

The Impact of the Vancouver Games
What the Polling Tells Us

An Analytical Summary by:
The Sport Matters Group

March 1, 2010

A. Overview

A number of public opinion polls were taken both in the lead up to and during the Vancouver Winter Olympic Games. These polls focused on three primary areas:

- The success of the Games
- The impact of the Games
- The success of the Own the Podium (OTP) program

This paper provides an analysis of the outcomes of all the polling that was undertaken over this time period and outlines the primary conclusions that can be reached based on this data.

B. Analysis

Going into the Olympics, polling commissioned by Sport Matters suggested that almost 3 in 4 Canadians thought it was important for Canada to demonstrate our prowess in Winter sports and to finish in the top 3 in medals. A similar percentage of Canadians felt that the Own The Podium program was an important tool in achieving these goals that should be continued after the Games.

Opinions on Own The Podium at the conclusion of the Games were still overwhelmingly positive with two thirds of Canadians expressing that it had a mostly positive impact (with particularly strong support in Quebec and amongst French speaking Canadians). An even greater percentage of Canadians (72%) supported an increase in annual funding for OTP to \$22m annually while 77% thought that the investment of \$110m over 5 years had been worthwhile.

The perceived impact of the Games on our Canadian identity has been even more profound. Over ninety percent of Canadians thought that the performance of our athletes would have a positive impact on Canadian pride with a similar number agreeing that this was indeed the case at the conclusion of the Olympics.

Eight in ten Canadians thought that it would also have a positive impact on national unity with a similar number feeling that this goal had been achieved at the conclusion of the Games.

Eight in ten Canadians also thought that the performance of our athletes would motivate Canadians to participate more broadly both in Winter sports and to get more physically active in general.

An Ipsos-Reid poll undertaken for Historica-Dominion suggested that over half of Canadians believe that the Vancouver Olympic Games are a more defining national moment for Canada than the 1972 Hockey Summit Series between Canada and Russia. There was also a strong majority (74%) who felt that the Games were Canada's Games.

In terms of the real world impact of these feelings of belonging, nearly one half (45%) of respondents said that they belong first to Canada, up from 38% a year ago.

A Harris-Decima poll taken towards the end of the Games suggested that the most important success factor for the games was that it was delivered without a major security threat (88%). Other important goals included winning gold in men's (71%) and women's (68%) ice hockey and that Canada finish in the Top 3 in medals (64%). Over half of respondents also felt that it was important for Canada to win the most medals (52%).

This same poll echoed the findings of the SMG poll in finding that the Games did a lot to unite Canadians (77%) and indicated that Canadians supported both the decision to host the Games (74%) and the actual delivery of the Games (83%).

C. Recommendations

It is clear from the polling data that Canadians are proud of the Vancouver Games and of the accomplishment of our athletes. Overwhelmingly they feel that the Games have been a success and that this success is worth investing in and replicating in the future through continued and enhanced support for the Own The Podium program.

Appendix 1: Summary of Polling Data

A. Sport Matters Group Polling

Dates:

Before: Feb, 02, 2010

After: Feb 25, 2010

Specific questions from February 02, 2010

1. How important is it that Canada continue with OTP?

Important 74%

Not Important 26%

2. How important is it that Canada finish top 3 in medals?

Important 73%

Not Important 27%

3. How important is it that we show the world that we are a force to be reckoned with at Winter sports?

Important 75%

Not Important 25%

Specific questions from February 25, 2010

1. Prior to today, did you know that OTP exists?

Yes 55%

No 41%

2. What kind of impact has OTP had?

Mostly positive 66%

Mostly negative 11%

- Their were particularly positive views about OTP in Quebec and with French speaking Canadians

3. Support for an investment of \$22m annually in OTP

Worthwhile	72%
Not Worthwhile	22%

4. Investment in OTP was it ...

Worthwhile	77%
Not Worthwhile	18%

- Particularly strong support in Quebec

Questions on Both Surveys

Impact of outcomes by Canadian athletes on Canadian Pride

Before

Positive	91%
Negative	2%

After

Positive	92%
Negative	3%

Impact of outcomes by Canadian athletes on Canadian unity

Before

Positive	83%
Negative	6%

After

Positive	79%
Negative	4%

Impact of outcomes by Canadian athletes on motivation Canadians to participate in Winter sport

