What if you could energize the next generation of Canadian Olympians?
World speed skating records were broken in the very first official competition and to this day, continue to be surpassed on Oval ice.

With 294 world records to date, it is the ice that attracts the world’s best speed skaters to train and compete in Calgary. As part of its winning record, the Oval has proudly upheld the legacy mandate and original intent of Calgary’s 1988 Olympic Organizing Committee: to win speed skating medals for Canada with the right people, programming and facility; to enable advancement of human performance science; and to promote active living in the community.

Fulfilling its mandate, Calgary’s Olympic Oval has been generating excellence in all pillars since 1988 and now seeks new partners to build on the legacy.

As an iconic training, learning and competition space at the University of Calgary, the Oval aspires to an even brighter future — unleashing potential, benefiting society and strengthening ties to the community.

“With The Fastest Ice in the World™, the University of Calgary's Olympic Oval has championed excellence since opening day more than 25 years ago.

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“The Oval has had a unique energy since day one, and continues to have an energy that inspires. It is a place where dreams come true.”

— Catriona Le May Doan, O.C.
Olympic Gold Medalist, Ambassador, Olympic Oval
We have heard the “klap” of their skates and the roar of the crowds in the charged air of the Oval. We have witnessed their power, grit and grace. Wotherspoon, Le May Doan, Klassen, Crockett, Boucher, Campbell, Krauss, Hughes, Nesbitt...Canada’s celebrated speed skaters have given the country 52 Olympic medals and electrifying performances since 1988.

They have made us proud. Their home ice is Calgary’s Olympic Oval.

Winning athletes come from great training grounds. And great training grounds need a winning team behind them. The Oval has always drawn its power from the community. Now we look to energize the future — with new skaters, a new pathway to excellence and a recharged facility.

Known internationally as the “Icemeister," Oval Operations Manager Mark Messer has pursued perfection in making and maintaining The Fastest Ice in the World™ since 1987. He has consulted for Olympic Winter Games’ organizing committees since the 1988 Calgary games, and in 2014, was awarded the Order of the University of Calgary for his distinguished service.

Dubbed “Canada’s medal factory,” the Olympic Oval is the training ground for the national speed skating team — our nation’s most prolific Winter Games’ medal winners in the past two decades.

Our goal, our reason for coming to work every day, is to create and sustain the best environment we can for all of our users — from high performance athletes striving to reach the podium to recreational users dreaming about one day being there themselves. As a facility, we take great pride in being a small part of every World Record, Olympic Medal or personal best earned by our athletes.”

— Mark Messer
Operations Manager, Olympic Oval
Propelling to victory

In today’s fiercely competitive world of speed skating, it takes year-round training, exceptional technical coaching and comprehensive support for athletes to achieve international podiums. The winning combination at the Olympic Oval lies in harnessing the collective power of people, programming and place. The pacing rhythm: personal best-game ready.

Program-by-design

Working in conjunction with Canada’s provincial and national speed skating organizations, the Olympic Oval has developed the Elite Athlete Pathway with clearly defined stages to build team depth, develop athletes to their full potential and optimize high performance.

Athlete promise

Enabling personal best achievement requires full support — not only with great coaching, technology, conditioning and mental preparation — but also by taking the financial burden off developing athletes with bursary programs.

No better place

Maintaining this great community asset as The Fastest Ice in the World™ gives young Canadian skaters an edge, and will position the Olympic Oval as the go-to facility for world competition — for long track and short track speed skating.

“...

What we do today is critical to Canadian long-term success. To be ahead of the game and a continuing force on world ice, we need depth — a critical mass of speed skaters who achieve personal bests through rigorous development and support. We make that personal best promise to any committed participant who comes our way.”

— Yves Hamelin
Director, Olympic Oval

Few images evoke the power and beauty of the skater and the sense of collective power, as does the magnificent bronze frieze that hangs in the Olympic Oval — Brothers of the Wind by Robert Tait McKenzie (1925).
It takes a village to raise a child and the Oval has been the best village to have grown up in. It has been an integral part of the skater I am today and I take a lot of pride in having gone through the ranks from the Calgary Club to the Olympic Team.”
— Gilmore Junio
Canada’s Olympic Team, Sochi 2014
Student, University of Calgary

Transforming lives

It is that transformational action of striving, practicing, encouraging, and never giving up that develops winners. Individual passion and drive — the stuff of leaders — is buzzing in the Olympic Oval.

