Game ON –

The Ontario Government’s Sport Plan

A LEGACY OF THE PAN AM/PARAPAN AM GAMES

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Game ON – The Ontario Government’s Sports Plan
Minister’s Message

As Ontario’s Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, I am proud of the work we are doing to make our province a wonderful place to live, work, play – and compete.

Since we launched Game ON in 2015, we have been busy transforming Ontario’s sport sector and encouraging engagement with sport for Ontarians of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Over the past year, we have made great progress, including launching a revitalized Ontario Games program with increased support to host municipalities across the province, holding the first-ever Sport Symposium to engage with our sector partners and stakeholders, and promoting safe athletic participation, including important efforts to combat concussions.

Following Ontario’s superb achievements as part of Team Canada at the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, our motivation to succeed has never been stronger. Based on the pillars of participation, development and excellence, we are continuing our work to enhance opportunities for all Ontarians to participate in sport and ensure athletes, coaches, professionals and volunteers have access to the training and competition opportunities they need to reach the podium. By renewing the Quest for Gold program, strengthening our support for provincial, national and international competition opportunities, and hosting major sport events, we are investing in our competitors of today and tomorrow.

By improving physical health and encouraging psychological and social wellness, participation in sport can play a vital role in the lives of all Ontarians, including Ontario’s women and girls. One of our government’s priorities is to advance opportunities for women and girls in sport, and I look forward to continuing to leverage the support and advice of the Minister’s Advisory Panel on Sport to develop an Action Plan for Equal Opportunity in Sport to be launched and implemented later this year.

I am proud that our government has redoubled our efforts to support sport and recreation opportunities for Indigenous communities, including focusing on programs that increase participation of Indigenous youth in particular. I am also delighted that Ontario will host the North American Indigenous Games for the very first time when they come to Toronto this summer.

We have made important progress to date in securing a vibrant, safe and inclusive sport system. Sport and recreation have a vital role in increasing our collective prosperity and quality of life, and I look forward to continuing that work together as we continue to implement Game ON.

All my best,

The Honourable Eleanor McMahon
Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Advancing Women and Girls in Sport

SUCCESS AT THE HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEVEL
Working to close the gender gap in sport will ensure women and girls have equal and fair access to opportunities to participate, develop their skills and achieve excellence.

Women performed exceptionally well at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, where 60 per cent of Team Canada’s Olympic athletes were women. Fifty-two women, either individually or on teams, contributed to 16 of Canada’s 22 medals — nearly half of these women are from Ontario, and are Quest for Gold recipients.

PREMIER’S ROUNDTABLE ON WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORT
On March 24, 2016, a Premier’s Roundtable on Women and Girls in Sport was held with government representatives, including the provincial Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues, and experts from the sector to identify barriers and discuss issues and trends affecting participation of women and girls in sport. The information gained from this roundtable discussion continues to be used to inform ministry priorities and government objectives.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT
In 2016–17, the ministry supported initiatives designed to advance opportunities for women and girls in sport by providing nearly $1.3 million across the province.

COLLABORATION AMONG FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS
At the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Conference for Ministers responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation in June 2016, Ontario championed action to make closing the gender gap in sport a pan-Canadian priority for collaborative action. As a result, women and girls will be a top priority of the Canadian Sport Policy for the next five years.

FEMALE COACH SALARY PARTNERSHIPS
The ministry is also making strides to advance development of female coaches. In 2016, the ministry funded Female Coach Salary Partnerships through the Quest for Gold program. This will assist post-secondary institutions in developing female coaches who will become eligible head coaches for varsity programs in the near future.

SPORT RECOGNITION POLICY
In August 2016, the ministry released a revised Sport Recognition Policy for Provincial and Multi-Sport Organizations with a new inclusion requirement that will ensure equal and fair opportunities for women and girls to participate in sport and have access to governance, programming, training and coaching.
Game ON Commitments

The ministry has also made progress on other key initiatives across all three priority areas identified in the plan. Reflecting on our progress will help us to demonstrate our achievements and identify where we must focus our efforts in the year to come.

Sport Plan Priority

Participation

- Focuses on providing opportunities for all Ontarians to get involved in organized sport in a safe and positive environment
- The ministry, in consultation with the sector, has taken action in a number of areas to achieve this priority

Support for Indigenous Peoples in Sport

In May 2016, Ontario announced it is providing $3.5 million to support the 2017 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG), which will be hosted in Toronto. This will be the first time the games have been hosted outside of Western Canada. The theme of NAIG is to promote unity, heritage, youth and sport. The games will include a week-long cultural village.

Since 2014, the number of First Nations communities participating in the ministry’s Community Aboriginal Recreation Activator program has increased from 15 to 27. This year, the ministry committed to renewed funding for the program — $3.88 million over the next three years.

The government’s support for the Sport Pathway for Ontario Native Wellness initiative builds on the existing mainstream sport and recreation system by developing opportunities for Indigenous participants, athletes and coaches to achieve their personal best from playground to podium.

Fostering Safe Participation in Sport

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON CONCUSSIONS

In May 2016, the ministry hosted a roundtable on concussions with sport leaders and experts to begin discussions at the provincial level on prevention, identification, management and treatment of concussions experienced in organized sports.
ROWAN’S LAW ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Rowan's Law Advisory Committee — named after Rowan Stringer, a 17-year-old who passed away after sustaining a head injury while playing rugby — will support the government’s action on detection, prevention and treatment of head injuries.

