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Indigenous Sport,
Physical Activity
& Recreation Council

March 17, 2021

RE: Update regarding the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG)

Hello to our Team BC NAIG family of coaches, athletes, and parents:

We have reached the one-year mark of the World Health Organization's confirmation of the global COVID-19 pandemic and all of us across Turtle Island continue to face its impacts. Among the effects of the pandemic, was the disappointing, but understandable, news that the Halifax 2020 North American Indigenous Games as postponed indefinitely. Athletes, coaches, and families across North America have been anxiously awaiting confirmation of the plans for hosting the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG).

The NAIG Council and the Halifax Host Society has confirmed that they are continuing to work very closely with their community, sport, and funding partners with a commitment to work towards hosting the NAIG in Kuipuktuk (Halifax) and Millbrook First Nation in the summer of 2023.

The NAIG Council and Halifax Host Society conveyed the following in an update to the members of NAIG Council: "The Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia are supportive of the NAIG Council and the Halifax NAIG Host Society, as we continue to work closely with Indigenous sport communities and public health officials to protect the health of Indigenous athletes, their families and their communities. The safety of our athletes and participants has always been and will continue to be our primary focus. Moving towards 2023 provides us with the best opportunity for a safe and successful Games."

In addition, the NAIG Council confirmed that the age eligibility for athletes competing in a 2023 NAIG would be:

- 19U – born 2004 and later
- 16U – born 2007 and later
- 14U – born 2009 and later

Once the details of a 2023 NAIG delivery are determined, the NAIG Council is expected to issue a formal media release and accordingly, I-SPARC can begin the planning phases for Team BC's participation.

The NAIG has always been about fostering opportunities for young Indigenous athletes to participate in sport and to celebrate cultural unity and pride. And, it is recognized that the confirmation of these age categories affects those youth athletes born 2001 through 2003 who were vying for or preparing for participation in a 2020 delivery of NAIG.



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I-SPARC will soon be offering another series of Resiliency Training and other programs for youth athletes this spring and we will continue to explore ways to engage youth of all ages virtually and within community bubbles where possible through this year. We will resume athlete development camps and competitions as soon as conditions permit us to do so safely. We will also continue to work together with our coaches, volunteers, and sport partners to support our young athletes in this challenging time and to help them feel motivated, to stay active, and to keep healthy.

Should anyone need additional supports at this time, please find below a list of free support services available at anytime, any day of the week:

- KUU-US Support Line (First Nations and Indigenous support line available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll-free from anywhere in BC)
 - Toll-free at 1-800-588-8717

- MNBC Métis Support Line (Métis support line available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll-free from anywhere in BC)
 - Toll-free at 1-833-METISBC / 1-833-638-4722

Thank you once again for your support and we hope to have answers to the many questions that will surely develop with this news as soon as possible.

In the spirit of youth and sport, I wish you all the very best in continuing to stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Rick Brant
Chief Executive Officer