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CANADA

NATIONAL TEAM HANDBOOK

2016-2017

This handbook and its appendices provide key information for athletes, coaches, and support team members on the Gymnastics Canada (GCG) National Team (NT) in the four Olympic disciplines (men's artistic, women's artistic, trampoline gymnastics, and rhythmic gymnastics).

It is your obligation to read, understand, and abide by any directions contained in this material. If you are unclear about any information, you should obtain clarification from the GCG technical staff person responsible for your discipline. If you are still unsure, please send your inquiry to info@gymcan.org.

This handbook provides key information on GCG, the services provided by GCG, the responsibilities of the athlete, and on the additional benefits available to athletes who have been named to the National Team. It is important that you and your coach read and understand all the material.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in the Handbook is the most current. The Handbook will be updated from time to time and revised versions will be provided to NT athletes. To ensure that you continue to receive all communications from the GCG office, you are responsible to keep us updated with any changes to your mailing address, email address or phone numbers.

If you have feedback or additional suggestions regarding this Handbook, we encourage you to direct them in writing to the GCG staff in your discipline.

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INTRODUCTION

As a member of the GCG National Team (NT), you have an extraordinary opportunity to represent Canada at the highest levels of sport. You are an ambassador for Canada, for GCG, for your club, and the sport of gymnastics. With this comes the responsibility of top performances in training and competition, with the ultimate goals of podium and top-8 international rankings for Canadian athletes. As a NT member, you are a role model for the next generation of Canadian athletes and your profile may become highly visible to the media and public.

We have developed this handbook and appendices to provide you with an overview of your responsibilities, and of the many services and benefits that are available to you. NT members are responsible for reading and understanding the material in this handbook. The handbook is electronic/mobile friendly with direct links to sources for more information on many of the services and organizations mentioned. If you are not clear on any aspect, please contact GCG national office staff for further explanation.

1.0 ABOUT GYMNASTICS CANADA

GCG National Office Address: 1900 City Park Drive, Suite 120, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 1A3
613.748.5637 (tel) 613.748.5691 (fax)
General email: info@gymcan.org
Website: www.gymcan.org

The GCG office hours are from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM (Eastern Time Zone) from Monday to Friday. The office is closed on weekends and on the following holidays:

January	1 - New Year's Day	August	Civic Holiday
February	Family Day	September	Labour Day
March/April	Good Friday	October	Thanksgiving
	Easter Monday	November	11 - Remembrance Day
May	Victoria Day	December	24 - Christmas Eve (½ day)
July	1 - Canada Day		25-1 Closed

GCG is the national governing body for the sport of gymnastics in Canada. First established in 1969, GCG works closely with the Provincial and Territorial Organizations (PTOs) and over 700 member clubs to provide a broad range of programs and services to meet the needs of all participants. GCG is a member of the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG), which governs all aspects of international gymnastics activities and competitions.

GCG sets the operating standards and practices for gymnastics in Canada, from athlete development and coaching education to judging certification. Our mandate is to ensure that everyone can enjoy the sport in a positive and safe manner.

GCG uses social media to post content that shines the spotlight on the sport of gymnastics, and on the athletes representing Canada at national and international competitions. Many stories will be shared through social media throughout the year, and in particular during major competitions like the Pan Am Games, Commonwealth Games, Olympic Games, and World Championships, so be sure to connect with us. You can share the content found on our social platforms at:



Facebook

Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique
www.facebook.com/CDNgymnastics



Instagram

CDNGymnastics
www.instagram.com/CDNgymnastics



Twitter

@CDNGymnastics
www.twitter.com/CDNgymnastics



YouTube

Gymnastics Canada
www.youtube.com/user/gymnasticscanada

2.0 GCG STAFF

As a member of the GCG NT, your main point of contact will be with the National Team/High Performance Director (NTD/HPD) for your discipline. However, all of our staff are here to provide support, and the complete list of GCG staff contacts may be found on the GCG website at <http://gymcan.org/gymnastics-canada/staff>

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS FOR NATIONAL TEAM MEMBERS

3.1 Lines of Communication

For NT assignments and NT activities, the GCG program staff will communicate with the personal coach or club of a NT athlete. Technical information is distributed to coaches and clubs, as well as to the Provincial/Territorial Office (PTO). Technical information that is for, and distributed to the Program at large, will be posted on the GCG website in the appropriate program section.

At the Senior level, NT athletes will often be copied on information that is distributed to their coach(es) and are expected to take responsibility for communications with GCG and its partners including:

- reading emails and documents
- responding promptly and completely to requests for information
- returning completed forms within timelines
- submitting whereabouts by deadline

3.2 NT Agreements

Every NT athlete and named NT coach, as well as team judges and support staff, must sign a NT agreement. Integrated Support Team (IST) members will be expected to sign an IST member agreement. These agreements are not only important for establishing the responsibilities of GCG, of the athletes, coaches, judges, support staff, and IST members, but they are also required by Sport Canada before any Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) carding funds are released. The basic NT Agreement is consistent across all disciplines, with any required program-specific content being added or appended. Agreements are distributed to NT members each year at the time the new NT is named in each discipline.

Athletes aged 18 OR OVER are considered adults and do not require a parent/guardian signature on their agreement.

Athletes aged 17 OR UNDER must also have a parent/guardian signature on their agreement.

Coaches must sign a NT Coach agreement and must also sign the Athlete Agreement for their designated athlete to confirm the Athlete's statement of commitment and training status.

Several attachments, including passport photographs, passport scans, and other information may be required with the NT agreement. The individual is responsible for the costs of these items and for forwarding them to GCG with the completed agreement.

NT services (including funding and event assignments) do not commence until the completed, signed NT Agreement and all required attachments are received at the GCG office.

