



CROSS COUNTRY ONTARIO

***Quest for Gold* – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program 2011-2012**

ATHLETE SELECTION CRITERIA

A. Program Description

A.1 Objectives

Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program 2011-2012 (OAAP) is funded by the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport (MHPS), and operated through the Sport, Recreation & Community Programs Branch. The overarching goal of the *Quest for Gold* – OAAP is directly related to the Enhanced Excellence goals of the *Canadian Sport Policy* – 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.

The program will provide direct financial assistance to Ontario junior-aged athletes through an "Ontario Card" designation. "Junior-aged athlete" is defined as those athletes who fall within the eligible age range for the Canada Games - 11 to 22 years of age. A PSO/MSO with a NSO-approved Long Term Athlete Development Model (LTADM) that identifies older athletes in the "Train to Train" and "Train to Compete" categories may apply to MHPS for a variation to this 11-22 age range. A PSO/MSO may choose to allocate a maximum of 30% of its carding allotment to athletes older than 22 years of age who have been identified as a potential next generation national team athlete by the PSO/MSO's selection process.

The intent of the OAAP is to provide funding to individual athletes based on their demonstrated commitment to high performance sport, allowing them to pursue athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition.

A.2 How does it work?

In accordance with the OAAP guidelines, Cross Country Ontario is responsible for developing sport-specific selection criteria and forming a Selection Committee that will apply the criteria to select those athletes who will be awarded Ontario Card status in 2011-2012. The Selection Criteria are approved by the Board of Directors and reviewed by MHPS staff. Nominated athletes will be required to sign and comply with an Athlete Agreement between the athlete and Cross Country Ontario. Carding status will be for one year starting April 1, 2011 ending March 31, 2012.

In 2011-2012, the MHPS allocated a certain amount of OAAP Ontario Cards to each eligible Provincial Sport / Multi-Sport Organization (PSO/MSO). Cross Country Ontario has been allotted a total of 10 Ontario cards.

The Selection Committee, which has been approved by the PSO/MSO Board of Directors is comprised of the following members:

Brad Jones, Chair, CCO High Performance Committee (HPC)
Pavlina Sudrich, CCO Provincial Coach
Don Nixon, CCO Board Chair
Doug Winter, NOD District Coach Representative

A.3 How much funding is available?

The exact level of funding for the 2011-2012 carding year will be determined by the MHPS after the total number of athletes nominated for Ontario Card status has been determined. Funding will be released prior to March 31, 2012.

A.4 How will Cross Country Ontario's Selection Committee decide who receives funding?

The Cross Country Ontario Selection Committee will use both the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport Eligibility Criteria and the Sport-Specific Athlete Selection Criteria detailed below to determine which athletes will be nominated for Ontario Card status in 2011-2012:

B. Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport Eligibility Criteria

B.1 Minimum Eligibility Requirements

All athletes must meet the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport's minimum athlete eligibility criteria:

1. Athlete must be a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant.
2. Athlete must be a permanent resident of Ontario **for one year prior** to his/her nomination for carding status.
3. Athletes must be living in and continuing to train in Ontario. Exceptions shall be made **on a case specific basis by the PSO/MSO Selection Committee** provided that the athlete can substantiate in writing at the time of application/nomination for carding status that:
 - (a) He/She cannot receive the required level of training in Ontario and is out of the province **temporarily** during the year (i.e. due to lack of facilities, coaching, competitions);
 - (b) He/She must attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province either because the course of study is not offered by an Ontario institution: or
 - (c) It is more financially feasible to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province, or other extenuating circumstances that require the athlete to be out of the province.

