



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **WinSport supports our para athletes from grassroots to Beijing**

CALGARY, Alta. – As Canadian athletes converge on Beijing for the 2022 Paralympic Winter Games, WinSport is proud to play a key role in supporting Canadian para athletes from the grassroots level to those competing on the world stage.

Of the 49 athletes the Canadian Paralympic Committee is sending to Beijing from March 4-13, 30 of them have either trained or competed at WinSport's facilities at Canada Olympic Park or the Bill Warren Training Centre in Canmore. The Canadian Sport Institute Calgary, which operates in space provided by WinSport at the Markin MacPhail Centre, is affiliated with 31 of these athletes.

"WinSport is committed to be an inclusive and accessible organization where people of all ages and abilities can achieve their dreams. This includes representing our country on the Olympic or Paralympic stage," says Barry Heck, WinSport President and CEO. "These athletes have worked hard to get to where they are today. We take pride in knowing we have played a small role in their development by providing access to our world-leading facilities along with resources and support through some of our sport partners."

The 30 athletes at the Paralympics who have trained or competed at WinSport include all 12 para Nordic skiers, one para alpine skier and the 17-member para hockey team.

Calgary para alpine skier Alana Ramsay first learned to ski at WinSport's Canada Olympic Park at the age of six with CADS Calgary, an arm of the Canadian Adaptive Snowsports Association that has been based at COP since 1974. She will be participating in her third Paralympic Games.

"WinSport has always been there," says the 27-year-old Ramsay. "This is where I learned to ski, this is where it started, and this is why I started skiing. My favourite thing to do was go from the top of COP to the bottom of COP as fast as I could."

Ramsay won bronze medals in the super-G and super combined events at the 2018 Paralympics in PyeongChang and plans to go as fast as she can starting with the downhill event on Saturday. "I would like to the best I can and hopefully be in a medal position," she says.

WinSport has also been the home base to Hockey Canada's national para hockey team since the organization moved its Calgary head office to Canada Olympic Park in 2011. WinSport's Markin MacPhail Centre has hosted several training camps for this year's national team.

In Canmore, WinSport's Bill Warren Training Centre has provided a key dryland training venue for the para Nordic team, which captured a record 16 medals at the 2018 PyeongChang Paralympics.

"We are excited to cheer on our Canadian team and look forward to supporting our future para athletes and our Paralympians, either directly or indirectly," says Heck. "As stewards of the legacy facilities from the 1988 Winter Games, we want to ensure these facilities and our programs continue to evolve so they can be accessible for all."

In addition to being home to CADS Calgary, WinSport has successfully introduced Calgarians with and without physical disabilities to adapted wheelchair sport opportunities through its adapted sports program, which will launch its fourth session later this year. Participants are introduced to a different wheelchair sport each week by coaches from local and provincial sport organizations in each respective sport. WinSport provides the space, the sport and the equipment.

“This program breaks down barriers by providing the opportunity for people with and without disabilities the opportunity to participate in para sports,” says Jennifer Konopaki, WinSport Executive Director, Sport. “You only have to look to our Canadian athletes who are wearing the maple leaf in Beijing to provide the inspiration.”

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### **About WinSport**

*WinSport inspires human potential through the spirit of sport. The Calgary Olympic Development Association, operating as WinSport, is a community-based, not-for-profit organization that owns and operates Canada Olympic Park and the Bill Warren Training Centre in Canmore. WinSport also administers legacy funds that support the Olympic Oval. WinSport’s mission has three pillars: to help people discover the joy and health benefits of sport; to encourage talented athletes to develop their skills; and to enable Canada’s high-performance athletes to excel on the world stage. Financial commitments from Canadian governments and business have allowed WinSport to expand its sport and community offering over time; significant investment will be required in the coming years to renew the legacy facilities that have welcomed the world to the Calgary region for more than a generation.*

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