

After my first year as President of AthletesCAN I am proud to look back on what we have achieved. Operating in a governance environment of current and retired national team athletes led to a competitive energy that produced objective results.

We believe that when the athlete voice is heard, Canadian sport becomes more fair, responsive and supportive. We strive to empower athletes to be effective leaders; which not only benefits the entire system, but also allows our athletes to achieve full potential on the field of play and beyond.

2015 was named the Year of Sport in Canada by the government with our country's top high performance athletes competing on home soil at the Women's FIFA World Cup, and Toronto 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games. Sport Canada looked to AthletesCAN to help celebrate the power of sport, telling the athlete story through our strong social media presence and member engagement, an effort reaching over 600,000 people this past summer.

AthletesCAN continues to forge partnerships that foster an environment where athletes feel supported in their quest for excellence. Over the last year, we distributed over \$400,000 directly to Canadian athletes on behalf of our partners CIBC and Investors Group.

Further exploration of the impact of AthletesCAN this year can be best understood through three strategic directions: leadership, advocacy and organizational excellence.

### **LEADERSHIP**

#### **AthletesCAN Forum featuring KidsCAN School Day**

For the 23<sup>rd</sup> time, Canadian athlete leaders will assemble at the AthletesCAN Forum as a collective voice to reflect on the Year of Sport and the future of athlete-centered sport in Canada. This year, KidsCAN School Day celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary after which 300 athletes will have reached 22,500 youth across Canada since the event's inception in 2006.

#### **Leadership Development**

A recent multi-year focus on Athlete Reports and engagement is beginning to pay off. We are especially proud to have actively engaged Canadian athlete leaders this year achieving the following:

- Executing 12 formal one-on-one strategy and support sessions with athlete representatives
- Collecting and studying 11 Athlete Agreements and Athlete Reports, some of which AthletesCAN provided direct support in the drafting
- Confirming and supporting the existence and formalized structure of 11 NSO Athletes' Councils which AthletesCAN has identified as a best practice in Canadian sport

#### **Sport Solution**

Once again, the AthletesCAN Sport Solution Program at Western Law supported national team athletes when they needed it most, and played a critical role in encouraging and supporting alternative dispute resolution for sport in Canada. A Supervising Lawyer has joined the Program to bring professional support and oversight to the clinicians. Sport Solution opened 23 cases in 2014 and 18 so far in 2015, covering matters of team selection, carding, Athlete Agreements, and funding.

#### **CIBC Team Next**

Canada took notice of the power of athlete leadership to inspire, especially through our CIBC Team Next program in which the holistic development of 67 athletes is supported both on and off the field of play. This innovative 3-year partnership with CIBC which has identified up and coming athletes, provides them with much needed financial support and pairs them with mentors, far surpassed expectations at the Toronto 2015 Games where:

- 67% of CIBC Team Next Pan Am hopefuls made the team
- 88% of CIBC Team Next Parapan Am hopefuls made the team
- CIBC Team Next athletes (6% of Team Canada) won 54 medals – earning 14% of the overall medal count for Canada.

### **Team Investors Group Amateur Athletes Fund**

We are thrilled to have such a powerful partnership that fuels athletes directly and has delivered over \$1.6 million into athletes' hands since 2000. This program remains one of the longest standing corporate bursaries at the national team level recognizing the athletic achievement, financial need and community involvement of our Canadian athlete leaders.

### **Commitment of our Valued Partners to Canadian Athletes:**

- Dale Carnegie Course scholarships provide athletes with leadership development in human relations and effective communications – saving each athlete \$2000.
- Purolator serves over 500 sport organizations in Canada and more than 150 athletes through their AthletesCAN partnership, and has saved the sport system more than \$500,000.
- Our BBD & Etherington Generations Health & Dental plan gives more than 100 athletes the security in knowing they are covered.
- Our Enterprise/National partnership provides over 2000 athletes and sport organizations preferred rates and benefits on ground transportation across the globe.

## **ADVOCACY**

### **Athlete Assistance Program (AAP)**

In partnership with COC and CPC ACs, along with senior sport leaders we have identified an increase in AAP funding to athletes as critical to the success and sustainability of Canadian sport. We are active in exploring how to make this increase a reality.

