



2021 Annual Report

Wheelchair Sports Alberta
Annual General Meeting
March 27, 2022





Our Mission

To facilitate sporting opportunities to Albertans from the development level to high performance level of participation in athletic competitions, technical development, leadership and integration.

Our Vision

To achieve Excellence through Parasport

Our Values

Opportunity, Support, Empowerment, Excellence





A Message From Our President

Another difficult year for all Albertans as we all had to find new ways to operate our businesses. WSA came up with new and creative solutions to get our clubs and athletes back training and competing. Our staff did an amazing job of making it easier for our stakeholders to be able to use our services to start operating again. Our Executive Director was focused on applying for and receiving a number of grants that has allowed us to support our athletes and programs moving forward. On behalf of our Board, Executive Director, and Staff, we look forward to working with our five core sports to get our athletes back on the courts, track, and ice in 2022.

Andy Wigston

And Our Executive Director

While 2021 challenged us from the start again this year, WSA came out on top! This year was the year for us to work with our team and come up with creative solutions to some of our problems. We started off with having zoom training sessions with our athletes. Once spring came, the board approved the purchase of replacement bearings and casters to allow our athletes to train outdoors. Then Alberta was open for summer! Our clubs started to train on courts, tracks, and arenas again. It was truly incredible to see our athletes and clubs get together again after a long winter apart. Once fall hit, we had some new restrictions, but for the most part we were able to function as normal. We had provincial camps and even our Junior team traveled to BC together for their first exhibition competition in 19 months. WSA was able to give out nearly \$140,000 in grants to our athletes and clubs. WSA also was awarded nearly \$100,000 in different project grants for 2021/2022. We had some staff turnover again, we have welcomed Graeme Baxter to our Technical Director role in August 2021 and he is excelling through this challenging time. In the midst of everything, we had a new sledge hockey club emerge in Peace River. We are grateful to the hard work and dedication Melody is giving to this new club. Here's to 2022!

Jen Sales

Funding Program Overview

Government of Alberta

Wheelchair Sports Alberta continues to receive critical provincial sport funding through the Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women. Unfortunately due to budget cuts in 2020, we did receive a cut to our funding then, and the government continued to pay us at this same rate for 2021. We are hopeful that these funds will go back to "normal" in the future. We also have received our funding for the Canada Games program which has allowed us to purchase some new equipment, including timing lights.

Grants

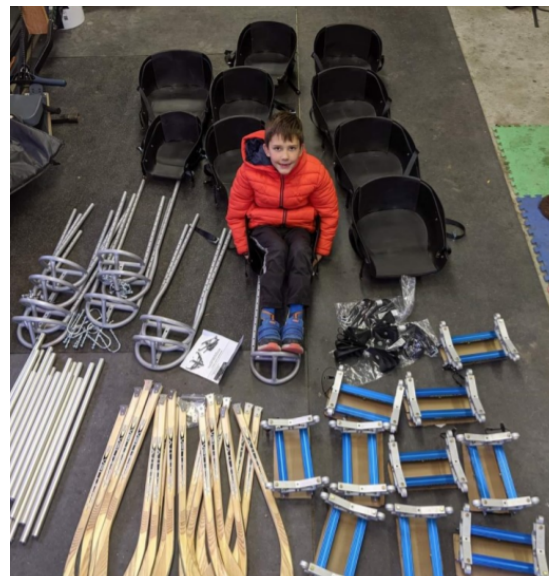
WSA did well again this year with receiving grants. Some of our new grants are from Jumpstart, one grant where Alberta Northern Lights Wheelchair Basketball Society partnered with us to support their Mini's program and the other grant will go to support our School's program in Calgary. We also received a grant from NHLPA- Goal's and dreams to support the new sledge program in Peace River. We have been grant funds to purchase full equipment, including sleds, for 15 athletes. We received a \$25,000 grant from the 2019 Canada Winter Games Legacy fund to purchase new chairs for our provincial wheelchair basketball team. The County of Northern Lights also awarded us a grant to support the Peace River sledge program which will pay for ice time. Wheelchair Rugby Canada has also supported us with the Podium Club Funding which went towards new equipment for an athlete and coach development.

Fundraising

Our telemarketing and door to door campaigns continue to be a huge success in Alberta. We survived all of the shutdowns this year, as the government allowed for door to door sales to continue throughout the lock downs. We are still not bringing in revenue equivalent to pre-pandemic but we continue to have tremendous support from Albertans'.

AGLC

We have continued to save our casino funds left over and have been granted a 2 year extension for spending on it. We are also working with AGLC to reschedule our next casino. It sounds like everyone is being pushed back 5 quarters, so we will most likely have our casino in 4th quarter 2022 or 1st quarter 2023.



WSA Grant Program

WSA was really fortunate to have a surplus of funds at the end of 2020. We had budgeted to offer \$120,000 in grants for 2021. The board reevaluated at our June board meeting and decided to increase the available budget to \$140,000. We have made significant programming and equipment investments with these funds. We are happy to be able to support our clubs and athletes achieve their goals! This is some silver lining that has come out of Covid-19. We have reorganized our funds to go towards grants, as our team expenses are small due to a lack of travel and competitions, which helps us to serve our mission while not being able to offer sport at a provincial capacity.