Testament to the transformational power of sport is one of Canada’s proudest-ever Olympic moments: Gilmore Junio’s selfless action at the Sochi Winter Games in 2014. The Oval-trained speed skater gave up his hard-earned Olympic spot to teammate Denny Morrison who Junio thought had a better chance of winning a medal. Morrison won silver, but the glory went to Junio. The pride of a nation, a city, university and team. There is no more eloquent display of team spirit and integrity — traits Junio learned from sport.

The Oval offers learning opportunities to Calgary’s youth. On any given day more than 400 varsity and intramural athletes train, condition, push their limits and grow in Oval space. Any young skater who aspires to the Olympic dream can bring their skates and try it on.

Strong leaders and great citizens are developed through the rigour of sport.
Stoking success

While a cool surface prevails, the Oval is also fired up with academic pursuit and varsity athletics.

Situated at the heart of campus, the Oval is an important and integral part of the University of Calgary’s Faculty of Kinesiology. It is a partnership that began when the Oval was a dream of then Dean, Roger Jackson, spearheaded the university’s support and commitment to the 1988 games and beyond.

Since 1988, university scholars have conducted research with Oval-based athletes to advance the science of human performance. Whether developing new technology, working on faster starts, synching eye-movement coordination or strengthening mental fortitude, University of Calgary research helps athletes move more efficiently, prevent injury, and gain the competitive edge.

It translates from the world of the elite Olympian to professional sport, recreational activity and daily living. The Oval is an incomparable laboratory that inspires the Calgary community.

Varsity athletes at the University of Calgary have full advantage of the training facility and advanced performance knowledge, as well as the distinct opportunity to train alongside Olympic role models.

The Olympic Oval not only upholds its Olympic legacy, it is fulfilling the University of Calgary’s Eyes High strategic direction to enhance the student experience, excel in research and fully engage the community.”

— Penny Werthner, PhD
Dean, Faculty of Kinesiology
University of Calgary
Though we continually fuel the pursuit of excellence, we can never afford to lose focus on our place in the community as a true Olympic legacy facility.

The legacy of the Oval as a place where anyone can attain their personal best was forged by the original 1988 Olympic Games Committee and is something that all Canadians, Albertans and especially Calgarians can be very proud of.

— Lisa Robertson
Associate Director, Sponsorship & Events, Olympic Oval

Connecting community

How many people can say they had their first skate on Olympic ice?

Few outside Calgary, but thousands in the hometown of the Olympic Oval can lay claim to the distinction.

Open to the public since the closing ceremonies at the 1988 Winter Games, the Oval is a popular learn-to-skate and family skate destination. It is a hub for active living and a place for family memories.

In addition to skating, hundreds of Calgarians use the newly installed running track at the facility. During its two-month summertime ice-out break, the Oval is also used for corporate events, sports tournaments, Calgary’s science fair and the convocation rallying point for the University of Calgary’s graduating classes.

For sport enthusiasts, the Oval offers up some of the most exciting spectator opportunities in the city with World Championship and international speed skating competitions.

The 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics have been called the “best games ever” in large part due to the community spirit they showcased. An incredible community asset, the Olympic Oval helps perpetuate that legacy.
Fueling the future
The University of Calgary thanks WinSport and the Government of Canada for their ongoing support. Now, in order achieve the next level, we need your support. Through philanthropy and sponsorship, we will be difference makers — key contributors to Canada’s sports system, to developing our youth and keeping the community strong.

The pathway is clear
We commit to the best programs-by-design, to the promise of developing personal bests in sport, new knowledge and active living, and to maintaining a premiere, game-ready facility — The Fastest Ice in the World™.

Skate with us.
Collective power will energize our future and propel us forward.

For half a century, the University of Calgary has created and grown a community of thought leaders, visionaries and drivers. This is the genesis of Energize: The Campaign for Eyes High, the drive to positively charge our campus community, our city and beyond for the next 50 years — to unleash the power of the Olympic Oval to energize the next generation of Canadian Olympians. And this power can only be unleashed together.