FINANCIAL, EDUCATION & CAREER SUPPORT

NATIONAL TEAM HANDBOOK

VERSION 1.0 – AUGUST 26, 2026

The demands of high-performance sport extend beyond training and competition. A range of programs and resources are available to help eligible National Team athletes manage the financial demands of sport, pursue education and career goals, develop skills outside of sport, and plan for their future.

Eligibility varies by program and may depend on factors such as carding status, National Team level, or program-specific criteria. Athletes are encouraged to explore the opportunities available to them and be aware of applicable application and nomination deadlines.

1 SPORT CANADA ATHLETE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (AAP)

The Athlete Assistance Program (AAP), commonly referred to as carding, provides direct financial support to eligible Canadian high-performance athletes.

The program is administered by Sport Canada and is intended to help athletes manage some of the financial demands associated with training and competing at the international level while pursuing their sport, education, and career goals.

Athletes are nominated by GymCan in accordance with Sport Canada requirements, GymCan's AAP quota, and the approved carding criteria for their discipline.

Carded athletes receive a monthly living and training allowance. Depending on eligibility, additional support may also be available for tuition and other approved expenses.

Discipline specific criteria can be found on the Discipline microsites.

1.1 TUITION SUPPORT

Eligible carded athletes may receive up to $5,500 in tuition support per carding cycle to support post-secondary education.

Deferred tuition support may also be available to eligible athletes who do not use all of their tuition support while carded.

Athletes should review Sport Canada's current AAP policies and their discipline-specific GymCan carding criteria for complete eligibility and program requirements.

Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program:
https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/athlete-assistance.html

2 GAME PLAN

Game Plan is Canada's national holistic athlete-support network. It provides eligible high-performance athletes with access to programs, resources, and individualized support designed to help them succeed during their athletic careers and prepare for life beyond sport.

2.1 ELIGIBILITY

Game Plan services are available to current and recently carded athletes, as well as Senior National Team athletes, with the level of access varying based on athlete status.

Athletes who are currently carded, or who have been carded within the past two years through Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program (AAP), have access to the full range of Game Plan programs, services, and resources.

Senior National Team athletes who are not carded may also access select Game Plan programs, services, and resources.

Athletes are encouraged to connect with Game Plan to confirm the services and benefits available to them based on their individual eligibility.

2.2 EDUCATION, CAREER & ATHLETE SUPPORT

Game Plan provides support and resources across areas such as:

- Education;
- Career development;
- Skill development;
- Transition planning;
- Mental health and wellbeing; and
- Community and networking.

Eligible athletes can also connect with a Game Plan Advisor for individualized support in navigating available programs and services.

Find your Game Plan Advisor:
https://www.mygameplan.ca/about/our-team

Game Plan also provides eligible athletes with access to mental health and wellbeing supports. For more information about mental health services available to National Team athletes, see Mental Health & Wellbeing in this Handbook.

3 CANADIAN ATHLETES NOW FUND (CAN FUND)

The Canadian Athletes Now Fund (CAN Fund) provides direct financial support to Canadian athletes who are training and competing to represent Canada internationally.

Active National Team athletes training to represent Canada internationally may apply directly to CAN Fund. Summer, winter, able-bodied, and Para athletes are eligible to apply.

CAN Fund typically offers two application opportunities each year. Successful applicants currently receive $8,000 per application, paid directly to the athlete. Athletes may apply during both application periods, even if they have already received funding during the year.

Funding can help athletes manage the costs associated with pursuing high-performance sport, including areas such as training, coaching, equipment, travel, nutrition, physiotherapy, team fees, and living expenses.

Athletes are responsible for applying directly to CAN Fund during an open application period.

Funding amounts, application periods, and eligibility requirements are subject to change. Athletes should consult CAN Fund directly for current information.

CAN Fund:
https://canadianathletesnow.ca/

Application:
https://canadianathletesnow.ca/application/

4 PETRO-CANADA FUELLING ATHLETE AND COACHING EXCELLENCE (FACE) PROGRAM

The Petro-Canada Fuelling Athlete and Coaching Excellence (FACE) Program provides financial support to developing athletes and their coaches as they work toward representing Canada at the Olympic or Paralympic Games.

The program is intended to support promising athletes at a stage in their development when they do not yet qualify for government funding.

Each year, National Sport Organizations, including GymCan, nominate eligible athlete-coach pairings for consideration. Final recipients are selected through the FACE program.

Selected athlete-coach pairings currently receive a $10,000 grant, with $5,000 provided to the athlete and $5,000 to their coach.

Funding may be used to support expenses such as:

- Training;
- Equipment;
- Competition travel; and
- Coach education.

Athletes do not apply directly through GymCan. GymCan identifies and nominates eligible athlete-coach pairings in accordance with the applicable FACE program requirements.

Petro-Canada FACE Program:
https://www.petro-canada.ca/en/about-petro-canada/olympic-and-paralympic-sponsorship/face-program

5 DOCUMENT TIMELINES

Version	Date	Change(s)
Final 1.0	August 26, 2026	Initial document