

The 2015 Pan Am Games and the University of Toronto

BACKGROUND

During the last 40 years, the infrastructure available for high performance sport in Ontario has fallen well below the Canadian standard. Ontario is the only region in the country without a facilities-based national training centre. While other centres have been built as a result of major games, the last such multi-sport competition to be held in Ontario was the British Empire Games in Hamilton in 1930. As a result, Ontario's best athletes and coaches travel to other countries or regions to train in the facility they need to excel on the world stage. While "Road to Excellence" and "Quest for Gold" funding in recent years has initiated a renewal of the Ontario sport system's operation, the critical shortfall in facilities has yet to be addressed.

The University of Toronto is committed to developing a critical mass of infrastructure and expertise to support high performance sport in this province, and is well on its way to this target, as evidenced by:

- the completion of Varsity Centre (including the throws area last summer and, this month the pavilion building);
- the recent establishment of high performance centres in swimming and track and field and the concurrent hiring of internationally renowned coaches to head them;
- the extensive renovations to Varsity Arena;
- the continued strengthening of our research programs in exercise sciences and sport medicine;
- the recent staging of high profile national and international events, including the Festival of Excellence, featuring many of the world's top athletes, and the Canadian Track and Field Championships & World Trials;
- the thriving partnership with the Ministry of Health Promotion to provide training space and services for Ontario's best athletes; and,
- the exciting plans for the Goldring Centre for High Performance Sport

The University has also established a strong high performance sport agenda to create a "sports institute" environment at the Goldring Centre that will bring together the best in research, teaching, coaching, sport science and sport medicine to best serve some of Canada's top athletes while at the same time creating a world-class physical activity and recreation environment for U of T students.

The 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games will significantly further this mission by investing in Goldring to bring futsal competition to campus, creating a double artificial turf field on the St. George back campus, and by renewal the artificial turf at Varsity

Centre. The Games will also bring the focus back on Toronto as a hub for high performance sport and an outstanding place for Canada's – and the world's – top athletes to train and compete.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What will the Pan Ams bring to the University of Toronto in terms of new and/or refurbished facilities?

St. George campus will benefit from:

- A new double artificial turf field on back campus (behind University College facing Hoskins Avenue)
- Renewed artificial turf at Varsity Centre
- The construction of a futsal venue at the Goldring Centre for High Performance Sport

Scarborough campus will benefit from:

- A \$170 million world-class sports and recreation complex that will provide a key venue for the Games and a legacy for UTSC and the City of Toronto. The facility will include the Pan Am Aquatics Centre (boasting two Olympic-sized pools and a 10-metre diving tank) as well as a field house complex featuring gymnasias, multi-purpose program areas, and fitness and training facilities that would support both recreation and high performance training.

Why does UTSC want to partner in the complex?

The current athletic facility at the UTSC campus was designed for 4,000 students, while over 10,000 students exist on campus today. UTSC's facilities are at 58% of the Council of Ontario standard for athletics/recreation space and are currently ranked in the bottom percentile (18th of 20) of all Ontario universities.

The opportunity to build a world-class sports and recreation complex will be transformational for UTSC. It will take the campus from having one of the lowest standards in sports and recreational facilities among Ontario universities, to having facilities at a standard equal to the very best in Canada. It provides substantial value for our student investment, as well as many secondary benefits, from the creation of new multi-purpose space for students to job opportunities and the potential for new academic programs. It will continue to provide value to students long after graduation, as they have an opportunity to remain active alumni members of the complex.

Why is high performance sport a priority for the University of Toronto?

The University of Toronto has long been committed to the encouragement of excellence in sport, through its facilities, coaching, research, undergraduate and graduate degree programs, sport medicine, administrative leadership and athletic events.

As a national research-intensive university, our mission is to understand our complex humanity and to make it better. Sport is arguably one of the most accessible, popular and globalized pursuits that we engage in, and it is deeply-rooted in science, human growth, economics and culture. Understanding sport and its importance to our civilization is therefore of utmost importance.

Doesn't this focus pull the University away from its academic mission?

Physical activity and health research and sport/exercise science are very much ongoing parts of the University's academic mission, and our high performance agenda enables us to further develop a critical mass of students, researchers, coaches and facilities to greatly enhance that mission.

The University of Toronto excels at research of all kinds, and creating a "sports institute" model – including a platform to showcase high performance sport – is an extension of this institution-wide commitment to excellence.

How does a high performance agenda meet the needs of U of T students?

Every sport and recreation facility on U of T campuses is developed with our students in mind. That many of these spaces also serve some of the country's top athletes only means that U of T students have access to state-of-the-art equipment, surfaces and spaces for keeping active and healthy – and that these resources are supported by the latest knowledge about sport science, physical activity and healthy living.

How does hosting Pan Am competition on University of Toronto campuses benefit the average U of T student?

The University of Toronto hosts high performance sporting events under a philosophy that inspires limitless athletic opportunity for all – from playground to podium. Events such as the Pan Am Games inspire up-and-coming Canadian athletes and sports researchers to flourish here at U of T. What that means for U of T students is access to facilities in which there is an incredible synergy between world-class science, sport medicine, coaching, research and training. In addition, investments brought in by competitions of this scale translate into world-class spaces and surfaces for enjoying a wide range of recreational activities – spaces which are always committed 75% of the time to U of T students.

How will the University of Toronto ensure that these new facilities are maintained and used to their fullest capabilities after the Games are over?

We are committed, and have been for some time, to budgeting for ongoing maintenance for all of our facilities. In terms of use, there is *never* a shortage of demand for our facilities, and these new facilities will enjoy the full spectrum of student and community use, from casual recreation to high performance training and competition.

Will maintenance of these new facilities result in an increase in student fees?

As with all co-curricular facilities on all university campuses, students will pay additional fees relative to the proportion of time they have access to the new facilities.

How will the Pan Am Games improve sports science research at U of T?

By enhancing facilities and bringing new profile to Toronto, the Pan Am Games will create new research and teaching clusters that will include undergraduate and graduate students, regional sport organizations, and researchers from U of T's affiliated hospitals.

Capacity-building goes far beyond facilities; it's also about building to knowledge to make researchers smarter and, by extension, the overall culture smarter about sport in general and healthy high performance sport in particular. Ensuring that the world's top athletes are competing in a healthy way (e.g., concussion-free; without huge, long-term detriment to bones and muscles; etc.) is increasingly becoming a public issue as well as a priority for the International Olympic Committee's medical commission. Bringing the Pan Am Games to Toronto creates a tremendous opportunity for U of T to lead the way in building on the "healthy high performance" research agenda in the world of sport science.

How will these new facilities improve or affect intercollegiate sports at U of T?

The enhanced facility in the Goldring Centre (for futsal) will have a hugely positive impact on our court sports, while the new artificial turf on back campus will be an incredible transformation that will result in "24/7, 365-day-a-year" use by students and the community. It will represent tremendous benefits in terms of training and competition for all of our intercollegiate field sports.