



I·SPARC

Move | Play | Compete

Indigenous Sport,
Physical Activity &
Recreation Council



ANNUAL REPORT 2024 | 25

20,342 PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

2024 | 25

22
PROGRAMS

750
EVENTS

1,829
GRANTS

12
PROVINCIAL ATHLETE
DEVELOPMENT CAMPS
& CHAMPIONSHIPS

34
PREMIER'S AWARD
RECIPIENTS

1,423
RISE GRANTS
AWARDED

172
COMMUNITY YOUTH
SPORT DEVELOPMENT
CAMPS

203
HEALTHY LIVING
COMMUNITY PROJECTS

6,151
HEALTHY LIVING
PARTICIPANTS

1,000+
TRAINED LEADERS,
FACILITATORS, COACHES
& OFFICIALS



Ultimate Spirit Group

NEW PROGRAMS, CONTINUED GROWTH, REVITALIZED ENGAGEMENT

Since 2009, the Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Council (I-SPARC) has been dedicated to making participation in sport, physical activity, recreation, and healthy living a priority for Indigenous youth and communities.

In 2024/25, I-SPARC was focused on growth and adaptation: launching new initiatives and modifying existing programs to ensure they continue to engage and inspire.

Following an incredibly successful pilot in 2023/24, I-SPARC officially launched its Cultural Safety Training program, designed to provide an understanding of the historical and current realities of Indigenous Peoples

and the ongoing racism within the sports and physical activity systems. The program has been very well received by participating sport organizations and there is growing interest from other organizations throughout the sport and physical activity sectors.

The Indigenous-led Food Systems Program (FSP), funded in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and the Ministry of Health (MOH), continues to grow and respond to community needs. The Tobacco Reduction Project pilot was successful and is now in the curriculum implementation phase, and the response to the adaptations made to the Schools Physical Activity and Physical Literacy (SPA-PL) program has been positive.

I-SPARC also worked with the Ministry of Environment and Parks to establish an Indigenous Outdoor Recreation Leaders focus group and launched an initiative to support the growth of Arctic Sports, which will be introduced as a trial sport at the 2027 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG). The regional gatherings I-SPARC hosts annually to connect with Indigenous sport advocates and community champions across the province have been revitalized and rebranded. These developments and changes to I-SPARC's programming have been made in response to

the feedback of participants, communities, and subject matter experts.

Work continued in 2024/25 to strengthen existing partnerships within the mainstream and Indigenous sport systems and find new avenues of support for individuals and communities. In partnership with Sport BC, the inaugural I-SPARC Athletes of the Year awards were created to celebrate the province's most outstanding Indigenous athletes. The one-time Indigenous Active Communities Grant program was developed in collaboration with the Province of BC and the BC Alliance for Healthy Living. Relationships with professional sport organizations such as the Vancouver Whitecaps and the BC Lions continue to grow, and the response to RISE, I-SPARC's grant program dedicated to children and youth in care, which was introduced in 2023/24 with a commitment from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (MTACS), has exceeded all expectations.

In 2024/25, by being creative and flexible about responding to the needs of Indigenous youth and their communities, I-SPARC delivered a total of 750 events involving 20,342 participants, which was consistent with 2023/24 participation numbers.



WHAT IS I-SPARC?

The Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Council (I-SPARC) was established to improve the health outcomes of Indigenous peoples by supporting and encouraging physically active individuals, families, and communities. The programs and services delivered by I-SPARC are designed to build capacity and increase access to sport, recreation, and physical activity in First Nations communities, Métis Chartered Communities, Aboriginal Friendship Centres, schools, and other delivery agencies throughout the province.

Today, more than fifteen years later, I-SPARC is a thriving provincial organization, with dozens of robust and responsive programs and services, committed not only to advancing the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples but also to the creation of safe, inclusive, and respectful environments.



THE STRATEGY

Organized and supported by four Pillars, I-SPARC's Provincial Strategy provides a long-term road map for the creation of programs that together have a transformative impact on the health and well-being of Indigenous individuals, families, and communities throughout BC.