3.3 GCG Code of Ethics and Conduct

The complete GCG Code of Ethics and Conduct is contained in the GCG Policies and Procedures document which is available on the GCG website (gymcan.org). All NT members, coaches, judges, and managers should be familiar with this document and with the consequences for not adhering to the Code. Note that the Code of Ethics and Conduct applies during all NT activities, whether in Canada or not.

3.4 GCG Member in Good Standing Status

To receive NT services and to be permitted to participate at GCG events and activities, all participants must be members in good standing of GCG. This means that all documentation is complete and up-to-date, that all requirements for certification, membership, or other special qualifications are complete, and that the individual does not have any outstanding (over 60 days) invoices with GCG. Breaches of the GCG Code of Ethics and Conduct may also result in withdrawal of member in good standing status and national team status.

Participants who do not meet the requirements for a member in good standing will not be permitted to participate in any GCG events (camps, international or domestic competitions) or receive NT servicing until they have fulfilled all requirements. In the case of outstanding invoices, GCG staff will contact individuals who are in this situation to arrange for payment. However, the responsibility for payment of all invoices rests with the individual. Where an arrangement for an established regular payment plan is disrupted, due to no fault of GCG, the individual will revert to “not in good standing” status until such time as the situation is corrected and payment is received at GCG.

GCG will notify the respective PT office and our funding partners when a participant is no longer considered to be a member in good standing.

3.5 Requirements for NT Coaches and Support Team Members

All named NT coaches and support team personnel, including any personnel who attend GCG domestic events (Canadian Championships, Elite Canada, Canada Cup, training camps) or who travel with athletes to domestic or international competitions, will be required to complete the following and provide proof of completion to GCG, prior to being approved or funded to attend any activities.

Requirement	Link to Access
Police Check	http://sterlingbackcheck.ca/cac_ace
CAC <i>Making Headway</i> Concussion e-learning course (free)	http://www.coach.ca/concussion
Respect in Sport online course	https://gymnasticscanada.respectgroupinc.com/
True Sport Clean101 UNTRACKED e-learning course (free)	http://cces.ca/truesportclean101untracked
Registered with CAC Professional Coaching Program (renewed yearly)	http://www.coach.ca/professional-coaching-s16900

These requirements are in accordance with GCG policy and are in addition to the existing requirements for NCCP certification. Any costs associated with fulfilling these requirements are the responsibility of the individual.

3.6 Passports

All NT members must possess a valid Canadian passport and a copy of this must be provided to GCG. Individuals who have dual citizenship (Canada and another country) must provide GCG with colour scans of all their passports. If a non-Canadian passport is used during travel (e.g. to facilitate non-visa entry into certain countries), GCG should be notified at the time of booking travel.

When passport renewal is required, it is recommended to renew to a 10-year passport (16 years and older). All NT members should ensure that their passport is kept up-to-date and ready for international travel. Upon receiving a new passport, NT members should send GCG a good quality colour scan of the passport right away, so that the GCG files are current for upcoming international assignments.

Be aware that a passport should be valid for at least 6 months prior to the date of entry into a country when travelling abroad. All countries have their own entry requirements. Consult the travel advisories at <http://travel.gc.ca> to view the entry/exit requirements of each country. Since these requirements can change, you may also check with the Government of Canada office of the country you intend to visit. For this reason, passport renewals should not be left to the last minute.

Be aware that if a visa is required to travel to certain countries, the passport will need to be submitted with the visa application. This is usually done well in advance of the actual travel date and must be done using the same passport being used to travel with. Applying for a NEXUS

card is an option that is also recommended for all NT members. NEXUS is designed to speed up border crossings for low-risk, pre-approved travellers into Canada and the United States (U.S.)

3.7 FIG Licences

GCG will assume the cost of providing and renewing a FIG licence for all NT athletes. GCG will cover this cost ONCE during a two year period, as the licence is valid for two years. If a new or renewed FIG licence is required, the athlete should contact the GCG Program Coordinator for the related discipline a minimum of two months before the expiry date on the card. If the athlete loses or damages the licence card, the athlete must contact GCG immediately to replace the card and is responsible for the cost of replacement. Note, the physical card is not replaced at renewal, only the expiry date is extended.

The athlete is responsible for providing all required information to GCG and for ensuring that the licence form is correct and completed with all required signatures. GCG will sign and submit all licence applications and renewals to the FIG.

NT athletes should keep their licence in a safe place, bring it to all FIG competitions and be prepared to show it as proof of identity during the accreditation process. If GCG incurs a penalty fee for an athlete who has not brought his/her FIG licence to a competition, payment of that fee will be the responsibility of the athlete.

3.8 NT Uniforms (Non-Competitive Attire)

GCG will provide a uniform package to NT athletes, the named coach(es) of NT athletes, and designated support team members who represent the country at international competitions. This uniform is generally provided in advance of the competition or activity. Coaches who are assigned to represent Canada at international competitions must wear the GCG NT uniform. Only current, named personal coaches of named National Team athletes are entitled to wear the Gymnastics Canada National Team uniform at competitions or activities.

The contents of the uniform package will depend on the level of NT member, and on the role (e.g. athlete, coach, or support team member). Generally a new NT uniform package will be issued only once every two years, unless there are changes to the clothing items. NT coaches will receive one uniform kit regardless of the number and levels of their athletes named to the NT. The coach will receive the kit corresponding to the highest level of athlete they have on the NT.

The official supplier of GCG NT uniforms is Adidas. Athletes representing GCG are expected to wear team-supplied clothing for all team-related training and competitive functions, including, but not limited to: training, competition, podium training, competition day warm-up, opening and closing ceremonies, receiving awards, travel, media events, and other times when identified as a member of the NT or GCG. GCG will issue guidelines that define 'what to wear and when' which are event- and discipline-specific.

