

Quest for Gold



CANADA CARD Athlete Handbook 2009/2010

Ministry of Health Promotion

Canada Card Athlete Handbook 2009-2010

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This Handbook is designed for Ontario athletes who have been nominated and accepted in the Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program within the Government of Ontario's fiscal year of April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010.

Please review the contents of this Handbook prior to completing your on-line application. For assistance or further information please contact Ministry of Health Promotion (MHP) staff directly.

Forward any hard copy information to:
Quest for Gold - OAAP
Ministry of Health Promotion
393 University Ave, Suite 1802
Toronto, ON M7A 2S1
Attention: Scott Cooper

How do athletes apply for their Canada Card?

Athletes shall review this booklet to determine if they meet all program requirements. Eligible athletes shall apply on-line at www.questforgold.ca.

Only those athletes who are Ontario residents, current recipients of the Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program and who meet the Ministry of Health Promotion requirements detailed here should apply online.

Athletes will complete the following steps to submit their application:

- i) Apply on-line at www.questforgold.ca.
- ii) Previously funded applicants will login using the same email address used previously. **Do not create a new account.**
- iii) Previously funded applicants will use their same password. Use the “Forgot Password” button to retrieve a previous password.
- iv) Enter all personal contact/ mailing information and Social Insurance Number.
- v) Enter Carding Cycle – see page 12 of this booklet for details.
- vi) Enter type of Sport Canada Card (example: Dev, C1, SR1, SR2) and the number of months you receive carding. Confirm this with your NSO if unsure.
- vii) Submit proof of Ontario residency - each athlete **must** submit a copy of either an Ontario Driver’s License or Health Card to establish Ontario residency. This must be attached within the online application or mailed directly to the MHP.
- viii) Documentation supporting a Residency Exception – athletes living outside Ontario on a temporary basis **must** submit documentation clearly indicating how they meet one of the residency exceptions. This must be attached within the online application or mailed directly to the MHP. See page 5 of this booklet for more details.

***** Failure to complete steps vii and viii will prevent approval of your application.**

Each applicant must have a unique email address. The online system will not allow multiple users to use the same email address. Ensure this is a functional email account you have regular access to. Information must be entered using proper capitalization (not ALL CAPS or all lowercase). No short forms or abbreviations shall be used.

After completing the online process applicants will immediately receive an auto-response email from the address application@questforgold.ca. If you cannot locate this email, please check your Junk or Spam folder and add this address to your “Safe List”. If the message still cannot be located, please contact staff at the Ministry of Health Promotion for assistance.

If you are unable to apply online and require a paper copy of the application please contact the Ministry of Health Promotion at Scott.Cooper@Ontario.ca or by phone: 416-314-7692.

Program Overview: *Quest for Gold* - Ontario Athlete Assistance Program

1. What are the goals and objectives of the *Quest for Gold* - Ontario Athlete Assistance Program?

The Ontario Athlete Assistance Program (OAAP) is one aspect of the funding offered under the 2009-2010 *Quest for Gold* Program. In addition to the OAAP the *Quest for Gold* Program also provides funding to enhance access to high performance coaching and to provide enhanced competitive opportunities and services for Ontario athletes. Funding for the *Quest for Gold* Program is obtained from revenues generated in 2009-2010 by the *Quest for Gold* lottery game that is administered by the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG).

The overarching goal of the *Quest for Gold* - OAAP is directly related to the Enhanced Excellence goals of both *ACTIVE2010* and the *Canadian Sport Policy* – i.e. to improve the performance and number of Ontario athletes performing at the national and international level; thereby contributing to the improved performance of Canada at international competitions. Specific objectives of the program are:

- a) To help athletes continue their pursuit of athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition;
- b) To encourage athletes to stay in Ontario to live and train;
- c) To compensate athletes for earnings lost while training;
- d) To enable athletes to successfully pursue excellence in sport while fulfilling their educational goals;
- e) To increase athlete access to improved high performance coaching; and
- f) To enhance training and competitive opportunities available to athletes.

