



# Sport Participation in Canada

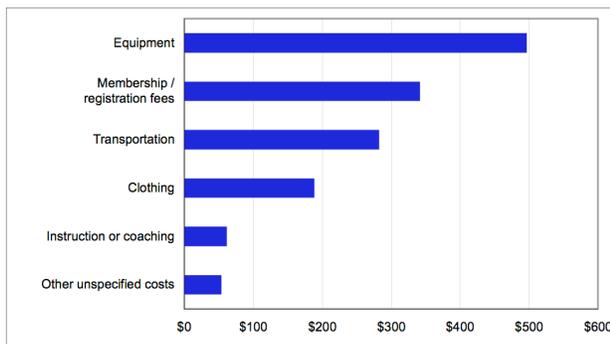
## The Economics of Participating in Sport

There are a number of expenses which can arise when participating in sport or physical activity, ranging from enrolment fees to equipment purchases and other supportive costs.

The 2006-2007 Sport Monitor examined annual expenditures related to participating in sport or physical activity. Individuals were asked how much they spent in the year prior to the survey on equipment, clothing, membership or registration fees, transportation, and other expenses related to their participation in sport. As illustrated in figure 1, adults spent over \$1,400 on average within the 12 months prior to the survey, as per the following approximate breakdown:

- \* \$500 on equipment
- \* \$340 on membership or registration fees
- \* \$300 on transportation
- \* \$200 on clothing
- \* \$60 in other fees for instruction or coaching
- \* \$50 in other unspecified costs

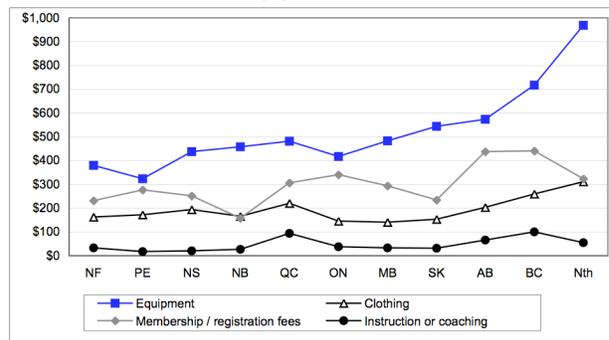
**FIGURE 1: SPORT EXPENDITURES overall**



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**Region** In terms of expenditures related to equipment, those living in Prince Edward Island spend slightly less than the national average, whereas those in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories spend more. Regarding clothing expenses, those in the Yukon spend more compared to the national average. There are no regional differences with respect to transportation expenditures related to sport. Residents of Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan spend less on membership or registration fees than the national average. Similarly, those in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick spend less on other fees for coaching or instruction compared to the Canadian average.

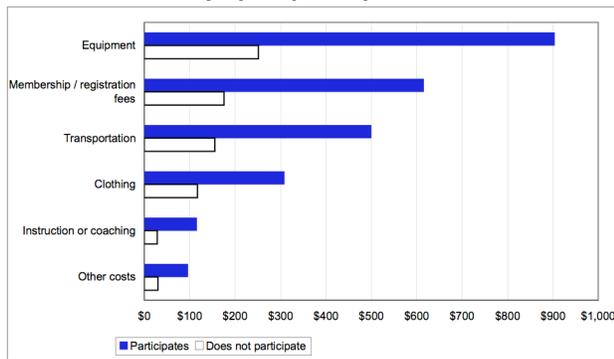
**FIGURE 2: SPORT EXPENDITURES by province**



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**Sport participants** As one would expect, sport participants spend significantly more than non-participants on all sport and physical activity expenditures.

**FIGURE 3: SPORT EXPENDITURES  
by sport participation**

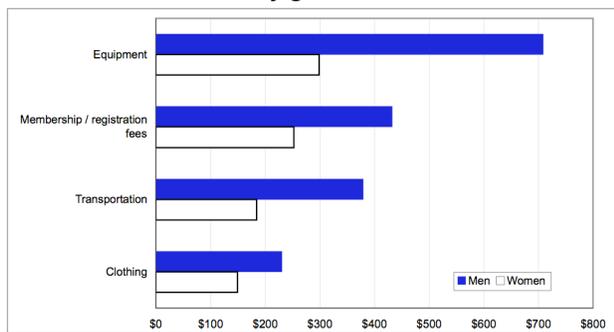


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There are relatively few differences in expenditures by specific types of sport. Badminton and basketball players spend less money on equipment compared to the average, whereas those who participate in outdoor winter sports spend significantly more. In addition, those who participate in badminton, basketball, soccer, volleyball, or low organization activities spend less money on membership or registration fees compared to the average, whereas golfers spend more.