The onus is on the athlete to demonstrate that he/she needs to be out-of-province for one of the above reasons. Any documentation required to clarify this "residency exception" must be submitted in its entirety to the Cross Country Ontario Selection Committee by no later than September 26, 2011 in order to be considered. Documentation related to

- exception (a) above may include, but shall not be limited to, a letter from the athlete's NSO outlining the following, as well as any other pertinent information:
- why the athlete is training out-of-province;
 - whether or not the athlete was formally invited by the NSO;
 - what additional opportunities are being made available beyond those provided in Ontario; and
 - any other information that will illustrate that the athlete is receiving enhanced training while still meeting all obligations of Cross Country Ontario.
4. Athletes who have achieved Canada Card status are not eligible for Ontario Cards;
 5. Athlete must be a member in good standing with PSO/MSO and NSO where applicable;
 6. Athlete must have entered into a Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement with his or her PSO/MSO and must be in full compliance with the terms and conditions of that agreement;
 7. Athlete must have met all terms and conditions of any previous *Quest for Gold* Sports Organization – Athlete Agreements to the satisfaction of the PSO/MSO in order to be eligible for consideration in 2011/2012;
 8. Athlete must demonstrate a commitment and dedication to a proper training and competitive program;
 9. Athlete's coach must be minimum Level 2 NCCP certified or trained status Competition Stream or the sport's equivalent in the Instruction Stream;
 10. Athlete must not be under a sanction that prohibits competition as per the Canadian Anti-Doping Policy;
 11. Athlete must be attending an educational institution full-time (i.e. elementary and secondary schools):
 - Exceptions will be made provided that the athlete can substantiate that his/her training will not allow for full-time attendance or if an athlete requires special needs that preclude full or part-time attendance (e.g. Athlete with a disability (AWAD));
 12. Athletes who have completed their area of study at the secondary level (i.e. high school) and who continue to train towards participation in major national or international competitions will also be considered;
 13. If eligible, the athlete must compete, and continue to compete solely for Ontario and/or Canada for one year from the date of the Minister's letter informing the athlete of acceptance into OAAP program, at Canada Games and other national competitions involving provincial team competitions;
 14. Athlete must not receive financial support from any other provincial/territorial athlete assistance program. This does not include academic scholarships, bursaries, student grants, student loans, social assistance, disability pensions, and other forms of financial assistance that have nothing to do with competitive sport.
 15. Eligibility will be limited to Ontario junior-aged athletes, ages 11-22 ("junior-aged" refers to chronological age, not a sport's specific age category). The only exception is for PSO/MSOs using 30% of Ontario Card allotment for athletes older than 22 years of age who have been identified as a potential next generation national team athlete by the PSO/MSO's selection process.

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 Reservist currently deployed by the Canadian Forces into active service and who takes up residence in Ontario during the fiscal year. This means that eligible military family members now qualify for OAAP funding immediately upon becoming residents of Ontario. Please see the 2011-2012 *Quest for Gold* Athlete 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.

B.2 Important Notes

- To be deemed a potential next generation national team athlete, the athlete must be age-eligible to compete on the national team in the year following receipt of Ontario Card funding.
- An athlete who received Sport Canada Carding during any part of MHPS' fiscal year April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011 and/or any part of fiscal year April 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012 and is no longer in receipt of Sport Canada Athlete Assistance shall not be eligible to receive *Quest for Gold* funding during fiscal year 2011-2012 (April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012.) 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 by the MHPS on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions may include, but may not be limited to logistical or administrative changes (ex. reduction in Sport Canada carding allocation), injuries, etc. Cross Country Ontario must contact MHPS in writing prior to the submission of the Athlete Nominations to seek individual exceptions.
- 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.
- An athlete can only be nominated to receive *Quest for Gold* funding in one sport.
- Athletes who are attending any foreign post-secondary educational institution (including NCAA institutions) and are receiving an athletic scholarship in any sport are not eligible to receive OAAP support.
- 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 and agreeing to the related terms and conditions of the program. Athletes are strongly encouraged 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 hours - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern time Monday through Friday.

Toll-free phone number (U.S. callers) - Customer service line – 877-262-1492

Phone number (international callers) - Customer service line – 317-223-0700
Fax number - 317-968-5100

- In the event of a conflict or inconsistency between the MHPS eligibility requirements detailed in the MHPS binder provided to PSO/MSOs and duplicated in the Athlete Handbook provided to each nominated athlete and the eligibility requirements listed in the PSO/MSO Athlete Selection Criteria Document prepared by the PSO/MSO, the MHPS Binder/Athlete Handbook shall prevail.

