



# **RULE 40 GUIDELINES**

**FOR ATHLETES AND THEIR PERSONAL SPONSORS**

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**MILANO CORTINA 2026**

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# INTRODUCTION

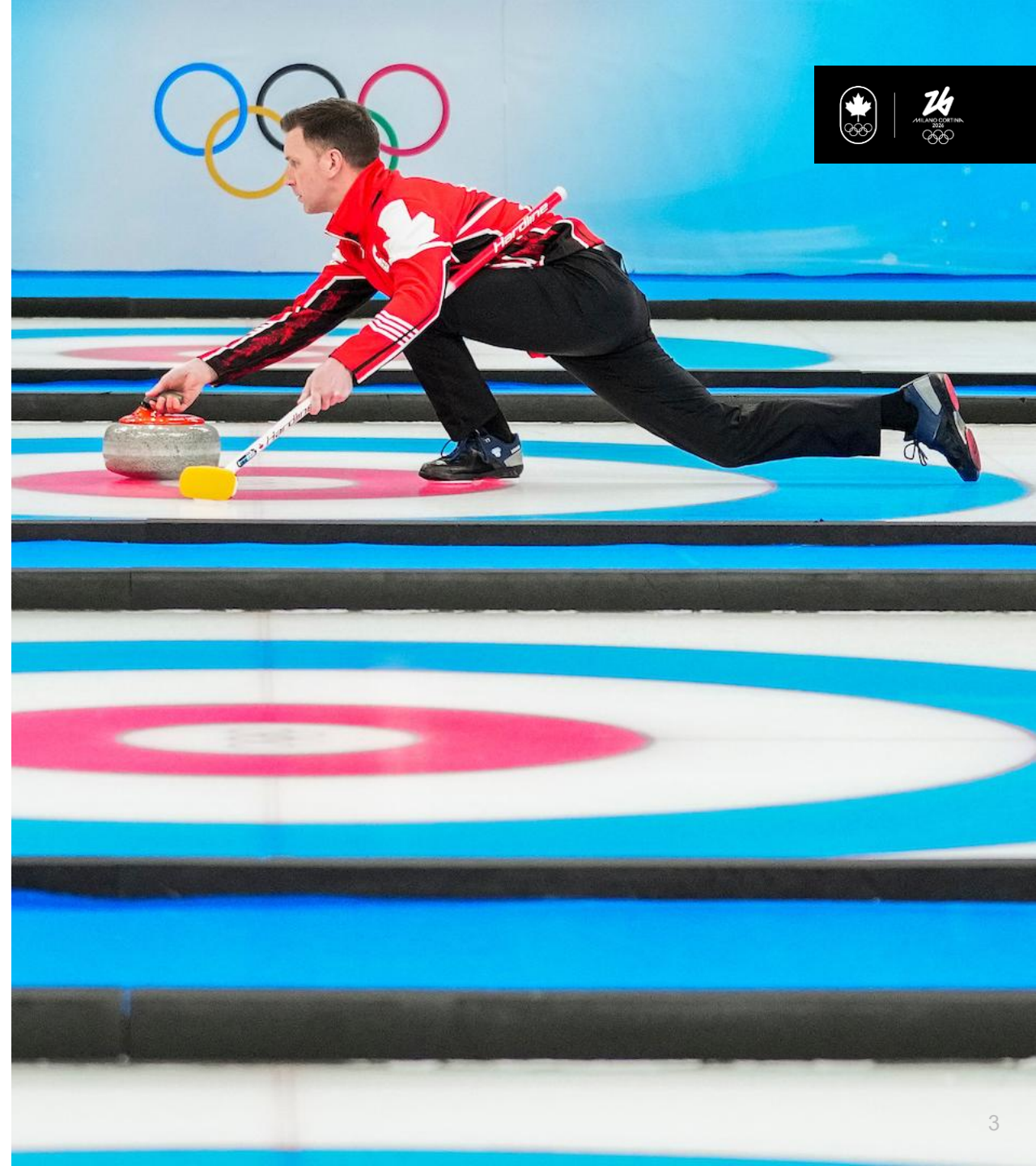
These guidelines outline how the Canadian Olympic Committee (“COC”) will implement Rule 40 in Canada during the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games (the “**Games**”), including how athletes may continue to promote their personal sponsors (i.e. brands and companies who are not Olympic partners), and how these sponsors may continue to feature athletes in advertising during the Milano Cortina 2026 Games Period running from January 30 to February 24, 2026 (the “**Games Period**”).

