

**Mt. Washington Ski Club**  
**Steve Frame**

Mr. Chairperson, Staff and Guests. Thank you for the opportunity to allow me to speak today. I was President of the Mt. Washington Ski Club for 3 years, and am now the immediate past president.

What we are here today, is to ask for predictable, stable funding, a simplified application form, and multi-year funding.

The Mt. Washington Ski club has approximately 300 members. The athletes are between the ages of 4 and 17. We have 38 coaches and about a third of the athletes come from Victoria, about a third come from Qualicum Beach, Parksville, Nanaimo areas, and the last third come from Comox, Courtenay, Campbell River and Powell River. We are a non-profit society. It was incorporated in 1981. This is our 30<sup>th</sup> year.

We struggle to break even or lose a little bit each year. Bingo funding is an important part of it. We are constantly struggling to find sponsorships and we do our best to keep the cost down. The cost to put a 4 year old in a ski program is about \$200 dollars, equivalent to minor hockey. And we teach more than simply skiing. We teach team work, we teach nutrition, fitness, we teach how to win, we also teach, what is probably more important, how to lose, how to set goals, how to gain confidence and a work ethic. Those are all really, important aspects that lead to future leaders. They are good life skills.

We have athletes that compete locally. We have athletes that compete regionally, provincially and internationally. We have one on the BC ski team right now, and we have one, Alison Forsythe, who competed for Canada in two Olympics and then in 2010 she couldn't because she blew out her knee. What is interesting about sport is we all have a warm, fuzzy feeling when we watched the Olympics, but the athletes are impoverished. One of our athletes, who was competing nationally, was staying in a van at the top of the ski hill. He comes home from racing all day, cooks dinner on a little hot stove inside his van and then goes to sleep. It doesn't lead for his best results, but it shows you the level of commitment of these athletes and what they can do with little or nothing.

We work with the disabled ski team. We are close to Comox and with Iraq and Afghanistan, you are seeing a lot more disabled military people that are coming in and they are the ones you see on sit skis, doing the disabled skiing. We hosted the Para Nationals and the North American's last year right after the Olympics. Most of the Olympic teams came directly from the Olympics and competed again in the Para Nationals at Mt. Washington.

It is one of the few sports that you have to pay coaches because of a technical nature. I also coach hockey, but in skiing because of the technical nature of the sport, you have to pay coaching, so that makes it a little more onerous for us. It is one of the few sports you have for life, where a child can ski with their grandparent and be at equal levels. There is not many sports like that.

We are in a bit of a difficult situation because for us, every race, or every competition is off the Island. Even within our region if we have to go to Hemlock, Grouse, Whistler, Seymour, Cypress, it is an expense. The athletes have to get there, they have to stay there. If you are a Vancouver athlete it is 50 cents to go up on the bus, for us, it is a ferry, hotel and if they have to go further for the provincial ones, Big White, etc. it adds to the cost.

There is a myth out there, in terms of a lot of sports, that they are dumb jocks. And I think it is important to recognize that. My daughter was also a B+ student, and we were concerned about putting her into competitive skiing, because we knew that at the higher levels she would miss about 60 days of schooling. She came back as a straight A student, and most of her teammates are straight A students, missing 60 or 70 days of schools.

What it does, the work ethic and the ability to focus and look and compete is translated into their school work. What you find is that a lot of these kids are going off to university and are using the skill set that they have developed in sports to allow them to pass that on to school and doing exceptionally well.

And there is more to sport than just the sport itself. From the government's perspective, if you look at the criminal justice system, these aren't the kids that are getting in trouble, they are not the kids that are drinking and partying and doing a lot of drugs, because they can't. They can't go out drinking at night and get up at 5:00 and do dryland. They can't compete if their health and nutrition isn't up to snuff.

Often their teammates keep them in check. So if one of the kids is misbehaving, often there is 30 or 40 other kids saying, "you are letting us down." It keeps the kids out of trouble and gives them a sense of self, and a sense of achievement. That bodes well for them. It is really cheap at this end. Once they are incarcerated, or you have issues, it becomes very, very expensive. Anything that puts kids on the right track, early on, and that is not just sports, that is money well spent.

It also relates to the health care funding. We are teaching nutrition, fitness, keeping in shape, and it is a lot cheaper to do that early on, than it is to try and deal with the after affects, diabetes, the host of health care issues that come in. So it is money very well spent in a whole bunch of aspects.

I don't think it is fair to force the clubs to compete with each other. There is a lot of very worthwhile organizations here, sports, culture, environmental, arts, and I don't think it is fair to put us in a position so we have to rank who is more important. It would be nice to have some sort of predictable funding that encompasses all of the different organizations.

I coach hockey as well. I see a lot of parents at the various different organizations, whether at Rotary or sporting events, whether at cultural events, or various fundraising things, in terms of ski racing you are getting a pretty good bang for your buck. It is about 100 volunteers per day, per race. We typically have a 3 race day, so you have 100 people out there standing sometimes in -5 or -10 weather, for 8 hours to get things off. Before a race starts, it is organized for 2 or 3

months in advanced, and most often 10 or 12 people will take an entire week off and all the safety fencing is put up basically put up.

The Gaming funds make a huge difference for kids. It is cheap now, it is more expensive later on. And the cost become exponential. In terms of your recommendations, one thing that could make an enormous difference for years to come, and if there was only two things that came out of this review, a restoration to the previous, historic levels. I gather they are 30% of Gaming funds. We have felt the pinch and it is very difficult to tell a 4 or 5 year old kid or his mom that you can't put on a program because your funding has been cut. Two to mandate legislatively that 30% of the overall Gaming funding is dedicated to sports, cultural, art and environmental issues for funding for non-profits, so it is legislative.

We all know world wide the problems that the governments are under. There is a fiscal pinch going on. I would suggest that politicians at all levels have a hard time not dipping into the kitty if it is there. If it is dedicated, legislative funds, where this percentage of Gaming revenue has to be distributed, that may take away a problem of that money being siphoned off for other purposes and pushed into general revenue, which seems to be an ever exploding portion of the budget.

The last portion would be to ensure that part of that funding doesn't develop a giant bureaucracy. If there is targeting funding and it is at a certain level, it is a large number obviously, there is a tendency to build bureaucracies around that. You can see it in some cases with fundraising where every dollar that is raised a certain percentage goes to administration costs. The administration costs should be kept to a bare minimum. So if the targeted funding that is raised is actually given to where it is meant to go, that would make a huge difference. If there is a pool of money, there will be people that want to spend it. You can see from all the people here giving up their day to come and talk to you, it is enormously important for the community at large. If there is some way to secure that so every year it isn't another fight, that would be certainly one of the key recommendations that I would have.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.