

Canada at the Games: History in the Making

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Toronto, ON - The Vancouver Olympics are shaping up to be a defining moment in Canada's national history, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Historica-Dominion Institute.

The Games as a Defining National Moment...

When it comes to Canada's sporting and cultural history, there are a few events in time that can be truly called a defining national moment. When stacked up against a few of these moments, here is how the Vancouver 2010 Games compare in the eyes of Canadians:

- One half (52%) agree (18% strongly/34% somewhat) that the Vancouver Olympic Games are more a defining national moment than the 1972 Hockey Summit Series.
- One half (51%) agree (17% strongly/34% somewhat) that the Vancouver Olympic Games are more of a defining national moment than the Montreal Olympics in 1976.
- One half (51%) agree (12% strongly/38% somewhat) that the Vancouver Olympic Games are more of a defining national moment than the Calgary Olympics in 1988.
- One half (49%) agree (17% strongly/31% somewhat) that the Vancouver Olympic Games are more of a defining national moment than Expo 67.

Even among Canadians aged 55 and older, many consider the Vancouver Games as more of a defining national moment than the 1972 Hockey Summit Series (52%), the Montreal 1976 Olympics (47%), the 1988 Calgary Olympics (43%) and Expo 67 (41%).

Being Canadian During The Games...

Three quarters (74%) of Canadians believe that the 2010 Winter Olympics are first and foremost Canada's Games, while significantly fewer (22%) believe they're Vancouver's Games or British Columbia's games (4%). In fact, even in British Columbia twice as many Canadians believe the Games belong to Canada (61%), and not Vancouver (32%) or British Columbia (8%).

Vancouver 2010 is stirring a renewed sense of patriotism in many Canadians, as nearly one half (45%) say they belong first and foremost to Canada, up from 38% a year ago. This is double the proportion who says they belong first and foremost to their town or city (20%; down from 28% in 2009), province (19%; up from 16% in 2009) and the world (16%; down from 18% in 2009). The data are compared to results taken one year prior to the start of the Olympics.

Since this is Canada's moment to shine, Canadians aren't being bashful about putting their pride on display: seven in ten (71%) 'disagree' (39% strongly/32% somewhat) that 'there is too much Canadian nationalism on display during the Olympics'. In fact, many Canadians are showing their pride for their nation in various ways. For example, four in ten (40%) agree they'll fly/display the Canadian flag during the Olympic Games, and one in three (34%) agree they'll wear Olympic/Canada clothing during the Olympic Games.

Moreover, 14% of Canadians – which could represent roughly 3 million adult Canadians – agree (4% strongly/10% somewhat) that they'll miss work to watch the Olympics!

The Opening Ceremonies...

The opening ceremonies drew the largest television crowd in Canadian history, and VANOC had a challenge in trying to please Canadians and impress the world. But it appears they did a good job reflecting Canada as Canadians see it, as two in three (66%) 'agree' (21% strongly/45% somewhat) that 'the opening ceremonies reflected Canada' as they know it. Just one in three (34%) 'disagree' (11% strongly/23% somewhat) that the ceremonies reflected their vision of Canada.

When Canada Wins...

While Canada has put a lot of money into its Own the Podium programme, most (84%) Canadians 'disagree' (49% strongly/35% somewhat) that 'if Canada fails to win the most medals of any nation or lead in the medal count, the Games will be a disappointment'. Only 16% 'agree' (3% strongly/13% somewhat) that that result would be a disappointment.

In the areas where Canadians truly dominate - Women's hockey, for example - Canadians are not being humble about their dominance. Just one in three (32%) 'agree' (9% strongly/23% somewhat) that they 'feel uncomfortable' when Canada wins 18-0 at women's hockey'. The vast majority (68%) 'disagrees' (46% strongly/22% somewhat) with that position.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between February 18-19, 2010, on behalf of the Historica-Dominion Institute. For this survey, a national sample of 1,014 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of

+/-3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

A Defining Moment for Canada...

