



Thursday, January 27, 2022

BC Games Society Statement

VICTORIA – The BC Games Society is encouraged by Dr. Bonnie Henry’s announcement that youth sport tournaments will once again be allowed effective February 1. This is a positive step for the resumption of these important celebrations of sport across our province.

Despite this change, and as previously announced, the Greater Vernon 2022 BC Winter Games will not proceed in February 2022. Games organizers and stakeholders continue to explore options to see if the region can deliver this multi-sport event in 2023. The vision of a 2023 Games is to provide a BC Winter Games experience for athletes and coaches that were prepared to attend the 2022 BC Winter Games, pending qualification processes established by respective Provincial Sport Organizations.

Although the Games are only four days long, they require 18 months of planning by the host society, the BC Games Society, Provincial Sport Organizations, and many other partners to deliver a successful event. These Games see 17 different sport competitions hosted across 13 venues, requiring significant support from coaches, officials, and volunteers. The up to 1,800 participants are accommodated in 9 local schools, requiring 2 non-instructional days to be committed by the local school district. Meals are served at 3 food venues, and participants are transported to, from, and within the community on dozens of buses. And in the months prior to the Games, 18 Provincial Sport Organizations must qualify and register their participants so the BC Games Society can ensure every participant is provided with appropriate travel to the host community and informed of Games-time responsibilities and expectations.

In short, planning for all the above requires significant uninterrupted lead time and makes a multi-sport Games far more complex than any single sport tournament. The uncertainty of the ongoing pandemic, coupled with external factors such as wildfires and floods in this region this past year, has resulted in this planning process facing numerous setbacks and interruptions. Furthermore, these Games would be bringing together up to 1,800 participants from across the province in a single community, grouping them together for four days in sport, transportation, accommodation, and food service settings, and then sending them all home to their families, schools, and workplaces, all in the presence of a variant that rapidly transmits. This is a risk that the BC Games Society does not take on lightly, despite the many modifications that were planned for these Games to keep participants as safe as possible.

The BC Games Society looks forward to being able to share information about a future version of the 2022 BC Winter Games when available and will continue to plan towards a return to multi-sport Games with the 2022 BC Summer Games in Prince George.