanges can actually be utilized by having that hot air pumped back into the office tower for heating."

The facility is designed to let in a great deal of natural light and

incorporate green products where possible. For example, the main structural beams are made of glulam. Developed by a company in Edmonton, glulam consists of recycled waste from pulp mills.

"We hope that this facility spurs on others, especially all levels of government, to support other institutions across the country, be it for winter or summer sports," says Huntingford. Upgrades to WinSport Canada's other facilities will follow after the complex is completed.

Once the 2010 Olympics come and go, however, WinSport Canada will remain as active as ever. "There are kids training here right now that won't go to the Olympics until 2014 or 2018," says Huntingford. "So we need to make sure that we have a sustainable model that keeps WinSport Canada going forever." ❧

### GEC ARCHITECTURE

GEC Architecture's approach is based on gaining an in-depth understanding of their clients' business. They do this by asking big questions that help their clients think deeply about what they do, and then truly listening to the response. This results in solutions that are always appropriate and often unexpected.