The purpose of these guidelines is to encourage athletes and sponsors to continue to run long-standing, generic (i.e. non-Olympic themed) advertising campaigns during the Games Period, while ensuring protection for official Olympic partners who support Team Canada and the Games.

These guidelines only apply to Team Canada athletes and sponsor campaigns targeted at Canada. Athlete sponsors who are also Olympic partners should continue to work with their COC account teams in relation to campaigns featuring athletes.

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact us at [branduse@olympic.ca](mailto:branduse@olympic.ca).

**Please note:** these guidelines are intended to provide guidance only and are not exhaustive. COC reserves the right to revise these guidelines at any time. The information provided does not constitute legal or professional advice. Interested parties are encouraged to obtain their own such legal or professional advice.



# BACKGROUND



## What is Rule 40?

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Rule 40 of the Olympic Charter is a rule of the International Olympic Committee (“IOC”) which governs eligibility for participation in the Olympic Games. Byelaw 40.3 states: “Competitors, team officials and other team personnel who participate in the Olympic Games may allow their person, name, picture or sports performances to be used for advertising purposes during the Olympic Games in accordance with the principles determined by the IOC Executive Board.”

The IOC has released guidance which includes the “key principles” determined by the IOC Executive Board for implementation of byelaw 40.3 for the Milano Cortina Games. COC is responsible for the implementation of these key principles in Canada, and these guidelines set out COC’s approach.

## Who does Rule 40 apply to?

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Rule 40 applies to all athletes, coaches, trainers, officials and team members who will participate in the Games. It does not apply to Olympians or other participants who have competed in previous Olympic Games but will not be participating in Milano Cortina. While these guidelines often refer to athletes, please note these guidelines apply to all Team Canada Games participants as defined above.

## Why is Rule 40 in place?

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The purpose of Rule 40 is to help maintain the unique global nature of the Olympic Games. The rule helps ensure global participation at the Games, the funding of the Games and the long-term health of the Olympic Movement by maintaining the appeal of Olympic sponsorship both globally and nationally. At the global level, the IOC sponsorship program helps secure funding for all national Olympic teams regardless of their profile or commercial or sporting success, based on the principle of solidarity. At the national level, COC relies heavily on its sponsorship program to fund all COC programs and Team Canada's participation in the Games.

COC is committed to balancing its need to generate revenue for the benefit of all Team Canada athletes with supporting the ability of athletes to attract personal sponsors to support their careers. COC will continue to review its position on Rule 40 in Canada to enable athletes and their personal sponsors to promote their relationships during the Games Period while respecting the rights of Olympic partners to exclusive use of COC’s IP and rights of association with Team Canada and the Games.

# KEY PRINCIPLES



Athletes may continue to promote their sponsors, and sponsors may continue to use their sponsored athletes for advertising purposes, during the Games Period (i.e. January 30 – February 24, 2026), where the following key principles are met:

- ① The advertising is generic (as defined on page 6);
- ② The advertising (i) has been in market for at least ninety (90) days prior to the Games Period (i.e. before October 29, 2025), (ii) is advertised consistently during that period and (iii) is not objectively escalated during the Games Period<sup>1</sup>; and
- ③ The COC is notified of the advertising plans by October 29, 2025 through COC's online platform: <https://athletewaiver.olympic.ca/>.

