

## **The XV Commonwealth Games: A Prospective View**

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At the most obvious level, the bids by the Canadian cities to host major international games are motivated by the prospect of the sheer enjoyment that spectators get from seeing some of the best athletes in the world compete in the local community. But it does not take much insight to see that there are more compelling reasons for hosting major games. One of these is the sport legacy--the acquisition of world class facilities that are attractive to professional sport franchises and/or that will subsequently provide training and competitive venues for high-performance athletes. The prospect of getting provincial and federal

government funds to build these facilities is another prominent factor in such bids. Such funds provide the major share of the money for sport facilities, and they are also often made available to provide infrastructure for the event (i.e., athlete housing and media facilities and improved access roads and transit systems) that will enhance the city once the event is over. Another motive is increased tourism; proponents argue that the media attention paid to the event itself will attract tourists to the area, both during and subsequent to the event. In many cases, the desire to create a “world class” city is an overriding motive in staging of major games and other “hallmark” events such as world fairs. This paper uses documents, newspaper and magazine articles, and interviews with key actors to explore these motives as they apply to the XV Commonwealth Games, to be staged in Victoria B.C. in August 1994. Certainly, some motives, i.e., the sport legacy and the prospect of funding by senior levels of government, are applicable to the Victoria Games. But the size of the city, its position as an established tourist attraction, and the much smaller scale of the event make the Victoria bid different in important ways from those that were mounted in Calgary for the 1988 Winter Olympics and in Toronto for the 1996 Summer Games. Consequently, the Commonwealth Games in Victoria have much in common with those that were staged in Edmonton in 1978.