Unless the NT members are part of a Major Games, the wearing of branded clothing from companies other than the official GCG suppliers/sponsors or of other international and/or domestic teams (gymnastics or other sports/organizations, including COC) at any time while representing the GCG NT is prohibited.

Additional t-shirts and supplementary NT clothing items and/or discipline-specific items (e.g. grips, competition shoes) may be provided by GCG for members of teams to specific events, such as World Championships or special training camps.

Since shoes or footwear are not provided in the NT uniform kit, appropriate indoor athletic footwear (running shoes) is to be worn for all official GCG athletic events. Shoes must be clean, either white or black in colour, and in good condition. Boots, heels, sandals/flipflops, and street shoes are not appropriate footwear in the sporting venue.

All clothing should be worn in a dignified, clean, and responsible manner, and should be in good repair at all times. Alterations to clothing can only be made in cases of sizing considerations, and only following discussion with GCG staff. Newly received items that need to be exchanged for a different size must be unworn, unwashed, and still have the tags attached. If an item is outgrown before a new kit is distributed, contact GCG for replacement. Charges may apply if this is in the same year the clothing was sent.

GCG controls all commercial rights related to NT clothing. You may not add labels, patches, or any items promoting causes, companies, or organizations to your NT Uniform.

Replacement of lost, damaged, or soiled items is the responsibility of the athlete, and should be arranged with GCG as soon as the problem occurs with the item. Be prepared to return damaged or soiled items to GCG before a replacement is issued. The cost of replacement is the responsibility of the individual and not of GCG.

Members of major games' teams will receive a separate Games team kit from the Canadian organization with overall responsibility for team logistics – COC, CGC, or CIS. GCG NT uniforms are not worn during a major games.

3.9 Competition Attire

The official sponsor for competition attire for the WAG and Trampoline gymnastics-Women's programs is Jagwear. The official sponsor for competition wear for the MAG program is Inspire Sport. Athletes will be issued competition and training attire by GCG, and these items are to be worn as specified by GCG at all NT events. At present there is no official sponsor for trampoline gymnastics-men's competition wear. As with the National Team Uniform, athletes will receive guidelines that define what to wear and when for the competition and training attire as applicable.

Due to the highly individual nature of RG competition clothing, GCG does not have an official NT supplier for either Individual or Group NT athletes. GCG will source suppliers on an annual basis for the competition bodysuits for the GCG RG Group. GCG will provide the designated Group athletes with 2 bodysuits and this clothing remains the property of GCG. Athletes who do not return Group bodysuits to the GCG NTD will be invoiced for the original purchase cost of the suit.

3.10 Information Regarding Travel and Assignments outside of Canada

i) Travel Arrangements

GCG's official travel agent is Boulevard Travel. GCG is responsible for booking most travel for National Team activities. It is our general operating procedure to find the best routing at the most economical cost, though Air Canada is the preferred airline when possible. Wherever possible, we book travel early, as soon as delegates are confirmed, and our bookings are done as per the scheduled travel days for the specific event(s).

Travel bookings are arranged to keep team members traveling together, particularly for international assignments, and to respect the arrival and departure requirements of host organizing committees.

If any deviation is being requested for travel dates, the request must be made to GCG program staff in writing, within 7 days of being named to a team or activity. All deviation requests must be approved by the respective NTD, and generally the only acceptable deviation is to delay return dates after a competition. Any additional costs due to deviations are the responsibility of the individual. Changes to a flight/travel plan that are made without GCG staff approval may result in charges for all related travel expenses being invoiced to the individual.

ii) Baggage Fees

It is the individual NT member's responsibility to be familiar with applicable airline baggage restrictions and to take all reasonable steps to minimize luggage. Unless clearly specified by GCG in the comprehensive event memo, all charges for excess baggage are the responsibility of the individual.

iii) Accommodations

For all NT events, rooming lists will be organized by GCG staff and all team members are expected to stay in the accommodations arranged for the duration of the NT activity. Where host hotels are identified by an organizing committee, GCG will generally select the best option within the budget allocated for the event in order to provide the best conditions possible for the delegation members. Generally this will be a mid-range hotel, as this has proven in the past to be the most reasonable level of accommodation with some quality assurances.

Athletes will room with athletes of the same gender and support team members, including coaches, will room with other support team members of the same gender. Unless there is no

other option, athletes will not room with support team members. Team members are expected to show respect for their assigned roommates and ensure that the room is kept tidy and left at checkout in the same state in which it was found.

The individual is responsible for any charges incurred against the room. This includes but is not limited to phone calls, internet access, meals, or snack fees.

Any damage charges at hotels will be invoiced back to the individual(s) assigned to the room. This includes charges for smoking in designated non-smoking rooms, damages to hotel property, and/or missing items.

Family and friends who choose to travel to watch competitions are not permitted to stay in the same hotel as the team, and must source out their own travel and accommodation requirements.

People not part of the GCG NT program are not allowed access to team hotel accommodations unless organized and approved in advance by GCG. This includes family, friends, and members of teams from other countries.

iv) Accreditations and Meal Tickets

Each individual is responsible for maintaining their accreditation tags and meal tickets for the duration of the event. Lost accreditations and meal tickets must be replaced and any resulting costs are the responsibility of the individual. Under no circumstances will team members share, trade, lend, or borrow accreditations with another person.