Before

Positive	84%
Negative	3%

After

Positive	78%
Negative	2%

Impact of outcomes by Canadian athletes on motivation Canadians to get more physically active in general

Before

Positive	77%
Negative	3%

After

Positive	75%
Negative	2%

B. Other Polling

a. Historica-Dominion (Ipsos Reid)

Feb. 23, 2010

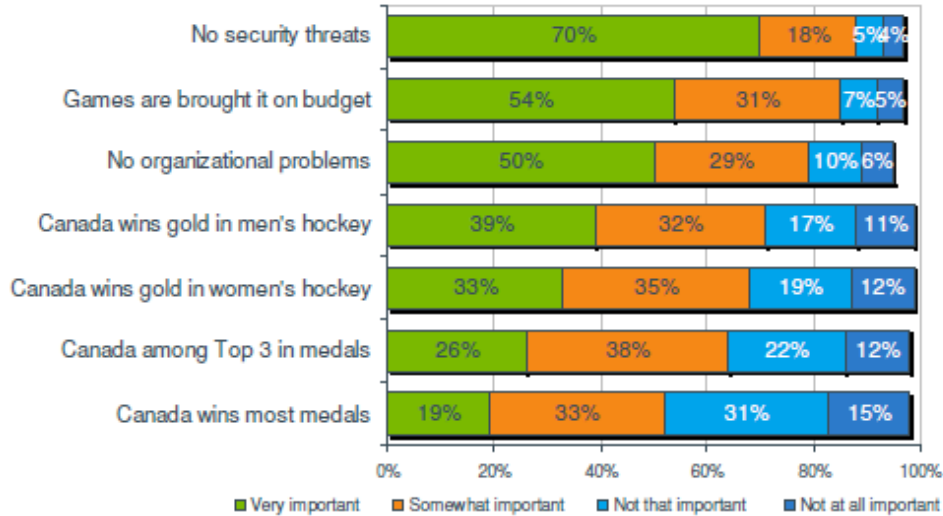
- 52 per cent of Canadians believed that the Vancouver Olympic Games are a more defining national moment for Canada than the 1972 Hockey Summit Series between Canada and Russia. They also think it is more of a milestone than the 1976 Montreal Olympics (51%), the 1988 Calgary Olympics (51%) or Expo 67 (49%).
- Among Canadians aged 55 and older, who have longer memories, the Vancouver Games are seen as more significant than the 1972 Hockey Summit Series (52%), the 1976 Montreal Olympics (47%), the 1988 Calgary Olympics (38%) and Expo 67 (40%)
- The survey also found that three quarters (74%) of Canadians believe that the 2010 Winter Olympics are Canada's Games, while significantly fewer (22%) believe they are Vancouver's Games or British Columbia's games (4%).
- Vancouver 2010 is stirring a sense of patriotism in Canadians. Nearly one half (45%) say they belong first to Canada, up from 38% a year ago. This is double the percentage who says they belong first to their town or city (20%; down from 28% in 2009); province (19% up from 16% in 2009); and the world (16%; down from 18% in 2009).
- Seven in ten (71%) disagree that 'there is too much Canadian nationalism on display during the Olympics'.
- Four in ten (40%) agree they'll fly/display the Canadian flag during the Olympic Games
- One in three (34%) agree they'll wear Olympic/Canada clothing during the Olympic Games.
- Two in three (66%) agree that 'the opening ceremonies reflected Canada' as they know it.
- 14% of Canadians – which could represent roughly 3 million adult Canadians - agree that they'll miss work to watch the Olympics!

b. Harris-Decima

February 22, 2010

Canadian Success at the Olympics

How important will the following be to you in determining whether the Olympics In Vancouver will be a success