As part of its work, the committee will focus on how parents, coaches, officials and the medical community can work together to increase safe participation in sport. It will also review the jury recommendations made in the inquest of the death of Rowan Stringer and best practices from other jurisdictions, and advise on pragmatic, effective ways to implement the jury’s recommendations. The committee will submit its recommendations to the government by September 2017.
Sport Plan Priority

Development

- Focuses on ensuring athletes receive the right support as their skills develop
- The ministry, in consultation with the sector, has taken action in a number of areas to achieve this priority

Renewing the Games Ontario Program

The province released a renewed and rebranded Ontario Games program, with an increase in hosting grants for municipalities — and launched PACHI, the mascot of the 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games — as the Games Ontario mascot.

Since assuming responsibility for delivery of the Ontario Games program in 2015, the ministry successfully delivered the first set of games including the largest ever Summer Games with more than 4,000 participants. The 2016 Ontario Summer Games were held in Mississauga, and the 2016 55+ Summer Games were hosted by Midland.

The ministry also released a new set of hosting guidelines and received a record number of letters of interest — five for the 2020 Ontario Winter Games and three for the 2019 55+ Winter Games. This is a testament to the ministry’s improved bidding process.

This year, the ministry also successfully secured host municipalities for the 2018 Ontario Winter Games (Orillia), 2018 Ontario Summer Games (London) and 2018 Ontario 55+ Summer Games (Mississauga) through a competitive bid process.

Hosting the 2021 Canada Games

Ontario announced it will be hosting the 2021 Canada Games, and will provide more than $10 million to support the host community, which will be selected in April 2017.

The games will give Ontario athletes critical at-home competition experience.
Sport Plan Priority

Excellence

- Focuses on ensuring athletes can pursue excellence in high-performance sport
- The ministry, in consultation with the sector, has taken action in a number of areas to achieve this priority

Building on the Legacy of the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games

The ministry revised the Ontario Sport Hosting Program, positioning the province as a key destination for national and international sporting events. In 2016–17, the Sport Hosting Program committed more than $2 million to support 23 amateur sport events in 14 communities across the province. This year, the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games legacy facilities served as host for six of these events, and three legacy facilities will also host 2017 North American Indigenous Games events.

In June 2016, the ministry provided an additional $7 million to the TO2015 Sport Legacy Fund to support the continued operation and maintenance of three Pan Am/Parapan Am Games legacy facilities: Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre, York Athletics Stadium and Milton Velodrome.

Supporting High Performance Athletes

Ontario invested $9.76 million through the Quest for Gold program, including $6.36 million in direct funding for 1,326 athletes and $3.4 million through sport organizations to enhance coaching, training and competitive opportunities for athletes and their coaches.

The ministry also continued to fund the Canadian Sport Institute Ontario to support Ontario’s high-performance athletes and coaches in new facilities with new training equipment, enhanced programs, research facilities and support services.
Moving Forward

As we move into the second year of Game ON, the plan will continue to build on the legacies of the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games in a demonstrable and measurable way, through implementation of our key priorities. Planning for the launch and release of several initiatives and programs is already underway for 2017.

This year, the ministry streamlined its funding application process to reduce administrative burdens for provincial sport organizations. In 2017, the ministry aims to launch a renewed Ontario Amateur Sport Fund that will lead to greater financial certainty for provincial sport organizations.

In the spring of 2017, the ministry will host the second Ontario Sport Symposium. The symposium will continue to serve as an opportunity to engage with sector stakeholders about Game ON and its implementation, and provide updates on the government’s priorities and progress on the sport plan.

During the first half of 2017, we will lead the development and redesign of a renewed Quest for Gold program to better support athlete and system development. The renewed program would include identification and implementation of an optimum delivery model.

Finally, we will continue to fund programs and services and work with our partners — in other ministries and levels of government, sport and community organizations, the private sector and individuals — to advance the priorities of this plan and strengthen the province’s sport sector.
Conclusion

Ontario’s greatest strength is its people. We want everyone in this great, diverse province to have an opportunity to participate in sport, recreation and physical activity. Working together with our partners, and with Game ON as our guide, we are building a healthier Ontario where more people can pursue and achieve excellence in sport.

So far in 2016, Ontario athletes have already shown us how much they can achieve. Ontario sent the largest provincial contingent of athletes to compete for Team Canada at the Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro. Our Olympians contributed to 15 of Team Canada’s total 22 medals. More than half of Ontario athletes in Rio also competed in the Pan Am Games, which gave them the benefit of experiencing competition in a high-pressure international multi-sport event at home.

The ministry is proud to have been part of their success and this plan will help us build on that. The government’s efforts in the first year of the sport plan are just the beginning. Game ON will continue to be a living document, which we will adapt over time to meet the sector’s changing needs. What will remain consistent is our commitment to putting Ontario athletes first through our three key priorities — participation, development, excellence.

“(Game ON) is intended to be a living document, adapting over time to specific events and changing circumstances. What will remain consistent is our three priorities — Participation, Development, Excellence — and our commitment and leadership to putting Ontario athletes first.”

Game ON – The Ontario Government’s Sport Plan (2015)
Game ON

YEAR ONE

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport