

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023-24

SPORT INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTRE





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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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The Sport Information Resource Centre is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous peoples whose presence marks this territory on which peoples of the world now gather



# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO AND CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dear Members of the Canadian Sport Community,

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, it is with immense pride and gratitude that we present SIRC's 2023-2024 Annual Report. This year has been a remarkable period of growth, collaboration, and innovation, as SIRC continues to play a pivotal role in advancing sport in Canada.

Our mission has always been to serve as Canada's leading knowledge hub for sport, and this year was no exception. With our first-ever hybrid Sport Canada Research Initiative (SCRI) conference, we successfully connected sport leaders, researchers, and participants from coast to coast to coast and beyond. The virtual and in-person engagement allowed us to foster new partnerships, deepen existing relationships, and ensure that vital research and insights were accessible to all. The Canadian Concussion Symposium once again brought communities and individuals together from coast-to-coast-to-coast to learn and protect Canadians from concussions. Our reach extended to over 94% of all communities across Canada through our digital platforms, amplifying our impact across the sport sector and reinforcing the importance of knowledge-sharing in today's evolving landscape.

As we celebrated our 50th anniversary, we are reminded of the rich history that has brought us to this moment. SIRC has long been a trusted resource, helping Canadian sport organizations and individuals navigate challenges and seize opportunities. Our commitment to knowledge excellence, network growth, and forward-thinking strategies has never been stronger. We are proud of the work we've done to promote safe sport, inclusivity, and equity across all levels of participation and performance, safeguarding every Canadian with opportunities to engage in sport in a healthy and supportive environment.

This year also saw SIRC strengthen its governance, with new Board members bringing fresh perspectives and expertise. We are grateful for their contributions, and for the guidance of our outgoing Chair, Sherri Audet, whose leadership helped pave the way for our current successes. We welcome our new Chair, Jake Rondot, whose passion for sport and knowledge will help guide SIRC into an exciting future.

In 2023-24, SIRC launched the Research and Partnership team and worked on several exciting projects with both academics and sports organizations. The focus on research and evaluation included services such as literature reviews, surveys, focus groups, and project evaluations, producing comprehensive and insightful sector reports. The introduction and intentional focus on evidence-informed services for the sector resulted in significant diversification of our revenue streams.



**Debra Gassewitz,**  
President and CEO



**Jake Rondot**  
Chair, Board of Directors

The path ahead is bright, but it is not without its challenges. As the sport landscape evolves, so too must SIRC. Our focus remains on addressing the pressing issues facing sport in Canada, from ensuring athlete safety and well-being, to fostering collaboration across diverse communities, to leveraging research for informed decision-making. Together, we will continue to build a sport environment that is inclusive, innovative, and grounded in excellence.

To our partners, collaborators and all those who contribute to making sport in Canada a vibrant and thriving sector, we extend our heartfelt thanks. We look forward to another year of working alongside you to shape the future of sport in Canada.

Yours in sport,  
**Debra Gassewitz**  
President & CEO  
Sport Information Resource Centre (SIRC)

**Jake Rondot**  
Chair of the Board  
Sport Information Resource Centre (SIRC)

# SIRC CELEBRATING 50 YEARS



## SIRC at 50: A Half-Century of Shaping Canadian Sports Through Knowledge and Collaboration

The Sport Information Resource Centre (SIRC) has been a cornerstone of the Canadian sports landscape for over 50 years, significantly influencing the development of sports through research, knowledge dissemination, and collaboration. Founded in 1973 by pioneers like Abby Hoffman and Geoff Gowan, SIRC began as a national resource library and has since evolved into a globally recognized knowledge hub, supporting sports professionals, organizations, and enthusiasts across Canada.

Throughout its history, SIRC has been at the forefront of technological advancements, launching initiatives like SportDiscus, an authoritative research database, and the SportThesaurus, a comprehensive repository of standardized sport-related terms. These tools have made sports information more accessible, facilitating evidence-based decision-making in coaching, athlete development, and sports governance.

SIRC's commitment to collaboration is evident in its partnerships with leading national and international sports organizations, academic institutions, and government agencies. These collaborations have enriched the sports community by providing valuable insights, research, and solutions to complex challenges. Notably, SIRC's efforts in concussion awareness, safe sport initiatives, and gender equity have had a lasting impact on the Canadian sports ecosystem.

In addition to these initiatives, SIRC has played a crucial role in shaping sports policy in Canada. Through extensive consultations and stakeholder engagement, SIRC contributed to the development of key policies, including the Canadian Sport Policy. The organization continues to be a trusted partner in national dialogues on critical sports issues.