Team members are expected to dine together at events whenever possible and to follow nutritional guidelines for healthy eating which support optimal performance.

v) Curfews

Team curfews are established to ensure that all team members are well-rested and capable of optimal performance, regardless of their role in the team. Curfews also serve an important function in supporting the ongoing health, safety, and security of team members. The precise curfew for team members will be set by the head of delegation or head coach of the event, in accordance with the applicable training and competition schedule.

vi) Athlete Supervision

Athletes aged 15 to 17 years who have provided written permission from a parent/guardian, will be permitted to travel alone on **domestic** flights. Athletes aged 14 and under are not permitted to travel alone at any time and must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Generally, athletes aged 17 and under will not be permitted to travel alone on international flights, even if parent/guardian permission is given. During international flights, athletes aged 17 and under must be accompanied by a responsible adult in a support team role, with reasonable ratios of athlete/adult.

Upon arrival on-site, there must be a minimum of 1 coach assigned to the team for every 4 athletes aged 17 or under, in addition to any judges, IST members, or GCG staff. GCG is not obligated to assign a personal coach for each athlete, provided that the minimum supervision requirements are met.

Any coach and/or support team member who has been funded or approved (self-funded) to attend an event by GCG is expected to remain on-site with the athletes throughout the event, regardless of the age of the athletes, and is responsible for overall team supervision for the duration of the event. When several coaches and/or support team members are present at an event, at least one must be readily available at all times. This may be either in-person or by phone/text, as long as they are able to meet and support the athlete(s) *in-person* within a few minutes of receiving notification.

The location and nature of each event will determine the required levels of security and supervision. Athletes aged 18 or over may obtain permission from the NTD/HPD or Team Manager for short local outings without a coach/support team member, provided that there is a group of at least two athletes together, and the supervising support team member is informed of their schedule and plans.

vii) Registration with Canadians Abroad

Registration of Canadians Abroad is a free service that allows the Government of Canada to notify you in case of an emergency abroad or a personal emergency at home. The service also enables you to receive important information before or during a natural disaster or civil unrest.

We encourage any athlete or coach to register when the travel plans have been arranged. Gymnastics Canada staff may do this on behalf of the delegation which will be communicated to all at that time. <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>

viii) Social and Extra-curricular Activities during NT assignments or events

Where schedules permit, team activities may be scheduled by GCG support team members to offer tourism opportunities or recovery/relaxation time. These activities are team activities and all team members are encouraged to participate. Athletes must be accompanied by a GCG support team member during these activities.

Activities that may be perceived to involve risk, which have not been officially approved by the NTD/HPD or Team Manager, and/or which are not related to training or performance needs are not insured under the GCG insurance plan and should be avoided.

4.0 ATHLETE HEALTH SUPPORT

4.1 GCG Integrated Support Team

The programs of Gymnastics Canada have established a core of Integrated Support Team (IST)

members who provide medical and technical support during NT assignments or events. Most disciplines have identified IST leads to be responsible for coordinating the activities of IST members as well as monitoring the ongoing health status of NT athletes. GCG and the IST Lead will work with the individual athletes' sport medicine and sport science practitioners such as therapists, chiropractors, nutritionists, biomechanists, and mental performance consultants. When training at home, athletes continue to work with their personal practitioners for therapy or other services.

The contact point for the IST Lead is through the program staff in each discipline. The IST Lead will assist athletes in coordinating services and care in the event that they become injured or ill.

4.2 Illnesses or Injuries

The National Team Athlete Agreement describes the process that must be followed when an athlete is ill or injured to the extent that training or competition participation is compromised in any way. It is expected that all NT coaches and athletes will follow the process. It is not acceptable for any athlete to arrive at a camp or competition with an unreported injury, regardless of when the injury occurred. Failure to immediately report injuries or significant illnesses to GCG may result in NT status being withdrawn.

Should a team member become ill, injured, or have a health concern during a NT assignment or event, it is the individual's responsibility to bring this to the immediate attention of the coaching staff and/or the designated GCG IST member on-site. This can help to quickly deal with symptoms and in the case of an illness, avoid spreading this to other team members.

If a condition is pre-existing, the IST member or Head Coach for the assignment or event should be notified in advance of travelling. Athletes SHOULD NOT self-medicate, even for minor illnesses or pain, and should seek the advice of the team medical staff. This ensures that symptoms are recorded and helps manage the possibility of the athlete inadvertently ingesting any banned substances in over-the-counter medications.

Under no circumstances should coaches or other non-medical support team members provide any type of medication (prescription or non-prescription) to an athlete.

In the case of illness, and where feasible and necessary, the athlete will be quarantined from other team members for a specified period of time. The amount of time in quarantine will be established on the advisement of the NT physician, or a local doctor.

The decision to notify parents/guardians or family of an illness or injury to a team member will be made depending on the age of the athlete, severity of the situation, and whether there is a need to alter training, competition, or travel plans. Parents/guardians or family members will be notified any time a hospital visit is required, regardless of the age of the athlete.

Decisions to alter the trip, training, or travel plans due to illness or injury will be made by the Head of Delegation, on advisement from the IST member on-site. The NT IST has the final authority in deciding if and when an athlete can return to training, competition, and full integration with the team.

The health interests of the athlete will always take precedence over camp or competition participation. Athlete long-term health, appropriate recovery time, and optimal performance will be the primary considerations when determining when an athlete can return to training or competition.

5.0 BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT

As ambassadors for Canada and for GCG, all NT members (including athletes, coaches, officials, support team, and any traveling friends/family) are expected to behave and conduct themselves in an exemplary manner while traveling or participating as part of NT competitions, training camps, or activities. All NT members should be familiar with and abide by the NT Code of Conduct, Gymnastics Canada's Policies and Procedures, discipline-specific Technical Regulations, Responsibilities Manual, Code of Ethics, and National Team Handbook. Non-compliance will result in disciplinary actions being levied by GCG.