THE 4-PILLAR PLAN

- 1 **Healthy Living** | Self-Empowerment
- 2 **Sport** | Strengthening Pathways
- 3 **Engagement** | Inspiring Participation
- 4 **Sustainability** | Building Capacity





OUR PILOT TAKES FLIGHT

After the incredibly positive response to the pilot, in 2024/25 I-SPARC officially launched its new Cultural Safety Training program.

Designed using a collaborative approach with Indigenous cultural safety experts and I-SPARC staff, the program’s goal is to promote learning opportunities for sport organizations and empower participants to make informed decisions about delivering culturally relevant and appropriate sport programs for Indigenous participants that are safe, inclusive and respectful. The 3-part program, which includes both online and in-person sessions, provides an understanding of the historical and current realities of Indigenous peoples, including cultural barriers that can hinder participation and the ongoing racism within the sports system today.

The creation of safer environments for Indigenous participants will lead to the betterment of the existing sport and physical activity systems overall and ensure that every individual feels welcome, valued, and empowered to thrive. Throughout the year, 4 training sessions were delivered to a select group of organizations and leaders within the sport, physical activity, recreation and wellness sectors, including Camosun College and BC Hockey. A total of 85 participants completed the training.

“ Thank you so much for sharing your knowledge and stories.

2024 Cultural Safety Training Participant



“ Such a powerful experience. Amazing work, I•SPARC!

Jimmy Roney, Ultimate Spirit Program & Cultural Safety Training Participant

WORKING TOGETHER TO FOSTER TRUST AND EMPOWERMENT

The success of the Cultural Safety Training program is due in no small part to the ongoing support of our partners, including MTACS, viaSport and the BC Games Society.

PARTICIPANTS





PASSIONATE ABOUT HEALTH

I-SPARC's Healthy Living initiatives are designed to support the first Pillar of the Strategy.

I-SPARC brings together community leaders and individuals who are passionate about health and wellness and support them in developing programs tailored to the needs of their respective communities.

In 2024/25, a total of 191 programs were delivered, involving 5,355 participants from across the Indigenous RunWalkWheel, Honour Your Health Challenge and FitNation programs.

INDIGENOUS RUN/WALK/WHEEL

The Indigenous RunWalkWheel (IRWW) program, which has been successfully delivered since 2007, is designed to gradually prepare community members to walk, run, or wheel in a 5k or 10k event. In 2024/25, a total of 66 IRWW programs were delivered. On-site support from I-SPARC was provided at 6 IRWW events: the BMO Marathon/8K in Vancouver, the Vancouver Sun Run, the Times Colonist 10K in Victoria, the Tears to Hope Relay in Terrace and 2 local school events in Hope and Port Moody, including sharing circles to discuss motivational strategies and share success stories. A total of 1,844 participants from 66 communities made the trek across the province.

KEY FOCUS AREAS



Physical Activity



Healthy Eating



Respecting Tobacco



Healthy Communities

“ Thank you for sending me—and this school—on such an incredible journey! The Indigenous Run Walk and Wheel has been a truly inspiring program.

IRWW Leader Vancouver Island Region, Comox



FIT NATION

Two FitNation forums were held in Richmond, BC, to train leaders to run an 8-week program in their own communities. Workshop topics included program development, mental wellness, disability inclusion, and using games to cultivate joy and a sense of belonging.

A total of 25 new FitNation leaders were trained. Based on feedback from previously trained leaders, plans are in the works for a redesign of the FitNation program to ensure ongoing engagement. This revised land-based training will focus on healing through movement and will include options for online gatherings.

HONOUR YOUR HEALTH CHALLENGE

The Honour Your Health Challenge (HYHC) program supports leaders in designing their own healthy living programs within their respective communities. At the RTS, HYHC leaders shared their success stories.