High Performance Grants

We did 2 cycles for the HP Grants. Our first cycle we were able to support 9 athletes . 4 of our athletes received new sport equipment and 5 received funds to offset the costs of their sport commitments. We were able to invest funds into some of our national team athletes that we have not supported in the past. Originally we only had \$20,000 set aside for HP Grants, and we had nearly \$46,000 in applications. WSA was able to reshuffle the dollars and we ended up giving out \$40,158. Our 2nd cycle we had majority of our applications from wheelchair curling athletes and we were able to fullfill all of those needs.

Athletics/Tennis Grants

Unfortunately we had no applications for these grants. I'm sure some of that had to do with Covid-19. We are hoping to have some applications in the future, so we can assist our individual sport athletes where they need it most!

Financial Aid Grants

We were happy to see applications continue to come in for our financial aid grants. We came in under budget again this year, so we did not have to turn anyone away! We gave out 5 grants to support athletes in all sorts of different ways and spend just under \$6,000.

Club Grants

We had \$60,000 set aside for club grants and had applications for over \$131,000. We were able to support 5 clubs with their requests and funded \$74,000. We were able to support different hosting and travel grants, programming, operational grants, equipment and facility purchases.



Bridging the Gap Program

In all BTG activities: Rehab Sports Program, Have-A-Go Days, Multi-Sport Events, Developmental Sessions, and School Presentations/Demonstrations. We were able to support some clubs this year, who put on have a go days. The Alberta Northern Lights Wheelchair Basketball Society ran a have a go day in Nov 14, 2021. We also were able to support a local Pickleball club in Red Deer over the summer where we were able to offer Wheelchair Pickleball to 35 individuals! A new sledge program started in Peace River this year and we hosted a test event in March, 2021 where we had 35 participants show up! We have successfully started our first season in the Fall, where we actively have 15 athletes participating weekly. Finally, we had a lawn bowling club partner with us over the summer and we did some test events with a few athletes! We are looking forward to what new para sports we try next!

Weekly Sports Programs

Glenrose WC Sports Night– We are still unable to facilitate weekly programming in Glenrose with the current Covid-19 situation. We have continued working on our relationship with the recreation therapists to connect us closer to their patients. Due to this bond, we have been able to target potential athletes in new ways. The rec therapists have set up zoom calls to introduce wheelchair sports to potential athletes in a creative way! WSA has given some presentations to social workers and recreation therapists at Glenrose to have them be informed on what Wheelchair Sports are available in the province, and they communicate that info to patients. There was a need for different sized equipment, that we were able to support, to help them meet the needs of all of their participants. WSA was also able to access some of our equipment from Glenrose which supported the Edmonton Wheelchair Tennis Club over the summer.

WinSport Multisport Programming—Improved efforts to reach more Calgary athletes have resulted in a very successful multisport adaptive program, partnering with WinSport in Calgary. The weekly program highlighted a different adaptive sport each Sunday. The program was able to run for 7 weeks and showcased the following sports: Wheelchair Tennis, Handcycling, Sledge Hockey, Wheelchair Lacrosse, Boccia, Wheelchair Handball, and Wheelchair Basketball. We had really strong attendance and we are looking forward to 2022 to run some more programming!

WSA Schools Program

Our schools program has started up again in Fall 2021. We were able to go out to Westpark Middle School in Red Deer, AB. We brought our trailer with chairs out for a week in November, where we taught Wheelchair Basketball to close to 500 students! We have 7 schools ready to book with us in 2022, and we are in the middle of hiring a Marketing and Program Coordinator which will run these programs in 2022. We have received grant funding to support this position and we are really looking forward to getting back into the schools after a long pause.

Quick Numbers

Weekly Programs (Glenrose and WinSport)
105 Participants

School and Awareness Programs:
497 Participants



Para Athletics

Our athletes were able to attend some outdoor meets in 2021, not competing for the province but individually. It was great to get them some competitions before the upcoming 2022 Canada Summer Games in Niagara, ON. We are preparing 7 athletes to represent Alberta, 5 wheelchair racers and 2 seated throwers. We are starting in the indoor season now, and are hopeful for 2022.

Maegan Ciesielski



Wheelchair Tennis

Covid-19 continues to take a toll on our sport but we will keep pushing through and hope to reach some degree of normalcy soon!

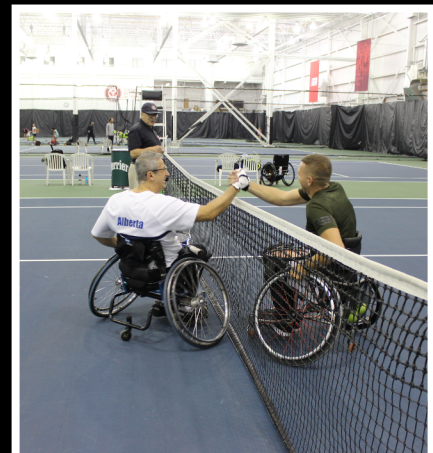
In November we were thrilled to be able to participate in a Wheelchair Tennis session for an Adapted sports program hosted at Winsport! We had over 20 participants of all different ages and abilities come out and give wheelchair tennis a try! It was very well received by the staff at Winsport, the volunteers, as well as the participants and their families. We were fortunate to have a few media outlets come as well to get the word out about the program! Hopefully this will kick off some programming opportunities in the new year!

