A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR DONORS | ISSUE 10 | MAR 2016

# STRIVE

## FUTURE OLYMPIANS

TOMORROW'S CHAMPIONS AT YOG

+

RBC TRAINING GROUND TACKLES TALENT ID

+

SECOND CHANCE FOR CANADA'S SKI JUMPERS




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# FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This winter we have met some incredible athletes, and we are pleased to share a few of their stories with you in this edition of Strive. The athletes are from all regions of the country, all ages and all levels of talent including the hundreds of athletes participating in the RBC Training Ground talent identification program to the young, dedicated athletes competing in the Youth Olympic Games. As a donor to the Canadian Olympic Foundation, you can take pride in knowing that your support has impact on all of these athletes and their coaches.

The 2016 Youth Olympic Games took place in Lillehammer, Norway; site of the 1994 Olympic Winter Games. The Youth Olympic Games (YOG) used all the same venues, allowing the young athletes aged 15 to 18 to compete in world-class facilities. The YOG are not only about competitive sport, but are billed as an event where 'sport meets culture and education' with a goal to inspire young people to participate in sport and live by the Olympic values. Read more on page 5.

We hope that you enjoy this edition of Strive. As always we try to share with you the impact that your gift has on Canadian sport, and the many athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers. We love to hear from you, so please share your comments with us by sending an email to foundation@olympic.ca.

Leanne Nicolle, Executive Director

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We would love to hear from you! Please send your comments to:

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OLYMPIAN PROFILE

# Isabelle Charest

Lillehammer, Norway is a small town with a big Olympic history. This picturesque ski destination holds a special place in Isabelle Charest's heart. The decorated short track speed skater made her Olympic debut at the Lillehammer 1994 Olympic Winter Games. Isabelle's medals – a silver and two bronze – came in the span of three Olympic Winter Games in the 3000m relay, her first a second place finish in Lillehammer 1994.

When she saw an opportunity to serve as Chef de Mission for the Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG) and to return to the place where her Olympic journey began, she couldn't pass it up.

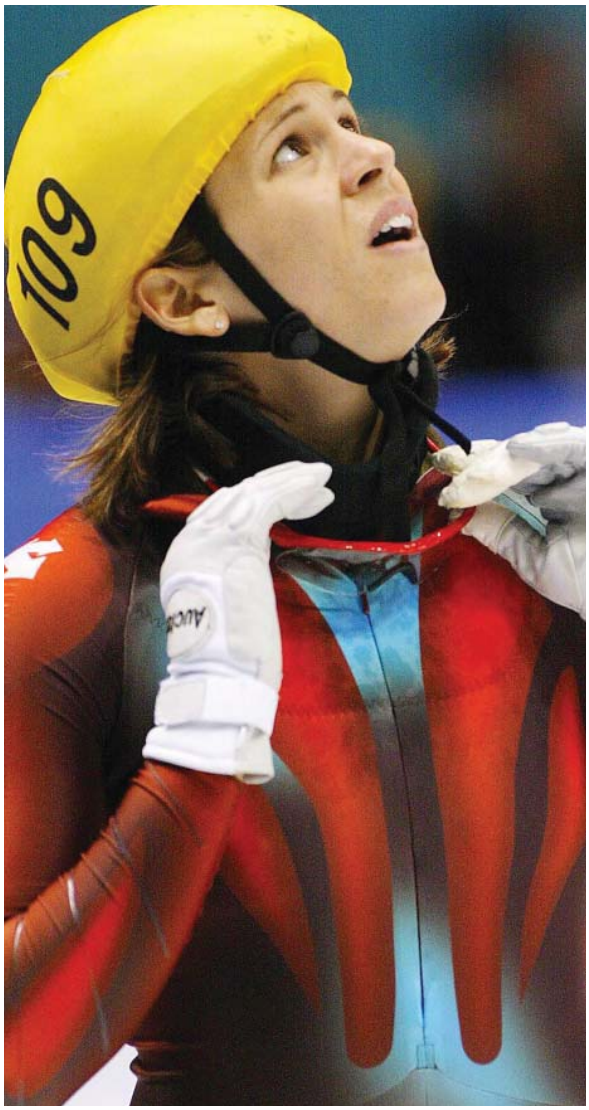
"I wanted to give back to the sport community that gave me so much in my youth – to perhaps have a positive impact on the progression of some young athletes," says Isabelle.