The 112 HYHC programs delivered in 2024/25 ranged from Ultimate Frisbee tournaments, cooking programs and the creation of community recipe books, healthy snacks and Re-Think Your Drink challenges, school running clubs, and the hosting of traditional games and cultural activities.

The continued popularity, diversity and growth of this program is a testament to the power of community-led initiatives.

“The support from I-SPARC staff was phenomenal. I had a participant who was struggling to move and walk and by following the coaching tips provided by I-SPARC, I was able to support her by helping her listen to her body and break up the movements into smaller portions when needed.

IRWW Leader Northeast Region,
Prince George

2024 Fit Nation Training



“

“ As the Executive Director of Wuikinuxv Nation, I have had the privilege of witnessing the transformative impact of this program on the health and well-being of our community members.

Malista McIntyre, Executive Director

PHYSICAL LITERACY IN SCHOOLS

The School Physical Activity and Physical Literacy (SPA-PL) program continues to provide both in-person and online professional development opportunities to build educator confidence and competence in delivering quality physical activity and physical literacy opportunities at school. SPA-PL focuses on students from kindergarten to Grade 7 in First Nations schools, and public schools with high Indigenous populations.

In 2024/25, I-SPARC delivered 9 five-day In-School Support programs in First Nation and Indigenous-serving public schools and provided tailored Indigenous SPA-PL resources to educators. In addition, a three-day in-person Physical Activity and Physical Literacy Training Forum was held for 10 Indigenous educators working in FNSA, Independent, and District schools across the province. This train-the-trainer forum incorporated teachings from an elder, demonstrated how to include Indigenous culture and language into physical literacy, and provided multiple physically active games and activities that can be used in the classroom and on the land, including traditional Indigenous games.

WATER-BASED TRAINING

A Lifeguarding Leadership Camp, hosted in partnership with Aboriginal Youth F.I.R.S.T. (Futures in Recreation & Sport Training), was held in West Kelowna in August 2024.

The weeklong experience supported participants in developing a variety of water-based skills, from basic lifesaving to scuba diving certification, that prepare them for outdoor aquatic recreation leadership opportunities and both short- and long-term employment.

In 2024/25, 11 certification courses were offered, with a total of 69 certifications awarded to 27 participants.

INDIGENOUS OUTDOOR RECREATION

Through a collaborative partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Parks, in 2024/25, in support of the implementation of I-SPARC’s Provincial Strategy, I-SPARC established an Indigenous Outdoor Recreation Leaders focus group and conducted four engagement sessions to gain insight into the priorities and unique needs, issues, and challenges of Indigenous people engaged in outdoor recreation.

The information gathered will assist in the creation of an outdoor recreation shared vision and help identify gaps in engaging Indigenous recreation leaders.

CONNECT TO CHANGE

Commercial Tobacco Cessation and Physical Activity Project

I-SPARC was awarded funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada’s Healthy Canadians and Communities Fund for a 4-year commercial tobacco cessation initiative in partnership with the Canadian Cancer Society and FNHA. The project encourages reduced commercial tobacco use by engaging Indigenous communities in culturally relevant land- and water-based group activities, complementing and enhancing the related component of Healthy Living’s IRWW, HYHC and FitNation programming.

The pilot resulted in 9 participants successfully completing, and the project is currently in the curriculum implementation phase. An advisory and evaluation committee has been created, allowing staff to guide the project’s direction and monitor progress.



FOOD SECURITY IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Since 2022, I-SPARC has been the steward of the Food Systems Program (FSP), funded in partnership with the FNHA.

This Indigenous-led program empowers communities to develop a wide variety of initiatives to achieve their distinct food security and food sovereignty goals. In 2024/25, FSP launched the *Learning Together, Growing Together* fund. Grantees now have access to additional funding to support capacity building within their community, including hosting workshops, training, or attending learning opportunities that incorporate Indigenous food systems and honour traditional practices and infrastructure.