Inappropriate behaviours include, but are not limited to: alcohol and/or drug abuse, loud or confrontational behaviour, swearing, negative or inappropriate coaching behaviours, and inappropriate use of social media.

5.1 Alcohol Consumption

Guidelines on alcohol consumption for NT members are provided in the summary of the Code of Ethics and Conduct (see Appendix), and are also referenced in Section 35 of the GCG Policies and Procedures document.

5.2 Smoking

GCG maintains a "no smoking" practice for all its team members, which includes all tobacco products and e-smoking products. GCG follows the regulations that are established by our partners for major games teams, and for all specific event organizing committees. All team members are expected to abide by these regulations.

Individuals who smoke may only do so in officially designated areas. At no time should any form of smoking take place when athletes are present. Failure to comply with smoking regulations will result in a warning, and repeated warnings can lead to disciplinary sanctions being imposed on the individual.

5.3 GCG Harassment Policy

Harassment of any delegates or staff in any form is unacceptable and is a violation of the GCG Code of Ethics and Conduct. The GCG Harassment Policy (in the GCG Policies and Procedures) describes types of harassment and how harassment complaints will be processed.

6.0 CANADIAN ANTI-DOPING PROGRAM

GCG has adopted the 2015 Canadian Anti-Doping program (CADP), which is the set of rules that govern doping control in Canada. This program is managed by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES), and demonstrates Canada's commitment to clean sport. A full description of the 2015 CADP as well as the current World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) prohibited list is found on the CCES website: <http://cces.ca/canadian-anti-doping-program>

In addition, the CCES website contains a great deal of information for athletes to assist them in managing medications and completing other requirements for the CADP. Refer to <http://cces.ca/athletezone> for full details.

6.1 Medical Exemptions (or Therapeutic Use Exemption - TUE)

Athletes may have illnesses or conditions that require them to take particular medications. If the required medication falls under the WADA Prohibited List, a medical exemption can give the athlete authorization to take the medication. A system for determining if an athlete needs to apply for a medical exemption for any medications that they may be using, and all details about this process, are found at: <http://cces.ca/medical-exemptions>.

6.2 CCES National Athlete Pool (NAP)

All Senior NT and carded athletes will be named to the CCES National Athlete Pool (NAP). Athlete contact and residence information will be provided by GCG to CCES. The athlete must sign an agreement permitting unannounced anti-doping testing at any time, and is also required to complete an online anti-doping awareness course.

Once an athlete's name is added to the NAP list, the name can only be removed when the athlete has formally retired from gymnastics competition. The individual athlete is responsible for officially notifying CCES in writing of their retirement, with a copy sent to GCG.

6.3 Registered Testing Pool (RTP)

CCES identifies a small number of Senior NT athletes who are named to the Registered Testing Pool (RTP). Any World or Olympic Champion will be included, and usually a selection of the top Senior NT members as well.

Athletes included in the RTP have additional responsibilities, including submitting and updating whereabouts information to an online tracking tool known as ADAMS. Athletes in the RTP are also required to submit at any time to unannounced anti-doping testing.

If an athlete is named to the RTP, it is extremely important that he/she meet all quarterly deadlines for submitting their whereabouts information. Whereabouts submissions are the responsibility of the individual athlete and must be kept up-to-date whenever a schedule changes.

7.0 MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

GCG regularly prepares and shares media announcements before, during, and following official training camps and competitions. These releases are distributed by the Director of Communications and Marketing to program members, online subscribers, and Canadian media outlets.

GCG receives many requests for athletes to participate in interviews or other media events. Athletes may have many different opportunities to speak with the media, particularly if they have been named to the NT of an important event such as a major games or World Championships. If an athlete or coach is contacted directly by someone from the media, before agreeing to participate, the first action should be to contact GCG and inform us of the request. GCG can assist in confirming logistics and in vetting requests that are not from mainstream or reliable media sources.

GCG also works with the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) and other partners to conduct media training activities for national team members. Group media training sessions may be held during a training camp or domestic competition, and may include NT members from two or more disciplines.

Before interacting with the media, have an idea of the messages you want to convey and how you want to be perceived. GCG media training will help you identify and articulate your key messages. Generally your message should:

- Tell your story
- Educate the audience about your sport
- Keep the tone of the interview positive

It helps to practice your key messages out loud. Have a friend sit with you and do a mock interview or talk to the mirror. Like any skill, your ability to do interviews will improve with practice.

When working with the media:

- Arrive on-time for the interview and **wearing the appropriate NT uniform.**
- There is no such thing as “off the record” - you are always on the record.
- Let your personality shine through. Smile or laugh as appropriate, be energetic and approachable

- In any emergency or crisis situation, direct the media to your media attaché or the Gymnastics Canada Communications Director and allow them to handle difficult questions.
- Anticipate in advance the kinds of questions you may be asked.
- Use short, to-the-point answers, speak in complete sentences, and stay focused in your responses, though try to avoid one word answers like yes/no.
- Think about the message you wish to convey and how you will convey it. Pace your responses, and think before you speak.
- Don't answer a question with "no comment". It is better to re-direct the direction of the discussion into an area that is more "on-message" for you. Keep your composure at all times.
- Avoid technical jargon, including acronyms.
- Mention something personal about yourself and your experiences.
- Enjoy your time in the spotlight.
- Tell your story for the first time - every time.
- Thank the reporter.

7.1 Social Media

Engagement on social media on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Twitter, Vine, Snapchat, and YouTube is encouraged but one must post responsibly and not post text or images that are disrespectful, hateful, harmful, disparaging, insulting, or otherwise negative. All accredited persons must abide by the event's organizing and governing bodies (e.g. FIG, International Olympic Committee) on policies regarding social media, blogging, and the internet, before and during an event.