We were able to send one Alberta athlete to the Birmingham Wheelchair Tennis Nationals in Montreal this year, Souheil Saab from Calgary. He played very well against some tough competition, winning one of his matches 6-4, 6-2 and then losing after a long three sets in the next match. We are hopeful that next year a few more of the players will be comfortable with traveling again and we can make a stronger showing!

We are grateful to still have 3 Alberta athletes in the top 20 of Canada. Souheil in 14th, Laurie Zalmanowitz of Edmonton in 17th and Kyle Thompson, also of Edmonton in 18th!

We are looking forward to what 2022 will bring! We are hoping for lots of programming, lots of court time and some amazing tournaments!

Mackenzie Quigley



Wheelchair Basketball



The start of the COVID -19 World Pandemic in early 2019 affected all aspects of our Life including home, health, friendship, work and sport. Still present in our everyday lives COVID has had 3 waves in the Province of Alberta and wheelchair basketball has seen starts and stops as each wave comes and goes. Happily I can report that when wheelchair basketball has been allowed for athletes to participate with all COVID protocols in place athletes, coaches, and support staff have been healthy and no issues have arisen. I hope we can continue to operate as a Provincial sport in Alberta, keep current return to sport health measures in place, and build a provincial wheelchair basketball program for Canada Winter Games in 2023.



In early 2021, working with WSA technical director and myself as Head Coach, we were still in the second wave of the pandemic and athletes had not been in a gym since early November. It was decided at that time to start virtual roller sessions once a week for an hour with all athletes across the province. Local clubs helped athletes pick up their chairs and zoom links were set up where athletes would push for an hour each week. Sessions included pushing, ball handling and some core exercises. Ten virtual sessions were held over two and a half months and athletes enjoyed the exercise, team building and concentrating on good pushing techniques that were being taught.

In early July when the Province announced, "Open for Summer" some training gymnasiums opened up. This allowed athletes back in the gym and able to start shooting, passing, wheeling, dribbling, and playing wheelchair basketball on court. WSA also started planning for fall camps and training opportunities with British Columbia. On October 2/3 weekend at Leduc Recreation Centre Team Alberta held its first provincial in person training session in over 18 months. 15 athletes from across the province trained for two days. 9 athletes were selected three weeks later on October 22 - 24 to travel to British Columbia to train with Team BC and play 2 exhibition games.



On December 11/12 another two day camp was held at Leduc Recreation Centre for selection to the 2022 Team Alberta Jr program. This team will represent Alberta at the upcoming Jr Nationals in Charlottown, PEI in March 2022. There will also be an Alberta Prep National tournament held in Edmonton on February 26/27 weekend with 4 other provinces attending including (BC, Que, Sask, Man) and a one day camp in early March in Penhold, AB for training prior to Canadian Jr Finals.

Team Alberta thanks WSA Board of Directors for their continued support in putting together a quality program to train and be ready to compete at the Canada Winter Games in 2022.

Darrell Nordell Head Coach Team Alberta Level 3 NCCP, Member of Coaches of Canada Team

Wheelchair Rugby

Due to the ongoing restrictions, the provincial wheelchair rugby programs are still facing challenges when it comes to organized practices and games. The ongoing restrictions in place have affected us all. There are constant ongoing discussions about how the sport will look in our province once restrictions are lifted. Our club teams have started to travel to competitions, so we are hopeful that our provincial team will be able to soon.

We were able to provide some coach development to our coaching team over 2021 and we will continue with this in 2022. We also have a new official in the province who is on a pathway for official development.

Bruce Crosby, Head Coach Team Alberta



Sledge Hockey

Team Alberta held a selection camp in Okotoks on October 22-24, 2021 and chose the players to take part in 4 camps over the 2021/2022 season in preparation for the 2022 Canadian Sledge Hockey Championship (CSHC) in May 2022. Our first camp was in Leduc from December 28-30, 2021 but was cut short due to COVID. As this is an Olympic year and having our head coach and four players potentially on the National Team presents a challenge for us to book camp dates that everyone can attend. Our roster currently consists of sixteen returning players and one rookie all looking to extend our championship record to five. Alberta Sledge would like to acknowledge WSA for their great partnership with us over the past six seasons in contributing to the success of the Team Alberta Sledge program.

Andy Wigston

Alberta Sledge; Provincial Elite Program



2020 Summer Paralympics



We were so excited to watch some high performance competition this year, and to be able to cheer on our very own from across the world. We had 4 WSA athletes and 1 coach represent Team Canada in Tokyo. There was a lot of late nights and early mornings to watch these games, but the lost sleep was well worth the competition!

