

Ratings for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games Peak as Canada wins Gold

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Vancouver, BC – Based on the results of a 4-part series of Ipsos Reid online polls conducted throughout the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, British Columbians appear to have gone from having initial cautious expectations about the Games to the event winning over the hearts and minds of the residents in the host province. With a world record-breaking gold medal count which was clinched with the gold medal win at the much anticipated Canada vs. US men's hockey game, it is no wonder that British Columbians are feeling overwhelmingly positive about the outcome of the Games.

Enthusiasm about the 2010 Olympic Winter Games reached an all-time high in the final online overnight poll conducted within 24 hours of the closing ceremony. A large majority of British Columbians (86%) were very/somewhat excited about the 2010 Winter Olympic Games (73% last week, 78% two weeks ago). Momentum built significantly throughout the games, as only 53% were excited just prior to the opening ceremony.



This building excitement level translated into a large number of British Columbians who followed the Games; eight in ten (83%) followed the games very or somewhat closely (75% last week, 74% previous week), while less than one in five (18%) say they did not follow the games closely or not at all (25% last week, 26% previous week).

Perhaps one of the largest contributing factors to the high overall rating awarded to the 2010 Winter Olympic Games (92% excellent/good) is the performance of the Canadian athletes at the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Nearly all British Columbians are very or somewhat satisfied with the overall medal count for Canada (98%). Similarly, British Columbians universally believe that Canadian athletes performed excellent or good at the Games (97%). This number has fluctuated significantly over the polling period (84% expected an excellent/good performance prior to the start of the Games, growing to 90% after the start of the Games and dipping to 76% after the first week of the Games).

The impact of Canada's world-record breaking gold medal count also appears to contribute to the growing level of pride that British Columbians feel about Canada hosting the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Nearly all British Columbians surveyed (96%) feel very or somewhat proud to be Canadian as a result of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games being hosted in Canada. This is up from a similarly high number of nine in ten British Columbians (90%) who were moved by the Opening Ceremony to feel a similar sense of Canadian pride.

Steve Mossop, President of Ipsos Reid Canada West commented: "At the initial outset, British Columbia residents were tentative about the games, and divided on their expectations. The dramatic opening ceremony, the outstanding medal performances of our athletes and the grassroots participation in all aspects of the games among BC residents changed everything,

and resulted in a dramatic swing in public support and ratings of the Games over the 17 days of events and activities”.

During the final week of the Olympic Games, a growing number of the six in ten (60%) local BC residents surveyed who live in the Olympic area (Greater Vancouver/Whistler corridor) participated in the activities and events. One quarter (25% this week, 19% last week) attended an Olympic sporting event live, nearly seven in ten (68% this week, 57% last week) have been to an activity or event in downtown Vancouver and more than half say they have been to an activity or event in the local community where they live (56% this week, 49% last week). The Olympic area locals also participated in the cultural activities, with nearly half (45% this week, 38% last week) having visited one of the various country or province houses that are part of the 2010 Winter Olympic festivities. Attendance at a victory ceremony at BC Place Stadium (11% this week, 9% last week) and travel to an activity or event in Whistler (6% this week, 6% last week) did not change much from a week ago.

The growth in positive ratings towards the 2010 Winter Olympic Games also flows through to the organizational aspects of the Games. More than eight in ten British Columbians (82%) give VANOC an excellent or good rating on running the games. This is up from 56% excellent/good rating before the start of the games, fluctuating to 73% and 66% ratings during the games. Similarly, a majority of British Columbians give security higher ratings at the conclusion of the Games (90% excellent or good) compared to the start of the Games (78%). British Columbians appear to be notably pleased by travel, transportation and getting around the Games. Only one third of British Columbians expected travel to be excellent or good prior to the start of the Games (29%) and nearly eight in ten gave a rating of excellent or good at the end of the Games (79%); fully 50 points higher.

British Columbians were asked about their most memorable moments about the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Besides the popular gold medal hockey games (18%) and medal count accomplishments (11%), it is the athletic heroes that won the hearts of British Columbians including Joannie Rochette's courageous performance (8%) and Alex Bilodeau's first gold medal for Canada (8%).

The closing ceremony was watched by 87% of BC residents, and while ratings of the ceremony were positive (78% 'excellent' or 'good'), they weren't as high as ratings of the opening ceremony (89% 'excellent' or 'good').

This is Ipsos Reid's fourth poll in an ongoing series that measured the momentum of the games through the views of British Columbian residents throughout the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

These are the findings of an online study conducted by Ipsos Reid from February 28, 2010 (after the Closing Ceremonies) to March 1, 2010 with 1,438 British Columbians. The results were statistically weighted to ensure that the age and gender composition of respondents reflects that of the actual British Columbian population according to 2006 Census data. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate within 2.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of British Columbia been polled.

The polling was conducted using Ipsos Reid's "Voice of the West Interactive Forum" – an online panel of nearly 6,000 British Columbians who have been randomly recruited to match the overall characteristics of the adult residents of the province. In the final poll, respondents were pre-recruited to participate in a very short time period of less than 24 hours.



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For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Steve Mossop
President
Ipsos Reid Canada West
(778) 373-5001
Steve.Mossop@ipsos.com*

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