SIRC marked its 50th anniversary in 2023, standing as a testament to the vision and dedication of its founders, leaders, and collaborators. Moving forward, SIRC remains committed to its pillars of knowledge excellence, expanding networks within the sports community, and promoting innovative approaches to advance the landscape of sports in Canada. SIRC's enduring mission is to ensure that all Canadians can participate in sports safely, inclusively, and with the support of a well-informed community.

This milestone year reflects SIRC's unwavering dedication to transforming how sports information is accessed, shared, and utilized, setting a benchmark for the next half-century of excellence in Canadian sports.



# WHAT SIRC DOES FOR SPORT IN CANADA

Guided by its strategic pillars of Growing the Network, Knowledge Excellence, and Moving Forward, SIRC is the trusted, central resource for sport and physical activity in Canada. By reaching new audiences and evaluating its impact, SIRC ensures that credible, evidence-based research, sector insights, and critical sport updates are accessible to everyone within the Canadian sports community. As SIRC continues to expand its reach, it champions knowledge-sharing and capacity-building, contributing to the evolution and resilience of the entire sector. Key priorities include:

## Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination

- **Provide Access to High-Quality Research and Data:**  
SIRC collaborates with sport organizations, athletes, coaches, researchers and policymakers to synthesize and provide access to the latest research, resources, and data on sport science, sport participation, governance and leadership, policy, and emerging trends.
- **Facilitate Knowledge Exchange:**  
Through platforms like SIRCuit, the Canadian Sport Daily, Knowledge Nuggets and conferences, as well as its comprehensive website and social channels, SIRC enables effective knowledge exchange and strengthens connections within the sport sector.

## Building Sector Capacity and Supporting Development

- **Enhance Sector Capacity:**  
SIRC strengthens the sport sector through its leading job board, event calendar, resource hubs, engagement initiatives, and evaluation services, providing ongoing access to vital information that builds capacity and drives sector sustainability.
- **Inform Policy and Promote Innovation:**  
By delivering timely research and sector insights, as well as drafting clear and concise reports, SIRC informs policy development at national and provincial levels.





## Promoting Safety, Integrity, and Excellence in Governance

- **Support Safety in Sport Initiatives:**  
SIRC provides resources, templates and guidelines to create safe, inclusive sport environments, increasing awareness of safety in sport policies, such as the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS) and the Canadian Concussion Guidelines.
- **Promote Good Governance:**  
By sharing resources, research, and toolkits on best governance practices, SIRC helps sport organizations implement and monitor governance standards that enhance integrity and accountability at all levels.

Through these efforts, SIRC remains an essential resource for advancing sport in Canada, from grassroots to high-performance levels, supporting ethical practices, collaboration, and knowledge-driven development across the sport sector.



## Research and Evaluation

- **Conduct Rigorous Research and Evaluation:**  
SIRC's research and evaluation services help organizations assess impact, make data-driven decisions, and adopt evidence-informed strategies. Services include literature reviews, surveys, targeted focus groups and project evaluations, all geared toward improving sector-wide insights and outcomes.
- **Canada's National Sport Resource Centre:** Acting as Canada's national sport e-library, SIRC serves as the central hub for sport-related research and best practices. SIRC's resources help to inform and guide programs and activities that shape the sports and physical activity sector in Canada, building a stronger and more connected community.

## Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

- **Support Inclusive Policies and Practices:**  
SIRC actively promotes inclusivity in sport by supporting policy development, providing resources that address gender equity, racial equity, accessibility, and diversity, and facilitating focus groups and data collection to make sport participation and leadership more equitable.
- **Encourage Participation for Underrepresented Groups:**  
SIRC's research and programs work to remove barriers for groups such as women, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and newcomers, fostering a more inclusive sport community.

# REACHING AND ENGAGING CANADIANS

**SIRC connects communities across Canada by publishing sector announcements, sharing sport partner resources, and delivering relevant news. These efforts help grow SIRC’s network, reaching new audiences and fostering a sense of community within the sport sector. Continuous evaluation and monitoring of these initiatives allow SIRC to measure its impact and adapt to the evolving needs of Canadian sports.**

## **Key Achievements:**

- **Coast-to-Coast-to-Coast Impact:**  
SIRC connected with over 90% of communities across all 13 provinces and territories, reaching 871 out of 925 communities in Canada (as defined by Google). This widespread engagement reflects SIRC’s commitment to serving Canadians in every corner of the country.
- **Primary Outreach:**  
An impressive 92% of federally funded Canadian National Sport Organizations (NSOs) and Multisport Organizations (MSOs) utilized SIRC as their primary outreach channel for sharing news, job postings, and events. This strong partnership demonstrates SIRC’s essential role in the sport sector.

