

## MEDIA RELEASE

Regina - June 23, 2015

*Audra Young, Chair of Sask Sport Inc.'s Aboriginal Sport Leadership Council issued the following statement on behalf of Sask Sport Board of Directors in response to the Calls to Action report issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada.*

"It is with humbleness and gratitude that we thank the members of the TRC for the work they have done in raising the profile of the legacy of residential schools and ensuring Canadians and people around the world understand the need to make system wide changes to improve the lives of Indigenous people in Canada, and advance the process of reconciliation with non-Indigenous peoples.

"I am a proud member of the Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan, and am also entering my 25<sup>th</sup> year as a member of the Regina Police Service. Every day I witness the aftermath of this dark chapter in Canada's history. Many members of my family and others have shared stories of the abuse they endured in these schools during the TRC's hearings that took place throughout the country between 2010 and 2013.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued 94 Calls to Action. Items 87-91 deal specifically with sport policy and how the federal government and all levels of government should work together to redress inequities in Canada's amateur sport system.

Young was elected to the Sask Sport Inc. Board of Directors in 2008 and served as President in 2010-2011. Her current volunteer position as Chair of the amateur sport federation's Aboriginal Sport Leadership Council is near to her heart. "This position allows me to work with a team of leaders who play a key role in helping Sask Sport collaborate with Indigenous people at the local level to support grassroots initiatives that are strengthening communities across the province.

"I have nothing further to add to the dialogue that has not already been said. What I *do* wish to share is a story of hope - some beacons of progress that have been experienced through the work in the area of Aboriginal sport development in Saskatchewan."

"We truly believe in sport and the role that it can play to build better communities. As a board we hear of the success of programs like the Aboriginal Community Sport Development Grant which is in place to assist in the development of sport opportunities for underserved youth. These programs create opportunities for children and youth to experience the many benefits of sport, which contributes to building a healthier more cohesive society.

Initiatives such as KidSport and Dream Brokers reduce barriers to sports participation and programs like the Aboriginal Coaches and Officials Program and the Tribal Council Coordinator Program nurtures volunteer capacity in First Nations and Métis communities.

“When I first joined the Aboriginal Leadership Council there were virtually no Indigenous athletes on Team Saskatchewan at the Canada Games,” said Young. “Last year seventeen Aboriginal athletes were members of Team Saskatchewan at the Winter Games. Should we do better? Of course we should but *that’s* significant progress. Equally important to participation at this elite level are the opportunities at the community level that are being increasingly established in support of youth across Saskatchewan.”

“First Nations and Métis participation in sport is a priority that has been woven throughout the structure of the organization. Indigenous people can exist in every facet of this organization. We’re not just at the corner of the table anymore. This is an amazing feat. ”Aboriginal sport development is not just a special project for Sask Sport. It is commitment to empower First Nations and Métis people in the development, planning and implementation of sport.

Sask Sport in partnership with a wide variety of provincial and national partners continues to nurture contributions that provide First Nations and Métis athletes with opportunities that enhance and increase participation in Sport.

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