

Jan Vallillee – Yellowknife North

1) All Canadian provinces and territories have agreed to increase participation in sport by 10% by 2020. What is the most effective way for this territory to make that happen?

Promotion, promotion, promotion. I'd like to see the sport sector continue their involvement at trade shows and include some of their marketing materials at the schools. Do lunch time promotion at each of the schools.

You might be able to tap into federal funding if promoting healthy activities. You might also be eligible for some Territorial government funding if done in partnership with NWT Film Society. I recommend applying for a grant to assist with the costs. You must show at least 50% of the participants with indigenous background.

I would suggest trying to create a video showcasing sport in the Territory and the advantages of sport to all age levels in plain language. Interview kids who have benefited from sport, especially the AWG's youth. This can be shared with all regions in the North! If you're trying to engage youth, it is imperative to continue with a broad social media exposure.

2) Access, affordability and availability of sport and recreation programs and facilities are vital to our communities. Where does the improvement of this fit into your priorities for the next 4 years?

I fully recognize the importance of sports having been a beneficiary of the sport system for over 40 years. I've had the opportunity to travel across the entire Country and internationally as a result of sport. It helped form who I am today, kept me healthy and socially engaged.

If a community does not have access to a gym, or arena, then it should be budgeted for in the main estimates capital plan. I'd like to see the availability of more outdoor rinks as well. I realize it's a colder climate, but they are a viable option. We played on outdoor rinks all winter growing up. Just need appropriate wall tents or geodome's with a wood stove, or propane/oil drip if no viable wood source, so kids and adults alike can warm up. Facilities are a first step and any shortfalls should be addressed.

3) Will you work with your fellow members of the Legislative Assembly to create awareness of the issues facing sport in the NWT and address the needs of our organizations? A lot is expected of sport without it ever being a priority issue for Territorial government. How do you propose to change this?

I would fully commit to bringing more awareness to the Legislative Assembly. I would like to see the GNWT more engaged with the Sport sector to see specifically where the financial shortfalls are. I'd also like to see the GNWT research additional funding sources for sport from the Federal government. GNWT should also support organizations such as Sport North in preparing applications for funding by providing reference documents and testimonials, letters of support, etc.

The GNWT also needs to increase funding levels for high performance athletes. To attain such high levels of professionalism in an athlete's sport is incredibly expensive. This is an aspect of support the GNWT could do a much better job of. The NWT has produced Olympians and World champions, but the costs to get there are extremely high. I would support additional funding for these levels, in particular.

I do believe the GNWT should assist with translation services so documents can be created in the language of the communities Sport North works with, particularly for Elders or Senior's recreational programming.

4) Research has shown that the rates of obesity and illness, particularly in children, continue to rise at alarming rates. The cost of delivering healthcare in this Territory has become almost all consuming to the Territorial budget. How would you incorporate sport and physical activity into a preventative approach and policy on wellness?

Agreed, obesity is increasing at alarming rates. This is not a GNWT issue, but a family issue. Parents need to step up and get their kids actively engaged in more physical activities. It costs zero dollars to walk, use playgrounds, hike and explore. Parents need to restrict their kids use of electronics and gaming systems if they want their kids to be more active.

The GNWT could develop an advertising campaign to try to encourage kids and adults to get active, but the reality is, it starts at home. Schools could be more involved in increasing their physical activity time for kids and ensure classes include the health benefits of being active.

5) While our Sport Volunteers are the pillar of all sport matters in the NWT; their efforts go unappreciated and undervalued. Do you have any plans to change the way that volunteers are overlooked in their roles and in what ways do you plan to recognize them if selected?

I think volunteers are recognized. Sport North recognizes them via your sports Builder award, individual TSO's recognize their volunteers at various awards ceremonies, MACA also has a volunteer recognition program, and the City also hosts volunteer appreciation annually, so I do believe they are recognized, but more could be done. I don't think this is a GNWT initiative, rather the TSO should bear this responsibility.

I would like to see the government do a much better job at recognizing volunteers though. This could easily be accomplished through social and print media. Perhaps a sport volunteer of the month. This would entail all of the NWT, not just Yellowknife.

I'm very proud of the work the sport north federation does. This is one class act organization that has worked hard for decades and does an outstanding job! Their passion and commitment to Arctic Winter Games, Canada Summer/Winter games and North American Indigenous Games, to name a few, is a testament to the professionalism of Sport North's team.