- **Sector Participation:**  
A total of 3,300 news, event, and job postings were shared through SIRC, with contributions from 424 sector partners.

SIRC’s ongoing commitment to reaching Canadians and supporting the sport sector is evident in its year-end achievements. As SIRC continues to refine its strategies and expand its impact, it remains dedicated to serving as the central, trusted resource for sport in Canada.

## **Expansive Reach Across Diverse Participants**

In the past year, SIRC has demonstrated its extensive reach and influence across a wide array of organizations and sport disciplines throughout Canada. From coast to coast to coast, SIRC engaged with National Sport Organizations (NSOs) such as Athletics Canada, Hockey Canada, Canadian Blind Hockey, and Swimming Canada, as well as Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSOs) including Gymnastics Nova Scotia, Ontario Parasport Collective and Special Olympics Manitoba.

The network also extends to Community Sport Organizations (CSOs) like the Guelph Minor Hockey Association in Ontario, the Vancouver Ultimate League Society in British Columbia, and the Calgary Adapted Hub in Alberta. These organizations, along with many others, have actively utilized SIRC’s job board, the Canadian Sport Daily news, and research services to connect with the broader sport community, recruit talent, and stay informed on the latest developments in sport science and management. This widespread engagement underscores SIRC’s role as a vital resource in supporting the growth and development of Canadian sport at all levels.

SIRC’s outreach is not limited to traditional sports but also embraces emerging and niche activities such as pickleball, represented by Pickleball Canada and Pickleball Alberta, and dodgeball, with Dodgeball Canada and Dodgeball Ontario actively involved. This year, SIRC’s outreach engagement spanned all provinces and territories, reaching organizations as diverse as the Yukon Freestyle Ski Association in the North and Soccer Nova Scotia on the Atlantic coast.

In addition to sport organizations, SIRC connected with a broad spectrum of educational institutions and multi-sport organizations. These include prominent universities such as the University of British Columbia, the University of Ottawa, and Dalhousie University, as well as key stakeholders like the Canadian Olympic Committee, the Paralympic Foundation of Canada, and the Aboriginal Sport Circle.

Through these extensive partnerships, SIRC plays a crucial role in ensuring that valuable resources, insights, and knowledge are disseminated across the entire Canadian sport ecosystem, from grassroots participants to elite athletes, fostering development and excellence in sport at every level.



# SUPPORTING THE SECTOR WITH RESEARCH AND DATA

SIRC collaborates with academic and sport partners to enrich the sport sector with data-driven insights. In 2023-2024, SIRC launched its Research and Partnerships team to bring new and expanded research, evaluation, and knowledge mobilization services to sport organizations. Over the past year, SIRC has provided tailored support to NSOs and MSOs to help them achieve their strategic and programming goals. This work included:

- Market research for sponsorship pitches
- Equity, diversity and inclusion research and action plans
- Member consultations to support strategic planning and program development
- Program evaluations and measurement framework development
- Literature reviews and environmental scans to inform program design

SIRC's services are not limited to national partners like Ringette Canada, Alpine Canada, Special Olympics Canada, and the Canadian Olympic Committee. Community partners, from the Ottawa Sport Council to the Ontario Parasport Collective, are also engaging SIRC for research support. No matter the scale, SIRC has the tools and expertise to provide credible, actionable insights that bring research to life for Canada's sport communities.

The past year has also seen SIRC grow its presence as a central knowledge mobilization partner for the academic research community. SIRC is an active partner on 10 research grants that were submitted or approved for funding in 2023-2024. These projects shine a light on emerging trends and issues in sport, including:

- The development of a Canadian Safe Sport Handbook
- Enhancing quality sport and play experiences for Canadians with disabilities
- Peer-to-peer concussion education for youth in sport

A notable highlight has been SIRC's leadership role in the development of the Sport Partnership Collective—a group of researchers and sport professionals dedicated to enhancing partnerships and collaboration for the advancement of sport in Canada. The Collective hosted an in-person “Advancing Partnerships in Sport” workshop with more than 90 registered participants at the 2023 SCRI Conference, bolstering support for SIRC's ongoing work in the research partnerships space.