Following an open call for applications, FSP issued a total of 162 grants to Indigenous communities across BC: 84 activity grants of \$5,000 each, 61 *Learning Together, Growing Together* grants of \$3,000, and 17 infrastructure/equipment grants of up to \$10,000. FSP also participated in a cross-government Food Security Table hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and FNHA, with shared goals of improved coordination and information-sharing across various governmental and Indigenous organizations.

“ Kukstun̓ckálap/Thank you all, for this funding and the great work you are doing. It may seem like a little thing but it truly makes a difference within our communities. We very much appreciate all the flexibility that this funding provides, ensuring that it works for us and our communities as we see fit. A big thank you also to the Food Systems Program Team who are always available, patient, and very supportive. The Food Systems Program & Team really is one of a kind.

Pa’La7Wit Society of the Lower Lillooet Lake,
Food Systems Program Grant Recipient

REGIONAL LEADER TRAINING

A key component of I-SPARC’s Healthy Living programs is the Regional Leader Training Sessions (RTS) held across the province every fall. Community champions are provided with the tools and resources they need to deliver either the Indigenous RunWalkWheel (IRWW) or Honour Your Health Challenge (HYHC) program in their respective communities. They also gain deeper knowledge in the areas of physical activity, healthy eating, mental wellness, respecting tobacco, healthy communities, and cultural celebration.

In 2024/25 all five planned RTS, individually tailored to the distinct regions, were successfully delivered, including the coordination of 20 different types of workshops involving 46 facilitators. The workshops covered topics such as holistic wellness, nutrition, trauma-informed practices, and traditional medicine. There were also planned celebrations in recognition of returning leaders who have been delivering these programs consistently for years. A total of 295 leaders participated—an impressive 3% increase over the significant uptick in participation of 10% from the previous year. Supported with grants totaling \$195,000, those leaders subsequently returned to their respective communities to deliver 191 multi-week Healthy Living programs (66 IRWW, 111 HYHC, 14 FitNation).





Eli McLaughlin, Haudenosaunee Nationals

COMMUNITY SPORT DEVELOPMENT

The core priority of the second Pillar of the Strategy is to foster and increase community-driven sport activities and performance sport opportunities for Indigenous youth.

Providing culturally grounded and sport development opportunities based on the individual needs and priorities of communities is one of I-SPARC central sport initiatives. In 2024/25, 172 youth sport development camps were delivered across the province, with a total of 8,687 participants (47% girls, 53% boys). Increasing leadership capacity also continued with the delivery of 62 coach development training opportunities in various communities, with a total of 732 participants (47% women, 53% men). Six officials training clinics were

also offered, with an attendance of 44 trainees (39% women, 61% men). In total, 239 sport development camps, clinics, and courses were delivered, a 10% increase over last year.

2024-25 HIGHLIGHTS

172
CAMPS

8,687
PARTICIPANTS

62
COACH
CLINICS

732
COACHES
TRAINED

THE HOLISTIC MODEL

I-SPARC's Provincial Strategy applies a holistic perspective to health and wellness, a common thread across Indigenous cultures, which acknowledges the interconnectedness of the physical, mental (intellectual and emotional), cultural, and spiritual facets of life.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS BASKETBALL CAMP

I-SPARC participated in the Aboriginal Sport Circle and Basketball Canada's high-performance National Indigenous Basketball Camp (NIBC) pilot initiative. The goal of the camp is to increase representation of Indigenous participation in high-performance basketball at both provincial and national levels. I-SPARC initiated a province-wide application process that resulted in the selection of two coaches (1 woman, 1 man) and four athletes (2 boys, 2 girls) participating with other participants from across Canada.



PLAY WITH PRIDE SPORT



PROFESSIONAL SPORT COLLABORATIONS

Building on relationships forged in previous years, I-SPARC's collaborations with various professional sport franchises continued in 2024/25.

The partnership with the Vancouver Whitecaps (VWFC) is thriving and this year included regional soccer camps, community ticket giveaways, as well as a co-hosting of the BC Indigenous Soccer Athlete Development Camp with the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations. The camp was very well received, with 60 youth participating (42% girls, 58% boys).

