

2010 Olympic Winter Games Chiropractic: The Making of History

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Since its establishment well over a century ago, chiropractic has played a valuable role with athletes from recreational sports to international competition. And, for over half a century the chiropractic sports community has been firmly entrenched with sport organizations as a valued partner in health care delivery. In one of the first documented partnerships, Dr. Harry Williams, a Canadian

chiropractor, worked in the 1950's with the Toronto Maple Leafs professional hockey team, providing years of professional service. Dr. Williams gained a renowned reputation for enhancing athlete performance and reducing time loss from injury.

As the Canadian population began to develop a greater interest in structured physical activity and participate in the trend of organized sport, the demand for sports-centered chiropractic grew. By 1970, there were nearly 1000 chiropractors registered in the province of Ontario alone; a number substantially larger than when it first received legislation in the 1920s. As professional membership grew, special interest groups began to emerge. One of the earliest and most prominent factions was in the area of sports chiropractic.

Modern day sports chiropractic in Canada evolved from two previous organizations. The first, termed the Canadian Academy of Chiropractic Sports Therapists (CACST) was soon renamed after a debate surfaced regarding the profession's concern with the word "therapist." As a result, CACST was soon renamed the Canadian Chiropractic Sports Academy (CCSA) in 1978.

The CCSA gradually became less active over the next several years and after a period of dormancy, sports chiropractic was re-organized in Canada with yet another name change to reflect its rebirth and modernization. The organization, College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada), or CCSS(C), evolved out of the ever growing need to coordinate and direct the involvement of the chiropractic profession with athletic and sport-minded communities. Receiving its charter from the Canadian Chiropractic Association in October 1984, the CCSS(C) was granted its patent letters by the Ministry of Consumer and Corporate

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Affairs, for the Government of Canada. Moving forward, the CCSS(C) continued to expand and mature into an influential part of Canada's sports health care community.

A decade ago, two significant advancements in organization took place. First, the CCSS(C) established the Sports Sciences Residency Program (SSRP); a re-designed program centred on a specific program mandate and detailed objectives to offer chiropractic sports specialty training through post-secondary educational institutions throughout Canada. With a minimum of 1000 hours of field work, graduate level academic focus on exercise physiology, sports nutrition, sports psychology, advanced imaging, research methodology, acute injury management and other aspects of sports chiropractic, the SSRP was designed to provide extensive sports specialty training. This graduate level training began to produce a new breed of Chiropractic Sports Fellow, emerging better prepared than ever before to represent sports chiropractic throughout Canada and the world.

The second major advancement for the CCSS(C) was the inclusion of Sports Fellow selections as part of Canadian health care teams. These teams exist to provide support for athletes at international events for which Canada participates. Since our inaugural selection, chiropractors have been represented on Canadian Core Health Care Teams that accompany support staff and athletes to Minor/Developmental and Major Games. Minor or Developmental Games include the World University Games (Summer and Winter), World Francophone Games, Commonwealth Games and Canada Summer and Winter Games. Major Games are the Pan American Games, and the Olympic and Paralympic Summer and Winter Games. Currently, the Canadian Health Care Team for these various Games reserve positions for chiropractors, specifically those with the CCSS(C) Sports Fellowship designation (FCCSS(C)). As a result, sports chiropractors have become firmly entrenched in the multidisciplinary care of athletes. Furthermore, Sports Fellows have gained access to established funding support for the treatment of national level athletes with several Canadian Sport Centres throughout the country. As sports specialists with a unique view of the body and its mechanics, sports chiropractors were being requested to participate in health care teams for a variety of national and international athletic events; a path to the full inclusion of sports chiropractic in the mainstream sport medicine model.

As we forward to present day, the CCSS(C) and sports chiropractic in Canada has reached another truly outstanding milestone. For the first time ever, chiropractic was included as part of the host medical services for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Within the infrastructure of the Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC) and with backing from the IOC Medical Commission, chiropractic was an equal partner in the health care delivery to all participants of the 2010 Games. Chiropractic has now joined with equal footing, all other therapy services (physical therapy, athletic therapy, massage therapy, sport acupuncture) in the delivery of health care. This is an unparalleled accomplishment in the chiropractic profession and was made possible through the history of integration of sports chiropractic into all aspects of the Canadian sports health care system.

The 2010 Olympic Winter Games proved to be the best yet at providing a truly inclusive and innovative approach to health care delivery. With polyclinics located within the athlete village sites for both the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Whistler and Vancouver, and health care support at competition venue sites, coordination at the Games was truly monumental. It was the vision of Dr. Jack Taunton, VANOC Chief Medical Officer, that chiropractic plays an integral goal in the integrative team approach. Dr. Taunton noted, "It was as a result of sports chiropractic leadership, integration into mainstream health care, and vision that I presented to the IOC Medical Commission the inclusion of chiropractors within our therapy team for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games." Through chiropractic acceptance Dr. Taunton was able to establish a truly inter-professional collaborative model of health care delivery with chiropractors and other health care professionals working side by side to the best benefit of those they serve.

With chiropractic inclusion ensured, Dr. Jack Taunton and Rick Celebrini (Manager – Medical Services & Therapy) required the enlisting of a chiropractic manager to coordinate all aspects of chiropractic services. Dr. Robert Armitage, a Vancouver-based chiropractic Sports Fellow was the obvious choice given his extensive credentials, prior involvement with Dr. Taunton as chiropractor for the Vancouver Grizzlies Professional Basketball Team, and professional relationship with many in the Vancouver sports health care community. Through his expertise and passion for sports chiropractic, Dr. Armitage was

extremely well suited to lead the profession through our inaugural inclusion with the Olympic family. The number of Olympic athletes and team officials totaled 5,500 from 80 different countries and Paralympic athletes and team officials reached 1,350 from 40 different countries. This was a staggering amount of international participants and chiropractic was able to gain exposure like never before in the world of elite sport.

Now that the 2010 Olympic Winter Games with an athlete centred, comprehensive health care delivery system has obtained this stage of reality, the mission, vision, and philosophy for health care coverage has achieved its goals.

It is through the dedication of so many chiropractors who have given of their time and expertise over the past two and half decades that the CCSS(C) has eliminated the professional barriers that have limited full chiropractic in-

tegration into all aspects of the sports health care system. It is through this greater inter-professional communication that the creation of mutual professional respect has emerged. Through our inclusion, we now have an opportunity to support the Olympic mission, vision, and philosophy. It is now our opportunity to be part of history – the opportunity of a lifetime to participate in the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Chiropractic showcased its unique and specialized skill set, gained recognition and gave back to the sport community through professional association, and helped promote volunteerism in Canada and throughout the world. The social and professional interactions with people from all over the world has been unparalleled in our history. The entire profession watched enthusiastically as the CCSS(C) and sports chiropractic played a pivotal role in establishing full integration of chiropractic into the Olympic medical services model.