2. How will the *Quest for Gold* - OAAP achieve its objectives?

The *Quest for Gold* - OAAP achieves its objectives by:

- Providing additional direct financial assistance (Canada Card designation) to Ontario athletes who are carded at the national level by Sport Canada;
- Providing standards for the identification and support of eligible sports and eligible junior-aged Ontario athletes to be carded at the Provincial level (Ontario Card);
- Ensuring that Provincial Sport and Multi-Sport Organizations (PSO/MSOs) have appropriate selection procedures and criteria in place, for the nomination of Ontario athletes to be carded at the Provincial level (Ontario Card);
- Providing OAAP carding support in a consistent and timely manner to athletes who meet their sport-specific carding criteria in those sports that meet OAAP eligibility requirements;

- Focusing support on junior-aged athletes to assist in their transition from junior to senior national and international competition;
- Providing a living and training allowance to help offset some of the costs athletes incur as a result of their involvement in high-performance sport;
- Allowing financial assistance provided to be used to offset tuition costs to allow athletes to attain academic goals;
- Ensuring, in conjunction with the PSO/MSO, that appropriate training and competitive opportunities are in place and providing annual, ongoing and long-term evaluation of athlete performance and potential.

3. How will direct financial assistance be provided to Ontario athletes?

Direct financial assistance will be provided to eligible Ontario athletes in the form of a living and training allowance. Assistance will be provided through two carding designations – Canada Card and Ontario Card.

Canada Card - Eligibility is limited to Ontario athletes who are carded by Sport Canada. Canada Card will provide up to an additional 33% in funding over and above the full value of the carding designation the athlete is receiving from Sport Canada – the actual value of the card is dependant on funding available.

Ontario Card - Ontario Card will provide direct financial assistance to Ontario junior-aged athletes identified by PSO/MSOs. The Ministry will also consider Ontario Card designation for some senior-aged ParaSport/Paralympic athletes and able bodied athletes in certain circumstances. The actual value of the card is dependant on funding available and total quantity of eligible athletes.

4. What are the eligible expenses for this funding?

Carded athletes receiving funding under the Ontario Athlete Assistance Program can spend funding obtained only on the following items:

- Normal living costs;
- Costs directly associated with training (e.g. coaching, facility fees, other athlete services);
- Costs associated with attending training camps and competitions (e.g. entry fees, travel costs);
- Sport-specific equipment;
- Tuition and education related expenses (e.g. books, fees, commuting costs).

5. Does the Ministry of Health Promotion require receipts from the carded athletes?

The terms and conditions of the *Quest for Gold* Program (contained within the athlete application) require athlete recipients to retain all records and documents related to the grant (e.g. receipts) for a three-year period and must make them available for inspection by the Ministry of Health Promotion when requested. However, the Ministry will not be requesting receipts from carded athletes on an ongoing basis.

6. Are *Quest for Gold* - Ontario Athlete Assistance Program grants considered “income” under the Federal *Income Tax Act*?

Canada Revenue Agency has advised that, upon review of the program, the benefits received from the *Quest for Gold* – OAAP will generally be received by recipients tax free within the meaning of the *Federal Income Tax Act*. If OAAP-funded athletes have any questions regarding their personal tax situation, they should contact the CRA at 1-800-267-6999 or online at www.cra-arc.gc.ca. Athletes who receive an OAAP grant in 2009-2010 will not be issued a T4A form for grants received in the 2009 calendar year.

7. What programs are funded by *Quest for Gold*?

The *Quest for Gold* Program had a budget of \$10.0 million in 2008-2009. In addition to the Ontario Athlete Assistance Program, funding was provided to enhance access to high performance coaching and to provide enhanced competitive opportunities and services for Ontario athletes.

