



2022 AthletesCAN President's Report

Dear Canadian National Team Athletes,

I wanted to start off this message with gratitude for being in a position to represent fellow Canadian athletes in the past year. It has been an eventful year for sport, with athletes dealing with the continued pandemic and representing our Country in both Summer and Winter Olympics and Paralympics within a 7-month span. I was proud to watch Canadian athletes demonstrate resilience, strength and determination through what we all knew to be a difficult time in life and in sport.

This past year has also been remarkable for the continued rise of athlete advocacy in the Canadian sport system. We have seen athletes be more vocal about challenges they are facing in their sports, including speaking out about safe sport, governance, racism, discrimination and mental health challenges. While these conversations have been tough to hear, we applaud the strength and courage it has taken for athletes to be vulnerable and take a stand to create change for themselves and future generations.

AthletesCAN continues to work with athletes to ensure that their voices are represented, that they are heard, and most importantly to push for systemic changes that are needed in Canada. There is still a long road ahead to create the sport system athletes are asking for, that is safe, inclusive, and athlete-centred, but we continue to be dedicated to this mission. We continue to ask for your input and feedback and are always here to listen to you.

In 2021, AthletesCAN launched our new strategic plan (2021-2025). Attached to this letter, is an overview of this year's progress related to our three key pillars: Awareness, Insight and Activation. None of this progress would have been achieved without the contributions of our incredible staff, board members, and volunteers, who have dedicated endless time, energy, and passion to this organization, and more importantly, to the mission of ensuring athletes are at the centre of Canadian sport. Thanks to all of you.

Finally, I wanted to acknowledge all of the athletes who continue to demonstrate leadership in and beyond your field of play. You are all inspirational and we at AthletesCAN are very proud to continue to represent you.

Yours Truly,

Erin Willson
President

Our Year in Review

April 1st, 2021, to March 31st, 2022

This was the first year of embarking on our new 2021-2025 strategic plan ([click the link here to view it online](#)). 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.

While looking to ensure we were set up for success, we took the opportunity to assess the structure of our organization. With this, we decided to bring in a second staff member, Alan Hudes, to join Georgina Truman and our dedicated Board of Directors. Towards the end of the fiscal year, Georgina took on a new job which meant departing AthletesCAN. We wanted to recognize her extensive dedication and contributions to our organization and support her on her next chapter.

Reflecting on the activities of the past year, I want to express my sincere gratitude for everything that was accomplished. The overview of the progress will be presented based on our three pillars: Awareness, Insight and Activation.

Awareness

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

How we delivered it

- Brought on a manager of communications and partnerships to continue to build on social, digital, and traditional media channels, and awareness with national and international partners
- Launched new interactive and accessible website: AthletesCAN.ca
- Held virtual forum: Building for the Future in October 2021, which discussed safe sport, intersectionality, and athlete mental health and partnership opportunities,
- Hosted the Canadian Sport Awards to recognize leadership within Canadian Athletes

Insight

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

- In preparation for the meeting with the Minister of Sport, Honourable Pascale St. Onge, AthletesCAN conducted a pulse survey for athletes on safe sport. Athletes shared with us the lack of trust in current processes, particularly within their NSO's, and frustrations with the lack of meaningful change within the culture of sport.

Activation

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

- Hosted the Canadian Sport Awards in conjunction with CBC

- Assisted with the formation and held a formalized position with the Athlete Advisory committee for the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (independent safe sport mechanism)
- Published a book chapter on athletes' perspectives in a Safe Sport eReader with the Centre for Sport Capacity, Brock University
- Formalized partnership with Firework
- Published "I Tested Positive" guide ([click this link to view the guide online](#)) to support athletes as they navigate through the anti-doping process