For the third year, I-SPARC and the BC Lions Football Club delivered another fun-filled season of the Indigenous Youth Program. The five-week program introduced youth across four communities to the fundamentals of flag football as well as related life skills such as teamwork, sportsmanship and leadership. The camp wrapped up with a tournament and goodbye barbecue, as well as ticket giveaways to BC Lions games for the participating communities.

In 2024/25, the ongoing partnership with the Vancouver Bandits to enhance basketball coaching and officials training included 5 coach development clinics and 1 officials training clinic. Partly supported by the Canada Basketball Foundation, the clinics involved 56 Indigenous coaches and 13 Indigenous officials were trained (50% women, 50% men).



ILTPD PATHWAY IMPLEMENTATION

In 2024/25, I-SPARC and Sport for Life received funding through viaSport's BC Sport Participation Program (BCSPP) to implement the Indigenous Long-Term Participant Development (ILTPD) pathway, a guide developed by Sport for Life on how to address the needs of Indigenous participants as they navigate the transition between Indigenous and mainstream sport. Canoe Kayak BC was selected and training was delivered.



COMMUNITY ULTIMATE SPIRIT PROGRAM

BC Ultimate's Community Ultimate Spirit Program (CUSP), a fun, welcoming introduction to the sport of Ultimate designed for Indigenous youth, is a program I-SPARC is proud to continue to support. Rooted in play and using the Holistic Model, CUSP encourages teamwork, leadership, and physical literacy in a culturally safe and inclusive environment. In 2024, CUSP was presented with the Delivering on Diversity Award by the MTACS at the 57th Sport BC Athlete of the Year awards.

“ One of the big things we're trying to achieve with this program is focusing on the elements of sport, so that the youth can learn about teamwork, leadership, hard work and discipline and all those things that playing sports teach you. I think that's a big part of what this program is about.

Jamie Taras, Director of Community Partnerships, BC Lions, on Indigenous Youth Flag Football Program

INTRODUCING ARCTIC SPORTS—TRIAL SPORT FOR 2027 NAIG

Arctic Sports, rooted in traditional circumpolar games that emphasize strength, agility, and cultural values, will be introduced as a trial sport at the 2027 North American Indigenous Games. In anticipation, I-SPARC launched development programming in January 2025 in partnership with Arctic Sports coach Kyle Worl and Fort Nelson First Nation. The initiative included a coaching clinic that trained 8 Indigenous coaches, and two youth development camps that engaged 112 participants (55% girls, 45% boys). These events support the growth of Arctic Sports in BC and lay the groundwork for Team BC athlete and coach development and future NAIG participation.



BC INDIGENOUS PROVINCIAL ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT CAMPS

In 2024, I-SPARC delivered 12 BC Indigenous Provincial Athlete Development Camps in collaboration with our sport partners and hosted in partnership with Indigenous communities across the province. These camps are a key component of the performance sport development pathway, providing opportunities for Indigenous athletes to train, build skills, and connect with high-quality coaching in a culturally supportive environment and with an eye on future competition, including the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG).

Sports with a high-performance focus included basketball, volleyball, and soccer, while development camps were offered in archery, athletics, badminton, canoe/kayak, golf, swimming, and—new for 2024—Arctic Sports. A total of 385 athletes participated in the series (43% girls and 57% boys), demonstrating growing engagement in Indigenous high-performance sport.



CANADA GAMES COACHING APPRENTICESHIP

The Aboriginal Apprentice Coach Program (AACP), a partnership between the Aboriginal Sport Circle, Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal Sport Bodies, Provincial/Territorial Coaching Representatives, the Canada Games Council, and the Coaching Association of Canada, supports two coaches from each province and territory in participating in the Canada Games in apprenticeship

roles. For BC, a record 11 expressions of interest (4 women, 7 men) were received from Indigenous coaches. Following a comprehensive process led by I-SPARC, viaSport, and partnering PSOs, two apprentice coaches were selected, 1 for Lacrosse and 1 for Softball.



SALISH STORM HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

I-SPARC is proud to support the Salish Storm Hockey Association (SSHA), which provides a unique and barrier-free opportunity for Indigenous children and youth to participate in the sport of hockey. Through inclusive programming and competitive opportunities, SSHA helps foster skill development, confidence, and community pride on and off the ice.



NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2024 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships (NAHC) were held in Grande Prairie, Alberta, from May 6-12. The Team BC selection camp was held April 5-7, 2024, in Prince George, involving 145 athletes (86 boys, 59 girls). Team BC's 18U women's team and 18U men's team, each composed of 20 athletes and 5 coaching staff members, advanced to the bronze medal games.

Unfortunately, due to forest fires in the area, the bronze medal matches were cancelled. The Host Society awarded bronze medals to all four teams. Notably, this is the tenth consecutive year the men's team has won a medal at the NAHC.

“My favourite parts about my Team BC NAHC experience were the teammates, the cultural experience, and just being part of Team BC. An experience I'll never forget.

Team BC NAHC athlete

PATHWAYS TO ENGAGEMENT

For many years, I-SPARC has hosted annual regional forums across the province to connect those involved in Indigenous sport, recreation, physical activity, and health promotion. In 2024, I-SPARC rebranded and revitalized these gatherings under a new name and format: *Pathways: Indigenous Sport Leadership Gatherings*. This pilot initiative, delivered in partnership with the BC Regional Sport Alliance, introduced a more purposeful and engaging approach to leadership development and community connection.

I-SPARC hosted two in-person Pathways events that brought together Indigenous community champions, coaches, leaders, recreation managers, youth workers and other advocates. Workshop subjects were wide-ranging and offered practical tools and valuable education, training, and certification opportunities. Topics included athletic taping, concussion awareness, addressing racism in sport, and using the Holistic Model in creating inclusive environments. In total, 89 participants attended the two events, a strong foundation for future growth of the Pathways series.



DIGITAL INDIGENOUS SPORT GALLERY

The Indigenous Sport Gallery, the largest known permanent gallery in the world dedicated to Indigenous sport, can now be experienced by visitors from across BC and the world. One of the most comprehensive digitization projects in sports history, the Digital Indigenous Sport Gallery (DISG) was designed to increase the accessibility of the Indigenous Sport Gallery and highlight the accomplishments and contributions of Indigenous athletes, coaches, and builders who have had a profound impact on sport history and culture.

I-SPARC was a primary partner in the creation and promotion of this state-of-the-art virtual reality experience, with several staff members participating in the project's advisory group. The gallery also provides a platform to spotlight emerging Indigenous athletes, including the annual recipients of the Premier's Awards for Indigenous Youth Excellence in Sport (see page 30). The project was officially launched on April 21, 2024.





REDUCING BARRIERS

The fourth Pillar of the Strategy is centred around sustainability—building capacity and providing opportunities for growth.

I-SPARC’s grant program, designed to promote healthy, active lifestyles by reducing barriers and enhancing access to sport, recreation, and physical activity programs, continues to evolve in response to the growing need for financial support in Indigenous communities across the province. Funds are distributed through the Equipment Grant Program, the Healthy Living Community Grants, the FSP Community Grants, RISE Grants, and the newest addition, Indigenous Active Communities.

INDIGENOUS ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

In 2024/25, in collaboration with the Province of BC and BC Healthy Living Alliance, I-SPARC launched a new grant program, Indigenous Active Communities, supporting First Nations, Métis Chartered Communities, and Friendship Centres in creating or expanding physical activity, sport, and recreation opportunities in their communities. After a review of the 62 applications received, funds were dispersed to 12 communities and organizations, for a total of \$200,700.

THE RISE GRANT PROGRAM

With ongoing support from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, the RISE (Resilient, Inspire, Strength, and Engage) Grant Program continues to thrive. Grants from I-SPARC’s first program dedicated to children and youth in or transitioning from care reduce financial barriers, providing greater accessibility to sport, physical activity, recreation, and cultural programs.

