



# The Daily Gleaner

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## Of Hockey Pucks and Hope

I am a proud Canadian, and after last week, prouder than ever before. After two weeks of inspiring stories of Canadian Olympians' athletic successes, Sidney Crosby and his teammates won Canada our 14th Winter Olympics gold medal - a record for most Winter Games gold medals by any country, ever. Simply incredible for this vast land of ice and snow and 33 million people!

And on the topic of ice and snow, as was evident early in the Olympic Games (despite best laid plans), the climate is changing. Vancouver was the warmest city to ever host the games, Whistler was balmy, and Cypress Mountain employed every possible technique and technology to ward off slush and mud on the slopes.

Where does hope come in, you ask?

Well, I believe that if Canada can do what we did in these Games, then I am hopeful that the global community can do what has to be done for this planet and humanity. Vancouver reinvented the norm when it came to how they approached, designed, planned, and delivered their Olympic Games. And this same philosophy must be applied as we attempt to fix our earth. The same dogged determination Vancouver had in making this Olympics the success it was – an incredible plan, commitment, collective hard work, overcoming adversity and cynical views – must be employed by global humanity as we stare of into an uncertain future. What will be different in our climate change 'Olympics', however, is the way in which we will reflect on success, and the timeline of that success.

We, as spectators, enjoy the MOMENT of the overtime goal, the MOMENT a skier crosses the finish line, or the MOMENT the last curling stone is thrown. What we do not see as spectators is the thousands of hours those athletes spend honing their skills, or perfecting their game and overcoming injuries and challenges along the way. Years of preparation are invested for one moment in time - the moment of victory.

That is where doing right for the planet differs from the Olympics. For every nice pass or every curling stone thrown, there is one light bulb turned off and piece of litter picked up. But the reality is that we will never collectively pause as humans and congratulate each other on saving the planet in each one of these isolated actions.

I have always likened what we have to do about global climate change to team sports. The four most popular team sports in North America are: baseball, football, basketball and hockey (though perhaps not

if you are an American this week!). So how do these sports compare with the most popular team sport in the world - soccer?

We love the home run in the bottom of the ninth inning to win the game. We love the winning 'Hail Mary' pass at the end of the football game. We love the three-pointer at the buzzer in basketball. And we love the overtime goal in the Olympic final game.

And soccer? It too is a great team sport, but perhaps more than the others, it requires mostly meticulous passing to get an opportunity to score, with an unlikely chance of last second heroics. We North Americans love those last minute heroics, the star, and the moment. But soccer takes patience, it requires us to appreciate each strategic pass - the 'many' moments - not just the culmination of them.

The same is true of solving the climate crisis, there is no silver bullet like the three-pointer or overtime goal. We need to solve our environmental issues like a game of soccer is played – one pass at a time. And this takes commitment because each 'pass' doesn't always get fanfare or a standing ovation.

Sure, we may reduce our collective carbon footprint by 80% in the next 40 years, but will we gather as eight or nine billion people and celebrate our success? I hope so. Stranger things have happened, like Canada cleaning up on gold medals. Not bad, eh?

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