Social media has become a mainstay of our lives and has introduced new opportunities as well as challenges with respect to how the world communicates. As an elite or up-and-coming athlete, social media is a great way to connect with fans and share both professional and personal experiences, but NT members need to be mindful of what is shared and the audience that is following their posts.

The most important thing to remember as a NT member is that you are creating a personal brand that defines you. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat allow you to communicate your message and personal brand in creative and interactive ways, so don't be afraid to optimize these tools! Just remember that what you communicate will be what people associate with your "brand".

Social media is a fantastic tool, have fun with it while respecting that you are accountable for your actions. Know that you are a leader in sport, that you have the ability to use your voice to have a positive, inspiring impact on people, and that you need to define your personal brand in a way that reflects your best self.

The following are some strategies for engaging with the public via social media:

- *Be honest and speak with an authentic and proper voice*

People like to know who you are outside of your sport, especially younger athletes who are aspiring to one day be like you. The best-known athletes are not only loved for what they do on the field, but also for what they do off the field. Use proper grammar, be honest, share your emotions - but have a filter and keep controversial or potentially sensitive statements to yourself.

- *Your image – how the world sees you!*

It is unlikely, but in the event that you violate rules or laws, or make a less than appropriate decision, don't share it with the world on social media. What you post, who you follow, and who follows your postings is a direct reflection of yourself. The world will not only judge you on what you say, but also on your interactions.

- *Provide compelling and meaningful content through the use of images*

There is no better way to showcase what you do in a day than to post pictures. Keep in mind that some events have restrictions about where and what you can photograph, and that there may be existing copyright holders for all competition images at major games. Keep your photographs positive and professional, and obtain permission from anyone who is in the photo **before** you post it on social media. The sample tweet above from Jason Burnett is an example of a great post-event tweet. It shows all the team members, dressed in the team uniform and wearing their medals. It mentions the competition and the location. There is a lot of information included and a very positive message.

- *Allow your profiles to be a source of information for people*

Get into the habit of posting and tweeting shortly after something happens, such as competition results, or a new skill.

- *Show appreciation and gratitude to fans, organizers, sponsors, coaches, and family*

- *Think before you post*

You are not only a reflection of yourself, but you're a reflection of your organization, trainers, coaches, support team, club, and your family. When in doubt, just don't post. Keep your social media postings specific to your NT activities and avoid including personal content.

- *Avoid offensive images and inappropriate language*

- *Don't post what's on your mind after a tough day or competition*

You have trained hard to become a champion so when you don't perform well at a competition or in training, it can be emotionally draining. Put your phone away and avoid posting when you're upset, tired, or frustrated. You will thank yourself later.

- *Respect other NT members, officials' decisions and other countries*



Jason Burnett's post on Twitter with Canadian National Teammates after winning Gold in the team event at the 2014 Pan American Championships in Mississauga (Burnett, 2014).

Don't post anything coaches or teammates say in confidence or in private. Refrain from commenting negatively or sarcastically about results, judging, other people, other countries, and all organizations.

All major games team members (Commonwealth Games, Pan Am Games, Olympic Games, and Youth Olympic Games) must sign a team members' agreement with the lead partner (e.g. Commonwealth Games Canada or COC), which includes a section related to social media. Be sure to read these agreements carefully before you sign, so that you understand the rules, which can be quite different from lower profile events.

7.2 Competition Photos

Photos and video taken during a competition and on the podium by the organizing committee, media outlets, and by athletes and coaches themselves, are important for the promotion and representation of GCG as an organization and Canada as a country.

Athletes and coaches should act, appear, and pose appropriately for photos and videos, to uphold the utmost professionalism, respect, and reputation. This includes media posted on personal social media accounts that are open to the public.

A good photo will show:

- Eye contact with the camera
- Natural smile
- Good posture
- Straight arm position
- Appropriate and policy-abiding uniform*

*Note: Competition and podium uniforms may differ during major events (e.g. Commonwealth, Pan American, and Olympic Games) and are under the jurisdiction of the overseeing delegation organizers. Athletes will be instructed as to which uniforms to wear for each situation.

7.3 Controversy and Crisis Management

Controversy is part of sport. At some point, you may be asked to comment on an issue or conflict that may or may not concern you directly. As a professional, you should be prepared to answer questions on the topic.

Here are a few examples of questions that could be asked related to a crisis or controversy:

- There have been reports that a Canadian athlete recently tested positive for a banned substance. How does this reflect on the Canadian Team at these Games?
- You tend to crack under pressure, how will you approach this competition?
- We need more hospitals, plus money for education and health care. Why should we support funding for athletes?



Rosannagh MacLennan poses after winning Gold at the London 2012 Olympic Games (Russell, 2012).

- There has been speculation that a terrorist attack is imminent during these Games. Are you afraid for your safety?

When you are asked this type of question, it can help to use a transitional phrase to re-route the conversation to one of your key messages. Here are some examples:

- An equally important concern is...
- There's another issue to consider...
- We are confident that...

7.4 Remember Your Audience

Depending on the news outlet, your audience will vary greatly - especially during important competitions held outside of Canada. But no matter where you are, your audience includes children and their families as well as potential sponsors. Always be aware of your audience and choose your words carefully. Children look up to athletes as role models, so focus one of your key messages on inspiring another generation of athletes. As a child, you were most likely motivated to participate in sport because you watched one of your heroes achieve something great. Be sure you do the same for those who come after you by encouraging them to be active.

