

For Immediate Release

BASKETBALL FASTEST GROWING SPORT IN CANADA: STUDY

SIZE OF FAN BASE TO GROW BY 56%

TORONTO (May 8, 2006) – As Canada's Steve Nash makes history and joins elite company that includes Larry Bird, Magic Johnson and Michael Jordan as the NBA's most valuable player for the second year in a row, a recent research study finds that basketball will be the top sport in fan base growth in the next 10 years.

"One very important driver of the popularity of different sports is the demographic pattern due to record immigration levels to Canada. In the next ten years, Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal in particular will become much more diverse than the rest of Canada – a trend that favours basketball and soccer as fast-growth sports in these markets," said Kaan Yigit, director of the study.

According to Solutions Research Group analysis of Statistics Canada data, Canada's visible minority population will grow by over 70% by 2017, while the rest of the population will grow by a mere 3%.

Among the findings:

- ✓ Overall, the leading sport among fast-growing visible minority groups is Basketball (37%), followed closely by soccer (36%). Hockey is in the third position (22%) followed by football (12%) and baseball (11%).
- ✓ Basketball is #1 among Black and Chinese Canadians, while soccer takes the top spot among those of West Asian and Hispanic backgrounds. Hockey leads among South Asian Canadians.
- ✓ In Canada's largest three markets – Toronto, Montreal & Vancouver – projections show that the fan base for basketball will grow by 56% in the next 10 years, followed by soccer (44%). Baseball's fan base will expand by 23%, football by 22% and hockey by 19%.
- ✓ Hockey will remain the #1 sport in these three major markets for the next 10 years, however, the margin of dominance against other sports will shrink.

"In addition to basketball, soccer also has momentum in Canada's major markets. Toronto's new Major League Soccer (MLS) franchise has the potential to capitalize on this growing fan base," said David Ackerman, a consultant at Solutions Research Group.

The information for this release comes from a special analysis of the *sports* section of *Diversity in Canada*, an independent syndicated research study. To maintain an unbiased perspective, Solutions Research Group funds its own ongoing syndicated research studies.

Diversity in Canada delivers one-of-a-kind snapshot of Canada's fastest-growing population groups in Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal. A total of 3,000 respondents (age 15+) were interviewed in 9 different languages in June-August 2005.

Top Sports Among Fast-Growing Population Segments in Toronto, Vancouver & Montreal

Chinese	South Asian	West Asian	Black	Hispanic
Basketball	Hockey	Soccer	Basketball	Soccer
Soccer	Cricket	Basketball	Soccer	Baseball
Hockey	Soccer	Hockey	Baseball	Basketball
Tennis	Basketball	Tennis	Football	Hockey

Q: Thinking of the sports you follow in general, which ones are your personal favourites?
 Based on 3,000 interviews (15+) in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, Solutions Research Group

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Contacts

Kaan Yigit, kyigit@srgnet.com 416.323.1337 x 22

David Ackerman, dackerman@srgnet.com 416.323.1337 x 25

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