B.3 Athletes funded through the Sport Canada AAP

Ontario athletes who have been nominated and accepted for funding through Sport Canada's AAP within the government of Ontario's fiscal year (April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012) and who continue to meet AAP and OAAP eligibility requirements will automatically be considered for a *Quest for Gold* 'Canada Card'. MHPS will contact those athletes directly at the mailing and email addresses the athlete provided to Sport Canada. Athletes are solely responsible for ensuring that their contact information is kept accurate and up to date at all times.

C. Cross Country Ontario 2011- 2012 Sport-Specific Athlete Selection Criteria

This section contains the sport-specific athlete selection criteria to be used in the identification, ranking and selection of athletes for Ontario Cards. In order to avoid the possibility of a conflict of interest in the OAAP selection process, the HPC Athlete Representative, and any member of the HPC who has a child on the Ontario Ski Team, will not participate in the application of the criteria or the selection process.

C.1 What are CCO's Objectives for OAAP funding?

CCO's Selection Committee is looking to support Ontario athletes who have the best chance of making a national team in the next three years. The determination of who has the best chance of making a national team will be based on an athlete's performance on the Canada Points List (CPL) and their percentage proximity to the International CPL Points Benchmarks (IPB) as posted by Cross Country Canada <http://www.ccski.com/dbfiles/1636.pdf>. From this data a ranking list will be created that shows each athlete's performance as a percentage of age-appropriate IPB for his or her year of birth.

C.2 CCO Selection Criteria for Full Cards

1. The CCO OAAP selection committee will generate a list of all Ontario Ski Team athletes that is based on each athlete's CPL for distance and sprint, as well as the IPB distance and IPB sprint values respectively, for the athlete's applicable year of birth. The differences between each athlete's distance and sprint CPL values and the corresponding IPB values will be averaged and used to create separate ranking lists for males and females.
2. **A performance cut-off will be established such that only athletes who rank 93.00% or higher on the ranking lists will be eligible for carding.**



3. The selected athletes will be the five females and five males who are ranked one through five on both of the gender lists AND who achieve the minimum performance level described in 2) above.
4. If the application of the minimum performance results in fewer than five OAAP-eligible athletes within a gender, up to two (2) unused cards may be reassigned to the next highest ranking athlete(s) who meet the performance standard on the other gender list and who have not already been assigned a card.
5. If the application of the minimum performance standard results in fewer than five OAAP-eligible athletes within a gender, and there exists no other athlete from the other gender who has met the minimum performance standards, the unused card(s) will go unassigned for this carding year.
6. A tie between two or more athletes on the ranking list will be broken by comparing the results of the head-to-head competitions in the common races used to generate the respective CPL numbers for the athletes involved in the tie.

Note: The IPB to be used to calculate the rankings will be the International CPL Points Benchmarks developed by CCC for the 2010-2011 year of competition. The CPL used will be the Period 5 list published April 11, 2011.

C.3 CCO Selection Process

Nominated athletes who meet the Minimum Eligibility Requirements (section B.1) and the CCO Selection Criteria as set out in section C.2 will be invited to apply for OAAP carding as detailed in section F below.

Information to be provided to Cross Country Ontario must include:

1. A detailed training plan. The plan must show the athlete's current training and racing plan and the steps they intend on following to achieve national and international success. The plan must be approved by their personal or club coach, and the Ontario Coach.
2. A written record of the athlete's training log demonstrating adherence to the above plan, including proof of attendance at appropriate, specific training camps or events through the 2011-2012 dryland season.
3. A commitment to sign an Athlete Agreement, which will be sent to nominated athletes. The agreement covers the athlete's obligations and commitments for the period of funding. This agreement will include a commitment to engage the services of a qualified coach, and to participate in a number of specified training camps and races over the carding period, of April 1st, 2011 to March 31, 2012.

