



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF KINESIOLOGY & PHYSICAL EDUCATION



CENTRE FOR SPORT POLICY STUDIES

**CENTRE FOR SPORT POLICY STUDIES  
POSITION PAPER SERIES**

**FACULTY RESPONSE TO  
THE *MILLS REPORT***

**Peter Donnelly  
University of Toronto**

**with the faculty, staff and coaches of  
the Faculty of Physical Education and Health  
(now Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education)**

**February, 1999  
CSPS Position Paper No. 1  
[www.sportpolicystudies.ca](http://www.sportpolicystudies.ca)**

The Centre for Sport Policy Studies (CSPS), in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education at the University of Toronto, is engaged in empirically-based research in the service of sport policy, monitoring and evaluation studies, and education and advocacy for the two most important ambitions of Canadian sport: 'sport for all' (widespread grassroots participation) and healthy high performance in elite-level sports. The Position Papers represent an important part of the work of CSPS.

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## **CSPS POSITION PAPER NO. 1: Editor's Introduction**

One of the first initiatives of the newly established Centre for Sport Policy Studies was to organize a Faculty Forum in the Faculty of Physical Education and Health at the University of Toronto to respond to the recently published *Mills Report: Sport in Canada – Everybody's Business* (Mills, 1998:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=1031530&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=36&Ses=1>). In 1998, the Standing Committee on Canadian

Heritage produced this major and comprehensive report on Canadian sport. An initiative of the Liberal government, the report was widely celebrated and endorsed by the Canadian sport community.

Only one group of academics was able to submit a brief to the Standing Committee: Jean Harvey, Marc Lavoie and Maurice Saint-Germain of l'Université d'Ottawa. The three opposition parties provided dissenting reports, with the Bloc Québécois providing a particularly detailed and well researched report (these are appended to the *Mills Report* in the link cited above).

Since the *Mills Report* involved and affected all areas of Canadian sport, including the staff, coaches and faculty members in the Faculty of Physical Education and Health at the University of Toronto, they were invited to read the *Report* and attend a Forum to respond to all relevant recommendations of the *Report*. The Faculty response was sent as a memo to various concerned parties, and that memo is reproduced here as a CSPS position paper. The items and responses correspond to the 69 recommendations in the *Report*, and although many are fairly clear in the itemized memo that follows, others may make more sense if they are read against the specific recommendation in the *Mills Report*. Also, the 69 items have been re-organized from the *Report* into major themes: recommendations concerning *accessibility [to sport participation]*; those pertaining to *high performance sport*; and a collective category of *other* recommendations. These are then sub-divided into specific thematic items.

The *Mills Report* is striking in that it represents the first overt neo-liberal intervention in Canadian sport. The *double entendre* in the title – *Everybody’s Business* – is clearly intended. The *Report* continually emphasizes economic themes, including several recommendations for tax credits and tax reductions rather than more direct forms of support, and recommendations regarding public subsidies to Canadian professional sports. The Bloc Québécois and the Faculty Forum clearly recognized, and expressed their concerns about this neo-liberal shift, and the *Report* became the focus of several scholarly articles (e.g., Rail (2000); Whitson, et al. (2008)).

While many of the more progressive recommendations in the *Report* have not been implemented, it is also apparent that several of the more regressive / neoliberal recommendations were not implemented. For example, several attempts to provide “corporate welfare” (Rail, 2000) to professional sports by, for example, the Harris Conservative government in Ontario and John Manley in a federal Liberal government (Whitson, et al., 2008), proved to be politically unpopular and were abandoned. However, the neoliberal shift continued, and is evident in other ways – such as the implementation of a Child Fitness Tax Credit despite evidence that it may only subsidize parents who would have registered their children for sport and fitness activities anyway. Even more striking is the growing funding for high performance sport rather than grassroots sport -- despite widespread concerns about the need for more physical activity among children in Canada – with such funding geared strategically to increasing the number of medals won by Canadian athletes. The public funding is channeled, in part, through programmes such as *Own the Podium*. Thus, Canadian federal policy has embraced what has been termed the ‘fetishization’ of the medal, and linked Canada to ‘the global sporting arms race’ (cf., Donnelly, 2009-10).