Following the selection process, it was announced in spring of 2015 that Isabelle would return to Lillehammer to lead Canada's aspiring Olympians at the YOG.

"Because of my current role in the education field, I'm inspired every day by what young people can achieve and who they can become. Serving as Team Canada's Chef de Mission for the Youth Olympic Games in Lillehammer felt like a natural fit."

Fourteen years post-retirement from speed skating, Isabelle now works in communications for a school board in Granby, Quebec. Though sport is removed from her day-to-day life, Isabelle sees the Youth Olympics Games as an invaluable experience for young athletes on their path to the podium.

"Multi-sport Games are fantastic, exciting, life-changing events. But they also come with a lot of external distractions that are atypical from World Cups and other individual sporting competitions. The YOG offers the feelings and environment associated with an Olympic Games and helps athletes manage those extra emotions," says Isabelle. "It surely gives these athletes an edge over someone who has never participated in a large scale of event of this type before."




The Youth Olympic Games have been put on by the International Olympic Committee since 2010. An event distinct from other youth sports events, they also integrate a unique Culture and Education Programme (CEP), based around five main themes: Olympism, Social Responsibility, Skills Development, Expression and Well-being and Healthy Lifestyles. These lessons are delivered through a series of seminars, information booths and activities, known as 'Learn and Share'.

"I don't know anywhere else that young athletes can take advantage of the full spectrum of athlete preparation," says Isabelle. "I really see the value in it. Everything is covered – from injury prevention to clean sport to mental training, nutrition to safe sport. For the level and age of athletes at YOG, they can really learn a lot."



**Left**
Isabelle checks her finish time at Salt Lake City 2002.

**Above**
Isabelle and Young Ambassador Eric Mitchell at the Lillehammer 2014 Opening Ceremony.

Paul Chiasson

Are you an Olympian alumnus? We want to hear from you! Contact us at foundation@olympic.ca

## YOG BLOG:

# Young Ambassador Eric Mitchell



**Top**
The Canadian Youth Olympic men's ice hockey team tries luge at the Lillehammer Olympic Sliding Centre.

If you are looking for ways to infuse the Olympic Movement into your community check out the hundreds of resources offered by the Canadian Olympic School Program. All resources are available for download at **Olympic.ca/education.**

At the beginning of my journey to the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) as Canada's Young Ambassador I set out to do everything possible to inspire the next generation of athletes to make the most out of their YOG experience. Success for me at the YOG consisted of three components: building a cohesive Team Canada, creating an environment where athletes and coaches utilized the Learn & Share activities, and above all else to ensure athletes left Lillehammer with the tools and motivation to share their experience back at home.

I had many moments with athletes doing Learn & Share activates that really resonated with me, and each was for different reasons. Working with our figure skating athletes in the 'Lead the Games' booth we were working through an activity with our eyes closed; it was challenging and without notice one of the athletes stopped and said 'imagine how hard it would be if you were blind.' This was a real moment where we learned how important it is to provide the assistance required for everyone. Another moment that stuck out to me was when our entire hockey team came to the 'Luge Try the Sport' with our Luge athletes. It was a great moment for the hockey players to experience a sport they were not familiar with.