D. Failure to Meet Selection Criteria for Health-related Reasons (Force Majeure)

Athletes who, for strictly health-related reasons, have not achieved the standards required for nomination of carded status **may** be considered for nomination under the following conditions:

- The athlete has fulfilled all reasonable training and rehabilitation requirements aimed at a speedy return to full high-performance training and competition during the period of his or her injury, illness or pregnancy and, despite making every reasonable effort to attain the

- applicable carding standards during the year in which the injury, illness or pregnancy occurred, has failed to do so, in the view of Cross Country Ontario, for reasons strictly related to the injury, illness or pregnancy.
- Cross Country Ontario, based on its technical judgement and that of a Cross Country Ontario team physician or equivalent, indicates in writing the expectation that the athlete will achieve at least the minimum standards required for carding during the upcoming carding period.
 - The athlete has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate his or her long-term commitment to high-performance training and competition goals, as well as his or her intention to pursue full high-performance training and competition throughout the carding period for which he or she wishes to be renewed despite not having met the carding criteria.

Athletes who apply for OAAP carding consideration under Force Majeure will be ranked against one another, and the other athletes on CCO's OAAP ranking list as follows:

1. A performance figure for the Force Majeure candidate will be determined based on the average of the CPL for the best two distance races and the best two sprint races attained by that athlete in the competitive season where training and/or competition was curtailed or restricted for health reasons.
2. This performance measure will be used to generate an OAAP ranking for the Force Majeure athlete(s) in the same manner (i.e., proximity from IPB based on year of birth) that is used for all other eligible athletes on the OAAP ranking list.
3. The addition of a male Force Majeure athlete to the ranking list will not affect the selection process for female athletes and vice versa.
4. A maximum of two Force Majeure appeals (one male and one female) will be accommodated in any one OAAP carding cycle.
5. A Force Majeure athlete must demonstrate a performance figure on the CCO OAAP ranking list that would put them in the top half of the ranking list for the available number of cards in their gender.
6. The CCO HPC reserves the right to revert to the CPL performance history from the previous year of competition in the case where a Force Majeure candidate was not able to participate in the minimum number of races specified in criteria # 1 above.

E. Alternates

Cross Country Ontario will also nominate alternates to those athletes nominated for Ontario Card status. Alternates will be those athletes who are ranked directly behind those athletes nominated for the allotment of Ontario Cards of a particular gender. The names of alternates will be published along with the names of nominated athletes. If an athlete declines or is removed from nomination an alternate will be substituted into that athlete's position, provided that:

- Alternate is substituted within MHPS' 2011-2012 fiscal year;
- An alternate is available from the same gender;

- Funding for the alternate athlete is still available within MHPS' fiscal year (e.g. full funding for the Ontario Card has not already been paid out to the athlete who is no longer in program).

F. To Apply

Athletes will be required to submit their training plan and log as detailed in Section C.3 above, no later than October 7th, 2011 to:

Name: Liz Inkila
Email: admin@xco.org
Address: 738 River St, Thunder Bay, ON, P7A 3S8
Phone number: 807-768-4617
Fax number: 807-768-8368

Cross Country Ontario will publish or make known a draft list of athletes nominated for Ontario Card status by no later than **October 17, 2011**.

The Athlete Agreement and proof of Ontario residency must be received no later than **November 14th, 2011**. The CCO OAAP Athlete Agreement will only come into effect if an athlete is selected and accepts carding status through the OAAP program.

An email will be sent to each athlete by CCO by no later than November 16th confirming receipt of the athlete agreement and proof of Ontario residency. It is the athlete's responsibility to contact Cross Country Ontario if this email is not received to be certain that the supporting documentation has been successfully received by the deadline date.

G. Appeals

Athletes who have not been nominated for an Ontario Card by Cross Country Ontario's Selection Committee or who have been nominated for a 'Half Card' versus a 'Full Card', where applicable will be allowed to appeal that decision by filing a "Notice of Appeal" with MHPS. Appeals will be heard by an Appeals Committee comprised of representatives from the sport community, selected by the MHPS.

Grounds for appeals will be limited strictly to issues related to:

- A) Whether or not the Selection Committee has completed the selection process in accordance with its own published selection criteria and related procedures;

B) Whether or not the Selection Committee applied the selection criteria in a manner that was free from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest.

Please note that before an athlete can file a Notice of Appeal, he or she must first ask Cross Country Ontario for reasons explaining why he or she was not nominated for an Ontario Card.