**Age and sex** Men spend more on most sport and physical activity expenditures than do women, including equipment, membership or registration fees, clothing, and transportation.

**FIGURE 4: SPORT EXPENDITURES  
by gender**

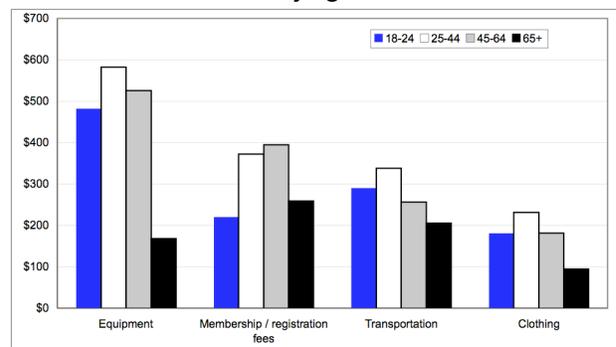


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Older adults (aged 65 and older) generally spend less on equipment and clothing than do their younger counterparts, and this is true among both older men and women. Women

spend less on equipment than men in all age groups (among those aged 18 years or older). In addition, women between the ages of 18 and 44 or 65 and older spend significantly less on transportation than their male counterparts. Young adults (aged 18 to 24) spend less on fees than do those aged 25 to 64; however, this age relationship is primarily found among women. Older women (aged 65 and older) also spend less on membership or registration fees than do women aged 25 to 64. Those aged 25 to 64 also spend the most on instruction and coaching fees.

**FIGURE 5: SPORT EXPENDITURES  
by age**



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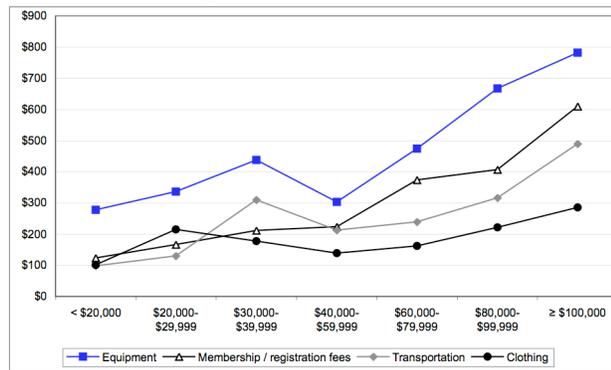
**Socio-economic and demographic characteristics**

There are no differences related to expenditures for sport and physical activity by education level, with the exception that university-educated adults spend significantly more on membership or registration fees than do those with a secondary level of education or less.

Unsurprisingly, household income is associated with the amount of money spent on sport and physical activity. More specifically, adults with the highest annual household incomes (\$100,000 or more) spend the most on equipment and fees related to sport and physical activity. Similarly, those with the highest annual household incomes spend more on clothing for sport and physical activity than do those with lower incomes (particularly those earning \$40,000 to \$59,999 or less than \$20,000). Adults in the lowest income group generally spend the least on transportation and coaching

or instructional fees, whereas those in the highest income group generally spend the most on these. Those in the highest income group also generally spend the most on other unspecified costs related to sport.

**FIGURE 6: SPORT EXPENDITURES by household income**



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Individuals who work on a full-time basis spend more on fees related to instruction or coaching compared to retirees. In addition, they spend more on equipment, transportation, and clothing compared to those who work on a part-time basis or who are unemployed. Full-time workers also spend more than most (with the exception of retirees) on membership fees.

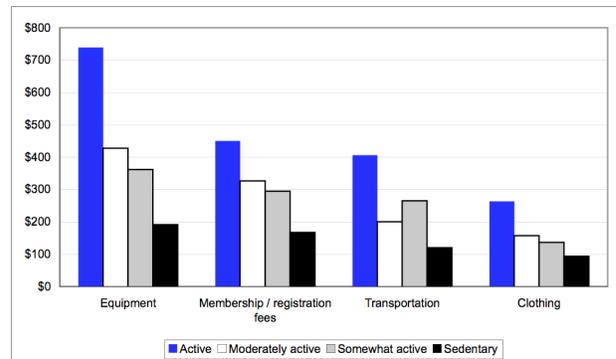
Residents of the smallest communities (with populations of 1,000 or less) spend less on membership or registration fees than do those in the largest communities (with 500,000 residents or more).

Adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated spend the least amount of money on equipment and clothing compared to others. These individuals also spend less on membership or registration fees and other associated costs than do those who are married or in common-law relationships.

**Activity level** Active Canadians generally spend the most money on sports equipment, clothing, and transportation. Active adults also spend much more than those who are least active on

membership or registration fees, coaching or instruction fees, and other unspecified expenses.

**FIGURE 7: SPORT EXPENDITURES by activity level**



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**Recommendations for Action** According to the Conference Board of Canada, in 2004 almost \$16 billion of household spending in Canada was on sport, which represents about 1.2% of the gross domestic product (GDP) for that year. This is up from the figure of 0.9% of the GDP eight years prior.<sup>1</sup> The Conference Board also states that, at that time, about 2.2% of total household spending was on sport,<sup>1</sup> and that amount is typical of what would be spent in other developed countries.<sup>2</sup> The 2006-2007 Sport Monitor indicates that adults spent over \$1,400 in the previous year on expenditures related to physical activity and sport, such as fees, apparel, equipment, transportation, and more. The sport expenditure data found in the 2006-2007 Sport Monitor reflect that found in other surveys.<sup>2,3</sup> Key findings in this bulletin reveal that:

- \* Sport participants spend more than non-participants on sport-related expenditures.
- \* Active Canadians spend more than those who are less active on sport-related expenditures.
- \* Men spend more on most sport expenditures than do women.
- \* Older adults spend less on many sport expenditures than do their younger counterparts.

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- \* Household income is associated with the amount of money spent on sport and physical activity (that is, those with higher incomes generally spend the most).

Participation in sport is higher among men than women. Participation in vigorous and team-oriented sport is also generally more likely to be reported by men than by women, and by younger rather than older adults. Conversely, women and older adults tend to report participation in moderate-intensity physical activities such as walking or social dancing. This relationship appears to be substantiated by the fact that men and younger adults are more likely to spend more on sport expenditures. Consequently, lower expenditures may potentially be due to lower participation rates or preferences for different types of activities. In addition, data from this survey indicate that women and older adults who answered this survey typically had lower levels of income.

Data from the 2006-2007 Sport Monitor reveal that income is positively correlated with an increase in spending on sport expenditures. Given that adults with the highest household incomes spend the most on equipment and fees related to sport and physical activity, policies can focus on reducing the economic discrepancies that exist for participation, and consequently for spending, in sport. For example, service providers can be encouraged to:

- \* Discount or waive registration fees for lower-income families. Alternatively, innovative approaches can be incorporated to ensure that low-income families are able to participate while providing cost-effective services (for example, volunteering time in lieu of payment).
- \* Coordinate equipment swapping or exchanges, as well as rental of equipment, in order to reduce the costs required for participating in sport.

- \* Consider establishing agreements with local organizations to provide affordable programming (e.g., free public swimming or skating), contributions toward registration, subsidized sport activity days, or contributions towards teams.
- \* Promote low-cost sport alternatives. Data from this bulletin indicate that participants in certain sports have lower costs associated with participation. For example, badminton and basketball players spend less on equipment and, alongside those who participate in soccer, volleyball, or low organization activities, also spend less money on membership or registration fees.
- \* Ensure that facility usage is distributed in an equitable fashion between structured and semi-structured (for example, pick up) sports. In addition, promoting opportunities to try activities, to participate in less formal sport programs (e.g., those that do not require uniforms, pick-up sports, etc.), and to participate in those that are located near where people live, work or learn, may help increase sport participation. This may be especially helpful for inactive individuals or those who are unsure of committing time and resources to a particular sport if they are lacking skill or knowledge about it. Family oriented programs may also help to meet the multiple constraints facing some groups (e.g., those with low incomes, single parent families, etc.).

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## References

- 1 Bloom, M., Grant, M., & Watt D. (2005). Strengthening Canada: The Socio-economic benefits of sport participation in Canada. The Conference Board of Canada.
- 2 Lera-López, F., Rapún-Gárate, M. (2005). Sport participation versus consumer expenditure on sport: Different determinants of strategies in sports management. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 5(2), pp. 167-186.
- 3 Taks, M., Renson, R., Vanreusel, B. (1999). Consumer expenses in sport : A marketing tool for sports and sports facility providers ? *European Journal for Sport Management*, 6(1), pp.4-18.

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