Minimum Sport and Athlete Eligibility Requirements

1. What are the minimum Canada Card eligibility requirements for athletes?

- Athlete must be a current recipient of the Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program.
- Athlete must be a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant.
- Athlete must be a resident of Ontario and/or Canada for one year prior to his/her application for carding status.
- Athlete must be living in and continuing to train in Ontario. Exceptions will be made provided that the athlete can substantiate in writing at the time of application that they meet one of the following **“Residency Exceptions”**:
 - He/She is training out of province as part of a formal NSO-sanctioned training program;
 - He/She cannot receive the required level of training in Ontario and is out of the province **temporarily** during the year (i.e. lack of local facilities, coaching, competitions);
 - He/She must attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province because the course of study is not available to him/her in Ontario;
 - It is more financially feasible to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province, or other extenuating circumstances require the athlete to be out of the province.

- **As part of the application process, each athlete applying under a “Residency Exception” must submit written documentation clearly indicating how they meet the Residency Exception. This is in addition to the submission of a copy of their Ontario Driver’s License or Health Card. This must be attached within the online application or sent separately by mail.**
- **Acceptable documentation shall be one of the following:**
 - **Letter from NSO confirming athlete is part of a formal, out-of-province, NSO-sanctioned training program; or**
 - **Letter from athlete briefly describing their reason for attending an out-of-province place of study.**

***** Failure to submit this information will prevent approval of your application.**

- Athlete must be a member in good standing with PSO/MSO and/or NSO where applicable. **Ministry of Health Promotion staff will contact the Ontario PSO/MSO for each sport to confirm that the athlete is representing Ontario when competing.**
- Athlete must have signed an NSO Athlete Agreement.
- Athlete must demonstrate a commitment and dedication to a proper training and competitive program.
- Athlete must be instructed by a coach who has been trained and certified in the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) Level 2 or equivalent.
- Athlete must not be under sanction as per the Canadian Anti-Doping Policy.

Residency Exemption for Military Families:

The one-year Ontario residency requirement is waived for any Ontario Card or Canada Card applicant who is a spouse or dependant of a Regular Force member of the Canadian Forces or a Reservist currently deployed by the Canadian Forces into active service. This means that eligible military family members now qualify for OAAP funding immediately upon becoming residents of Ontario. Please see page 9 of this Handbook for details of this exemption, including a list of documents needed to verify eligibility for this waiver of the one-year Ontario residency requirement.

2. What if athletes are under the age of 18?

All athletes under the age of 18 must have their parent or legal guardian sign their OAAP application form. Cheques will be processed in the name of the eligible athlete.

3. What about professional / semi-professional athletes or athletes who have normal living and training costs covered?

Athletes who receive or who have received funding in excess of normal living and training costs through exercising their skills as a professional or semi-professional athlete, or have these costs covered by virtue of involvement on a team through a formal agreement, within the same sport as the one for which they wish to receive OAAP funding, will not be eligible for OAAP support. The onus is on the athlete to prove that he/she meets the eligibility requirements.

4. How are athletes considered for Canada Card eligibility?

All Ontario athletes who have been nominated and accepted for funding through Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) within the Government of Ontario's fiscal year (April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010) and who continue to meet AAP and OAAP eligibility requirements will automatically be considered for Canada Card status under the OAAP. The Ministry will contact those athletes at both the email and at the Ontario mailing address provided by the athlete to Sport Canada.

Athletes are solely responsible for ensuring that their contact information is kept accurate and up-to-date with Sport Canada at all times. The Ministry has no responsibility for any consequences that may follow or losses that may be sustained because of errors or omissions in Sport Canada's list of eligible Ontario athletes or for any errors in an athlete's contact information.

5. When am I eligible to apply for OAAP – Canada Card funding?

Application deadlines for Canada Card status will vary depending on when the Ministry of Health Promotion is informed by Sport Canada of an Ontario athlete's successful acceptance into Sport Canada's AAP.

Athletes will be invited to apply for *Quest for Gold* - OAAP Canada Card status based on the timelines identified by their NSO's Sport Canada Carding Cycle. For the 2009-2010 program year, Ontario athletes carded by Sport Canada will be invited to apply for OAAP in one of three carding groups.

Please use the chart on page 12 of this book to identify which carding group your sport has been designated to determine appropriate submission deadlines.

