Re-investing in Canada’s sport system: The spring economic update 2026 in context

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On April 28, 2026, the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne tabled the federal government’s spring economic update 2026 (Update). The Update included what the government described as a “generational investment” in sport: $755 million over five years and $118 million in ongoing funding to support Canada’s sport system.

The announcement follows comments made by Prime Minister Mark Carney in March 2026, in which he said that the federal government would examine and revamp funding for Canadian athletes, alluding to enhanced support from the grassroots to high-performance sport.

The Update includes new investments for national sport organizations (NSOs), strengthened support for athletes, and funding to promote the hosting of sporting events.

Investments in sport from the playground to the podium

A key investment announced in the Update is the renewed funding for national sport organizations (NSOs). The Update allocates $660 million over five years and $110 million ongoing for NSOs, explicitly noting that federal funding levels have remained largely unchanged since 2005. The Update links this funding increase to growing participation in children and youth nationwide.

The Update also provides $45 million over five years and $8 million ongoing to support athletes training and competing at the highest levels, including enhanced mental health supports linked to “robust safe sport measures and frameworks.”

In addition, the federal government announced $50 million over five years to support the hosting of sporting events in Canada, with funding tied to legacy projects that support communities and grassroots sport after events conclude.

These investments were broadly welcomed across the sport sector as long-overdue reinvestments following years of funding pressures. Athletes characterized the funding as a sign that long-standing concerns about affordability and under-resourcing are being heard and acknowledged.

The Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) and the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) publicly applauded the announcement, describing it as a landmark investment in sport and a turning point for Canada's sport system, with the potential to strengthen alignment and deliver better support for athletes from grassroots to high performance.

In a jointly released statement, AthletesCAN, the association of Canada's national team athletes, the COC Athletes' Commission, and the CPC's Athletes Commission celebrated the investment, and viewed this as an opportunity to modernize and better align the sport system to serve Canadians more effectively.

Fresh on the heels of the Future of Sport in Canada Commission

These funding announcements come just over a month after the Future of Sport in Canada Commission released its final report in March 2026.

The Commission put forward 98 calls to action to improve safe sport and the sport system in Canada, including calls for urgently increasing funding for NSOs (call to action 81) and increasing support for athletes (call to action 88), as well as continued investments to promote participation in sport and physical activity (call to action 84).

While the scale of investment is significant, key details remain unresolved. It is not yet clear what conditions will attach to additional funding for NSOs, or whether the federal government will adopt the Commission's call to impose conditions to improve safe sport and the sport system, including the latter's mandatory adoption and compliance with the Canadian Sport Governance Code and safe sport requirements.

As noted in the Update, these new investments respond to some of the Commission's findings, while the government signalled that work is ongoing to consider all of the Commission's calls to action.

What Canada's spring economic update 2026 means for the sport sector

Beyond immediate relief for NSOs and athletes, the Update signals a dual focus on strengthening high-performance sport and growing participation.

Notably, NSOs are expected to make changes to their programming to invest in sport at all levels, and encouraged to work with private-sector partners who share the goal of increasing sport participation. This could mean that more Canadians will have access to sport.

The Update also signals heightened expectations for the sport sector. Funding is explicitly tied to the delivery of a "strong and safe sport system," reinforcing the Commission's message that safety and governance are not optional add-ons.

Looking ahead

The Update responds to some of the Commission's most immediate calls to action: increasing funding for NSOs and strengthening direct support for athletes. However, many calls to action on safe sport, governance reform, and broader system transformation remain outstanding.

Whether future budgets and policy decisions build on this initial response will be central to determining whether Canada's sport system undergoes the deeper transformation envisioned by the Commission.

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