Peter Donnelly, Director  
Centre for Sport Policy Studies  
University of Toronto  
*Editor’s Introduction, May 2012*

## References

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Rail, G. (2000). Contextualizing the Mills Report: Pro Sport, corporate welfare, and the Canadian State. *Avante*, 6: 1-11.

Whitson, D., J. Harvey and M. Lavoie (2008). The Mills report, the Manley subsidy proposals, and the business of major-league sport. *Canadian Public Administration*, 43(2): 127-156.

FACULTY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

**FACULTY RESPONSE TO THE MILLS REPORT**

ORGANIZED BY

**CENTRE FOR SPORT POLICY STUDIES**

FEBRUARY, 1999

**Date:** 8 February, 1999

**To:** Dennis Mills, MP  
Chair, Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada  
Clifford Lincoln, MP  
Chair, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage  
Hon. Sheila Copps  
Minister, Canadian Heritage  
Preston Manning, MP  
Leader of the Opposition  
Alexa McDonough, MP  
Leader of the NDP  
Gilles Duceppe, MP  
Leader of the BQ  
Elsie Wayne, MP  
Leader of the PC

**cc:** Members of the Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada  
Marg McGregor, CAAWS  
Victor LaChance, Centre for Ethics in Sport  
Sue Neil, Sport Canada

**From:** Faculty of Physical Education and Health  
University of Toronto

**Re:** Report of the Sub-Committee (December, 1998) [*Sport in Canada: Leadership, Partnership, Accountability -- Everybody's Business*]

On 25 January, 1999, members of the Faculty of Physical Education and Health (FPEH) at the University of Toronto held a Faculty Forum to consider the Report of the Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada.

FPEH recognizes the significance of the Report and acknowledges that, if implemented, many of the recommendations would have a direct impact on our work.

FPEH also congratulates the Sub-Committee on its work, and welcomes the fact that the significance of sport and physical activity has been recognized, and addressed seriously in a manner that is an attempt to develop policy and not in response to a crisis.

FPEH is aware of the blanket endorsement of the Report prepared by Canada Games and the sport community, and was invited to join in that endorsement. However, we have concerns about several of the Report's recommendations, and chose instead to address those recommendations in an open and democratic manner at our Forum.

For convenience and ease of organization, the 69 recommendations in the Report have been re-organized into three general categories [we recognize some overlap between these categories]:

- **Accessibility** (recommendations 16 - 35)
- **High Performance** (recommendations 1 - 15; 60 - 69)
- **Other** (recommendations 36 - 59)

These categories are then sub-divided into thematic groups. In the following, each recommendation is followed by an FPEH comment / suggestion.

These comments and suggestions are informed by several principles regarding quality, accessibility, and restoration of the public sphere. In addition, members of FPEH do not regard funds for (non-professional) sport and physical activity in Canada as a cost, but rather as a significant investment in the future -- one that ensures major savings in health care, penal and legal services, and social welfare, and one that is associated with increased productivity and a general increase in the health and standard of living of the nation.



## **Accessibility**

- **Sport development fiscal incentives**

*[NB for each of the three of the following recommendations, FPEH was concerned that an assurance of quality of the organization or course should be a prerequisite for the issuance of any tax credit]*

### **16. Tax deductions for sport organizations:**

While FPEH recognizes and endorses the intent and potential impact of this recommendation, concern was expressed that the two most democratized and open forms of access to sport and physical activity are through schools (subsequently recognized in the Report) and municipal parks and recreation departments. Both of these are currently suffering from devastating cuts in all parts of Canada. Care should be taken to endorse and enhance that first line of access before increasing the support to sport organizations.

### **17. Child sport tax credit:**

FPEH felt that the actual impact of such a tax credit would be quite small; there is not a significant number of families in Canada where such a tax credit might make a difference in the decision to register a child in an organized sport programme. For families in real need, this would have no impact. Thus, in order to ensure accessibility, more creative measures are needed.

