

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**“ONE-YEAR-TO-GO” TO  
WHEELCHAIR RUGBY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS AT OVAL**

*Schools Program announced to educate students about the sport of wheelchair rugby and disability awareness*

**Richmond, BC, CAN** -- The occasion of “one-year-to-go” to the 2010 World Wheelchair Rugby Championships (2010 WWRC) at the Richmond Olympic Oval was marked on Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup> with a sneak preview of the excitement of the game, and an announcement about the launching of a Schools Program.

Over 400 athletes, coaches, officials, delegates and volunteers representing the world’s top 12 ranked wheelchair rugby teams will attend the tournament, the first international event to be held at the Oval after the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The one-year countdown was celebrated at the James Gilmore Elementary school in Richmond whose students were featured in the promotional video that led to the successful bid for the Championships.

Laurel Crosby, chair of the 2010 WWRC Society and principal at the school, announced that students in Richmond will be the beneficiaries of one of the legacies being built into the 2010 WWRC. “Not only is having the Championships here going to do a lot for the sport of wheelchair rugby and disability awareness, but it is also going to be an educational opportunity for the school children of Richmond, the Lower Mainland and across the province,” she said. The Schools Program will be available to schools early next year.

Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie told the young audience that when the Olympic Oval was planned, one of the objectives was to be able to have many different kinds of events after the Olympics. “To have the World Wheelchair Rugby Championships there is a dream come true,” he said.

The students, dressed in red-and-white and waving Canadian flags, were treated to a hard-hitting demonstration of the game of wheelchair rugby by four members of the Canadian National Team and assistant head coach Adam Frost. Co-captain Ian Chan, Trevor Hirschfield and Travis Murao (all of Richmond) along with Say Luangkhamdeng (Surrey) also talked about what a thrill it will be to represent their country right in their own backyards, playing a sport that was invented in Canada.

Earlier this year two wheelchair rugby test events were successfully completed at the Oval. “It laid the foundation for the World Championships and gave us the opportunity to engage the community as we build towards 2010,” said 2010 WWRC organizing committee co-chair Kathy Newman. “We are very pleased with our preparations thus far and the commitment of our partners and sponsors.”