One half of Canadians believe that the Vancouver 2010 Games are more a defining national moment than various other sporting events hosted in Canada, including the 1972 Hockey Summit Series (52%), the Montreal Olympics (51%), the Calgary Olympics (51%) and Expo 67 (49%). But some Canadians have a higher propensity to believe that Vancouver 2010 is more of a defining moment than these other sporting events:

- Canadians aged 18 to 34, those who would be least likely to remember some of these events of the past, are more likely to believe that the Vancouver games are more of a defining moment than the Calgary Olympics (70%), Montreal Olympics (60%), 1972 Hockey Summit Series (60%), or Expo 67 (55%).
- Three in ten (28%) Quebecers believe the Vancouver games are more of a defining national moment than the Montreal Olympics, and two in ten (21%) Quebecers say the same about Expo 67.
- Four in ten (41%) Albertans agree the Vancouver games are more of a defining moment than the Calgary Olympics.

Canadians are Showing their Pride...

Two in three (66%) agree that the opening ceremonies reflected Canada as they knew it, but some Canadians had a higher propensity to believe that this is the case:

- Atlantic Canadians (77%) are most likely to agree, followed by residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (72%), British Columbia (69%), Ontario (68%), and Alberta (67%), while Quebecers (57%) are least likely to agree.
- Women (71%) are more likely than men (62%) to agree that the opening ceremonies reflected Canada as they know it.
- Those aged 35 to 54 are most likely (72%) to agree, followed by older (66%) and younger Canadians (59%).

Interestingly, Quebecers are less likely than the average Canadian to show their pride and to believe that too much pride is on display:

- One quarter (26%) of Quebecers say they'll display or fly the Canadian flag during the games compared to 40% of Canadians overall.
- Two in ten (19%) agree they'll wear Canada or Olympic clothing during the games, compared to 34% of Canadians overall.
- Four in ten (42%) Quebecers agree that there is too much Canadian nationalism on display during the Olympics, while only three in ten (29%) Canadians overall believe the same.

While 14% of Canadians overall say they'll miss work to watch the Olympics some are more likely than others to say they'll play hooky:

- Men (17%) are more likely than women (11%) to say they'll miss work to watch the Games.
- Younger Canadians (24%) are considerably more likely to say they'll skip out on work compared to those aged 55+ (11%) or 35 to 54 (9%).

- More Atlantic Canadians (17%), British Columbians (16%), Ontarians (16%) and Albertans (16%) will skip out on work to watch the games than those living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (9%) and Quebec (8%).

A Sense of Belonging...

Nearly one half (45%) of Canadians say they belong first and foremost to their country, while significantly fewer say that distinction belongs to their town/city (20%), province (19%) or the world (16%). But allegiances change slightly depending on who you are:

- Ontarians (57%) are most likely to say they belong first and foremost to their country, followed by those living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (50%), British Columbia (48%), Alberta (44%), Atlantic Canada (40%) and Quebec (26%).
- Quebecers (38%) are most likely to say they belong first and foremost to their province, while that feeling isn't quite as strong in Atlantic Canada (33%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (29%), Alberta (22%), British Columbia (13%) and Ontario (5%).
- British Columbians (21%) are most likely to say they're first and foremost citizens of the world, while Albertans (16%), Ontarians (16%), Quebecers (15%), Atlantic Canadians (10%) and residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (9%) are less likely to say so.

Canada's Games...

Canadians have made it clear: three quarters (74%) believe the Vancouver 2010 Games are Canada's Games. Fewer believe they're Vancouver's games (22%) or British Columbia's games (4%).



- Ontarians (83%) are most likely to believe that the 2010 games are Canada's games, followed by those living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (81%), Atlantic Canada (74%), Alberta (70%), Quebec (65%) and British Columbia (61%).
- Perhaps not surprisingly, British Columbians (32%) are most likely to say the games are Vancouver's, but Quebecers (31%) are almost as likely to say so as well, while those living in Alberta (25%), Atlantic Canada (20%), Ontario (14%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (14%) are less likely.

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