

January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017

All through 2017, The Lethbridge Sport Council will be working together with local sport organizations to provide opportunities for participants to try new sports, as part of **Lethbridge 2017: Get Active Through Sport**, a year-long celebration of Canada's 150th Anniversary of Confederation. This sport opportunity is called '52 in 52'.

Canada's National sports, hockey and lacrosse, will be featured in January, along with boxing and a variation of hockey, sledge hockey. There are introductory sessions planned for all 4 sports, which will be free for all participants, and suitable for all ages and experience levels.

Sledge Hockey (recently re-named Para Ice Hockey by the International Paralympic Committee) was invented in the 1960's in Sweden and is now one of the most popular sports at the Winter Paralympic Games. At the most recent Paralympics held in Sochi in 2014, the Canadian team brought home bronze medals.

Sledge, or Para Ice Hockey, is similar to traditional ice hockey in that the rules for stand-up hockey apply to sledge hockey with one rule unique to Para ice hockey: 'Teeing', which is charging an opponent using any part of the front radius of the sled. The difference between the sports is in the equipment. The sticks have a curved blade at one end, just like a regular hockey stick, but the other end has 6-8 metal picks at the other end, to enable the players to steer and propel themselves. The sledge itself has 2 regular sized hockey blades on the bottom of a specially designed sled the athlete sits in, which allows the puck to pass underneath.

At the local level, the Lethbridge Sledge Hockey Club welcomes all players, including individuals with disabilities, and able-bodied players of all ages and abilities. Sledge hockey is a lot of fun and a great workout for anyone. The local association was started 5 years ago with the help of Alberta Health Services. The club hosts company/group team building sessions as well.

If you are interested in learning more about the Lethbridge Sledge Hockey Club, you can visit their Facebook page by searching @lethbridgesledgehockey. If you want to give sledge hockey a try, along with other sports that may be new or familiar to you, consider signing up for 52 in 52, a fun opportunity for the sport enthusiast, or anyone who wants to try new things in 2017.

In addition to 52 in 52, the Lethbridge 2017: Get Active Through Sport initiative offers something for everyone. Families, groups, teams and individuals can sign up for #YQLChallenge, which encourages participants to do 150 activities over the course of the year, from a list that has been developed especially for Lethbridge! You can also find and attend sport events you've never seen before and CHEER ON by checking our sport event calendar, or be part of our Volunteer Hour Tracker to lend a hand to a sport event or organization! We invite you to register online - recruit friends, involve your family, teammates or co-workers - and engage on social media using #Lethbridge2017. Full details can be found at [www.lethbridge2017.ca](http://www.lethbridge2017.ca)

Submitted by the Lethbridge Sport Council