### **18. Volunteers tax credit:**

FPEH is concerned that refereeing is frequently a paid activity, even at the house league level, and that it would be appropriate to exclude officiating courses from the tax credit. However, other courses that enhanced the leadership and administrative skills of volunteers should be considered eligible.

- **School sport**

**19. Recognize value of school sport:**

FPEH endorses this recommendation above most others in the Report, and recognizes it as a step towards restoration of the public sphere; many of the other recommendations in the report represent a subsidy to those already involved in sport -- this one represents the forefront of accessibility and provision of opportunities

**20. Endorse Quality Daily Physical Education (QDPE):**

FPEH would like to see a particular emphasis on quality

**21. Expand school sport programmes:**

FPEH is concerned that this recommendation **not** be limited to interschool sport programmes, and be expanded to include intramural sports and physical activity programmes

- **University sport**

**22. Develop the system of athletic scholarships:**

FPEH would prefer to see a primary emphasis on accessible higher education for all qualified students in Canada; we recognize the danger posed by the loss of connection between sport and education at many US institutions; but we would welcome a well thought out, limited, and creative athletic scholarship scheme in Canada whereby more athletes in the high performance sport system were given tuition support (see recommendation # 5)

- **Women in sport**

**23. A sum of \$50m. to level the playing field for males and females:**

In general, FPEH supports this recommendation but recognizes the need for data in order to ensure equitable distribution of such funds. While participation data exist, we need economic data of the type recently collected by Ontario University Athletics (indicating proportions of athletic budgets allocated to males and females). Similar data are needed for school sports, community sports, and municipal recreation programmes. Professional sports should be excluded specifically from this recommendation.

**24. Establish a tracking system for the funding:**

Yes

**25. Continue the collection of gender-based statistics:**

In addition to the data noted in # 23 (above), FPEH believes that particular attention needs to be paid to the significant drop in female participation between school Grades 6 and 9, and that initiatives need to be put in place to reduce this drop

**26. Criteria for female administrative and coaching representation:**

FPEH proposes that this recommendation be amended to endorse 'gender equity' (rather than 'significant representation'), and to read 'programming and research that serves the unique needs of women....'

**27. Involve other government departments in hosting a conference in 2002**

Yes

**28. Continue work re harassment and abuse:**

FPEH feels strongly that this recommendation should be amended to include boys, and that the educational initiatives of the current activities be highlighted for enhancement

**29. Sport Facility Infrastructure Programme:**

See comment on # 11

**30. Tax incentives for female-friendly equipment:**

FPEH argues that this recommendation be limited to Canadian manufactured equipment, produced by ethical and environmentally sound means

- **Sport for people with a disability**

**31. Encourage integration into sports governing bodies:**

FPEH recommends endorsement to include school sport programmes

- **Aboriginal people and sport**

**32. Aboriginal sports and recreation advisory council:**

Yes

**33. Aboriginal coaching certification programme:**

FPEH believes that this recommendation would be enhanced by the inclusion of an aboriginal scholarship programme (college and university) specifically for students in recreation and physical education programmes

**34. Funding for North American Indigenous Games:**

FPEH suggests the amendment of this recommendation to include partnership with the US, and 'to develop an adequate funding framework...'

### **35. Assure funding for aboriginal sport bodies:**

Yes

*[NB -- recommendations 23 - 35 appear to limit 'underrepresented groups' specifically to women, disabled persons, and aboriginal people. FPEH recommends greater identification of 'underrepresented groups' (to include, for example, the elderly), and also suggests support and protection of less traditional programmes of sport and physical activity]*

## **High Performance**

- **High performance athletes and national sport organizations (NSOs)**

### **1. Government to continue policy and funding support:**

Yes

### **2. Same ethical criteria for funding professional and amateur sport:**

While FPEH endorses the insistence on ethical standards for sport organizations receiving government funding, the Faculty rejects outright any attempt to provide public funding for professional sport, and recognizes the impossibility of enforcing such ethical standards in the case of professional sport

### **3. Continue support for the Centre for Ethics in Sport:**

Yes [see recommendation # 65]

