



2020 Annual Report

Wheelchair Sports Alberta
Annual General Meeting
March 28, 2021



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



2020 has been a difficult year for all Albertans as we all had to find new ways to operate our businesses. WSA used this time to focus on some of the things that we had not had time in the past to accomplish. Our staff did an amazing job of making it easier for our stakeholders to be able to use our services and be informed as to what we were up to. Our Executive Director was focused on applying for and receiving a number of grants that will allow us to support our athletes and programs when we get back to business. 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 2021.

Andy Wigston

And Our Executive Director



It would be so easy to focus this report on Covid-19, but we all lived through it together, so we will focus on 2020's highlights! We were given the incredible opportunity of time, to focus on administrative tasks! WSA was able to redo our website, develop monthly newsletters, streamline coaching pathways, apply for some different grants, and develop safe sport policies. Due to the success of our fundraising campaigns, we were able to support over \$90,000 in grants. These grants included high performance, clubs, athletics/tennis, and for the first time, financial aid. It was great for us to support our athletes and clubs directly, during a time when it is so difficult to engage. We really want to extend a sincere thank you to all of our donors in 2020. We also had some staff changes. Barb left WSA in August and we were fortunate to have Rachel accept the position of Technical Director. Rachel has really taken on the challenge of Technical Director, and we are excited to see what she brings to the new role. We are so grateful for the relationships we have with our athletes, clubs, and members and we can't wait to see you all back on the ice/court/track!

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. However, there was relief given to us for COVID -19 from the government that supported our administrative costs. We will continue to work closely with our sports representative.

Grants

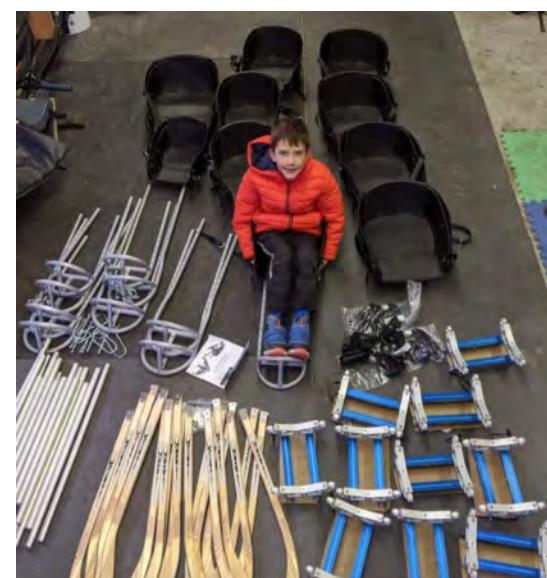
WSA received a grant from the Calgary Foundation —Doc Seaman Amateur Sport Grants for \$20,000 to purchase sledge equipment. We have a new club starting in Peace River that we are supporting with this grant. We received a Jumpstart Grant for over \$20,000 to support Medicine Hat's sledge hockey club. We received a grant from the Canada Post Community Foundations Grant for \$5,000 to purchase a basketball/multisport chair to add to our schools program. We received podium club funding from Wheelchair Rugby Canada. We also received the Bilateral funding grant from the Government of Alberta to add a recruitment staff. Most of these grants and projects will start in 2021, once our restrictions loosen up!

Fundraising

Our telemarketing and door to door campaigns continue to be a huge success in Alberta. Unfortunately we had to shut down the door to door campaign in March and we weren't able to start back up until September. The government did put in place some new restrictions in September for us to continue to fundraising door to door all through the second shutdown. We are grateful for that!

AGLC

We are fortunate to be able to have our AGLC funds available to purchase Team Alberta flights, hotels, facility rentals, and equipment. Our next casino is scheduled in the 3rd quarter of 2021. We know that it might have to change due to so many organizations having to postpone their casino's due to Covid -19.



WSA Grant Program

WSA was really fortunate to have a surplus of funds at the end of 2019. We had budgeted to offer \$90,000 in grants for 2020. In previous years, we did not have these kinds of funds available. We are so proud of the work we were able to accomplish and the support we could give to our members during a year where it's most needed. We are excited for 2021 and the grant possibilities!

High Performance Grants

We did 2 cycles for the HP Grants. Our first cycle we were able to support 3 athletes and 1 coach. 2 of our athletes received new sport chairs and 1 received new sport equipment. Our coach requested funds to purchase some new technology to assist in coaching. Originally we only had \$10,000 set aside for HP Grants, and we had nearly \$37,000 in grants. WSA was able to reshuffle the dollars and we ended up giving out \$12,500. Our 2nd cycle we were able to fulfill all the requests, and gave out funds to support athletes equipment needs, and HP sport fees.

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

This was the first time we have offered this grant. It was extremely successful. The applications in total came just under budget. We did not have to turn anyone away. We gave out 8 grants to support these athletes in all sorts of different ways and spend just under \$10,000.

Club Grants

We had \$50,000 set aside for club grants and had applications for over \$91,000. We were able to support 6 clubs with their requests and funded almost \$54,000. We were able to support different hosting and travel grants, 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 unable to continue our programming after March 12, 2020 due to the restrictions.