When talking with the media, showcase what makes you unique - your personality, special talents, or interests. The media looks for personal interest stories as they are well received by audiences. Remember to bring your stories back to your key messages and to keep the information you divulge well within the boundaries of discretion and good taste.

8.0 ATHLETE SUPPORT AND SERVICES

8.1 Competition Prize Money and Athlete Trust Fund

At sanctioned competitions, athletes may be eligible to win prize money based on their performance.

Prize money earned by athletes or teams at international competitions is most often transferred to GCG by FIG or the event organizing committee, after conclusion of the competition. Athletes will be contacted by the GCG staff to ask if they wish the money to be placed in a trust account for the athlete or released to them.

In situations where cash prizes are awarded on-site, the Head of Delegation is responsible for delivering the cash to GCG immediately upon returning to Canada. As above, GCG will contact the athlete for instructions on how they wish their prize money to be handled.

8.2 Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program

The Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) is a federal government grant program that provides financial assistance to specific NT athletes who have met the requirements of the GCG carding selection criteria in the respective Olympic discipline, and who have been nominated by GCG to AAP. This financial support is also known as "carding" funding.

Each discipline publishes annual Carding Criteria which describe the selection and nomination process. Carding Criteria are developed by GCG program staff, in consultation with National Team coaches and the Program Committee, and are reviewed and approved by Sport Canada. Once finalized, the criteria are distributed at large to the community and posted on the GCG website.

Complete details on the Athlete Assistance Program are found at:
<http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1414514343755>.

Athletes who have been nominated to receive AAP carding are advised to read this information thoroughly.

8.3 National Team Travel and Medical Insurance Policy

When NT members participate in a competition, training camp, or activity as a part of an official GCG delegation, they will be covered under GCG's travel and medical insurance policy, both internationally and domestically.

This insurance policy covers normal (travel, transportation) and sport-related activities (training, competition) that are planned related to the NT. It is recommended that NT members purchase their own personal travel insurance annually or event-by-event to ensure the most complete coverage possible.

Any unplanned activities (e.g. extended travel, shopping, skydiving), beyond the NT schedule are not covered under the policy and will require an additional plan for NT members to be covered.

8.4 Canadian Athlete Insurance Program (CAIP)

GCG provides all NT members the option to enroll in the CAIP (as long as the national team agreement and all attachments have been completed in full and received by GCG). The level will generally be bronze but may be provided at silver or gold on a case-by-case basis. The CAIP provides coverage when treatment is required for an injury incurred in training or competition in Canada. To be eligible, an athlete must be registered under a Canadian provincial/territorial health insurance plan.

CAIP insurance is for a period of one year, renewable each year. Athletes must pay in advance for the costs of eligible services, then submit the receipts and claim form to CAIP for reimbursement.

CAIP is also available as a self-funded benefit to non-NT athletes and coaches who are members in good standing of GCG and who have provincial health insurance.

If a NT athlete's family has sufficient health insurance coverage from other sources and does not wish to be enrolled in the CAIP program, the respective program staff should be informed immediately (at the time of completion of the NT agreement).

The CAIP also provides an option for travel medical insurance for athletes when travelling abroad.

For further and more detailed information about CAIP, updates and claim forms, visit the website: http://www.mkirsch.ca/CAIP2_ver_3.htm.

8.5 Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute (COPSI) Network

The COPSI Network consists of four Canadian Sport Institutes (Pacific, Calgary, Ontario, Quebec) and three Canadian Sport Centres (Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Atlantic). Each location provides services that are designed to enhance the training and recovery of high performance athletes.

Carded athletes may be entitled to certain services from the Centre or Institute in their region, although the level and type of servicing varies with each. Gymnastics Canada program staff and the IST leads for each discipline will help coordinate the use of these services for NT members.

8.6 Game Plan Athlete Transition Program

Game Plan is a collaboration between the Canadian Olympic Committee, Canadian Paralympic Committee, Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute Network (COPSIN), and Sport Canada to provide the best resources this country has to offer to NT athletes.



Game Plan is a holistic approach to athlete development and to total wellness throughout an athlete's high-performance sport career and beyond. For more information about Game Plan, visit the website: www.mygameplan.ca.

8.7 Appeal and Reconsideration Process

A NT member who is in disagreement with a decision made by Gymnastics Canada has the right to appeal the decision by following a dedicated process for resolving disputes. Section 39 of Gymnastics Canada's Organizational Policies and Procedures, describes the Appeal Policy in full detail.

Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada

Where disagreements or disputes cannot be resolved through informal means, formal appeals, particularly those involving selection of athletes to major games teams, may be referred to the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC).



SDRCC's main goals are:

- To ensure access to independent, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) solutions for all participants in the Canadian sport system at the national level;

- To strengthen the transparency and accountability of the national sport system and national sports organizations by clarifying their responsibilities to athletes, coaches, and other stakeholders;
- To ensure that independent alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes are equitable for all;
- To offer a low-cost mechanism throughout Canada in both official languages.

For more information about SDRCC, visit the website: www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca.

8.7 Sponsorship and Endorsement Support

Sponsorship and endorsements are important for National Team athletes to support their athletic endeavours. Gymnastics Canada encourages NT athletes to reach out to companies and organizations to self-generate funds for their training and competitions. As per Gymnastics Canada's Policies and Procedures, the organization offering support is required to be a signatory on an agreement. With this, GCG offers support in arranging and in the engagement of these opportunities. In consultation with the Director of Communications and Marketing, and the applicable Program Director, the athlete will receive advice and recommendations on how to secure agreements and the terms of any agreements.