If the athlete is not satisfied with the PSO/MSO's response, the athlete may submit a Notice of Appeal, found below. A Notice of Appeal will only be accepted on the MHPS-provided template (typed or hand-printed, no hand-written entries) through email, regular post, registered mail, courier or delivered in person. The Notice of Appeal must be received by MHPS by 4 p.m. on the deadline day. Appeals that are delivered personally or by courier shall be deemed to be received on the date of delivery.

Once MHPS has received the Notice of Appeal, it will share it with Cross Country Ontario, who will then have an opportunity to file a "Response" with MHPS by a specified deadline. The Response will outline why Cross Country Ontario believes that the Selection Committee's decision not to nominate the athlete should be upheld by the Appeals Committee. MHPS will share Cross Country Ontario's Response with the athlete.

If, after receiving Cross Country Ontario's Response, the athlete believes that Cross Country Ontario has raised new or additional reasons to justify the Selection Committee's decision not to nominate the athlete for an Ontario Card, then the athlete will have an opportunity to file a "Reply" with MHPS, responding to these additional reasons. The Reply must be limited to these additional reasons and cannot be used to make submissions already raised in the Notice of Appeal, or that the athlete neglected to include in the Notice of Appeal. The Reply will only be accepted on the MHPS-provided template.

Once MHPS receives the Notice of Appeal, the Response, and the Reply (if applicable), it will provide those materials to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will discuss all appeals at once. During its review of the appeals, the Appeals Committee reserves the right to request additional information from both the athlete and Cross Country Ontario.

After reviewing an appeal the Appeals Committee will have the authority to:

1. Direct Cross Country Ontario to redo the selection process using the correct criteria/process and submit a new list of nominated athletes;
2. Deny the appeal; or
3. Allow the appeal and nominate the appellant for carding status.

Once the Appeals Committee has reached its decision, it will contact the athlete and Cross Country Ontario in writing to communicate its decision and the reasons therefore.

An athlete who has had his or her appeal denied is not permitted to submit a second appeal to the Appeals Committee on the same or different grounds.

Note: Cross Country Ontario is encouraged to resolve disputes or disagreements informally with athletes who have not been nominated to avoid, wherever possible, formal appeals.

The deadline for athletes to submit an "**Athlete's Notice of Appeal**" to the Appeals Committee is October 27, 2011.

Appeals must be completed on the Notice of Appeal template below and will be directed to:

Quest for Gold Ontario Athlete Assistance Program Appeals Committee
c/o Sport, Recreation and Community Programs Branch
Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport
Suite 702, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1S5

2011/2012 *Quest for Gold* – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program Notice of Appeal Template

The deadline for an athlete to submit an appeal to the Appeals Committee is 4:00 p.m. on October 27, 2011 for Cycle 1 and 4:00 p.m. on January 26, 2012 for Cycle 2. Appeals will only be accepted on the MHPS-provided Notice of Appeal template. **Please refer to the appeals section of your PSO/MSO's Athlete Selection Criteria document prior to completing this form.**

Return form to:

**Quest for Gold Appeals Committee
c/o Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport
777 Bay Street, Suite 702, Toronto ON M7A 1S5
Fax: 416-314-6301 Email: Scott.Cooper@ontario.ca**

Full Name _____
Address _____ City _____
Postal Code _____ Phone _____ Email _____
Sport / PSO _____

Reason for Appeal (Check all that apply):

- Whether or not the PSO/MSO has completed the selection process in accordance with its own published selection criteria and related procedures;
- Whether or not the PSO/MSO applied the section criteria in a manner that was free from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest.

Provide a two-line summary of the reason for the appeal:

In the space below, (continue on to next page as needed) provide the reasons communicated to you by your PSO/MSO as to why you were not nominated for an Ontario Card. (Note: If your PSO/MSO did not provide you with any reasons, please make a request to your PSO/MSO to see these reasons before completing this Notice of Appeal Template.)

In the space below (continue on to next page as needed), provide a detailed account of the situation to allow the Appeals Committee to understand the basis of the appeal (please submit additional pages/supporting documentation as necessary):

PLEASE NOTE that all decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

Print Name of Appellant

Signature of Appellant

Date

All information provided to the Appeals Committee will be shared with both the Appellant and the PSO/MSO.
