

## 2021 AthletesCAN PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Canadian national team athletes,

As I conclude my first year as President of AthletesCAN, I couldn't help but reflect on the various challenges that the previous year have imposed on the entire Canadian sport system, and especially on you, the athletes.

Sport was put on pause during the pandemic, and Canadians united to think of broader issues and what really mattered. And unsurprisingly, when sport resumed, it was with new conviction that Canadian athletes stormed the world and achieved not only world class performances, but performances that embodied our values and who we are proud to be.

I am proud of the resiliency you all showed in the face of adversity, and the vulnerability that you have exhibited as you battled through the Covid-19 pandemic, advocated for the Black Lives Matter movement, and upon hearing of the tragic news related to the discoveries associated with the residential school system. While there remains a lot of work ahead of us to continue to learn, listen, and act, I am hopeful that we have all started to contribute to a better future, and will continue to work together on the path of reconciliation and social justice.

AthletesCAN also took a chance to reflect and grow this year. We listened to you, our members, and redefined what the organization aims to do, what it stands for, and how it can help create a sport system we are all proud of.

Below you will find a summary of our progress against our previous strategy (2016-2020), as well as information on where we are heading as we embark on our new strategy until 2025. The road ahead is one of learning, listening, and growth, and it is only through coming together that we will be successful in changing sport for the better.

It has been a privilege to represent you all as your President over the last year, and I am confident that the organization is now equipped with the right team, the right resources, and the right plan, to truly make the Canadian sport system one that we can be proud of.

Thank you for your continued trust and engagement. AthletesCAN remains proud to be representing you and we are grateful for the continued opportunity to carry your voices forward.

Yours in sport,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "PLL", is shown within a light gray rectangular box.

Pierre-Luc Laliberté

# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2020 TO MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2021

Last year marked the culmination of four years of hard work implementing the 2016-2020 strategic plan. AthletesCAN had set a bold vision for its future and the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan charted the beginning of AthletesCAN's next 25 years.

Under the leadership of a strong management team (Ashley LaBrie, and Georgina Truman) and a dedicated athlete Board of Directors, AthletesCAN enhanced the collective voice of athletes to empower them to achieve their full potential on the field of play and beyond. What the team managed to accomplish has been remarkable and I am extremely proud and grateful to be able to present this report.

## What we set out to accomplish

**Develop and deliver best in class athlete leadership education and resources to build sport system capacity and foster top performances on and off the field of play.**

## How we delivered it

- Updates the Athlete Representative toolkit of tools and resources
- Held 4 annual forums bringing together 350 athletes from 50 sports to exchange, learn, and grow through peer to peer interactions in-person, and virtually
- Delivered 2 KidsCAN events where athlete leaders interacted with the next generation of Canadian athletes
- Supported 23 athlete councils
- Provided National Team Athletes with access to Safe Sport training through Respect Group
- Provided leadership training to athlete leaders through Dale Carnegie Leadership programs
- Expanded the Sport Solution clinic to take on more athlete dispute cases
- Took over and re-launched the Canadian Sport Awards, recognizing Canadian athlete leaders and their contribution on and off the field of play
- Celebrated over 20 years of the Investors Group Bursary Program which distributed \$2.1 Million to 420 to emerging athlete leaders
- Developed and launched the AthletesCAN Ambassador Program



#### What we set out of accomplish

**Ensure sport system stakeholders have the tools and structure necessary to support an athlete-centered environment promoting the holistic development of its participants in a safe and healthy manner.**

#### How we delivered it

- Held the Safe Sport Athlete summit, leading to the release of the Safe Sport Consensus Statements
- Played a key advisory role through the Safe Sport Working group to help shape the future of Safe Sport in Canada
- Released the Athlete Agreement and Commercial Athlete Agreement Templates
- Released *The Future of Athlete Agreements in Canada (2015)* and *The Future of Athlete Representation within Governance Structures of National Sport Organizations (2020)*
- Supported efforts to increase AAP funding for athletes
- Provided athlete perspectives and recommendations on the Canadian Anti-Doping Program (CADP) and released the “I tested positive?” guide to how to respond to a possible anti-doping violation
- Provided athlete perspectives and recommendations on the Canadian Athlete Mental Health Strategy led by GamePlan
- Became an associate member of the World Players Association and signed the Universal Declaration of Players’ Rights
- Played an international leader role on specific issues affecting Canadian athletes by fostering collaboration with other international athlete representation organizations (e.g., WPA, Global Athlete, Athlete Germany, USOPC AAC, British Athlete Commission, etc.)
- Launched AthletesCAN’s Diversity and Equity Committee to advise the organization on how to continue to evolve in an inclusive way

#### What we set out of accomplish

**Maximize the financial and operational performance of our business, of partners we invest in, and of the system, to ensure we provide the maximum possible value to our athletes and the Canadian sport system.**

#### How we delivered it

- Increased communication to membership through various social media and direct communications channels
- Successfully completed an organization-wide gender equity audit
- Trained board members and staff on safe sport, gender equity, and accessibility standards
- Reviewed and modernized policies and governance structure
- Kept the organization in a healthy financial position
- Tracked and mitigated risks as they emerged

# LOOKING AHEAD

2021 TO 2025

While the previous table showcases a lot of accomplishments and a significant amount of progress in key areas, it has come at the realization that AthletesCAN can not sustainably continue to be everything to everyone. As such, the leadership team came together and, with the help of Deloitte's Community Advisory Program, developed the 2021-2025 strategic plan.

This plan narrows our focus to what matters most to our athletes and aims to unite and amplify the voices of all Canadian national team athletes. We want to have a system-wide impact on the issues that matter most to you and elevate your voices so that decisions are made by considering your thoughts, opinions, and recommendations.

To do so, we will focus on three key priority areas with clearly defined objectives:

## **Awareness**

By 2025, AthletesCAN is well-known by all Canadian national team athletes and fosters deep relationships with key system stakeholders

## **Insight**

By 2025, AthletesCAN captures the collective voice of Canadian athletes through robust data collection processes and formalized procedures

## **Activation**

By 2025, AthletesCAN develops and sustains impactful change initiatives in the sport system based on data-driven insights from Canadian national team athletes

Our commitment to our members is to keep you informed of our progress in all these areas and remain your trusted representatives at the various decision-making tables we sit at across the Canadian sport system.

AthletesCAN continues to believe that sport is integral to Canadian culture and that national team athletes are role models who inspire us as a country. To address the changes in our rapidly evolving sport environment which directly impact and influence our athletes' development, it is critical that the athlete voice is central to the system and is as accurate and independent as possible.