GORD DOWNIE & CHANIE WENJACK FUND

Lesson Plan

DWF LIVE WITH DALLAS SOONIAS

SUGGESTED AGES:

Grades 7-10

SUGGESTED SUBJECT AREAS:

English, PE, History, Social Studies

WATCH ON YOUTUBE

DURATION:

2 class periods (30 minutes for the DWF LIVE viewing, and 30 minutes for further class discussion and research)

Disclaimer: Educators and group leaders are responsible for ensuring lessons and materials presented in their classrooms or groups are appropriate for their unique students.

OBJECTIVES:

Students will investigate and analyze the volleyball career of Dallas Soonias, learning about his journey as a professional athlete, the challenges he faced and his contributions to sport and Indigenous communities

MATERIALS:

- **DWF LIVE with Dallas Soonias**
- Notebooks or paper for journaling
- Access to Internet and library resources for research

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES):

1. Introduce Dallas Soonias.

Dallas' bio:
Based in Calgary, Alberta, and a proud member of the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation, Dallas was the first Indigenous male to represent Canada internationally in volleyball from 2004 to 2016. He has received several awards, including the Tom Longboat Award and the 2021 Indspire Award for Sports. Most recently, Dallas was a commentator for the CBC covering volleyball at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Today, we will be talking about highlights from the Olympics, and how sport can play an important role in moving reconciliation forward.

DWF LIVE VIEWING (30 MINUTES)

1. Participate in the live event on the **DWF YouTube Channel.**
2. Ask students to take notes on topics or reflections.

GROUP DISCUSSION (30 MINUTES)

Facilitate a discussion around the following questions. These can be presented as a full class discussion or given out in small groups and encourage the students to communicate back their findings:

1. What motivated Dallas Soonias to pursue a career in volleyball? Explore his early experiences with volleyball. What events or individuals shaped his passion for the sport? What challenges did he face growing up?
2. What are the major achievements in Dallas Soonias' volleyball career?
3. Investigate key milestones in his career. What teams did he play for, both nationally and internationally? What records or accolades has he earned?
4. What were some of his reflections from the Paris Olympics?
5. What challenges did Dallas Soonias encounter throughout his volleyball career?
6. Research and discuss the obstacles he faced as a professional volleyball player. Were there any moments where he considered giving up or changing paths?
7. How does Dallas Soonias help elevate other Indigenous athletes? Examine his work off the court. How does he support and inspire Indigenous youth? Are there any specific programs or initiatives he's involved with?
8. How has Dallas Soonias' identity as an Indigenous athlete influenced perceptions in the sports world? Reflect on the representation of Indigenous athletes in professional sports. How does Soonias' career contribute to breaking stereotypes or opening doors for future Indigenous athletes?
9. What lessons can aspiring athletes learn from Dallas Soonias' career?
10. Consider his journey and the advice he gives to young athletes. What values does he emphasize? How can his experiences serve as a blueprint for overcoming adversity?

CONCLUSION (10 MINUTES):

- Group discussion: Have students share their findings with the class, discussing what they found most inspiring or surprising about Soonias' Journey.
- Research Project: Encourage students to choose another Indigenous athlete and compare their journey to Soonias'.
- Reflection Essay: Ask students to write a reflective piece on how Dallas Soonias' story can inspire them in their own personal goals and challenges.

ASSESSMENT:

- Group discussion: Have students share their findings with the class, discussing what they found most inspiring or surprising about Soonias' Journey.
- Research Project: Encourage students to choose another Indigenous athlete and compare their journey to Soonias'.
- Reflection Essay: Ask students to write a reflective piece on how Dallas Soonias' story can inspire them in their own personal goals and challenges.