

# **Wheelchair Sports New Brunswick Report**

## **2016 AGM**

Wheelchair Sports New Brunswick continues to grow to increase awareness and participation in wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby and wheelchair tennis primarily. WSNB also partners with organization whose focus is to increase participation, of individuals with a disability, in sport and recreation opportunities.

This past year, post Canada Winter Games, has been a rebuilding process for wheelchair basketball activities. During the past year we have introduced our mini program within a number of schools hoping that this initiative will lead to participation growth in wheelchair basketball in NB. We hosted a successful NCCP “Intro to Competition Development” clinic with 7 junior coaches participating...a first for NB!

Through the support of grants from the Province of New Brunswick WSNB was able to acquire a total of 9 basketball chairs, 1 rugby chair and contributed to the purchase of 1 tennis chair. The chairs have been distributed to the various clubs in the province. This equipment has helped participants’ access to available ongoing programs.

Wheelchair basketball athletes from NB have been identified by National coaches as having potential to be part of the National high performance program. One athlete attended the National Academy in Toronto while four others were invited to National training camps. WSNB and the Province of NB recognize their dedication and hard work to achieve their goals through financial assistance.

New Brunswick continues to be an active participant in the Maritime Wheelchair Basketball League. Clubs from Fredericton and Saint John attended the league finals in Nova Scotia. As we look forward, WSNB hopes that the mini program will help grow the sport so that NB will be able to add to the number of clubs participating in the MWBL.

WSNB congratulates Karen Ferguson, from Saint John, as the head of the classifiers for WBC. After many years of dedicated service in NB and at the national level we know Karen will continue to serve the basketball community with knowledge and decision making.

In the spring of 2016, WSNB was able to secure CWSA and Province of NB funding to hire our first part time human resource. The “Bridging the Gap” coordinator whose responsibilities will focus in the growth of wheelchair basketball, rugby and tennis in the province. This position will have a significant impact on our future participation growth.

Recruitment efforts through school and community demonstrations, visits to rehabilitation centers and the partnership with PSOs are an ongoing concern for WSNB. In the past we have had insignificant results and we are looking forward to developing a strategic plan for the future development of WSNB in the fall 2016. Challenges to be addressed include club development, leadership development and recruitment and retention of volunteers and participants. The ongoing need to recruit and train coaches and officials to work with mini and junior athletes will ensure wheelchair basketball development in the Province.

WSNB continues to support the programs and athletes participating in wheelchair rugby and tennis. Financial support for rugby and tennis participants has enabled them to attend National level events. NB was represented at the National Wheelchair Rugby championships in Saskatchewan. In 2016 NB has its first wheelchair tennis athlete reach the top 10 in Canadian ranking.

WSNB looks forward to our ongoing partnership with Tennis NB, Athletics NB and other PSOs whose mandate is to provide sport and recreation opportunities for individuals with a disability. Ongoing support from the Province of NB, municipalities and other NGOs will enable individuals to participate and have access to affordable programs and activities.

I would, like to express appreciation to the numerous volunteers, coaches, officials, sponsors, parents and athletes for their time and efforts given to the sport of wheelchair basketball, rugby and tennis. Without you we would not have the opportunity to celebrate our successes.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Wishart, President

Wheelchair Sports New Brunswick