

**Christine Hough-Sweeney and Russ Courtnall set to battle  
on behalf of The Archie Courtnall Centre**

**CBC Television's hit series *Battle of the Blades* returns to the ice this fall**

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For Immediate Release

Victoria, BC - *Battle of the Blades* skating partners Christine "Tuffy" Hough-Sweeney and Russ Courtnall are pleased to announce that they will be skating for the Victoria Hospitals Foundation in support of the Archie Courtnall Centre at Royal Jubilee Hospital. Uniting two of Canada's greatest passions – figure skating and hockey – *Battle of the Blades* pairs eight ex-NHL hockey players with eight champion figure skaters to compete for a \$100,000 prize donation to the winners' charity of choice. On Sunday, October 3 at 8:00 pm local time, the smash hit series makes its triumphant return to CBC Television with a brand new season.

"The Archie Courtnall Centre was established in memory of my father for residents of Vancouver Island suffering from mental illness and in need of psychiatric help," said retired NHL-er Russ Courtnall. "I think he would be proud of the good work done by the team there and I'll be thinking of him as I take to the ice and compete in his honour."

The Archie Courtnall Centre is open 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week with an interdisciplinary team of nurses, social workers, psychiatrists and unit clerks. Together, this team provides specialized psychiatric, mental health and addictions services, including emergency assessment, short-term crisis intervention/stabilization, treatment planning and care for people with emergent psychiatric disorders.

"We are delighted Russ and his family are continuing to support the amazing work being done at the Archie Courtnall Centre," said Starr McMichael, Board Chair, Victoria Hospitals Foundation. "The unique and supportive approach the centre provides for people facing a mental health crisis has been recognized across the country."

Supporters can tune-in to CBC each week on Sunday at 8:00 pm local time and vote for Christine Hough-Sweeney and Russ Courtnall by calling 1-877-844-8155, going online to [www.cbc.ca/battle](http://www.cbc.ca/battle) or by texting 55 to 777111 – with a portion of the 15 cent text charge going directly to the Victoria Hospitals Foundation. The two pairs with the fewest votes return for the Monday night live results show where the judges determine which pair goes home and which advances to the next round. The winning pair will receive a \$100,000 cheque made out to their chosen charity, and each week the eliminated pair receives a \$25,000 donation.

Produced by Insight Productions in association with CBC Television, *Battle of the Blades* takes to the ice for the first live performance on Sunday, October 3 at 8:00 p.m. on CBC Television.

### **About the Victoria Hospitals Foundation:**

The Victoria Hospitals Foundation works in partnership with the Vancouver Island Health Authority to enable donations to Vancouver Island's two largest and most comprehensive hospitals: the Royal Jubilee and the Victoria General. Every year we fund 40 per cent of capital equipment purchases for these hospitals that provide care to all 752,000 residents of Vancouver Island. Since 1989, the Victoria Hospitals Foundation has raised more than \$70 million to benefit our hospitals. For more information, call the Foundation at 250-414-6688 or go to [www.victoriahf.ca](http://www.victoriahf.ca).

### **About Christine Hough-Sweeney:**

Christine "Tuffy" Hough-Sweeney and her partner Tie Domi were fan-favourites from season one of *Battle of the Blades*, and she is back to compete again this year and looking to win.

Christine joined forces with her pairs skating partner Doug Ladret in 1984 and the two went on to compete five times at the World Figure Skating Championships and twice at the Winter Olympics. The dynamite duo won a total of six medals at the Canadian Nationals, including Gold in 1988. Christine turned pro and hit the *Stars on Ice* circuit with Ladret, performing for four years on the Canadian and U.S. tours. The pair also performed with *Skate the Nation* and appeared in the feature film *The Cutting Edge*.

In 1996 she married former Boston Bruins player Don Sweeney. Born in Renfrew, ON, and currently living in Boston, Christine now works as a coach at the Skating Club of Boston. A mother of 11-year old twins, Jarrod and Tyler, she is thrilled to be returning to the show this fall.

### **About Russ Courtnall:**

With a reputation for lightning fast skating and breathtaking stick handling, Russ Courtnall is one competitor to watch in this season of *Battle of the Blades*. Encouraged by his good friends Pamela Anderson and Wayne Gretzky, Russ is no stranger to the entertainment world.

Born in Duncan, BC, and following in his older brother Geoff's footsteps, Russ was considered one of the top prospects coming out of the junior leagues and was selected seventh overall in the 1983 NHL entry draft by the Toronto Maple Leafs. After six years with the Leafs, Courtnall joined the Montreal Canadiens where his speed and style made him a fan favourite during the four years he spent there.

For the next seven years, he also played for the Minnesota North Stars, Dallas Stars, Vancouver Canucks, New York Rangers and the Los Angeles Kings before retiring in 1999. During the course of 15 seasons in the NHL, Russ played over 1000 games, finishing with 297 goals and 744 points.

Russ currently lives in California with his wife Paris Vaughan (daughter of Sarah Vaughan) and their three children, Ally, Lawton and Brooklyn. He is also a partner of the Vancouver-based athletic apparel company, FIRSTAR Sports.

## About Insight Production Company Ltd.:

Insight Production Company Ltd, headed by John Brunton and Barbara Bowlby, has become an industry leader in the creative development, financing and production of highly rated television programs and cutting edge multiplatform content for the global market in every genre. Since 1979, it has been recognized for its reputation for quality as the recipient of numerous International awards, including multiple Geminis. The company has created thousands of hours of groundbreaking television that continues to be broadcast over major networks worldwide. Broadcast Magazine International claims that "When it comes to adapting formats for Canadian audiences there is one producer who appears to have the Midas touch." Recent hits include Insight's original new format *Battle of the Blades*; *Canadian Idol*, Canada's homegrown version of the hugely successful international format; *The Juno Awards*, which plays a key role in the Canadian music industry; *Project Runway Canada*, hosted by International Supermodel Iman; *The Jon Dore Television Show*, currently airing on the Independent Film Channel; and *Deal or No Deal Canada*, the hit primetime game show which delivered Global Television Network's highest ratings of all time for a Canadian program.

## Media Contact:

Carla Higgins, senior manager, communications & recognition, Victoria Hospitals Foundation, 250-414-6688, cell 250-208-0661, or [carla.higgins@viha.ca](mailto:carla.higgins@viha.ca)