Please note, any sponsorship or endorsement agreement must be within GCG's Policies and Procedures. The arrangement must not place the image of the athlete, GCG, or gymnastics in a detrimental position, nor convey any marketing rights associated with GCG or the NT. GCG sponsors in the same product category have the right to match the terms and conditions of any offer made by a competitor of those sponsors, and there must not be a significant conflict with current GCG sponsorship arrangements. The athlete is not permitted to wear NT apparel or refer to membership on the NT in advertising and promotions conducted by sponsors who are not sponsors of GCG. Please consult the GCG Policies and Procedures to view the full requirements.

9.0 PARTNER AGENCIES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

9.1 AthletesCAN

AthletesCAN is an association representing Canada's National Team athletes. They are the only fully independent and inclusive athlete organization in the country. AthletesCAN represents all athletes from all national teams including Aboriginal, Paralympic, Pan American Games, Olympic, and Commonwealth Games athletes, amongst others. Athletes who are members of a senior national team or athletes who have retired from a senior national team within the past 8 years are considered members of AthletesCAN.



AthletesCAN's mission is to work with partners in leadership, advocacy and education to ensure a fair, responsive, and supportive sport system for high performance athletes in Canada. In fulfilling this mission, AthletesCAN is committed to the values of accountability, equity,

inclusiveness, and mutual respect. For more information about AthletesCAN and their initiatives, visit the website: www.athletescan.com.

9.2 Team Investors Group Amateur Athletes Fund

Working in partnership with AthletesCAN, the Investors Group awards twenty (20) bursaries of \$5,000 to Canadian amateur athletes each year.



Athletes apply online in January for the following year and are awarded a bursary by the selection committee (made up of active and retired NT athletes, and officials from AthletesCAN) based on the following criteria:

- athletic achievement - 40%
- financial need - 30%
- community involvement - 30%

The bursary fund is open to any active senior national team athlete who is in good standing with Gymnastics Canada (those competing at the Olympic, Pan American, Commonwealth, and senior World Championship levels), is a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant permanently residing in Canada, is committed to training and competing for Canada as a member of the senior national team, and has a gross income, from all sources in the preceding year of less than \$50,000. Athletes with an income greater than \$50,000 annually, who demonstrate financial need, may also be eligible.

This bursary is available to an athlete twice during their athletic career. Athletes planning to attend NCAA schools after retirement should verify NCAA eligibility requirements related to funding programs.

For more information about Team Investors Group Amateur Athletes Fund and to apply, visit the website: www.athletescan.com/programs-services/ig.

9.3 Dale Carnegie Speaker Training

In partnership between AthletesCAN and Dale Carnegie and Associates, current and retired NT athletes are eligible to enroll in Effective Communication and Human Relations courses through a \$1,925 scholarship.



The nine-week course enables athletes to develop skills in communications, listening and leadership, as well as help managing stress and developing self-assurance to produce tangible results.

For more information about Dale Carnegie Speaker Training and to apply, visit the website: <http://www.athletescan.com/programs-services/dc-speakers-training>.

9.4 Canadian Athletes Now Fund

The Canadian Athletes Now Fund is a program that aims to help national team athletes throughout the country become world class through financial support.



Any active national team member can apply to receive \$6,000 (up to \$12,000 annually) through an application process that occurs twice a year. The responsibility for application is that of the athlete, although GCG may be asked to verify information from applicants.

For more information about the Canadian Athletes Now Fund and related forms, visit the website: www.canadianathletesnow.ca.

9.5 Bell Athletes Connect Program

The Bell Athletes Connect program is administered by the COC. The program is an initiative created by Bell Mobility that provides senior national team athletes with comprehensive mobile phone services. The names of eligible athletes are provided to COC by GCG on a yearly basis.



For more information about the Bell Athletes Connect Program, visit the website: [www.bell.ca/Bell Athletes Connect Program](http://www.bell.ca/Bell_Athletes_Connect_Program).

9.6 Petro-Canada Fuelling Athlete and Coaching Excellence

Aspiring Olympic and Paralympic athletes (non-carded athletes) and their coaches may be eligible to receive financial assistance through the Petro-Canada Fuelling Athlete and Coaching Excellence (FACE) program, which provides funding to amateur athletes hoping to one day represent Canada at the Olympic or Paralympic Games. Annually, Petro-Canada provides \$500,000 to 50 athlete and coach pairings.



FACE program funding may be used for:

- training
- equipment
- travel to competition

Athletes are nominated by Gymnastics Canada based on criteria established by Petro-Canada, the Canadian Olympic Committee, and the Canadian Paralympic Committee, and who would best benefit from funding. A committee comprised of representatives from Petro-Canada, the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic committees, and the Coaching Association of Canada work together to select the final recipients.

For more information about the Petro-Canada Fuelling Athlete and Coaching Excellence Program, visit the website: <http://retail.petro-canada.ca/en/olympics/5612.aspx>.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Term	Abbreviation
Athlete Assistance Program	AAP
Coaching Association of Canada	CAC
Canadian Athlete Insurance Program	CAIP
Canadian Athlete Monitoring Program	CAMP
Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport	CCES
Canadian Olympic Committee	COC
Chartered Professional Coach	ChPC
Canadian Sport Institute	CSI
Double Mini-Trampoline gymnastics	DMT
Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique	GCG
High Performance Director	HPD
International Gymnastics Federation	FIG
Integrated Support Team	IST
National Sport Institute of Quebec	INSQ
Men's Artistic Gymnastics	MAG
National Sport Organization	NSO
National Team	NT
National Team Director	NTD
Provincial and Territorial Organization	PTO
Rhythmic Gymnastics	RG
Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada	SDRCC
Trampoline gymnastics, Double Mini-Trampoline gymnastics and Tumbling Gymnastics	TG
Women's Artistic Gymnastics	WAG
World Age Group Championships	WAGC