

# MEDIA RELEASE

## **Wickenheiser World Female Hockey Festival attracts thousands of fans Tournament draws 800 players to Surrey for more than just hockey**

*For immediate release: February 4, 2019*

**Surrey, BC** – Thousands of spectators gathered in Surrey January 31 to February 3, 2019 to catch the highly-anticipated Wickenheiser World Female Hockey Festival (WickFest) at the Surrey Sport and Leisure Centre and Newton arena. After nine successful years in Calgary, the festival announced the expansion to Surrey in the spring of 2018 and sold-out quickly, registering over 800 female athletes from 48 teams from around the world.

“The turnout for this event, both from the players and the spectators, demonstrates that this festival not only creates development opportunities for our youth, but brings the community together through sport, while supporting the local economy,” said Mayor Doug McCallum. “Hosting high-profile events like WickFest gives us the opportunity to highlight our state-of-the-art facilities and advances Surrey as a leader in the sport tourism industry. We look forward to hosting this event again next year.”

For the 800 female athletes in attendance, WickFest was more than just playing great hockey. The young female athletes attended a variety of workshops led by celebrity athletes, designed to build leadership skills. With a focus on building both the player and the person, the all-star lineup of instructors included six-time Olympian Hayley Wickenheiser, and Olympic Gold Medalist, Kaillie Humphries.

Surrey Fire Services also led two workshops over the weekend, highlighting the importance of diversity within both hockey teams – and within its own team. Increasing the number of female firefighters in Surrey is a priority. John Lehmann, Fire Chief and hiring manager, urged the youth to consider roles within Surrey Fire Services in the future. Teams were put through drill exercises, had the chance to try on fire uniforms, and had mentorship with Shelley Morris, Surrey Deputy Fire Chief.

WickFest will return to Surrey in 2020, with plans to host at the newly-developed North Surrey Sport and Ice Complex, scheduled for completion in Fall 2019.

For more information, visit [surrey.ca/events](http://surrey.ca/events)

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*Photo caption 1: Hayley Wickenheiser, pictured with players from the Surrey Falcons during WickFest at the Surrey Sports and Leisure Complex, February 2, 2019*

*Photo caption 2: Surrey Firefighter Rachel McLaughlin leads a fire equipment demonstration at WickFest, held at the Surrey Sports and Leisure Complex, February 2, 2019*

# NEWS RELEASE

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