This collaborative initiative empowers individuals to connect with their communities, explore their cultural heritage, and experience the transformational effects of sport and physical activity. The program has exceeded all expectations, now averaging more than 300 applications per month. In 2024/25, a total of 1,423 Individual grants were distributed (1,325 grants for youth under 18 years and 98 grants for youth over 18). In total, \$708,000 in funding was distributed.

“ The impact of the RISE grant extends far beyond the physical equipment it provided. It has empowered my boys to engage in their passions safely and effectively, fostering confidence, resilience, and personal development. These experiences will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression, shaping their futures and encouraging them to continue exploring the activities that bring them joy and fulfillment.

Adoptive parent of 2 teenage boys

1,829

TOTAL GRANTS

In 2024/25, a total of 1,829 grants were distributed across I-SPARC grant programs.

12

INDIGENOUS ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

193

HEALTHY LIVING COMMUNITY GRANTS

Inclusive of IRWW, HYHC and FitNation

162

FSP COMMUNITY GRANTS

1,423

RISE GRANTS

GRANTS

VALUED LIVING

TIME TO CELEBRATE

Celebrating the accomplishments of Indigenous youth, as well as the community leaders, coaches, and volunteers who are vital to the success of I-SPARC’s programming, is an important element of the third Pillar of the Strategy.

“ Congratulations, Elder Alex (Nelson), you have contributed so much to the foundation legacy of the NAIG Council, Aboriginal Sport Circle, and Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council of BC. You were an amazing mentor, and spiritual and cultural support to all of us young leaders back in the day. Many blessings Alex – you so deserve this recognition!

I-SPARC Supporter

CANADA’S SPORTS HALL OF FAME

In 2024/25, I-SPARC partnered with Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame and the Order of Sport to promote the 2024 inductees, which included I-SPARC’s Elder and Senior Advisor Alex Nelson, who was inducted in the Builder category. Alex, from the Musgamaqw-Dzawada’enuxw First Nation, has spent decades supporting and promoting Indigenous participation in sport and recreation.

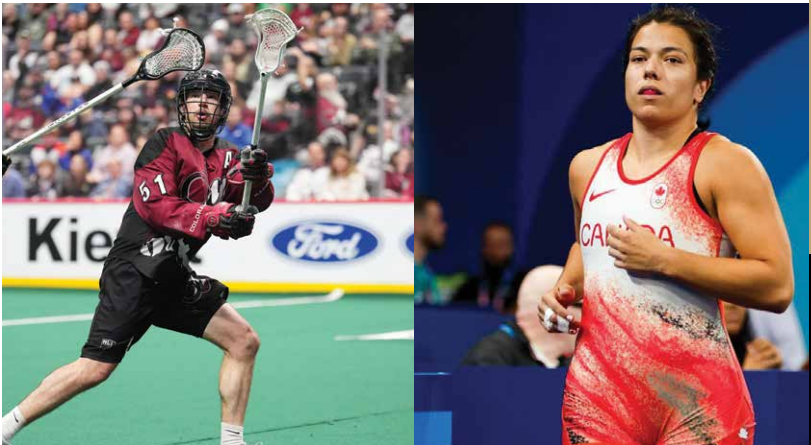


TOM LONGBOAT AWARDS

Established in 1951 in recognition of high-performing Indigenous athletes across Canada, the Tom Longboat Award is one of the most prestigious awards for Indigenous athletes in the country. This year, I-SPARC selected two athletes, Justina Di Stasio (Women) and Eli McLaughlin (Men), to receive BC’s Regional Tom Longboat Award. Both athletes were then recognized with the National Tom Longboat Award. The Aboriginal Sport Circle (ASC) honoured Justina and Eli during the National Indigenous Sports Gala ceremony in Ottawa.