### **4. Increase number of NSOs eligible for support:**

Yes

**5. Change carding [athlete financial assistance] eligibility requirements:**

FPEH endorses this recommendation, and proposes that it be extended in line with recommendation # 22 to include tuition credit. Such credit would apply to Canadian institutions of higher education, would apply for a total of four years (regardless of the length of time the individual was a member of a national team), and would be available to the individual both during and after his/her athletic career. In addition, FPEH proposes that carding criteria be amended to more clearly identify international athletes as employees of the government, eligible for the various benefits that accrue to employees [current carding criteria carefully demand all of the responsibilities of employment (at times even violating the basic expectations of traditional employees) while denying athletes any of the rights of such status].

**6. Non-carded athlete to have access to high performance training centres:**

Yes

**7. Support the development of high quality coaching:**

Yes

**8. High performance tax credit for parents:**

Again, as with recommendation # 17, FPEH does not consider that a tax credit to parents is the best way to fund our international athletes. The actual economic impact on families would be quite small, and while reimbursing to some extent those families who are able to support their sons' / daughters' high performance careers, it would probably not make any difference in accessibility for those without such means of support.\* In the same way that western European nations and Australia learned from, and went beyond Canada's high performance sport system, Canada should study and learn from those high performance sport systems (including rectifying some of the mistakes they have made) in addressing the funding of national team athletes in Canada.

\* NB, see the study by Beamish (1990) demonstrating clearly that the introduction of the carding system itself had no impact in broadening the social class background of those individuals who achieved national team status: Beamish, R. (1990). 'The persistence of inequality: An analysis of participation patterns among Canada's high performance athletes.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 25(2), 144-153.

## • Sponsorship

### **9. Tax deduction for small business sponsorship of amateur sport:**

FPEH recommends that such tax deductions be targeted more specifically. For example, criteria of equity and accessibility should be at the basis of such funding.

In addition, such schemes too often meet the needs of the sponsor rather than the recipient organization (e.g., the Husky notice boards which were erected at the behest of Husky, and not at the request of Ski Canada, and which survive at ski resorts long after Husky has ceased to provide funding); and sport organizations involved in such schemes frequently experience an inappropriate dependency, and are vulnerable as a result of their discontinuity (cf., the proposed increased deduction is limited to a two year period).

### **10. Create sport marketing advisory board:**

FPEH recalls two previous attempts to establish such a board, neither of which succeeded

## • Sport facility infrastructure

### **11. Improve and increase number of sport facilities:**

Yes; although FPEH believes that \$100m. per year would be a more realistic goal than the proposed \$100m. cap

- **Canada Lands**

**12. Allocate 20% of real estate for recreation:**

FPEH recommends that the recommendation be amended to stipulate physical recreation [rather than passive commercial (e.g., movie theatres) or motorized recreation]; and that the purchaser be obliged rather than the more ambiguous 'make a commitment' to such development

- **Hosting major sport events**

**13. Bid for soccer World Cup in 2010:**

FPEH had no comment on this recommendation other than a suggestion that it might be unrealistic

**14. Increase frequency of Canada Games:**

No -- FPEH does not consider this to be necessary

**15. Continue federal involvement in Canada Games:**

Yes

- **International sport policy**

**60. Develop strategies to sponsor athletes:**

FPEH recommends that such strategies include clear guidelines to assure athletes' rights



**61. Develop international sport strategy in order to promote Canada:**

FPEH is concerned that the inclusion of 'major sport franchises' in this recommendation might be interpreted as an alternative means to transfer public funding to professional sports

**• Programmes for athletes**

**62. Fairness in selection for national teams:**

Yes

**63. Involve athletes in decision making:**

FPEH considers that the recommendation should go further than 'encouraging sport organizations' in order to make athlete representation mandatory; also, rather than appointments, this recommendation should ensure that such athlete representatives are elected by their peers

**64. Ensure bilingualism:**

FPEH proposes that, in the spirit of recommendations # 23 - 35, this recommendation be extended to include, when appropriate, aboriginal languages, ASL, and Braille