# SPORT PARTICIPATION

## 17th Annual Sport Canada Research Initiative (SCRI) Conference

The 17th annual Sport Canada Research Initiative (SCRI) conference marked a significant milestone as SIRC's first-ever hybrid event, held both in person at the Ottawa Conference and Event Centre and virtually via Zoom on October 26 and 27, 2023. Sport Canada-funded research is at the heart of this research conference as it reaches out to diverse audiences and communities where it can be leveraged and implemented.

### Accessibility and Flexibility

The hybrid model allowed for broader participation across Canada and internationally. Virtual attendees praised the convenience and high-quality technology, while in-person participants valued the energy and opportunities to connect.

### Addressing Critical Issues in Sport

The conference focused on pressing topics, including Trending Topics in Youth Sport, The Future of Safe Sport, and Research Partnerships in Action. Keynote presentations by Tennis Canada on Re-imagining Sport through the Power of Strategic Partnerships and on First Nations and Partnerships by Peter Dinsdale provided valuable insights into sport governance, collaboration, and the growing importance of safe and inclusive practices in Canadian sport.

### Practical Impact and High Satisfaction

With 100% of in-person attendees and 90% overall finding the event helpful, and 96% eager to recommend it, the conference demonstrated significant practical value for participants. Tennis Canada's presentation was noted as a standout, showcasing collaboration as a growth strategy in sport.

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### Inclusivity and Sustainability

The hybrid format reduced the need for travel, making the event more accessible and eco-friendly. This inclusivity allowed participation from underrepresented regions, enriching discussions across the sport sector.

### Expanding Reach

SIRC's strong online presence helped SCRI reach over 70,000 impressions in October, amplifying the conference's impact beyond attendees to the broader Canadian sport community.

Overall, the SCRI conference plays a crucial role in advancing sport research, fostering collaboration, and addressing key issues, ensuring its continued relevance and practical impact on the Canadian sport sector.



# EMPOWERING SPORT LEADERS

## 2023/24 SIRCuit Editions Summary

Throughout the year, SIRC published four editions of the *SIRCuit*, offering insights into diverse and relevant topics for Canadian sport stakeholders. Each edition was designed to provide expert-driven, research-backed content that highlights best practices, current challenges, and innovative approaches across various facets of sport in Canada. The SIRCuit features a wide range of topics, including cannabis use in sport, air quality and outdoor sports, youth sport culture, concussion management, gender equity, and the evolution of sport over the past 50 years. These articles draw from a diverse group of authors and sources, ensuring that the content reflects both a broad spectrum of expertise and the lived experiences of sport participants from across the country.

In the **Spring 2023 edition**, the focus was on best practices in Canadian sport. Topics covered included the implications of cannabis use for athletes, optimizing sport experiences through values-based approaches, and incorporating Sport for Development strategies in youth sports.

The **Summer 2023 edition** emphasized underserved areas in sport, with articles on improving program evaluation, concussion protocols, and initiatives aimed at boosting physical literacy in northern communities through Ringette.

Celebrating SIRC's 50th anniversary, the **Fall 2023 edition** explored a 50-year historical overview of key sport sectors. Articles covered the history of SIRC, as well as the development of para sport, Indigenous sport, women's sport, and Sport for Development.



**SIRC at 50: A half-century of shaping Canadian sports through knowledge and collaboration**



**The history of Para Sport in Canada**



**50 years of Indigenous sport in Canada: An overview of 2 key advancements and challenges**



**Looking back to go forward: 50 years of Canadian women's sport**



**Sport for Development in Canada over the last 50 years**

Finally, the **Winter 2023 edition** focused on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), highlighting the hidden histories of women in Nordic sports, the role of mentorship in Para sport, and the importance of gender equity in National Sport Organizations (NSOs). Articles emphasized strategies for fostering inclusive environments in sport, with recommendations for NSO leaders and coaches.

Across all editions, the *SIRCuit* effectively brought together diverse voices from across Canada, including athletes, coaches, researchers, and administrators, offering a wide range of perspectives on critical issues. This commitment to diversity in authorship and topics ensures that the SIRCuit remains a valuable resource for addressing the evolving needs of the Canadian sport community.

# SAFETY: CONCUSSION AWARENESS

The past year has seen significant progress in concussion awareness, education, and management across the Canadian sport sector. The annual Canadian Concussion in Sport Symposium hosted virtually this year, headlined by keynote speaker Jen Kish, a former Canadian rugby sevens player, drew 787 registered attendees from 12 provinces and territories. Attendees included teachers, parents, athletes, officials, health professionals, and organizations like Hockey Canada and the Coaching Association of Canada.

