

## Vancouver 2010 Nabs a Bronze for Climate Change Issues

Written by Mike Morellato

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Shortly after my last post on "[Sustainable Olympics](#)," I read about the David Suzuki Foundation and the [release](#) of their climate scorecard for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic efforts. Vancouver makes it to the podium with a bronze - with a little to cheer about (unless you're a hockey fan), but a long way to go. A little early to make this call? Possibly, as there are some issues that the verdict should still be out on.

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We haven't yet seen to what extent the Olympic organizers and volunteers will spread the word about environmental sustainability, and use the Games as an awareness medium for climate change efforts. Also, the waste footprint of the games is yet to be determined, which is likely to be substantial. Waste management is a significant issue with an event of this size, [linked to climate change](#) issues, yet is something that is not touched upon with this scorecard. Will VANOC's [zero waste strategy](#) and 85% landfill diversion targets be a success? Only time will tell. Creating a sustainable Olympic legacy in the city of Vancouver is a huge component of how the Games should be scored. There is good reason why the Olympic Games Global Impact (OGGI) study - [PDF](#)

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- spans 11 years, and continues two years following each Olympic Games (although the effectiveness of this study is another debate).

Regardless of any possible shortcomings, I applaud the efforts of the David Suzuki Foundation and other NGOs/watchdogs in raising these important issues. It is also a good reminder that Environment is the third pillar of the Olympic movement and a very important consideration for Games planning, activities during the games, and environmental outcomes following each Olympics. Planning for the use of existing venues (rather than building brand new ones) and planning for deconstruction or modification of venues after the Games is a major consideration in my opinion. Past Olympics have shown that wasteful, underused venues can be a negative legacy to the Games but I feel Vancouver has done a decent job in this regard. The Richmond Oval, for example, was designed to be transformed into a multi-sport facility following the Olympics with a covered ice sheet able to be used again when needed.

Before taking this scorecard as a concrete measure of Olympic success (or failure), let us not forget that environmental issues are only one aspect of sustainability. Social and economic legacies are equally important if we are to apply a score to an Olympic Games. Why not incorporate "sustainability" as a pillar of the Olympic movement rather than just Environment? The David Suzuki Foundation has done their part to analyze environmental issues, but I would be a little scared to see a Vancouver 2010 scorecard measuring the social and economic components of the Games. Climbing out of money pits and pleasing social housing advocates... I'm not sure Vancouver would be a shoo-in for the podium there

### Links:

- The David Suzuki Foundation [Climate Scorecard for the Vancouver 2010 Olympics](#) or full [PDF version](#)
- Athletes [speak out](#) about carbon footprint and environmental impact of Games
- [Play it Cool program](#) - Climate Project Canada