Finally taking part in the IOC Youth Session with a Canadian Biathlete was an opportunity to speak about how important it was to share the spirit of the YOG with Canadians back home. This came to be a reality when I organized a presentation at a local school, I originally planned to have just one Young Olympian speak but after word spread I ended up having all five of our Calgary based athletes there to share their stories. I had an incredibly rewarding time learning and sharing with our young Team Canada athletes and cannot wait to see all the great things these future leaders will achieve.



# Behind The Scenes

## YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES

**Jessie Barrett** | Communications for the Canadian Olympic Foundation

When I learned back in October 2015 that I would be going to Lillehammer for the Youth Olympic Games, I was completely thrilled. For a sport-obsessed individual like myself, I was excited to call a ski-hill, or luge track, or curling rink my office for 10 days. As the communications lead for the Canadian Olympic Foundation, YOG offered a unique opportunity to meet, build relationships with and tell the stories of next generation athletes.

I arrived in Lillehammer on February 12 – an hour before the Opening Ceremony. A colleague and I rushed to Lysgårdsbakkene Ski Jumping Arena, an iconic venue for winter Olympians, where the ceremony was being held. The firework-filled, youth-centric celebration went off twenty-two years to the day after the Lillehammer 1994 Games began. The '94 Games are a huge source of pride for Norwegians and you could really feel the link from past to present. It set the tone for the next days of action.

I spent my days running from event to event; facilitating media requests, interviewing athletes, taking photos and cheering on the incredible young people that make up Team Canada. I had the pleasure of spending Valentine's Day at the Oslo Vinterpark Halfpipe with Chef de Mission Isabelle Charest. We watched as freestyle snowboarders Baily McDonald and Kira Lengkeek and skiiers Mackenzie Wilson and Evan Bichon tore up the half pipe. It was wild to watch these young people do their thing. Isabelle and I were able to chat with the athletes and their coaches after their competition and the whole group was incredibly positive and grateful for the experience. Personally, I love the freestyle vibe - the athletes are so cool and relaxed and appreciative of their competitors.

On February 15, I was fortunate enough to be at the Lillehammer Olympic Sliding Centre when sixteen-year-old Brooke Apshkrum struck gold in women's singles luge. Her win wasn't only Canada's first gold at the 2016 Youth Olympic Games. Teammate Reid Watts had won bronze just a day before in the men's singles competition and was on-hand alongside doubles pair Matt Riddle and Adam Shippit to celebrate with Brooke. Their victories were the first Olympic luge medals for Canada. Ever. It was a special moment for Team Canada and a special moment for luge.

I left the sliding venue and headed to Hafjell Freepark to catch the men's and women's skicross competition. Canada's representatives Reece Howden and Zoe Chore had been pegged as 'ones to watch' and the pair didn't disappoint. Reece – a gentle giant from Cultus Lake, B.C. – won every single one of his races before clinching gold in the big final. Zoe finished second in the women's small final (a term used to describe the consolation race for places 5-8). Accompanying a very happy Reece through the mixed zone was such a fun experience – and valuable professional development for me as I continue my young career in high-performance amateur sport communications.

**Above**
Team Canada at the Lillehammer 2016 Opening Ceremony.

Eric Mitchell

My golden day was just a snapshot of my experience at Lillehammer 2016. The friendships and connections I made with athletes, coaches, volunteers, and international associates inspire me to be my best at work, and in my personal life.

For a girl who eats, sleeps and breathes amateur sport, from my desk in Toronto I spend surprisingly little time around the athletes that we strive to support. Spending 10 days in Norway with Canada's future Olympians has left me feeling refreshed, invigorated and even more passionate about the work I'm so lucky to do. I can't wait to continue to share their stories with you.




# Breaking New Ground

**Above**
Pierce Lepage gives his all in the 40m sprint at the Toronto talent ID combine.

Mike Palmer, Mike Palmer Photography

At RBC Training Ground events, athletes execute a series of combine workouts measuring speed, power, strength and endurance.

