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***Intercollegiate Sport, National Culture, and
Federal Sport Policy in Canada Since 1961***

The first national organization supervising Canadian intercollegiate sport, the Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Union (CIAU), was formed in 1961. That same year the Federal Government took an active role in financing and direction sport activities with the passage of Bill C-131, which provided funding to amateur sports organizations, of

which the CIAU was only one. The temporal coincidence of these two events allowed one expansion of Canadian intercollegiate sport activities but also subtly drove them in new directions that the CIAU neither intended nor often recognized. Canadian universities prided themselves on their emphasis on the student athlete, for whom even intercollegiate sport was an integral aspect of a total educational experience. The Federal government was primarily interested in the development of elite athletes for national and international competition and, through this competition, the promotion of Canadian unity and culture.

Canadians were shocked when the Soviets beat Canada in the 1954 World Hockey championships, then won the gold medal in the 1956 Olympics. Three years later, quite coincidentally, in a famous speech to the Canadian Medical Association (June 30, 1959) the Duke of Edinburgh (Prince Philip) questioned Canadian physical fitness. During these same years the Federal government worried about regionalism and attempted to use federal institutions to promote national unity. Culture and sport were the arenas in which it seemed possible to engage in nation building. In 1957 Canada Council was established to protect and promote Canadian culture. Four years its creation and following another dismal performance in the 1960 Olympics, Ottawa established the National Fitness and Amateur Sport Advisory Council to provide assistance for the promotion and development of Canadian participation in national and international sport. National pride, nation building, concerns about fitness and an increasingly assertive federal presence in Canadian society combined to bring active intervention of government into amateur sport. Fundamental to intervention was a belief, common in the 1960s that government was responsible for the proper development of its citizens.

Government involvement progressed from a service role to amateur sport during the 1960s to a directive role in the 1970s when it promised to provide forty-five scholarships of \$2000 each based entirely on students' athletic ability, to prepare athletes for international competition. This announcement flew in the face of prior opposition from Ontario members of the CIAU. Only after bitter debate and a narrow vote did the CIAU, which heretofore had forbidden any athletic scholarship of any kind, allow "third-party" government scholarships.

In 1977 Iona Campagnolo, Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport, called for a national program to improve Canada's international sports performance through providing funding for athletes. Because universities alone had the facilities they would be given assistance to subsidize the salaries of coaches who worked with national team programs. The government asked universities to commit themselves to pursuing international excellence through their sports programs.

By the 1980s the universities had taken government money and established centres of sport excellence, but this conflicted with their own ideals of sport as ancillary. In 1987, Otto Jelinke, Campagnolo's successor, in a keynote address to the CIAU called for university scholarships to prevent an exodus of university athletes to the United States. Debate over the propriety of such scholarships divided the CIAU and nearly brought its dissolution in 1998-1999.

Government financing, then, allowed the CIAU to grow from an organization with a \$30,000 budget to one of \$3,000,000. Its funds permitted the universities to conduct national championships and subsidize coaches' salaries. But government emphasis on elite athletics, and national image commercialized intercollegiate athletics and threatened to separate elite athletes from the student-body as a whole — against the wishes of most Canadian universities. Concerns about national culture redirected university culture in athletics.