SPORT BC ATHLETE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Justina and Eli were also recognized as the inaugural I-SPARC Athletes of the Year during Sport BC’s 57th Annual Athlete of the Year Awards, hosted by renowned sports broadcaster Scott Russell. This was the first time that I-SPARC was involved in the event and marks a significant milestone in the organization’s ongoing efforts to recognize the accomplishments of elite Indigenous athletes.



RECOGNITION

AMPLIFYING

2024

PREMIER'S AWARDS FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH EXCELLENCE IN SPORT

RECOGNITION



TENTH ANNIVERSARY

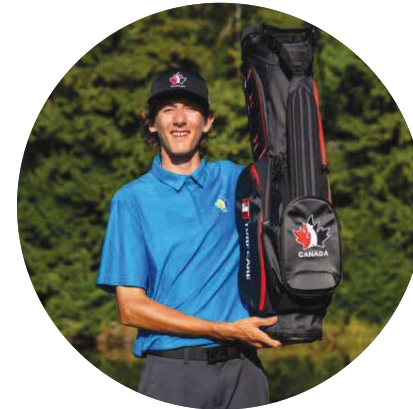
This year marks the tenth year of these prestigious awards, which recognize Indigenous athletes who have achieved excellence in performance sport and demonstrate a commitment to their education, culture, and promoting healthy and active lifestyles.

For 2024, 34 regional award winners (from a total of 81 nominations) were announced in March and 10 of those went on to be named as provincial recipients of the Premier's Award. I-SPARC celebrated with the winners during a virtual ceremony and their photos and bios will be on display in the BC Sports Hall of Fame.



ADELLE LARDEN

Lacrosse & Volleyball
Hwiltsum First Nations



AUSTIN KRAHN

Golf
Mohawks of Akwesasne



CAELEN CROSS

Hockey & Lacrosse
Rocky Mountain Métis Association



GAVIN CURRIE

Softball
Métis Nation BC



LOGAN MELLISH

Box Lacrosse
Squamish Nation



MAX GOLLER

Field and Box Lacrosse
Sts'ailes



SOPHIE CAMPO

Softball & Volleyball
Squamish Nation



SUMMER CANNELL

Figure Skating, Synchronized Skating & Free Skate
Musqueam First Nation



TENNYSON MCCARTHY

Basketball, Volleyball
Métis Nation BC



WYATT BLACE

Hockey
Squamish Nation

“Congratulations to all the (fellow) recipients. Our ancestors would be very proud of us! Hiŷám̓. Huy Chewx a (Thank-you)

Logan Mellish, 2024 Provincial Recipient, Premier's Awards for Indigenous Youth Excellence in Sport

“ This celebratory moment is meaningful because it shows all our people how sports and culture inspire the next generation of youth! I've learned that our traditions don't exist separately from our passions; they complement and enhance one another.

Summer Cannell, 2024 Provincial Recipient, Premier's Awards for Indigenous Youth Excellence in Sport

I-SPARC would like to thank the following Partners,

whose collaboration and support has been essential to the organization’s continued growth in delivering successful programs that have a positive impact on the health and well-being of Indigenous individuals, families, and communities across BC.

First Nations Health Authority
Métis Nation BC
BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
Province of BC
Government of Canada



We gratefully acknowledge the financial support
of the Government of Canada.



We gratefully acknowledge the financial support
of the Province of British Columbia through the
Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sport
and the Ministry of Health.

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SPORT

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Pete Natrall	Vancouver Coastal Regional Coordinator
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Lynn Munch	Northeast Regional Coordinator

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Julie Seal	Provincial Coordinator, HealthBeat
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Dwayne Roberts	Project Manager, Indigenous Programs – Learning in Motion
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Morgan Anson	Provincial Coordinator, Engagement, Food Systems Program
Annalynn Prince	Administrative Coordinator



I-SPARC

Move | Play | Compete

Indigenous Sport,
Physical Activity &
Recreation Council



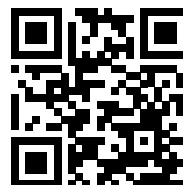
I-SPARC respectfully acknowledges the Cowichan Tribes
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