Have you ever wondered if you could one day be an Olympian? Do you think you could compete on the world's biggest stage? The Canadian Olympic Foundation is determined to help Canadian youth find out if they have what it takes and help them reach their full potential.

As part of our mandate to help transform Canada through the power of sport, the COF, alongside program partners RBC, CBC and the COC, launched RBC Training Ground - a series of regional combine events designed to help sport officials uncover athletes with Olympic podium potential, in sports they may not have considered.

Over 1,300 athletes from across the country applied to take part in RBC Training Ground, and 400 of those were selected to take part in RBC Training Ground in 2016. The events were hosted at Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute Network (COPSIN) facilities in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

At RBC Training Ground events, athletes execute a series of combine workouts measuring speed, power, strength and endurance. They perform in front of coaches and officials from a variety of national and provincial sport organizations and their results are measured against performance benchmarks to determine if they have the athletic capacity for sport at its highest level. The program is open to selected athletes between the ages of 14 and 25.



> THAT'S WHAT THIS RBC PROGRAM IS TRYING TO EXPRESS: JUST COME ON IN, HAVE A GO, DEMONSTRATE YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF ATHLETIC ABILITIES, AND WE WILL THEN HELP YOU FIND THE SPORT THAT IS THE BEST FIT FOR YOU.

"In order for us as a country to win, we've got to start collaborating and sharing all of these great examples of high-performance athletes, wherever they are and wherever they're playing," says Olympic track cyclist and Director of Talent at the Canadian Sport Institute Pacific, Kurt Innes. "That's what this RBC program is trying to express: just come on in, have a go, demonstrate your current level of athletic abilities, and we will then help you find the sport that is the best fit for you."

Kienna Stephens, Tanya Bambi, Pierce Lepage and Peter Collier were selected as the top performers and will receive a trip to the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to help fuel their passion and commitment and familiarize them with the Olympic experience. Canada will be introduced to these four incredible athletes through a series of features that will air on CBC as part of the #RoadtoRio coverage. Combined, they hit 43 of the elite bench marks.

In addition to the four winners, up to 40 additional athletes will be selected for further talent identification and be eligible to receive additional funding from RBC and access to high-performance training programs facilitated by the national sport federations. This support could include coaching, equipment, nutrition and other resources that are required to create the daily training environment that is required to cultivate their athletic talent.

The opportunity for further support is really important to brothers Sean and Ryan McAnuff from Oakville, Ont., who attended the combine in Toronto. The brothers, aged 18 and 21 respectively, play competitive lacrosse and are short track speed skaters. Already talent-transfer athletes, the two were very open-minded heading into RBC Training Ground.

"This has been a great experience. It's cool to meet other athletes from a wide variety of sports who share the same mission – to represent Canada at the Olympic Games," says Sean. "We met rugby, hockey and volleyball players, track athletes and rowers," added Ryan. "It's interesting to see the skills and strengths required for different sports, and you can really see those unique strengths come out in the fitness tests at RBC Training Ground."



Both Ryan and Sean surpassed the high-performance bench mark for the Arm/Leg bike, a punishing exercise designed to test an athlete's endurance. It's a fitness assessment relevant to rowing and cycling.

"We never thought we'd make great rowers, but after performing well on the arm/leg bike, one of the rowing coaches approached us and now it's planted the seed," says Ryan. "I'm willing to take this as far as I can. Whether it be rowing, bobsleigh, skeleton or whatever, I just want to compete."

"I grew up playing lots of sports and this is a natural next step. I'm open-minded about my future, regardless of sport."

**Left**
Ryan and Sean McAnuff chat with a coach at RBC Training Ground in Toronto.

**Above**
Madeline Schmidt tests her endurance on the Arm Leg bike.

Mike Palmer, Mike Palmer Photography

Where
The
Money
Goes

# Saving the Ski Jump



**Above**
The Ski Jump Complex at WinSport in Calgary, Alberta.

Elise Marcotte

In December 2015, the Canadian Olympic Foundation granted $75,000 to Winsport to help keep the ski jump complex open at Calgary Olympic Park through 2018.

