

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HIGH PERFORMANCE ATHLETE GRANT PROGRAM



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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

With the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games a few months away, I am proud to present *'Excellence in Sport: The High Performance Athlete Grant Program Report'*.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs developed the High Performance Athlete Grant Program as a means to provide support for Northern athletes. In order for athletes to excel in highly competitive sports and train in the best facilities Canada has to offer, they require a significant amount of funding. With the development of the High Performance Grant Program, we have been able to offer our finest athletes equal, and often superior, support.

Through this program, our Northern athletes are excelling and reaching for their dreams. Recipients of this program are on National teams and training towards the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games. They are committed to pursuing healthy, active lifestyles, and are role models for our youth and future generations.

I am proud of the accomplishments of the athletes who represent the Northwest Territories in competition, and support their continued training and improvement.

Sincerely,

Robert C. McLeod
Minister Responsible for Sport
Minister Responsible for Youth





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As president of the Sport North Federation, I have long been an advocate of the High Performance Athlete Grant Program.

The program supports our athletes by assisting them in their quest to qualify for national sport programs, and giving them the necessary assistance to compete throughout Canada and abroad.

To have athletes from the Northwest Territories potentially compete in the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games is a testament of what this program has accomplished. The Sport North Federation is proud of the accomplishments of all the recipients who continue to strive for the best.

This program has truly given aspiring our High Performance athletes the financial means to pursue their dreams. It is my hope that the High Performance Athlete Grant Program will continue to grow and that athletes will continue to benefit from the support they receive in the North.

Richard Daitch
President
Sport North Federation

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 2004, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Sport North Federation (SNF) worked together to develop the High Performance Athlete Grant Program, which provides financial support to High Performance Athletes from the Northwest Territories (NWT). By providing athletes with financial assistance, the GNWT and SNF are helping promising Northern athletes and enabling them to follow their dreams and shoot for the stars.

Grant recipients represent a variety of sports and communities. They exhibit commitment to sport, healthy living, a desire to excel within their sport and the strength to succeed. These young men and women are dedicated, passionate athletes whose determination and spirit are recognized by Northerners.

Wherever these athletes travel, they bring with them the spirit of the North, representing our proud territory in the highest levels of athletic competition and paving the way for future athletes to pursue their dreams. Their courage and persistence is admirable.



Credit: Andrew Matthews

“Financially, the High Performance Grant is huge!” said Sarah Daitch. “It is the main source of income we (athletes) have and it allows us to train full-time.” Sarah has been receiving the High Performance Athlete Grant since 2003.

PROGRAM HISTORY

The High Performance Athlete Grant Program (HPAG) was officially created in 2003-2004. Prior to 2003, the GNWT Departments of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) and Education, Culture, and Employment (ECE) partnered to support High Performance student-athletes through a Bursary Program.

In 2004, MACA expanded the High Performance Athlete Bursary Program into a Grant Program in partnership with SNF. The intention of the expansion was to increase the number of recipients to include High Performance Athletes who were not in a post-secondary program or who had graduated from a post-secondary program. The new program facilitates a broader scope of recipients and is significantly more beneficial for athletes.

The program provides funding at the following three levels: Gold, Silver, and Bronze. The Gold level athletes are eligible to receive up to \$15,000 annually; the Silver level athletes are eligible to receive up to \$10,000 annually; and the Bronze level athletes are eligible to receive up to \$5,000 annually.

Since the partnership between the GNWT and SNF, the grant program has significantly evolved. The number of athletes receiving grants has increased considerably and athletes from the NWT continue to prosper in National and International competitions.

In 2003, the High Performance Athlete Bursary was awarded to three student-athletes from the Northwest Territories. In 2008, there were 29 Grants awarded to athletes in the Gold, Silver, and Bronze categories.

The GNWT both encourages and supports high performance athletes as both a means to improve the opportunities for NWT athletes and a means to increase the number of positive role models to assist in promoting Sport and Recreation throughout the NWT. The success of these athletes reflects not only the commitment of the athletes, but also the commitment of their

communities in supporting them.

The Grant recipients are determined and enthusiastic about recreation and active living. They are excellent role models for youth in the NWT and across the nation. The North is proud to produce such inspirational athletes who continue to push boundaries and excel.

“People talk about starving University students, and when you’re a student athlete it’s that multiplied by five. I am responsible for paying for everything out of my own pocket. From food to registration fees, to airfare, and equipment... every penny goes to sport. The High Performance Athlete Program is one of the best financial support programs out there and makes training possible,” said Jill Gilday. Jill has been receiving the High Performance Athlete Grant since 2006.



Credit: Christian Manzoni. Courtesy of Biathlon Canada

AWARD RECIPIENTS

As the number of athletes receiving grants continues to increase, it is important to acknowledge that the Program is more than just a means of financially assisting athletes – it is a commitment to support the development of athletes and role models for youth in the NWT.