Note: For further information on the nomination process and timelines related to Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program, please contact your National Sport Organization.

6. Enrolment in 2009-2010 Program and Payments

Canada Carded athletes will be enrolled into the OAAP after:

- Notification has been given by Sport Canada to the Ministry of Health Promotion that an Ontario athlete has been nominated and accepted in the Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program within the Government of Ontario's fiscal year (April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010);
- The athlete has completed a Canada Card application form (application is available online) and submitted it by the appropriate deadline (applications will be sent by the Ministry of Health Promotion to all Sport Canada funded athletes identified as being from Ontario); and
- Once the Ministry of Health Promotion has verified Ontario residency, as submitted by the athlete as one of the application requirements (this submission is mandatory).

For 2009-2010 eligible athletes will receive carding status for one carding year starting from April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010. All payments will be processed before March 31, 2010. The amount of total payment to eligible athletes will be determined at a later date, once the total quantity of eligible athletes is known.

7. Is an athlete who is no longer funded by Sport Canada now eligible to receive a *Quest for Gold* 'Ontario Card'?

An athlete that received Sport Canada Carding between April 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009 and/or April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010 and is no longer in receipt of Sport Canada Athlete Assistance shall not be eligible to receive *Quest for Gold* funding during fiscal year 2009-2010 (April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010).

The intent of this rule is to prevent athletes whose performance levels and rankings no longer qualify them for Sport Canada carding from taking an Ontario Card from a future national-level athlete. However, exceptions may apply and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions may include, but may not be limited to logistical or administrative changes, injuries, etc. and shall be presented to MHP by the PSO/MSO Selection Committee for that sport as part of their nomination process.

8. How does receipt of *Quest for Gold* - OAAP funding impact on an athlete's current or future eligibility for a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) scholarship or their eligibility to compete in a non-scholarship NCAA sport?

The onus is entirely on the athlete to determine the impact of accepting OAAP funding on current or future NCAA eligibility and to decide whether or not to accept OAAP funding. The athlete will be required to acknowledge this onus and responsibility when signing the OAAP Ontario Card application form/completing the online application and agreeing to the related terms and conditions of the program. The Ministry accepts no responsibility for any consequences that may follow, or losses that may be sustained in connection with an athlete's eligibility or ineligibility for a NCAA scholarship, or in connection with an athlete's eligibility or ineligibility to compete in a non-scholarship NCAA sport.

The Ministry strongly urges the PSO/MSO and individual athletes to contact the NCAA Eligibility Center to determine the impact of *Quest for Gold* - OAAP funding on current or future eligibility for a NCAA scholarship or on eligibility to compete in a non-scholarship NCAA sport.

National Collegiate Athletic Association www.ncaa.org

NCAA Eligibility Center mailing address:

NCAA Eligibility Center
P.O. Box 7136
Indianapolis, IN 46207
Customer service line – 317-223-0700 Fax number - 317-968-5100

It is the Ministry's general understanding that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) stipulates that any athlete who accepts direct funding from a provincial or state government run program will likely forfeit their eligibility for an NCAA scholarship and their eligibility to participate in that sport or to participate in a non-scholarship NCAA sport. This understanding is based on the information currently available to the Ministry, which could change.

Information provided is for the general assistance of prospective *Quest for Gold* applicants and is based on the information currently available to the Ministry. The NCAA eligibility rules are entirely outside the Ministry's control and could change.

The Ministry makes no representations or warranties regarding the possible impact of a *Quest for Gold* - OAAP funding on an athlete's eligibility or ineligibility for a NCAA scholarship, or on an athlete's eligibility or ineligibility to compete in a non-scholarship NCAA sport.

Military Family Residency Exemption

The minimum one-year Ontario residency requirement for *Quest for Gold* eligibility is waived with respect to a spouse or dependant of a member of the Canadian Forces.