The ski jump complex, constructed for the Calgary 1988 Olympic Winter Games, is vital to the training and development of Canada's ski jump and Nordic combined teams. Canada has two ski jump complexes. A second was constructed in Whistler, B.C., for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

The COF's investment of $75,000 per year over three years (totaling $225,000) reduces WinSport's substantial financial commitment required to operate the jump complex.

"Ski jumping facilities are expensive to operate and maintain. The ramps and landing hills require snow making, maintenance and significant manpower to operate in a safe and effective manner," says Barry Heck, WinSport President and CEO.

"As the jump complex at WinSport is the only year-round training facility in Canada, it was imperative to the sports of both Ski Jumping and Nordic Combined that they remain open and viable," says Tom Reid, Chair of Ski Jumping Canada.

Calgary's Taylor Henrich won a pair of World Cup bronze medals and was fifth in women's ski jumping at the world championships last season, and is the linchpin to Team Canada's recent success and subsequent growth in the sport. Her success on the international stage has helped increase Ski Jumping Canada's funding from Own The Podium and the team is now poised for success at the 2017 World Championships and the 2018 Olympic Winter Games.

**"With a guaranteed home training ground for the next three years, it's up to Ski Jumping Canada and our athletes to prove that we can compete with the best in the world. I certainly expect to see our women's team be in the medal hunt in 2018."**

"An athlete's daily training environment must be the best in order for them to achieve excellence when it matters most," said Leanne Nicolle, Executive Director of the Canadian Olympic Foundation. "The ski jump facility at Winsport is a legacy from the Calgary 1988 Olympic Winter Games and is essential for the sport in Canada. The COF is pleased to grant to such a worthy cause and we look forward to seeing tangible and positive results."

The grant is part of the Canadian Olympic Foundation's commitment to supporting the Canadian sport system.

NEXT GENERATION ATHLETE

# Reece Howden




When ski cross racer Reece Howden learned shortly before the holidays that he would represent Team Canada at the Youth Olympic Games (YOG), he was determined to make the most of the experience. There was only one male spot up for grabs from the group of 15 high-performance alpine skiers and he wanted to prove to his friends, family and sports federation that he was the right choice. He left no doubt on February 15 when he dominated the competition to win men's ski cross gold; and on February 22 when he was chosen to lead Team Canada into the Closing Ceremony. All in all – a successful Games for the determined yet humble teen.

"Leading the team into the Closing Ceremony made my experience at YOG even more memorable," says Reece. "I felt the excitement of major international competition, the pride of standing on the podium and the joy of sharing this amazing experience with other athletes from so many different countries. I feel like this will help me grow as an athlete and a person."

What makes this feat even more impressive is that Reece has only been focusing on ski cross since 2015.

"Skiing has always been a big part of my life. Growing up in the Fraser Valley, I've been skiing with my family since I was 2. At 8, I was competing on the alpine team at Apex Mountain," says Reece. "I continued working hard at alpine, and then last season I tried ski cross and attended a few training camps. This year I really shifted my focus to ski cross when I was selected for the Next Gen team."

As a member of Alpine Canada's Next Gen prospect program (ski cross is an Olympic freestyle skiing discipline but is governed by Alpine in Canada) he receives $600 per month in Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) carding. It's a tremendous stress-reliever for Reece and his family.

"Skiing is obviously an expensive sport. There's a lot to it – travel and accommodations to chase snow conditions, on top of costly equipment and coaching."

He estimates the costs of his training at over $20,000 per year. From his home in Cultus Lake, Reece travels 3.5 hours each way to train at Apex Mountain, and misses every Friday at school. His family has a condo at the hill; he acknowledges that without this it would have been nearly impossible for him to ski at the level he is today.