Many of the recipients are awarded the grants over several years. This establishes a long-term relationship between the Government and the athletes. The athletes receive financial support from the Government, and in exchange, the athletes return to their home community and host workshops or youth forums run by the GNWT.

Since the development of HPAG, the GNWT has highlighted the importance of targeting potential High Performance Athletes and supporting them early on in their development. This ensures that young athletes who have the potential to compete at the highest levels are given the necessary support from the outset of their careers. Finally, HPAG maintains a strong relationship between Government and their people.



Credit: Jeff Bough. Courtesy of SSC

“I have met many athletes from across the country and I can safely say that the support that the NWT provides to its elite athletes is second to none,” said Michael Gilday. Michael has been receiving the High Performance Athlete Grant since 2005.



Credit: Dan Roycroft

SARAH DAITCH

DATE OF BIRTH: July 10, 1981

HOMETOWN: Fort Smith

SPORT: Cross-Country Skiing

TEAM: Canadian Senior Development Team

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Won the Canadian Junior Cross-Country Championships race at age 17, and after attended the World Junior Championships for Canada.
- 1st place in the sprint at the 2007 Haywood North American Cup in Canmore, Alberta.
- 4th in the sprint at the 2007 US Super Tour in Sun Valley, Idaho.
- 19th in the sprint at the 2008 World Cup in Canmore, Alberta.
- 10th in the team relay at the 2008 World Cup in Falun, Sweden
- 6th in the sprint at the 2008 FIS Race in Orsa, Sweden.

INSPIRATION:

Sarah believes that the tradition of cross-country skiing in the Northwest Territories, which began with the TEST program, is a huge asset for young athletes in the NWT. Growing up, Sarah particularly admired the Firth sisters, Sharon and Shirley, whom she had a poster of in her room. “Knowing what they achieved, being from a small, isolated community like me was very inspirational.”



*Credit: Christian Manzoni.
Courtesy of Biathlon Canada*

BRENDAN GREEN

DATE OF BIRTH: November 4, 1986

HOMETOWN: Hay River

SPORT: Biathlon

TEAM: Canadian Senior Development Team

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Eight-time medalist at the Canadian Biathlon Championships
- 2005 Winner of the Biathlon Canada Miriam Bedard Award
- 3rd place at the 2005 World Junior Youth Championship
- 2nd place in the relay at the 2007 World Junior Youth Championships
- 1st place in the 15km sprint at the 2007 Canada Winter Games in cross-country skiing
- 1st place in the 10km sprint at the 2008 U.S. Nationals and North American Biathlon Championships

SPORT IN THE NORTH:

“The North is full of potential for athletes,” said Brendan. “Growing up in rural towns is not an obstacle for athletes, but an asset. You develop an extended family network of community members, coaches and volunteers which support your training and achievements. That kind of support and encouragement is not available to athletes from big cities.”



Credit: Jeff Bough. Courtesy of SSC

MICHAEL GILDAY

DATE OF BIRTH: January 5, 1987

HOMETOWN: Yellowknife

SPORT: Speed Skating

TEAM: Canadian National Speed Skating Team

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Competed in four Arctic Winter Games for Team NWT
- Member of Team NWT at the 2003 Canada Winter Games
- Member of the Canadian National Development Team 2006-2008
- Established a new World Record in the 1000m in 2007
- 2nd place in the relay at the Speed Skating World Cup #2
- 2nd overall in the 2008 National Team Selection #3
- 2nd place in the 1000m sprint at the Vancouver World Championships in 2008

PASSION:

Michael's passion for speed skating began at a young age, but it is the complexity of the sport and the required use of both body and mind that truly drive him to compete. "I love that short track is not only a sport of brawn, it is also a sport that requires the brain," said Michael. "You are not just racing the clock, but also other people, and a successful skater must have excellent strategy as well as be in great physical form. Often it's not the fastest skater that wins, but the smartest."



Credit: Rob Picard

ANDREW MATTHEWS

DATE OF BIRTH: July 24, 1988

HOMETOWN: Yellowknife

SPORT: Snowboarding

TEAM: Whistler Valley Snowboarding Club

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- 5th in the half-pipe at the 2007 Canada Winter Games
- 2nd place in the 2007 Showcase Showdown in Whistler, British Columbia
- 9th in the 2008 Canadian National Championship
- Competed in the Big Air Slope Style competition at the Grenade Games

DETERMINATION:

Growing up in Yellowknife, Andrew had to work twice as hard as Southern snowboarders did to gain experience. With no mountains to train on, his first training was on a small slope built in a park near his house by his older brother and himself. Despite injuries and geographical boundaries, Andrew continues to push himself and follow his dream of being one of the top snowboarders in the world. Today, Andrew is a rising star on the National and International circuit where he is paving the way for Northern snowboarders.