- A “member of the Canadian Forces” means:
 - A regular force member; or
 - A member of the reserve force of the Canadian Forces referred to in subsection 15(3) of the *National Defence Act* (Canada) who falls within the circumstances described in clause 50.2(1) (a) or (b) of the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*.
- This means that eligible military family members now meet *Quest for Gold* - OAAP residency requirements immediately upon becoming residents in Ontario. The athlete must also meet all other program requirements, including the PSO/MSO’s athlete ranking process, as detailed in the PSO/MSO’s Selection Criteria.
- In order to qualify for this exemption, the following documents must be presented to the PSO/MSO Selection Committee, who will forward said documents to MHP for confirmation of eligibility:
 - A. If the Canadian Forces member is present, any one of the following is acceptable:
 - Canadian Forces member’s **Military Identification Card** (e.g. NDI 20);
 - **Special Passport** (for military family members returning from an out-of-country posting);
 - Canadian Forces **Member’s Personnel Record Resumé**;
 - Canadian Forces member’s **Posting Message** (with accompanying photo identification); or
 - **Letter** from local Ontario Military Family Resource Center on letterhead confirming military family status of applicants (issued at the discretion of the local Military Family Resource Centre).
 - B. If the Canadian Forces member is **NOT** present at the time of application, any one of the following documents is acceptable:
 - **Special Passport** (for military family members returning from an out-of-country posting);
 - Canadian Forces **Member’s Personnel Record Resumé**; or
 - **Letter** from the local Military Family Resource Center on letterhead confirming military family status of applicants (issued at the discretion of the local Military Family Resource Centre).

The Ministry of Health Promotion reserves the right to request additional documentation to establish eligibility for this exemption. For more information, please contact the Ministry of Health Promotion directly at 416-314-7692.

Appeals

Appeals will be allowed in writing from athletes who have not been granted Canada Card status.

If an athlete's application for Canada Card status is not accepted the athlete will be notified in writing. Appeals will be dealt with by an Appeals Committee comprised of representatives from the sport community.

Grounds for appeals will be limited strictly to issues related to permanent Ontario residency status.

The deadline for athletes to submit appeals to the Appeals Committee is:

Cycle 1 - October 26, 2009

Cycle 2 - February 1, 2010

The appeals will only be accepted on the MHP template (available upon request), in writing through regular post, registered mail, courier or delivered in person. Appeals that are delivered personally or by courier shall be deemed to be received on the date of delivery. Appeals that are delivered by regular post or registered mail shall be deemed to be received three days after the date of mailing. Appeals submitted by e-mail or fax will not be accepted. The Appeals Committee will discuss all appeals at once.

Any/all information provided to the Appeals Committee may be shared with the athlete's PSO/MSO or NSO or Sport Canada by the Appeals Committee.

Quest for Gold Ontario Athlete Assistance Program Appeals Committee
c/o Sport and Recreation Branch
Ministry of Health Promotion,
393 University Avenue, Suite 1802
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2S1

Illness, Injury or Pregnancy

Sport Canada's policy regarding illness, injury or pregnancy will apply insofar as it impacts the athlete's eligibility for Sport Canada's AAP and, as a result, the athlete's eligibility for Canada Card status under the OAAP. Questions related to an athlete's Sport Canada carding status in cases of illness, injury or pregnancy should be referred firstly to an athlete's NSO.

Application Deadlines

Athletes must complete their online application and submit all required documentation by the following deadlines:

Cycle # 1 Sports: November 2nd, 2009

Cycle # 2 Sports: March 1st, 2010

Cycle # 3 Sports: T.B.D. - Due to the close proximity of this carding cycle and the Government of Ontario's fiscal year end, athletes in this group will be contacted directly and provided with deadlines and instructions.

Returning Funds – Withdrawal from Program

If an athlete chooses not to accept the *Quest for Gold* - OAAP Funding, either to maintain future NCAA eligibility, due to retirement from sport, or whatever the reason, it is important to contact MHP at your earliest convenience to allow MHP to transfer these funds to the next eligible athlete within your sport's ranking list.

The *Quest for Gold* cheque, accompanied by a brief explanation indicating the name and address of the athlete and reason for withdrawal should be sent to:

Quest for Gold - Ontario Athlete Assistance Program
c/o Sport and Recreation Branch
Ministry of Health Promotion,
393 University Avenue, Suite 1802
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2S1

Eligible Sports and Application Cycles

Ontario athletes in the following sports may be eligible for a *Quest for Gold* 'Canada Card':

Alpine Skiing	Cycle 1	Judo	Cycle 1
Alpine Skiing - Paralympic	Cycle 1	Judo - Paralympic	Cycle 1
Archery	Cycle 2	Karate	Cycle 3
Archery - Paralympic	Cycle 2	Luge	Cycle 2
Athletics	Cycle 2	Modern Pentathlon	Cycle 2
Athletics - Paralympic	Cycle 2	Racquetball	Cycle 1
Badminton	Cycle 2	Rowing	Cycle 2
Baseball - Men	Cycle 2	Rowing - Paralympic	Cycle 2
Basketball - Men	Cycle 1	Rugby - Men	Cycle 1
Basketball - Women	Cycle 1	Rugby - Paralympic	Cycle 1
Basketball - Paralympic - Men	Cycle 1	Rugby - Women	Cycle 3
Basketball - Paralympic - Women	Cycle 1	Shooting	Cycle 2
Biathlon	Cycle 1	Shooting - Paralympic	Cycle 2
Bobsleigh - Men, Women	Cycle 1	Skeleton	Cycle 1
Boccia - Paralympic	Cycle 1	Ski Cross	Cycle 1
Boxing - Men	Cycle 3	Sledge Hockey	Cycle 1
Boxing - Women	Cycle 3	Snowboard	Cycle 1
Canoeing	Cycle 2	Soccer - Men	Cycle 2
Cross Country Ski	Cycle 1	Soccer - Women	Cycle 2
Cross Country Ski - Paralympic	Cycle 1	Softball - Women	Cycle 2
Curling - Men	Cycle 1	Speed Skating	Cycle 1
Curling - Paralympic	Cycle 1	Squash	Cycle 2
Curling - Women	Cycle 1	Swimming	Cycle 2
Cycling	Cycle 2	Swimming - Paralympic	Cycle 2
Cycling - Paralympic	Cycle 2	Synchro Swim	Cycle 2
Diving	Cycle 2	Table Tennis	Cycle 2
Equestrian	Cycle 2	Taekwondo	Cycle 2
Equestrian - Paralympic	Cycle 2	Tennis	Cycle 3
Fencing	Cycle 2	Tennis - Paralympic	Cycle 3
Fencing - Paralympic	Cycle 2	Triathlon	Cycle 2
Field Hockey - Men	Cycle 2	Volleyball - Beach	Cycle 2
Field Hockey - Women	Cycle 1	Volleyball - Men	Cycle 1
Figure Skating	Cycle 1	Volleyball - Women	Cycle 1
Freestyle Ski	Cycle 1	Water Polo - Men	Cycle 2
Goalball - Men - Paralympic	Cycle 1	Water Polo - Women	Cycle 2
Goalball - Women- Paralympic	Cycle 1	Water Ski	Cycle 2
Golf	Cycle 2	Weightlifting - Men	Cycle 2
Gymnastics - Men	Cycle 3	Weightlifting - Women	Cycle 2
Gymnastics - Rhythmic	Cycle 1	White Water Canoe	Cycle 2
Gymnastics - Trampoline	Cycle 2	Wrestling - Men	Cycle 1
Gymnastics - Women	Cycle 1	Wrestling - Women	Cycle 1
Hockey - Women	Cycle 1	Yachting	Cycle 2
		Yachting - Paralympic	Cycle 2

This list and the schedule for when each sport announces its carded athletes is subject to change and is based entirely on the Sport Canada - Athlete Assistance Program and their interactions with each respective National Sport Organization. MHP will contact eligible athletes, by sport, as soon as that sport's list of card athletes is made available to MHP by Sport Canada.