Weekly Sports Programs

Glenrose WC Sports Night—We have found tremendous success at the Glenrose programming since 2017. Our core four volunteers have been amazing over the past 18 months which has seen consistent attendance (6-15 individuals) by both in/out patients of the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital each week. We have really been working on our relationship with the recreation therapists at the hospital to connect us closer to the patients. Due to this bond, we have been able to target potential athletes really well. This bond also helped us through the pandemic, as the Rec Therapists have kept good communication with us and we have set up zoom calls to introduce wheelchair sports to potential athletes in a creative way! Wheelchair Tennis, Handcycling, Sledge Hockey, Australian Rules Football, and Wheelchair Basketball. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the following weeks due to COVID-19

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 6 weeks and showcased the following sports: Wheelchair Quidditch, Wheelchair Tennis, Handcycling, Sledge Hockey, Australian Rules Football, and Wheelchair Basketball. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the following weeks due to COVID-19

WSA Schools Program

The WSA School program continued to have success in the first few months of 2020, with three schools being visited, one school in Airdrie, and two in Red Deer. Athletes from the Airdrie school began to attend the WinSport program and showed interest in participating in other sports. A total of 842 students were visited during the 2020 portion of the program. 6 schools were cancelled, but we are hopeful that they will reschedule when the school program can begin running again.

Quick Numbers

Weekly Programs (Glenrose and WinSport)
235 Participants

School and Awareness Programs:
842 Participants



Para Athletics

Unfortunately we were in off season when the lockdowns began. Team Alberta Athletes continue to train remotely and independently. We are looking forward to when it is safe to be training and competing in person.

Maegan Ciesielski



Wheelchair Tennis

Wheelchair tennis met its match with Covid-19! We took a big hit in 2020 with Covid shutting everything down right as our programs were scheduled to start! At the beginning of the year we had some interest from new athletes who were wanting to give tennis a try. We were so excited to meet them and get them playing and we are anxiously waiting until we can call everyone back with some practice times! We hope to be able to get back on the courts once the next phase opens up. Unfortunately the accessibility of outdoor courts in Calgary is very limited, so we are pretty restricted to indoor facilities which haven't yet opened up for adult classes. Our current athletes are maintaining their fitness with various workout programs and other sports that have been able to safely re-open. We were fortunate to have received a fogging machine from the WSA that can sanitize wheelchairs, tennis balls and racquets so we feel that once the government allows, we will be ready to play and keep our athletes safe and healthy!

Mackenzie Quigley



Wheelchair Basketball



Alberta wheelchair basketball has used the pandemic as a way of engaging athletes virtually, through team building exercises, mental health check ins, supplying decentralized training programs and most recently starting virtual roller sessions. Although nothing will be ideal as being court training with teammates and travelling to various competitions during the pandemic WSA has supported Alberta wheelchair basketball athletes in keeping them excited, motivated and willing to try all types of various ways of virtual engagement to keep the program running. WSA office staff continue to step up, listen to all ideas on getting athletes engaged and fully supportive of some of the crazy new ideas that come our way to get athletes thinking life will return to normal and we want to be ready to step on court and have the confidence and fitness level to perform. Recently one hour virtual roller sessions are being offered across the province for athletes to work out from home with the head coach. The roller sessions follow a similar practice plan to being on court with stretching, technical wheeling, ball handling and shadow shooting where as many techniques that can be taught while stationary are instructed. Next up if gyms are not still open in spring 2021 is to have wheeling camps where athletes will meet at a designated site, get into their sport chairs and wheel on pavement which could be a neighbourhood, local park or even the community basketball court. Team Alberta wheelchair basketball will take this time to become a better program, better athletes, better coaches and for the betterment of Wheelchair Sports Alberta.

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

Wheelchair Rugby

The only tournament Alberta A or B teams attended was the Vancouver Invitation which was held in March 2020 in Richmond BC. We were able to send two mixed teams to this tournament which included up and coming players and allowed us to run a series of effective line ups. Both teams were successful winning 1st and 3rd place. We were hoping to build off the success we had in Ottawa by attending more tournaments and increasing the number of provincial practices but the pandemic changed all of that. We are looking forward to developing the new talent and getting back on the court to defend our national title.

Bruce Crosby



Sledge Hockey

Team Alberta had a selection camp on October 19-20, 2019 and players were picked to take part in 5 camps over the 2019- 20 season to prepare for the 2020 Canadian Sledge Hockey Championship (CSHC). There are 2 Rookies to the camp roster this season; Mitchell Potts and Ryan Straschnitzki. The roster announcement is attached of the players picked from these tryouts along with the Coaching staff for this season. The other players have been on the team in the past and helped Team Alberta in winning the Four National Titles from 2016-2019. Camp #1: Dec. 27-29 Camp #2: Feb. 15-17 Camp #3: March 21-22 (Cancelled) Camp #4: Apr. 4-5 (Cancelled) Camp #5: May 9-10 (Cancelled) At the end of these camps the Coaching Staff were going to decide on the Final roster that would have represented Team Alberta at the 2020 CSHC in Leduc, AB, on May 15-17, 2020. It was announced on the WSA/Alberta Sledge websites and Facebook pages in March 2020 that the whole season and the 2020 CSHC would be cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The players and staff wanted to go and defend our title in Leduc for the 5th straight year but circumstances outside our control prevented this from happening in 2020. Plus it would have been great to keep our partnership growing with WSA by hosting the Nationals together but again it had to be cancelled because of things that the country and world were dealing with in 2020. Alberta Sledge would like to say thanks for its great partnership with WSA in the past 5 seasons. With WSA's support in our stand-alone group of Alberta Sledge and helping to control this elite Team Alberta sledge program in the province.

**Dean Krawec, Team Director Alberta Sledge;
Provincial Elite Program**