Credit: Dan Roycroft

MIKE ARGUE

DATE OF BIRTH: November 7, 1980

HOMETOWN: Yellowknife

SPORT: Cross-country skiing

TEAM: Rocky Mountain Racers

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- 7th at the 2007 Canadian Championships 15 km classic
- Double Medalist for the NWT at the 2003 Canada Winter Games
- Competed in all of the prestigious Zylberberg Invitational Race Series
- Winner of the 2009 Rock & Ice Ultra Ski Marathon
- 1st place at the 2009 Canadian Western Championships

DEDICATION:

In recent years, Mike has continued to dedicate himself to skiing and has had exceptional results. He has dramatically increased his training load and his perseverance has paid off. In 2008-2009, Mike put in 750-800 hours of training, which gave him an edge over his competition and resulted in exceptional standings in competition.

Mike is an excellent role model and possesses incredible devotion and passion for his sport. His commitment to excellence and determination to succeed are inspirational for Northerners and other Canadians.



Credit: James Cunningham

THOMSEN D'HONT

DATE OF BIRTH: August 4, 1988

HOMETOWN: Yellowknife

SPORT: Cross-country skiing

TEAM: Callaghan Valley Training Centre

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- 2nd place at the 2007 National Cross-Country Skiing Championships
- 15th in the 1.1 km final at the 2009 Rosslund NorAM Cup
- 14th in the 1.2 km at the 2009 Highland Nordic National Championship
- 2nd place at the 2009 Canadian Western Championships
- 1st place in the 3-day K-Rock skiing competition in Yellowknife

THE PURSUIT OF DREAMS:

Cross-country ski racing continues to take front and center in Thomsen's life. He continues to push his training further and pursue his dream of competing in the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Russia.



Credit: Phil Hoffman

JILL GILDAY

DATE OF BIRTH: December 8, 1988

HOMETOWN: Yellowknife

SPORT: Speed skating

TEAM: Olympic Oval Short Track Development Team

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Competed in three Arctic Winter Games for Team NWT
- Member of Team NWT at the 2003 and 2007 Canada Winter Games
- Member of the Olympic Oval Short Track Development Team 2006 – present
- Short Track: ranked 25th woman overall in Canada (2009)
- Short Track: ranked 23rd woman overall in Canada (2008)
- Short Track: ranked 24th woman overall in Canada (2007)

COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

Jill feels that she has a tremendous and unique support base in the North and believes other amateur athletes do not have this same foundation. “If I was from Ontario and going back to Toronto over the summer, I would just be another face in the crowd,” said Jill.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

MACA is committed to ensuring that athletes from the NWT have the necessary support to pursue their sport and compete to the best of their abilities.

With the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games quickly approaching, it is an honour to have several athletes potentially representing the NWT. MACA hopes to continue to support High Performance Athletes and to continue to develop and support new athletes transitioning into larger competitive pools for many years to come.

High Performance Athletes in the NWT are more than just athletes and role models; they represent the volunteers, coaches and community members who have sacrificed hours of hard work to support healthy living and athlete development in the North.

The stories of the High Performance Athletes demonstrate commitment and passion for healthy living. Athletes surpass obstacles and push against boundaries in order to succeed. They represent the North in National and International competitions, bringing prestige and honour to all residents of the NWT. MACA would like to congratulate these athletes for their successes and encourage all athletes in the North to continue to pursue their goals.



Credit: Adrian D'Hont

APPENDIX

2003-2004 RECIPIENTS

Silver Level: Allison Simpson – Hockey (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Mike Argue – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Sarah Daitch – Cross-country skiing (Fort Smith) - \$10,000

2004-2005 RECIPIENTS

Silver Level: Ella Mawdsley- Biathlon (Fort Smith) – \$10,000

Lindsey Bolivar – Biathlon (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Mike Argue – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Sarah Daitch – Cross-country skiing (Fort Smith) - \$10,000

2005-2006 RECIPIENTS

Gold Level: Lindsey Bolivar – Biathlon (Yellowknife) - \$15,000

Silver Level: Amy MacDonald – Biathlon (Hay River) - \$10,000

Brendan Green – Biathlon (Hay River) - \$10,000

Chris Stipdonk – Duathlon (Fort Simpson) - \$10,000

Michael Gilday – Speed skating (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Mike Argue – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Sarah Daitch – Cross-country skiing (Fort Smith) - \$10,000

Bronze Level: Graeme Ryder – Basketball (Yellowknife) - \$5,000

John Tram – Gymnastics (Yellowknife) - \$5,000

Lincoln Prescott – Boxing (Yellowknife) - \$5,000

Thomsen D’Hont – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) - \$5,000

2006-2007 RECIPIENTS

Gold Level: Brendan Green – Biathlon (Hay River) - \$15,000

Silver Level: Michael Gilday – Speed skating (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Mike Argue – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Sarah Daitch – Cross-country skiing (Fort Smith) - \$10,000