**• Sport medicine and research**

**65. More monitoring of athletes re doping:**

FPEH proposes that any increased monitoring of athletes be undertaken only after a serious discussion of, and assurance of, athletes' rights (in conjunction with, and to be included as part of the mandate of, the Centre for Ethics in Sport - see recommendation # 3)

**66. Educate youth re safety in sport:**

FPEH suggests extending the recommendation to read: 'educate youngsters about safety and health promotion in sport and physical activity'

**67. Research fund re sport injuries:**

FPEH proposes that the fund be extended to include research on the treatment and rehabilitation aspects of sport injuries

**68. Specific sport research -- university funding:**

FPEH proposes that such research: (a) be specifically targeted to interdisciplinary research, and not limited to bio-scientific work; (b) be for projects that go beyond high performance sport to include, for example, special populations and participation in general; (c) be for projects that go beyond sport to include physical activity in general

**• New financing for sport**

**69. Establish a millennium sport bond to fund amateur sport:**

FPEH proposes that the recommendation be amended to ensure funds are held in perpetuity and that the investment strategy includes preservation of capital

**Other**

**• Professional sport**

**36. Promote the vitality and stability of professional sport in Canada:**

In general, FPEH does not endorse this recommendation. The issue (apart from the CFL) involves three cross-border leagues, and is better addressed by raising

an FTA [Free Trade Agreement] challenge to US subsidization of professional sport franchises (the US raises such challenges every time that it suspects subsidies to, for example, BC foresters).

Such a sport pact would also violate federal government gender equity guidelines since there are no women players or coaches in the leagues, and almost no women in the managerial ranks.

- **Broadcasting**

**37. Limit US sport programming in Canada:**

Yes

**38. Public awareness campaign on the benefits of sport and recreation:**

FPEH recommends that such a campaign be produced in conjunction with established experts in the field in order to outline all of the benefits -- political, economic, social, physical and mental health, etc. -- and to warn of some of the potential costs (e.g., injury from overuse or incorrect technique)

**39. Extend mandatory signal substitution to specialty services:**

Yes

**40. CBC/Radio Canada to broadcast more national team events:**

Yes

**41. Encourage broadcasters to provide best Canadian programming:**

Yes

**42. Initiate study of sport on Canadian television:**

Yes

**43. Radio Canada/CBC to broadcast min. # of hours of amateur sport:**

Yes

**44. Tax credit for advertising on Canadian amateur sport programming:**

FPEH believes that, in order to receive an extended tax credit, such advertising campaigns should also include a public service element, and that the credit should not be extended to corporations associated with tobacco and alcohol

**• Government coordination, collaboration, programming**

**45. Government establish a separate department responsible for sport:**

Yes

**46. Government examine its relationship with national sport community:**

Yes

**47. Federal and provincial/territorial ministers continue their responsibility for sport:**

Yes

**48. The Fitness and Amateur Sport Act (1961) be updated:**

Yes; FPEH suggests extensive collaboration with the public and the sport and physical activity community in revising the content of the Act

**49. Government organize a national sport summit:**

Yes (see # 48, above)

**50. Creation of a Prime Minister's council for health and fitness:**

Yes

**51. Statistics Canada to collect national sport statistics:**

Yes

**52. Study labour market for coaching in Canada:**

Yes

**53. Develop community business plan for hiring professional coaches:**

Yes

*[NB recommendations # 52 and 53 should be combined with provisions to ensure ethical coaching behaviour]*

**• The sporting goods industry**

**54. Information on the domestic and foreign sporting goods market:**

Yes

**55. Encourage new production technologies for equipment:**

Yes

**• Horse racing industry**

56. Amend Canada / US tax agreements re wagering )

57. Amend Income Tax Act for breeders and owners ) *not discussed*

58. Allow wagering over internet, etc. )

**• Sports wagering**

**59. Task force to study impact of sport wagering in Canada:**

FPEH recognizes the potential revenue benefits from the spread of legalized gambling but believes that, given the disturbing social, psychological, and

economic research evidence concerning the spread of legalized gambling, great caution should be taken before embarking on this path