"My teachers have also always been very supportive and accommodating, they help me set up my timetable, catch up on missed work and reschedule tests if I'm traveling for competition."

As a Next Gen skier, he looks up to Canadian ski icon Manual-Osborne Paradis and Norwegian alpine legend Aksel Lund Svindal. Reece also recognizes the incredible talent on the Canadian senior national ski cross team.

"I think Canada is dominating ski cross. The senior team has great world cup finishes at almost every race – either making the big final or being on the podium. We have an awesome program with fairly good funding, and it feels like it's a good recipe for success that young skiers like me work towards."

Reece's gold medal at YOG is likely to be the high-point of his 2015-16 season, but look for him to play a part in Canada's ski cross future.



**Top**
Reece competes in the men's ski cross competition at Hafjell Park in Lillehammer, Norway.

**Above**
Reece celebrates his gold medal win.

Simon Bruty for YIS/IOC



# HOW DO YOU #STACKUP AGAINST AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE?

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SPORT FEATURE

# Canadian luge on the fast track




Podium results aside, the 10 days of Games were inspiring; full of personal bests, lessons learned, fresh perspectives, powerful experiences and new friendships for the 54 Canadians athletes who took part in the Lillehammer 2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games.

Slider Reid Watts (Whistler, B.C.) earned Canada's first medal at the Youth Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway on Day 2 of competition; a bronze in men's singles luge. Twenty-four hours later, his teammate Brooke Apshkrum from Calgary stood atop the podium, champion in the women's singles luge. It's important to keep in mind that the Youth Olympic Games are just as much about Culture and Education as they are about field of play results – but for Luge Canada High Performance Director Walter Corey, the podium finishes aren't to be ignored.

"We're thrilled for the group that's there. The target for our next generation athletes is to always be inching ahead every single year," says Walter. "It's a bright spot on the long road to success. But the horizon for these kids is still a long ways way. The goal for athletes like Brooke and Reid is to transcend the success of our best athletes."

For Brooke and Reid, and doubles pair Adam Shippit (Pemberton, B.C.) and Matt Riddle (Vancouver, B.C.), the goal is to compete at the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games. All four athletes are part of Luge Canada's Next Gen sliding program. The program provides chosen athletes with a blend of funding assistance, elite coaching and role modeling with Canada's current top sliders. By pairing up-and-comers with the World Cup circuit athletes, it provides them with a dynamic opportunity to grow and develop, and its cost efficient for the heavily venue-dependent sport.

"There are six core sliding venues that host approximately 70 per cent of World Cup races," says Walter. "Our athletes must have a high run volume on these tracks to even have a chance at being an elite-caliber luge athlete."

Brooke, Reid, Adam and Matt all had the opportunity to travel to Europe throughout the 2015-16 season to participate in a senior World Cup race. In addition to providing valuable time on the track, they also learned a lot from Canadian veterans like Sam Edney, Tristan Walker, Justin Snith and Alex Gough.

"Part of this sport is envisioning the course," says Next Gen Head Coach Matt McMurray. "The kids tends to rush as fast as they can through their pre-race preparation, but it's important to slow the process right down. The best athletes in the sport go through the course so slowly in their heads before a race. Their imagery is so precise, that if they screw up a turn in their heads, they start over and do it again."

Experience and maturity is paramount in luge. Some of the best sliders in the world compete into their 40's (Italian luge great Armin Zöggeler was the first athlete to win medals in the same individual event in six straight Olympic Games, between 1994 and 2014). So at ages 16 and 17, the four Canadian youngsters at YOG are in a developmental sweet spot, early in their careers.

"The luge program in Canada is probably at the best it's ever been. The resources and sustainability of services for these athletes is superior to what's been offered in years past," says Matt. "Not so long ago, the services and opportunities that these kids have access to were reserved for Olympic team members. Now we have kids who are 15, 16, and 17 years old, with the same daily training environment as our top sliders. Medals aren't made by chance in luge; it's all by design."