Amy McDonald – Biathlon (Hay River) - \$8,000

Andrew Matthews – Snowboarding (Yellowknife) - \$8,000

Chris Stipdonk – Duathlon (Fort Simpson) - \$8,000

Jill Gilday – Speed skating (Yellowknife) - \$8,000

Bronze Level: Brandon Thompson – Volleyball (Fort Smith) - \$4,000

Danielle Pontus – Badminton (Yellowknife) – \$5,000

Dez Cassaway – Soccer (Lutselk'e) - \$4,000

Graeme Ryder – Basketball (Yellowknife) - \$4,000

Kelsey MacDougall – Soccer (Yellowknife) - \$5,000

Thomsen D'Hont – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) - \$5,000

Tyler Rentmeister – Hockey (Yellowknife) - \$5,000

Tyrone Yukon – Boxing (Deline) - \$5,000

2007-2008 RECIPIENTS

Gold Level: Brendan Green – Biathlon (Hay River) - \$15,000

Silver Level: Lindsey Bolivar – Biathlon (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Michael Gilday – Speed skating (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Mike Argue – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Sarah Daitch – Cross-country skiing (Fort Smith) - \$ 10,000
Thomsen D’Hont – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) - \$10,000
Andrew Matthews – Snowboarding (Yellowknife) - \$8,000
Jill Gilday – Speed skating (Yellowknife) - \$8,000

Bronze Level: Alyssa Carpenter – Soccer (Inuvik) - \$1,000

Bethany A. Enge – Volleyball (Yellowknife) - \$1,000
Betsy Mawdsley – Biathlon (Fort Smith) - \$1,000
Brandon Thompson – Volleyball (Fort Smith) – \$1,000
Chris Stipdonk – Duathlon (Fort Simpson) - \$2,500
Cordelia Bouvier – Soccer (Behchoko) - \$1,000
Danielle Pontus – Badminton (Yellowknife) - \$5,000
Eric Aitken – Cross-country Running & Track - \$5,000
Graeme Ryder – Basketball (Yellowknife) - \$1,000
Jazzan Braden – Basketball (Yellowknife) - \$1,000
Jenny Thompson – Soccer (Fort Simpson) - \$1,000
Josh Bolstad – Hockey (Yellowknife) - \$1,000
Kurt Laube – Karate (Yellowknife) - \$5,000
Lynette Anderson – Soccer (Fort Simpson) - \$1,000
Sarah Stephen – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) - \$1,000
Stephane Pontus – Track and Field (Yellowknife) - \$5,000
Tyrone Yukon – Boxing (Deline) - \$2,000
Zachary Sullivan – Gymnastics (Yellowknife) - \$2,000

2008-2009 RECIPIENTS

Gold Level: Brendan Green – Biathlon (Hay River) - \$15,000

Michael Gilday – Speed skating (Yellowknife) - \$15,000
Sarah Daitch – Cross-country skiing (Fort Smith) - \$15,000

Silver Level: Thomsen D'Hont – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) – \$10,000

Mike Argue – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) - \$10,000

Andrew Matthews – Snowboarding (Yellowknife) - \$8000

Jill Gilday – Speed skating (Yellowknife) - \$8000

Bronze Level: Alexander Hopkins – Cross-country skiing (Yellowknife) - \$500

Amelia Debogorski – Soccer (Yellowknife) - \$750

Bethany A. Enge – Volleyball (Yellowknife) - \$750

Betsy Mawdsley – Biathlon (Fort Smith) - \$750

Brandon Fabien – Soccer (Yellowknife) - \$750

Brandon Thompson – Volleyball (Fort Smith) - \$750

Chris Aitken – Badminton (Yellowknife) - \$750

Danielle Pontus – Badminton (Yellowknife) - \$750

Dustin Adams – Soccer (Yellowknife) - \$750

Gabriel Darku – Gymnastics (Yellowknife) - \$2,000

Graeme Ryder – Basketball (Yellowknife) - \$750

Hailey Grayston – Basketball (Yellowknife) - \$750

Ian MacDougall – Cross-country running (Yellowknife) - \$1,000

Jacqueline Thompson – Soccer (Fort Simpson) - \$750

Jazzan Braden – Basketball (Yellowknife) - \$750

Michael Craig – Wrestling (Yellowknife) - \$1,000

Nicholas Walker – Gymnastics (Yellowknife) - \$1,000

Peter Taptoona – Gymnastics (Yellowknife) - \$2,000

Zachary Sullivan – Gymnastics (Yellowknife) - \$2,000