

MEMBER'S STATEMENT – GREAT SLAVE – MARCH 2, 2009

SPORT NORTH FEDERATION

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Since 1976, the Sport North Federation has been actively promoting the development of amateur sport in the NWT. Their vision is to become the recognized leader in sport development and ensure that opportunities in sports are accessible to all residents in the Northwest Territories.

Today's Sport North is a federation of 27 territorial sport organizations. Its 3 partner organizations, the Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Western Arctic, NWT Recreation & Parks and Special Olympics NWT, are recognized leaders in the promotion of sports and active living.

Sport North administers the NWT branch of KidSport, a national organization designed to assist youth under 18 reach their athletic potential by supplementing registration and equipment fees when their participation in sports would otherwise be limited by financial barriers. KidSport helps ensure that all children have equal opportunity to enjoy sports and develop skills in their chosen activity.

Sport North Federation is directed by its members, but its policies and programs, such as KidSport, are administered by volunteers. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to applaud the large number of volunteers in the NWT athletic community for their dedication and hard work. Their hard work and commitment is what makes the difference in many Northerners' lives.

Through grants and scholarships, Sport North supports northern athletes who demonstrate potential at national and international levels. Its Rising Star Program provides funding to youth 14 and under to attend training camps and programs to enhance their regular training. The careers of athletes such as Fort Smith's Sarah Daitch, and Mike Argue from the Great Slave riding, benefit from Sport North's grant programs for elite and high performance athletes.

Sport North is committed to the success of our athletes at Canada Games, providing special assistance to athletes and coaches through its Excel NT program. The Federation also provides opportunities for coach development.

Sport North is a strong supporter of school athletics, including the ever popular Super Soccer tournament in Yellowknife. Participation in this event has increased to the point that this year it will be held over two week ends instead of one.

Mr. Speaker, the Sport North Federation is realizing its vision as we see NWT athletes on the national sports scene and as sport programs across the Northwest Territories foster healthy lifestyles among our people. Sport North's wide range of programs benefit not only the elite few, but offers opportunities for everyone to play.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.