**Left**
Brooke Apshkrum and Matt McMurray prepare for the race.

**Above**
Reid Watts competes in the men's singles competition.

Thomas Lovelock for YIS/IOC

# Upcoming competitions

Please see the calendar below for some of the upcoming sporting events across Canada.



**Right**
Canadian swimmer Santo Condorelli competes at the Toronto 2015 Pan Am Games.

Scott Grant

| DATES | SPORT | TITLE | CATEGORY | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| April 5-10 | Swimming | 2016 Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Swimming Trials | Olympic Qualifier | Scarborough, ON |
| April 7-10 | Diving | Canada Cup - FINA Diving Grand prix 2016 #4 | Grand Prix | Gatineau. QC |
| April 8-10 | Freestyle Skiing | 2016 International Table Tennis Confederation North America Olympic Qualification Tournament | Olympic Qualifier | Markham, ON |
| April 16-17 | Rugby | (HSBC) Canada Women's Sevens World Series | World Series | Langford, BC |
| April 27-May 1 | Swimming | 2016 Shiseido Canadian Open Synchronized Swimming Championship | National Championship | Calgary, AB |
| May 12-15 | Taekwondo | Taekwondo National Championships | National Championship | Calgary, AB |
| May 28 | Canoe/Kayak | Canoe/Kayak Slalom National Trials | Olympic Qualifier | Minden, ON |
| May 31-June 5 | Gymnastics | Gymnastic National Championships | National Championship | Edmonton, AB |
| June 2-3 | Cycling | Grand prix Cycliste Gatineau | Grand Prix | Gatineau, QC |
| June 10-12 | Diving | Olympic Trials/ Summer Senior Nationals | Olympic Qualifier | Scarborough, ON |





DONOR PROFILE

# Doctor Bob McCormack

Dr. Bob has been a sport enthusiast ever since his days as a middle distance runner at Queen's University. While running as a Golden Gael, Dr. Bob was enrolled in medical school and had first-hand experience with the balancing act between sport and education. During his running career, like most athletes, Dr. Bob dealt with injury. He was supported by a great medical team who helped to optimize his performance and overcome injury to compete. His personal experience inspired him to stay involved in sport and become part of the medical team that had helped him to achieve his best. His personal experience allows him to put himself in each athlete's shoes and he can understand why being 98% fit isn't good enough.

Dr. Bob leads Team Canada's medical team for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. The medical team is made up of chiropractors, physicians, athletic therapists, physiotherapists, nutritionists, sport scientists, psychologists and massage therapists. The team is responsible for maintaining the complete health of athletes to maximize their ability to perform. They not only support the athletes during the Games but work year-round to ensure any health concerns are addressed and strategies are in place to handle illness and/or injury. This team behind the team ensures our Canadian athletes are able to put their best foot forward so they can continue to inspire Canadians and make us proud.

Dr. Bob not only supports the health of our athletes, he also supports our athletes by donating to the Canadian Olympic Foundation. He has great pride in the Canadian Olympic Team and the aspiring Olympians who work so hard day in and day out to represent our country. Dr. Bob understands that the majority of athletes have a very basic existence because expenses and time spent to train at the high performance level are high, yet the margins between winning and losing are so small. In order to perform at their best, athletes and development programs require financial support to compete with the best in the world.

"Not only is it important to financially support our athletes, it is important to increase the broad base of participation in sport and talent identification of girls and boys across the country. When the general population is engaged in physical activity, health benefits can be seen and there is further opportunity for those that excel in sport," says Dr. Bob. "No matter what level an athlete competes, we need to celebrate their success. It should be considered a success when a recreational athlete advances to a higher level; when sport organizations operate together for the greater good, the sport system in Canada will become that much stronger."

Thank you Dr. Bob for all that you do to help our athletes shine on the world stage!

**Left**
Dr. Bob McCormack

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