Two Years In!

Here we are two years into our game plan! In May of 2015 the Olympic Oval came out with a three-year strategic plan to build the momentum toward the 2018 Olympic Games in PyeongChang, Korea.

In partnership with Speed Skating Canada, our team kept its focus on building new internal assets for sustainable Canadian success for not only 2018 Olympians, but our next generation of athletes for Beijing 2022 and beyond.

Key to this focus was aligning actions, investments, structures and partnerships to optimize and enhance our capacity to support athletes and coaches. At the same time, the university community and our students were fully integrated into this approach.

The Oval Team put a tremendous amount of effort into achieving what has been implemented over the last two years. We have already seen tangible outcomes such as:

1. A training structure and integrated support team for optimal athlete development
2. An emphasis on improving our approach with our customers to ensure an amazing experience in all areas
3. A “game ready” international event set up allowing for a positive fan experience for our speed skating, university and Calgary community
4. New imaging that strengthens our alignment with our faculty at the University of Calgary and the Canadian speed skating team

Internally our expertise and capacity evolved to adapt to such a changing environment. Investing in the development of our staff remains an integral part of our plan to stay at the forefront of today’s requirements. We are constantly highlighting the outstanding achievement from our ice making team led by our own Mark Messer. Their expertise allowed the PyeongChang Organizing Committee to create not just an amazing building, but their own world class ice conditions in time for a pre-games ISU last event held last February. This season, we once again saw Canadian skaters achieve impressive results at the senior and junior level on the highly competitive world stage. We are proud to be a key player in helping these athletes deal with such a challenging context. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our awesome employees, volunteers, partners and sponsors - without whom all of these achievements could not be reached.

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Game Ready

We hope that you are as excited as we are for year three of our plan. This coming season is guaranteed to be an exciting one for everyone involved as we make the final sprint towards the Korean Olympic games. The journey remains as challenging as ever, but our Canadian athletes will always find us behind them to support them in their push towards achieving their personal best.

— Yves Hamelin
Director, Olympic Oval

The Olympic Oval at the University of Calgary refreshed its visual identity this season. The new visual leverages and respects the Oval’s university and faculty ties yet maintains a strong and compelling presence in the competitive market for high-performance ice training venues around the world.

“A simple change in our image makes us more accessible, it can attract the public into our facility and help them develop an understanding of what we do,” said Yves Hamelin, Director of the Olympic Oval. “The refreshed visual identity respects and reflects the long-standing legacy of the Olympic Oval in Calgary and the new colour and wordmark emphasize our long-standing place as part of the University of Calgary.”

The Olympic Oval is a University of Calgary facility operated with the support of its legacy partners Winsport, the Government of Canada and the University of Calgary.
Oval skater Marco Schumann skated to a thrilling victory in the final event of the 2016 Short Track Canadian Junior Championship in December to vault himself onto the overall podium. The third overall finish was enough for Schumann to book his first trip to represent Canada at the 2017 World Junior Short Track Championship held in Innsbruck, Austria. He was joined by Oval short track coach Alan McIlveen.

Graeme Fish capped a breakout season with his first trip to the World Junior Championship but his biggest performance of the year came in setting a new Canadian record becoming first Canadian in history to skate under 1:07.00 in the 1000m!

In November, the Olympic Oval played host to 204 athletes from 32 different countries for the first short track World Cup event of the 2016-17 season. This marked the first short track World Cup event in Calgary since 2012. Over 4000 fans saw 22 new national records and one new World Record (Team Korea in the Women’s Relay) set on the Fastest Ice in the World™. Calgary sports fans also saw one of our OvalFamily, Jamie Macdonald, the only Western Canadian participant in the event capture a World Cup silver medal!

In late February the Oval played host to the 2017 ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championship and saw a pair of new World Record Sprint combinations set by the Champions; Nao Kodaira & Kai Verbij. One of the biggest highlights of the weekend came when Vincent De Halifax thrilled the crowd with a new Canadian record becoming first Canadian in history to skate under 1:07.00 in the 1000m!

Go Marco!

A trio of Olympic Oval Skaters. Calgary locals; Brooklyn McDougall and Connor Howe and Graeme Fish from Moose Jaw, were selected as part of Team Canada for the 2017 ISU World Junior Long Track Championship held in February in Helsinki, Finland. This was the first World Junior Championship for all three skaters and they were joined by Oval Coach Jeff Kitura as well as Associate Director of Sport Marcel Lacroix who served as the Canadian Team Leader.
Women’s Rugby, Canada West (CW) Champions Football, CW Champions Greg Ord, CW Rookie of the Year – Cross Country Emma Cook-Clarke, CW Champion, CW Athlete of the year – Cross Country Elgin Pearce, U SPORTS & CW Most Sportsmanlike Player of the year – Hockey DaLeaka Menin, U SPORTS & CW Player of the Year Bori Falaye, CW Rookie of the year – Soccer Jordan Smith, CW Player of the year – Soccer

We are ALL Dinos

As part of the University of Calgary Faculty of Kinesiology the Olympic Oval shares the same passion and drive for sport as our fellow Dinos. The Oval is proud to be the training home of many of the finest varsity athletes in the country.

Gift of Play
As part of the University of Calgary Faculty of Kinesiology, the Olympic Oval was very proud to take part in the ‘Gift of Play’. The project, which came about as part of UCalgary’s 50th Anniversary saw staff, athletes and volunteers paint the lines of 50 city school yards to promote a healthier lifestyle.

Doors Open YYC
The Oval was one of 10 University of Calgary facilities who took part in Doors Open YYC 2016. As one of the most unique venues on campus the Oval welcomed many visitors for interactive, athlete led, behind the scenes tours during the 2016 Fall Classic long track speed skating competition.

For the Love
Oval Athletes teamed up with Alberta Speed Skating volunteers to once again bring the For the Love of Speed Skating fundraiser to the Oval’s two largest events of the season - the ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championship and the ISU Short Track World Cup Speed Skating events. In total, the program raised over $1,750 for local speed skating athletes.

Skeate with Santa
The Oval continued our annual holiday Skeate with Santa event which welcomed over 1000 members of the community for a day of free skating and a visit from Santa.

#SkeateCalgary
In the lead up to the ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championship, Oval and Speed Skating Canada athletes participated in #SkeateCalgary, a downtown event organized by the Organizing Committee Calgary. Athletes skated and interacted with fans in Olympic Plaza.

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Dinos Men’s Hockey Forward
Elgin Pearce

The Oval continues to remain a landmark in the Calgary community. Being a true legacy facility in this Olympic city carries with it a responsibility to give back to the community. Whether our athletes are home grown or international, the Oval and this city truly become a second home.

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Talia White, CW Rookie of the year – Soccer Danica Ludlow, U SPORTS Gold (400m, 800m free) – Swimming Tianna Rissling, U SPORTS Gold (50m breaststroke) – Swimming Niki Oudenaarden, U SPORTS & CW Field Athlete of the Year, U SPORTS Gold (Pentathlon) – Track & Field Conlon Fey, CW Rookie of the Year – Wrestling Simon Chi – U SPORTS Coach of the Year – Women’s Rugby

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Niki Oudenaarden Women’s Track & Field
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Congratulations go out to Maggi (Mengyao) Qi and Mark Messer who celebrated an amazing work anniversary of 30 years at the Olympic Oval. MacLeod continues to be an integral part of the Fastest Ice in the World™ and Messer has been an important consultant for yet another Olympic games as the Oval and its staff help to bring world class ice to Korea in 2018.

Maggie (Mengyao) Qi

Mark Messer

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