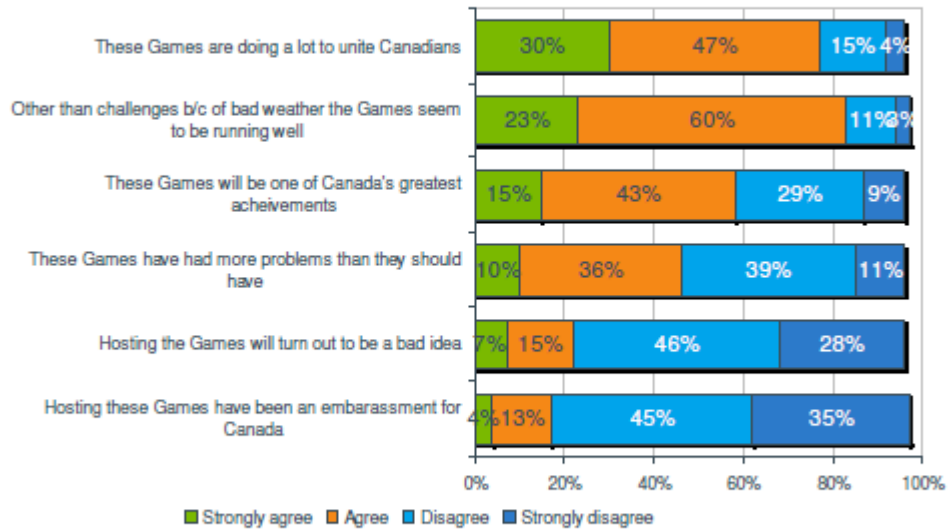


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Canadians are less concerned with the overall medal haul the country takes in. When it comes to winning more medals than any other country, 52% felt it was important to determining the success of the Games, almost 20 points fewer than the number who attached importance to winning gold in hockey. Canadians are more likely to attach importance to at least being in the Top 3 in medals won, with 64% saying such a finish would be important in determining the success of the Games.

The Vancouver Olympics

For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree



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c. Leger Marketing on behalf of Association for Canadian Studies

March 1, 2010

Eighty-six per cent of respondents agreed with the statement that “when Canadian athletes win medals at the Olympics I feel a stronger sense of pride in Canada.”

About three-quarters of Canadians backed the idea of increased funding for aspiring Olympians,

While about 40 per cent of respondents felt Canada’s Olympic organizers set unrealistic goals for the country’s athletes at the Vancouver Games, about 77 per cent support the idea of setting “a very high goal” in future Olympics.

About 65 per cent of those surveyed also disagreed with the statement that “investing more money in Canada’s athletes will not result in winning a lot more medals.”

66 per cent of respondents said that the question of winning and losing is less important than athletes performing their best.

d. Environics for CBC

86 per cent of Canadians thought the Olympics had led to great (51 per cent) or some (35 per cent) benefits for Canada as a whole. Those results represented an increase of 11 points overall from the 75 per cent who expected benefits in the first pre-Games poll.

Those who saw great benefits for Canada increased significantly to 51 per cent from 28 per cent over the period.

Eighty-five per cent of Canadians thought there had been great (56 per cent) or some (29 per cent) benefits for the province of B.C. There was a significant increase — to 56 per cent from 43 per cent — in the number of Canadians seeing great benefits for the province.

A total of 88 per cent of Canadians in the new poll thought the games had led to great (63 per cent) or some (25 per cent) benefits for the city of Vancouver. Among British Columbians, 80 per cent saw some or great benefits for B.C., a significant increase from the 63 per cent found before the Games. The number who saw great benefits for their province increased from 23 per cent before the Games to 41 per cent in the post-Game period.

Among Vancouver residents, 85 per cent thought their city had benefited from the Games. The number who expected great benefits for their city jumped from 28 per cent to 51 per cent mid-way through the Games, but fell back to the 44 per cent level in the new poll.

Overall, 44 per cent of Canadians see at least some benefit for themselves personally from the Games. That was an increase of 19 points since the pre-Games period.

Almost half of Canadians surveyed (49 per cent) said that the federal government, the province and the City of Vancouver spent "about the right amount" of taxpayer dollars on the Games. That proportion increased by eight points from the pre-Games poll. Thirty-five per cent, down eight points, thought that governments spent too much.

Attitudes toward government spending in B.C. and Vancouver remained more negative. A total of 55 per cent of B.C. residents and 59 per cent of Vancouver residents thought too much was spent by these governments. However, criticism of spending is down from the pre-Games period, when 70 per cent of British Columbians and 65 per cent of Vancouverites felt that governments were spending too much.

Some 37 per cent of B.C. residents and 33 per cent of Vancouver residents said "about the right amount" was spent by these governments on the Games.