Key highlights of the event included cutting-edge research presented by Canadian experts, particularly in the area of concussion management in Para sport, and the release of a new consensus statement on concussion protocols. The symposium also featured interactive “research-to-practice” sessions, led by researchers from institutions in Calgary, Montreal, Toronto, and others, which allowed for direct engagement between research and practical application in sport.

**A resounding 95%**  
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A resounding 95% of participants affirmed that education about concussions in sport should be a priority, with 98% stating they would recommend the symposium to a friend. The event’s reach extended beyond the symposium itself, achieving a digital reach of more than 405,000, further spreading vital information about concussion safety and management. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many calling the event “extraordinary” and lauding the breadth of insights and research shared, which will help Canadians minimize concussion risks and ensure access to the best possible treatments.

This year’s symposium underscores the commitment of governments and sport organizations to concussion awareness and athlete safeguarding. SIRC played a pivotal role in amplifying this message during Concussion Week in September 2023, further highlighting the importance of education and protection for participants across Canadian sports. The sport sector, from grassroots to high performance levels, continues to prioritize concussion management, ensuring that participants are better protected in the future. We look forward to building on this momentum in the coming year.



# GOVERNANCE

**SIRC remains steadfast in its commitment to the strategic plan for 2021-2026, guided by its vision, mission, and values. SIRC’s core pillars: Growing the Network, Knowledge Excellence, and Moving Forward continue to be highly relevant, ensuring SIRC effectively serves individuals and organizations dedicated to the development of sport in Canada.**

## **SIRC Board Governance**

The SIRC Board is an effective, diligent and collaborative board that reflects the culture of SIRC and diversity of Canada. The SIRC HR Committee identified the key competencies and that would strengthen the SIRC Board and conducted an open and transparent search, utilizing SIRC’s recruitment network and the Canadian Sport Daily (CSD). Following this thoughtful process, SIRC welcomed two new Board members this year: Elana Liberman from Safe Sport Nova Scotia and Bryan Heal from Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment (MLSE). Additionally, Jake Rondot from Human Kinetics was appointed as the new Chair, succeeding Sherri Audet, whose contributions as departing Chair were celebrated and recognized.

The current SIRC Board also includes Tom Hall (Canadian Olympic Committee, Olympian), Alison Doherty (University of Western Ontario), Amanda Black (Brock University), and Debra Gassewitz (CEO, SIRC). New and re-elected members received an updated Board orientation manual and participated in Governance and Safe Sport training. Demonstrating SIRC’s ongoing commitment to safeguarding participants, the entire SIRC Board, along with staff, members, and contractors, signed on to the Abuse-Free Sport initiative.

## **Financial Governance**

In its second year with new auditors, SIRC once again received commendations for the depth and thoroughness of its financial controls. SIRC continues to enhance its financial management by outsourcing additional support through the independent agency BSG, ensuring optimal skill, experience, and risk management. This year saw a change in SIRC’s virtual CFO, with Shannon Montpellier joining the team, bringing extensive experience to the financial management efforts. Shannon’s predecessor, Jan O’Donnell, was recognized for the strong controls and monitoring systems she established. The finance leads, in close collaboration with the VP-Operations and CEO, continue to provide rigorous oversight, ensuring the organization’s financial health and stability.

## **Progressive Sustainability**

As part of its governance mandate, SIRC emphasizes progressive sustainability, focusing on strengthening sport governance, enhancing collaboration, and bolstering capacity through multi-year funding and centralized resources. This strategic approach ensures effective leadership and supports the long-term health and success of both participation and performance contexts within Canadian sport. Through these efforts, SIRC continues to build a resilient foundation that enables all levels of sport—from grassroots participation to high-performance competition—to thrive across the country.



# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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## Revenue as of March 31, 2024

Sport Canada Contributions	\$904,427
Business Projects	\$326,710
Other Revenue	\$37,129
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Total Revenue	\$1,268,266

## Expenses as of March 31, 2024

Salaries & Benefits	\$691,041
Sponsored Projects	\$298,574
Contract Support	\$158,498
General & Admin	\$132,009
<hr/>	
Total Expenses	\$1,280,112
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(Deficiency) or Excess	\$(11,856)

## Statement of Financial Position as of March 31, 2024

Cash	\$813,041
Accounts Receivable	\$48,522
Prepaid Expenses	\$5,207
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Total Assets	\$866,770
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Accounts Payable and Other Liabilities	\$105,512
Deferred Revenue	\$67,037
Net Assets	\$536,632
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Total Liability & Net Assets	\$709,181

# THANK YOU. MERCI. MIGWETCH.

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