### **The Future of Athlete Agreements in Canada**

AthletesCAN is pleased to announce the October 2015 launch of *The Future of Athlete Agreements in Canada*, a system wide evaluation of the Athlete Agreement's efficacy in reflecting both the needs and obligations of high performance athletes and National Sport Organizations (NSOs).

### **Anti-Doping**

After rigorous submissions to the 2015 CADP consultation process, where AthletesCAN strongly opposed the introduction of NSO adoption fees and the implementation of forced athlete consent to share information with law enforcement and border services agencies, an AthletesCAN Anti-Doping Committee has been struck to bring the most senior Canadian athlete leaders together at least once per year to advise AthletesCAN, in partnership with CCES, on anti-doping issues. The committee is composed of the AthletesCAN President (Chair), COC and CPC AC Chairs, Canadian WADA Athlete Representatives, CCES Athlete Representative, with an opportunity for the committee to appoint additional appropriate athlete leaders as needed. The inaugural meeting will take place at the 2015 AthletesCAN Forum.

### **Other Athlete Associations**

We are taking seriously calls from the Canadian athlete community that AthletesCAN may not have the ability or structure to influence decisions within the sport system. This year yielded several opportunities to build relationships with various athlete unions and associations including the NBPA, CFLPA, and UNI World Athletes to further strengthen the Canadian collective athlete voice, on which AthletesCAN was built.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

### **Staff**

There were some major changes within the organization's structure this year as the AthletesCAN full-time staff was reduced from two to one after long-time Executive Director Jasmine Northcott left the organization to pursue an opportunity as the CEO position at Waterski & Wakeboard Canada. The directors brought Ashley LaBrie into the role of Interim Executive Director to lead the organization through the transitional period and ensure commitments and objectives were met in one of the busiest quarters in the last quadrennial. The leaner staff model has brought a positive impact on the budget and Ashley's leadership has been exemplary. We will move into a permanent staffing model in 2016.

### Policy Development and Renewal

The directors turned inward this year, striking a Board Development Committee tasked with optimizing director performance through evaluations and professional development. We have also forged ahead in developing a stronger board succession plan to ensure the sustainability of an AthletesCAN governed by athletes, for athletes.

To ensure we can deliver on our important mandate and commitment to members, AthletesCAN has professionalized its approach to risk management with the guidance of the Sport Law & Strategy Group by implementing a Risk Management Policy, and Risk Registry.

The directors drafted, updated or passed the following policies this year: *Communications Plan, Workplace Alcohol Policy, Hospitality Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Risk Management Policy* and *Terms of Reference* for the Brand Development, Board Development, Nominations and Election, Anti-Doping, and Governance Committees.

### Funding

AthletesCAN completed MSO Eligibility and Assessment Phases of the Sport Canada Sport Funding & Accountability Framework (SFAF) V in order to secure future government funding.

### Strategic Plan

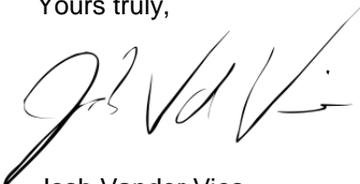
Heading into our 2016-2020 Strategic Planning process we have revised our *Operations Plan* and streamlined our focus into Key Performance Indicators based on member feedback that our directors and staff believe are central to our survival and success. The members will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan at the 2015 AthletesCAN Forum to ensure the collective voice is embedded in the vision of AthletesCAN going forward.

The scope of AthletesCAN is large and we provide critical programs and services to Canadian athletes and Canadian sport. It is my privilege to work with a dedicated team of directors and staff committed to our movement. Looking back on the year, the directors and staff are energized by our progress. Looking forward, we are ready to take on emerging challenges and opportunities for meaningful growth that will serve our members and effect positive systemic change.

We have real challenges ahead of us as an increasing number of national team athletes are being asked to produce even more spectacular results on the field of play with less resources and control over their careers. As a national multi-sport organization, AthletesCAN faces a similar challenge: how do we leverage the brand of Canadian national team athletes into what we know it is worth?

Thank you to our members for allowing us to work on your behalf; we are proud to steward Canada's collective athlete voice and we treat such an opportunity with the seriousness and excitement it deserves.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Vander Vies".

Josh Vander Vies  
President