Additional notes:

- These guidelines apply to all uses of an athlete's name, image or sport performance in advertising during the Games Period. Advertising includes all forms of commercial promotion, including traditional advertising (e.g. print, TV, radio, out of home, online), direct advertising (e.g. emails, text messages, direct mail), social and digital media (e.g. posts, retweets, shares by athletes or sponsors whether paid or unpaid, mobile apps, podcasts), point of sale (e.g. on product, in-store promotions), experiential/live events and public relations (e.g. press releases, personal appearances, lending or gifting of products, product placement).
- Sponsors are responsible for obtaining all necessary consents and approvals from the athlete(s) to be featured in advertising.

1. COC will consider exemptions on a case-by-case basis including, for example, where athletes are selected to Team Canada after October 29, 2025, or sponsors can demonstrate their 'business as usual' advertising activity does not align with the above timeline.

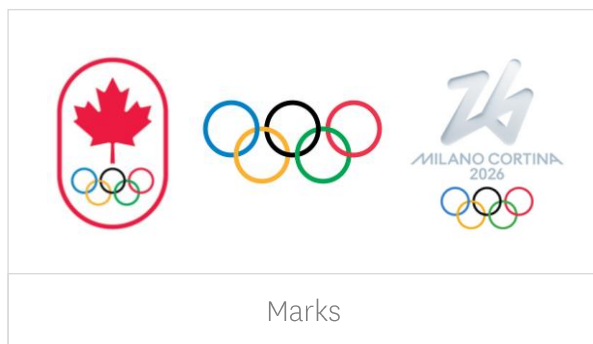


# GENERIC ADVERTISING



Generic advertising means any advertising by an athlete or sponsor that does not:

- ✗ Create, directly or indirectly, any association between the sponsor or any of its products/services and Team Canada, the Games or the Olympic movement;
- ✗ Reference an athlete's performance or participation in the Games;
- ✗ Use Olympic images or video; or
- ✗ Use Olympic marks, IP (including, but not limited to, the examples below) or Team Canada branded apparel:



Team Canada	#TeamCanada
Olympics	#Olympics
Milano Cortina 2026	#MilanoCortina2026
Winter Games	#WinterGames

Wordmarks



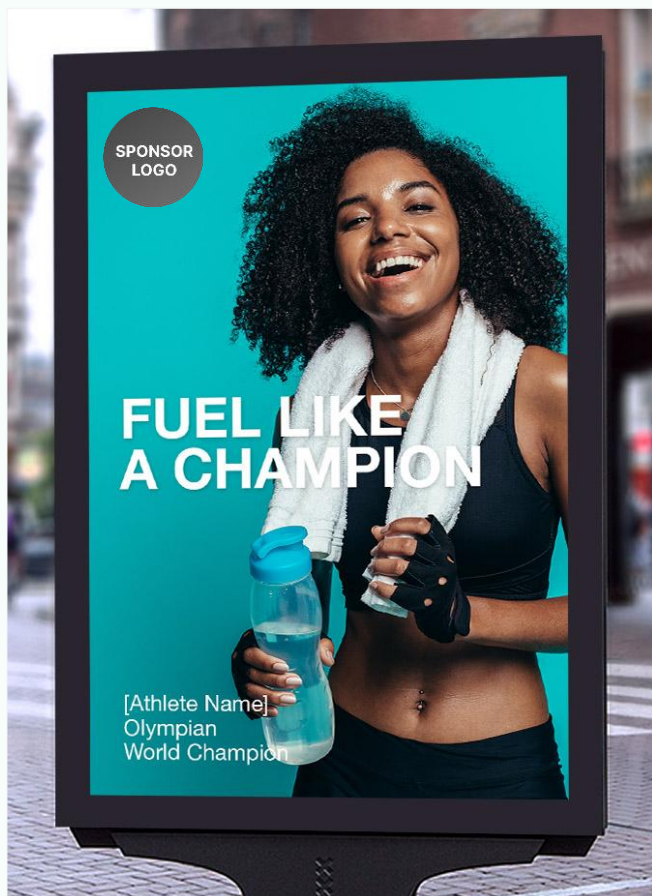
**Exception:** Factual, biographical descriptions of an athlete's achievements, including their status as an Olympian or Olympic medalist, are permitted where Olympic achievements are balanced with other accomplishments (e.g. results from World Cups, World Championships, National Championships, etc.). Please share any such biographic references with COC for prior review.

**Please note:** the above generic advertising guidelines always apply to athlete and non-Olympic sponsor advertising activity year-round, both during and outside of the Games Period.

# GENERIC ADVERTISING EXAMPLES



## Allowed



### Why?

- ✓ Assuming advertisement is part of long-standing campaign with athlete.
- ✓ Generic advertisement and tagline, specific to athlete's relationship with sponsor.
- ✓ Olympic accomplishment balanced with other non-Olympic achievement in biography.

## Not allowed



### Why?

- ✗ Athlete is wearing Team Canada branded apparel.
- ✗ Uses Olympic IP (e.g. Team Canada, Milano Cortina 2026, Olympic medals, etc.).
- ✗ Advertisement creates association between sponsor and the Games.
- ✗ Does not balance Olympic accomplishment with a non-Olympic achievement in biography.

# SPONSOR SOCIAL MEDIA



## Generic content

Sponsors may continue to feature athletes in social media advertising during the Games Period where the key principles (see page 5) are met. As the same principles apply to social media content, sponsor content must be generic and cannot:

- ✘ Create, directly or indirectly, any association between the sponsor or any of its products/services and Team Canada, the Games or the Olympic movement;
- ✘ Reference an athlete's performance or participation in the Games;
- ✘ Use Olympic images or video; or
- ✘ Use Olympic marks, IP (including as hashtags) or include Team Canada branded apparel.

## Congratulatory content

Congratulatory content refers to supportive and/or congratulatory messages posted by a sponsor on social media which reference their sponsored athlete's performance or participation at the Games.

Sponsors can post one (1) message congratulating or recognizing their sponsored athlete, and/or repost or share one (1) 'thank-you' message posted by their sponsored athlete (without further text/edits) during the Games Period where the post/repost do not:

- ✘ Include photos/videos from any Games venues or of the athlete in Team Canada branded apparel or with an Olympic medal;
- ✘ Mention or promote the sponsor's products or services;
- ✘ Mention or tag Team Canada, the Games, or include other Olympic marks (including as hashtags e.g. #TeamCanada, #MilanoCortina2026, etc.); or
- ✘ Include reposts/shares of Team Canada, IOC, Games or other Olympic social media content.

Sponsors who plan to post congratulatory content during the Games Period are asked to notify and share their planned posts with COC before posting.

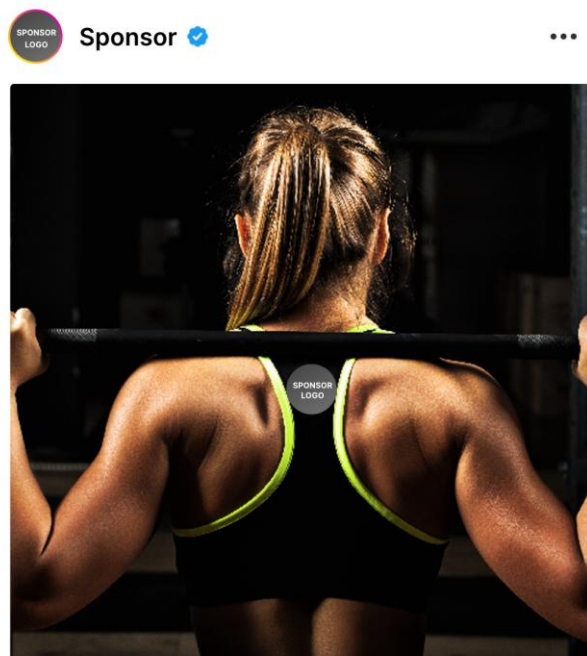


# SPONSOR SOCIAL MEDIA

## EXAMPLES OF GENERIC CONTENT



### Allowed



#### Why?

- ✓ Assuming post is part of long-standing social campaign with athlete and rate of social activity is not escalated during Games Period.
- ✓ Post uses generic image and copy.
- ✓ No use of Olympic marks or Games imagery.
- ✓ Post is specific to athlete and no association is made between sponsor and Team Canada or the Games.

### Not allowed



#### Why?

- ✗ Post uses Games imagery.
- ✗ Copy includes Olympic marks (e.g. #MilanoCortina2026, #TeamCanada, #Olympics).
- ✗ Post creates association between sponsor and Team Canada/the Games.
- ✗ Post promotes a sponsor product in association with athlete's participation in Games.

# SPONSOR SOCIAL MEDIA

## EXAMPLES OF CONGRATULATORY CONTENT



### Allowed



104 likes

**Sponsor** Congratulations [@AthleteName](#) on your medal! We're all so proud! [#Gold](#)

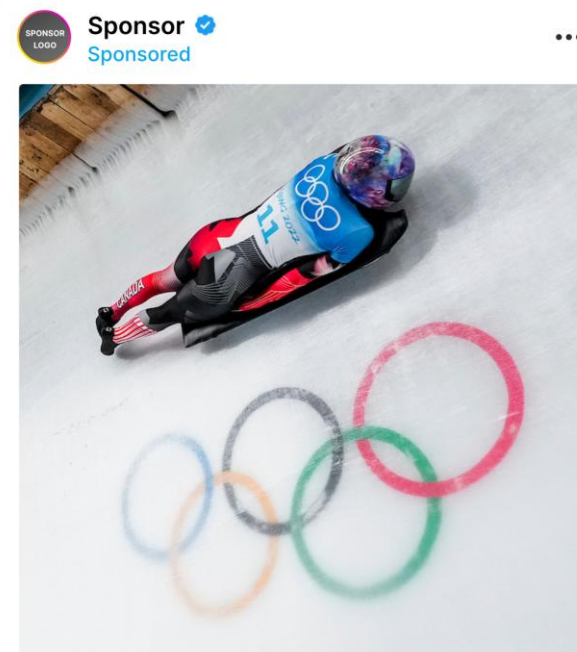
February 13, 2026

#### Why?

- ✓ Assuming post has been reviewed by COC and sponsor posts just one congratulatory message per athlete during Games Period\*.
- ✓ Assuming post is organic with no paid spend behind it (unless sponsor routinely does so with congratulatory posts).
- ✓ Post uses generic image and copy.
- ✓ No use of Olympic marks or Games imagery.
- ✓ Post is specific to athlete and no association is made between sponsor and Team Canada or the Games.

Please note: the same post could be replicated on different social platforms (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter)) at the same time.

### Not allowed



314 likes

**Sponsor** Congratulations [@AthleteName](#) on your Olympic medal! [#TeamCanada](#) [#MilanoCortina2026](#)

February 13, 2026

#### Why?

- ✗ Post uses Games imagery.
- ✗ Copy includes Olympic marks (e.g. [#MilanoCortina2026](#), [#TeamCanada](#), etc.).
- ✗ Post creates association between sponsor and Team Canada/the Games.
- ✗ Post is sponsored and/or amplified with paid promotion.

# ATHLETE SOCIAL MEDIA



## Generic content

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Athletes may continue to promote their sponsors and/or sponsor products or services on social media during the Games Period where the key principles (see page 5) are met. As the same principles apply to social media content, athlete content must be generic and cannot:

- ✘ Create, directly or indirectly, any association between the sponsor or any of its products/services and Team Canada, the Games or the Olympic movement;
- ✘ Reference an athlete's performance or participation in the Games;
- ✘ Use Olympic images or video; or
- ✘ Use Olympic marks, IP (including as hashtags) or include Team Canada branded apparel.

## Thank-you content

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Athletes can post one (1) 'thank you' message per sponsor during the Games Period to recognize the sponsor for their support, provided it does not:

- ✘ Include photos/videos from any Games venues;
- ✘ Include photos/videos of the athlete in Team Canada branded apparel or with an Olympic medal;
- ✘ Mention or promote the sponsor's products or services;
- ✘ Mention or tag Team Canada, the Games, or include other Olympic marks (including as hashtags e.g. #TeamCanada, #MilanoCortina2026, etc.); or
- ✘ Include reposts/shares of Team Canada, IOC, Games or other Olympic social media content.

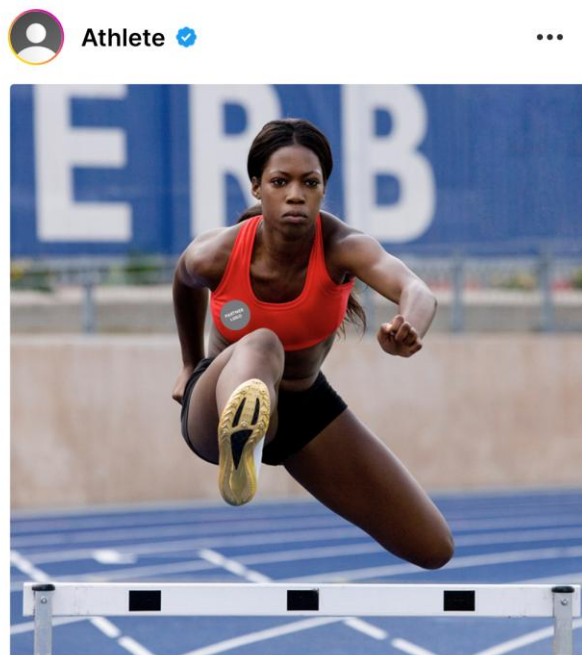
Athletes are not required to notify or share their planned thank-you posts with COC before posting but should ensure compliance with these guidelines and contact COC if they have any questions.

# ATHLETE SOCIAL MEDIA

## EXAMPLES OF GENERIC CONTENT



### Allowed



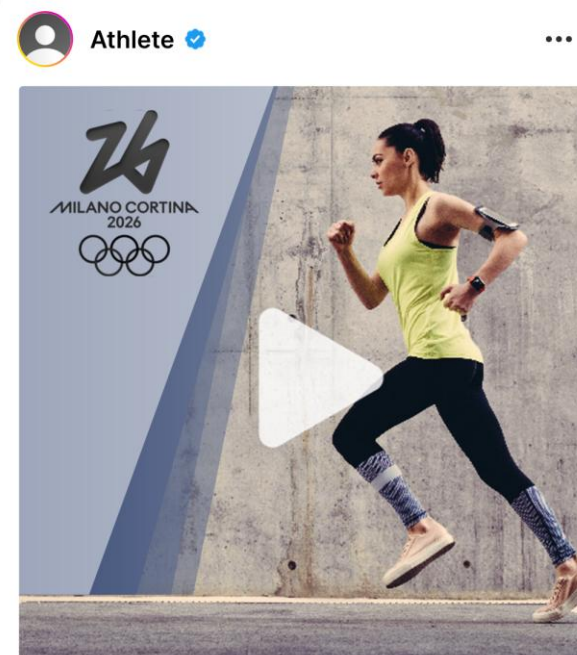
288 likes

**Athlete** Jump for that explosive weekend workout  
[@Sponsor](#) [#Team\[Sponsor\]](#) [#Training](#)  
 February 16, 2026

#### Why?

- Assuming post is part of long-standing social campaign with sponsor and rate of social activity is not escalated during Games Period.
- Post uses generic image and copy.
- No use of Olympic marks or Games imagery.
- Post is specific to athlete and no association is made between sponsor and Team Canada or the Games.

### Not allowed



458 likes

**Athlete** [@Sponsor](#) helps me train to be my best here in the Olympic Village [#MilanoCortina2026](#) [#TeamCanada](#)  
 February 16, 2026

#### Why?

- Post uses image taken from within Games venue.
- Copy includes Olympic marks (e.g. Olympic, [#MilanoCortina2026](#), [#TeamCanada](#), etc.).
- Post creates association between sponsor and Team Canada/the Games.
- Post promotes a sponsor product in association with athlete's participation in the Games.

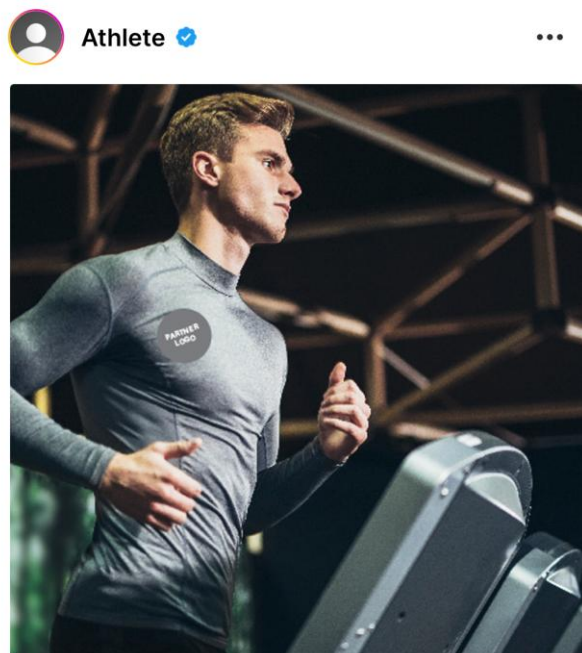


# ATHLETE SOCIAL MEDIA

## EXAMPLES OF THANK-YOU CONTENT



### Allowed



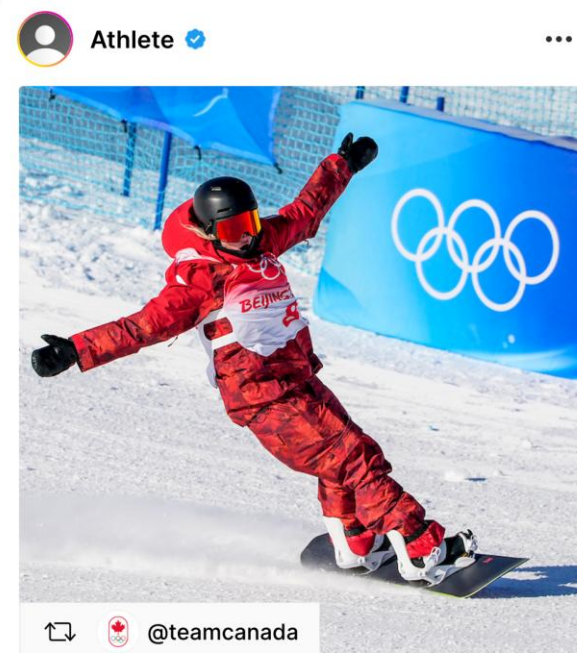
#### Why?

- ✓ Assuming athlete posts just one thank-you message per sponsor during Games Period\*.
- ✓ Post uses generic image and copy.
- ✓ No use of Olympic marks or Games imagery.
- ✓ No sponsor product/service is promoted.
- ✓ Post is specific to sponsor, and no association is made between sponsor and Team Canada or the Games.

**Please note:** the same post could be replicated on different social platforms (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter)) at the same time.

68 likes  
Athlete Thanks @Sponsor for all your support! #gold  
February 13, 2026

### Not allowed



#### Why?

- ✗ Post uses Games imagery.
- ✗ Copy includes Olympic marks (e.g. Olympic, #TeamCanada, #MilanoCortina2026, etc.).
- ✗ Post creates association between sponsor and Team Canada/the Games.
- ✗ Athlete cannot repost/share Olympic social content and tag or reference sponsor.

314 likes  
Athlete With the help of @Sponsor, I'm headed to the Olympic finals tomorrow! Can't wait to represent @Sponsor at #MilanoCortina2026 #TeamCanada  
February 13, 2026

# NOTIFICATION PROCESS



## Notification process

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Athletes and sponsors are asked to notify COC of their advertising plans by October 29, 2025 through COC's online platform available at: <https://athletewaiver.olympic.ca/>. This notification requirement enables COC to be aware of activity that is planned for the Canadian market and verify compliance with these guidelines. Any feedback on advertising plans will be provided within ten (10) days of receipt.

## What to submit

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Notice of advertising plans should include a:

- ✔ **representative sample** of each planned tactic: and
- ✔ **media schedule** demonstrating that the campaign will be in market and run continuously at least 90 days in advance of the Games Period (i.e. before October 29, 2025).

Sponsors are encouraged to use the submission templates available [here](#). It is not necessary to submit every piece of campaign collateral that will be in market during the Games Period. Sponsors wishing to post congratulatory content during the Games Period will be asked to share templated posts as part of their submission.

## Compliance

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By signing the Milano Cortina Conditions of Participation Form and COC Athlete Agreement for the Games, athletes selected to Team Canada are bound by the provisions of the Olympic Charter, including Rule 40. While it is the responsibility of each athlete to comply with Rule 40 and these guidelines, any sponsor using a Team Canada athlete for advertising purposes during the Games Period will want to ensure they are not putting the athlete in breach of Rule 40. Athletes who do not comply with Rule 40 and these guidelines may be sanctioned by IOC, the Milano Cortina Organizing Committee and/or COC.

## International campaigns

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These guidelines apply only to Team Canada athletes and sponsor campaigns targeted at Canada. International campaigns are subject to IOC guidelines and the IOC's notification process available [here](#).

## Questions

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Athletes and sponsors with questions about Rule 40 or these guidelines are encouraged to contact us at [branduse@olympic.ca](mailto:branduse@olympic.ca).

# APPENDIX

# SUMMARY OF KEY DATES AND ACTIONS



Summer 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Rule 40 Guidelines and set up a call with the COC if needed.</li> </ul>
<b>October 29, 2025</b> 90 days before Games Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertising must be in market; and</li> <li>Sponsor must notify COC of advertising plans.</li> </ul>
January 30, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start of the Milano Cortina 2026 Games Period.</li> </ul>
February 24, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End of the Milano Cortina 2026 Games Period.</li> </ul>



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## When is the Milano Cortina 2026 Games Period?

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January 30 – February 24, 2026

## What activities does Rule 40 apply to?

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These guidelines apply to all use of an athlete's name, image or sport performance in advertising during the Games Period regardless of the channel. This includes by way of example, TV, digital, social media, in-store, and public relations appearances.

## I am an athlete – does Rule 40 apply to me?

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Yes - Rule 40 applies to all athletes, coaches, trainers, officials and team members who will participate in the Games. Athletes with personal sponsors will need to pay attention to the guidelines as they impact how athletes can continue to promote their personal sponsors during the Games Period.

## I sponsor an athlete – how will Rule 40 impact me?

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Sponsors who work with athletes participating at the Games will need to ensure that any advertising or promotional activities featuring that athlete complies with the guidelines. Even if you are not sure if your sponsored athlete will participate at the Games, we encourage you to assume that they will qualify and proactively align your advertising plans to comply with the guidelines.

## Can athlete sponsors advertise around Team Canada or the Milano Cortina 2026 Games outside of the Games Period?

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No - the generic advertising principles (see page 6 of the guidelines) apply to all athlete and athlete sponsor activity, both during and outside the Games Period. Only official Olympic sponsors can engage in any advertising or promotional activities around Team Canada or the Olympic Games.

## What do athlete sponsors need to submit to COC?

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Sponsors should provide a representative sample of each planned tactic (note: it is not necessary to submit every piece of campaign collateral), as well as a media schedule demonstrating that the campaign will be in market and run continuously at least 90 days in advance of the Games Period.

## I have questions, who can I contact?

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Please don't hesitate to contact the COC ([branduse@olympic.ca](mailto:branduse@olympic.ca)) and we'd be happy to provide further support and clarification.