

Canada has also been a world leader in synchronized swimming since the sport began more than 50 years ago. Synchronized swimming reached full medal status at the 1988 Summer Olympic Games, where Carolyn Waldo won two gold medals for Canada. At the Barcelona Games in 1992, Sylvie Fréchette won the gold while the duo of Penny and Vicky Vilagos captured the silver.

Rowing has also enjoyed a recent upsurge in popularity in Canada following tremendous success on the international circuit. Canada won four golds and one bronze in rowing at the 1992 Barcelona Summer Games, marking its best Olympic performance ever.

Football, the world's most popular sport (it is called "soccer" in Canada), is now entrenched in Canada with a large base of young competitors and a professional league.

In terms of spectator appeal, professional baseball and American football rank with hockey at the top of the list. The Canadian Football League (CFL) has teams in Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, Ottawa, Regina, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg. The annual Grey Cup game, with the league's top two teams vying for the championship, is traditionally one of the most watched sports events in Canada.

Major-league baseball teams in Montreal and Toronto attract millions of spectators every season. In 1992, the Toronto Blue Jays captured the World Series title for the first time which also marked the first time the World Series had been won by a team outside the United States. The Blue Jays added to their fame by winning the World Series again in 1993. Baseball and softball are popular recreational sports in Canada, with countless local teams and leagues in operation in the summer and autumn.


International Role

With more than 60 national teams participating in international competition, Canada has a wealth of technical and administrative sports expertise that it shares with other countries through various programs and exchanges.

Canada has hosted almost every major international sports competition: the Summer and Winter Olympics, Commonwealth Games, Pan-American Games and World University Games. The city of Winnipeg will host the 1999 Pan-American Games, and Québec City is competing to host the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.

Canada also plays an important role in the Paralympics Games: the summer 1976 edition of the Paralympics were held in Toronto. At Barcelona's Paralympics of 1992, Canadian athletes obtained remarkable results, participating in 11 out of 15 sports and ranking sixth out of 96 countries.

The federal government supports sport around the world through financial aid for international competitions held in Canada and through programs promoting international sports relations as a means of strengthening global ties.

Canada continues to promote the contribution of sport for the personal and community well-being and international sport endeavours as a means of transcending political, cultural and religious differences abroad. 

The Future

Sport has always played an important role in the life of Canadians, but only recently has Canada come into its own as a sporting nation, ranking among the top 15 countries. Its first-rate competitors and international sports initiatives, such as participation in the movement to improve opportunities for athletes with disabilities and the drive to fight against doping in sport, have earned the country a leadership role.

